

WCHCS Veterans Program

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PW and Health Committee



WHATCOM COUNTY
**HEALTH AND
COMMUNITY
SERVICES**

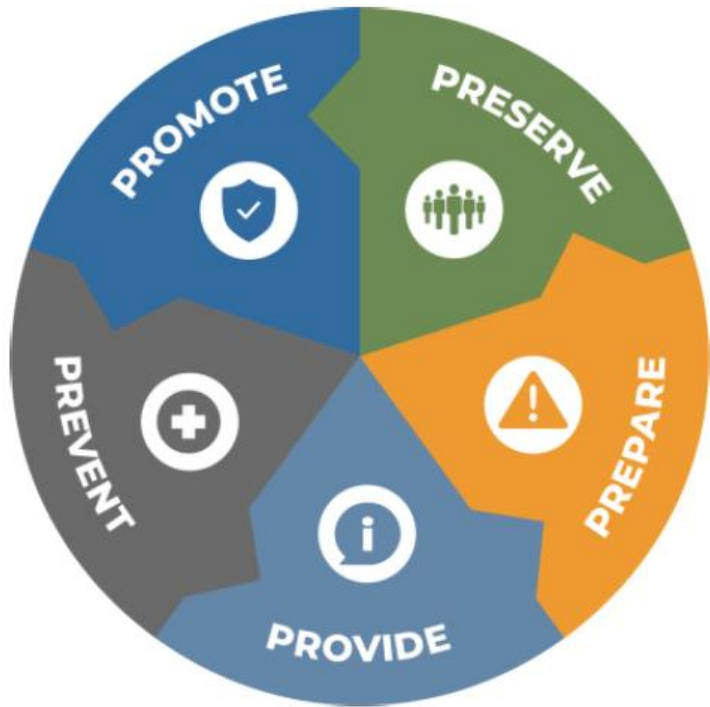


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WCHCS Purpose



We serve Whatcom County by advancing equity and partnering with our community to:



- promote health through policy and systems improvement
- prevent disease and injury
- provide accurate and reliable health communication, information and data
- prepare for and respond to emergencies
- preserve a healthy environment where everyone can thrive

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Agenda



- **Introduction**
- **Veterans Assistance Fund Programming**
 - Direct Services
 - Contracted Services
- **Veteran Service Officer Programming**
- **Budget**
- **Looking forward**

Veterans Assistance Program



Whatcom County Code

- **2.152.010 Veterans' assistance program established.**
- Pursuant to RCW [73.08.010](#) a Whatcom County veterans' assistance program is hereby established for the purpose of *developing, implementing and administering a comprehensive system of services to aid Whatcom County veterans*. Programs and services shall include those that meet identified basic needs for individuals, as well as community programs that benefit veterans and their families. (Ord. 2011-033 Exh. A).

Veterans Assistance Program Funding



- 2.152.020 Program funding.
- The resources of the veterans' assistance fund, authorized by RCW [73.08.080](#), will provide support for the programs and services delivered to Whatcom County indigent veterans. Funding from other sources may also support the veterans' assistance program and may be used to provide services to nonindigent Whatcom County veterans as allowed by state law. (Ord. 2011-033 Exh. A)
- Approx. \$600K annually in revenue

RCW 73.08.005.3



- **"Indigent" means a person who is defined as such by the county legislative authority using one or more of the following definitions:**
 - (a) Receiving one of the following types of public assistance: Temporary assistance for needy families, aged, blind, or disabled assistance benefits, pregnant women assistance benefits, poverty-related veterans' benefits, food stamps or food stamp benefits transferred electronically, refugee resettlement benefits, medicaid, medical care services, or supplemental security income;
 - (b) Receiving an annual income, after taxes, of up to one hundred fifty percent or less of the current federally established poverty level, **or receiving an annual income not exceeding a higher qualifying income established by the county legislative authority;** or
 - (c) Unable to pay reasonable costs for shelter, food, utilities, and transportation because his or her available funds are insufficient.
- **Currently set at 60% AMI per resolution in 2018.**

Direct Financial Assistance



Housing:

security deposits, pet deposits, first months' rent, last months' rent, rent, mortgage, washer/dryer rental in unit

Utilities:

electric, propane, natural gas, water and sewer, trash, wood stove pellets

Residential Repair:

(A residence is defined as a stick build or manufactured home owned by the veteran; recreational vehicles do not qualify.)

under \$3,000 and includes but is not limited to:

hot water tanks, plumbing, heating, septic, roofing, insulation, insect/pest removal

Transportation:

vehicle payments, vehicle insurance

Medical:

dental bills for emergency cases and major restoration not exceeding \$5,000; not ongoing routine care

medical bills not covered by the VA

Childcare:

up to \$3,000 in monthly and drop in childcare with a licensed provider

Burial:

burial of indigent veteran, indigent veteran's immediate family at the veteran's request

Direct Financial Assistance Needs Increasing



	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total Fund Usage	\$89,686.27	\$63,382.14	\$58,187.18	\$40,509.92	\$95,116.76	\$183,838.02
Total # of Veterans	76	55	37	21	37	37
Average Assistance Amount	\$1,180.08	\$1,152.40	\$1,572.63	\$1,929.04	\$2,570.72	\$4,968.60

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Other Direct Services



- Federally Accredited Veteran Service Officer work (VA benefits)
- Housing Program Referrals (VASH and SSVF programs through Opportunity Council)
- Financial Counseling
- Enrollment in Veterans Administration Healthcare Programs
 - Direct connection to mental health, substance abuse and dental programs
- Reentry services for incarcerated veterans
- Community Outreach
- Direct Connection to Vet Reps at WorkSource
- Case Management, Information and Referral Services
- Advocacy at State and Federal Level
 - Connection to Constituent Services at Senator Murray, and Representative DelBene and Larsen's Offices
 - County representation on Representatives' DelBene and Larsen's Veteran Boards
 - Chair of the ACHS Veterans Committee

Contracted Services



- Housing Assistance through the Opportunity Council
- Case Management through the Opportunity Council
- Transportation through the Opportunity Council
- Veteran Service Officer Representation to San Juan County Veterans

Contracted Housing



- 1,075 Veteran Households Served by Opportunity Council (2018-2024)
 - 116 Veteran's Funded Eviction Preventions
 - 258 Veteran's Funded Homeless Rehousing
 - 701 Veterans were served by non-Veteran Funding Sources (293 were Covid RA)
 - Currently 41 veterans in the housing interest pool as of May 2024

Contracted Case Management



	QTR 3 2022	QTR 4 2022	QTR 1 2023	QTR 2 2023	QTR 3 2023	QTR 4 2023	QTR 1 2024	QTR 2 2024
	Jul - Sep	Oct - Dec	Jan - Mar	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sep	Oct - Dec	Jan - Mar	Apr - Jun
Obtain Housing	0	1	6	9	11	13	20	5
Maintain Housing	0	1	4	8	19	12	14	7
Healthcare	1	14	10	11	6	9	5	1
MISC Benefits/Assistance	17	69	55	62	74	61	69	48
Total Assistance	18	85	75	90	110	95	108	61

MISC Breakdown	
Benefits	52
DD-214	52
Employment	21
Financial Assistance	39
Food Assistance	11
General Assistance	20
Misc	17
Legal	10
Transportation	16
VA forms/website/VIC	3

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VSO Programming



- The Veteran's Specialist became a Federally Accredited Service officer under a new WDVA partnership (2018)
- A second Veteran's Specialist position was created that partnered the Bellingham Vet Center at 3800 Byron Street (2022)
- Sean Dalgarn, USAF combat veteran and WWU alumnus, was hired
- The Vet Center gives the County Office space at no cost

VSO Programming by the Numbers



- 13,853 veterans in Whatcom County
 - 25% are in receipt of VA Disability Compensation
 - Average amount per veteran is \$1648.00/month
-
- In 2023 Whatcom County's VSOs filed over 1000 claims for veterans in the community
 - When veterans become service connected, there is less dependence on county veteran relief funds

VSO Programming by the Numbers



2022 Summary of Federal VA Expenditures in Whatcom

County	Veteran Population*	Total Expenditure	Compensation & Pension	Education & Vocational Rehabilitation/ Employment	Insurance & Indemnity	Medical Care	VA Health Care Enrollment
WHATCOM	14,203	\$113,228,000	\$ 73,964,000	\$6,777,000	\$815,000	\$31,671,000	20.0%

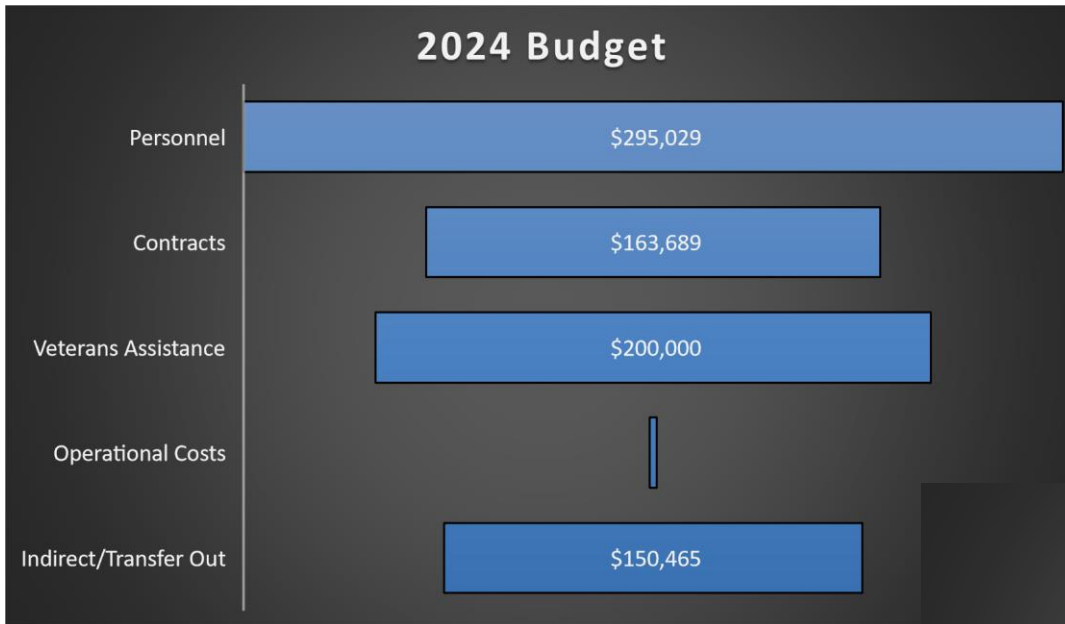
Whatcom County veterans bring over \$113 million/year from the VA into the community (Compensation, Pension and Educational Benefits)

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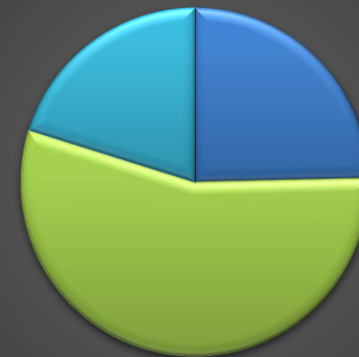
Veterans Program Budget



2024 Budget



2024 High Level Budget



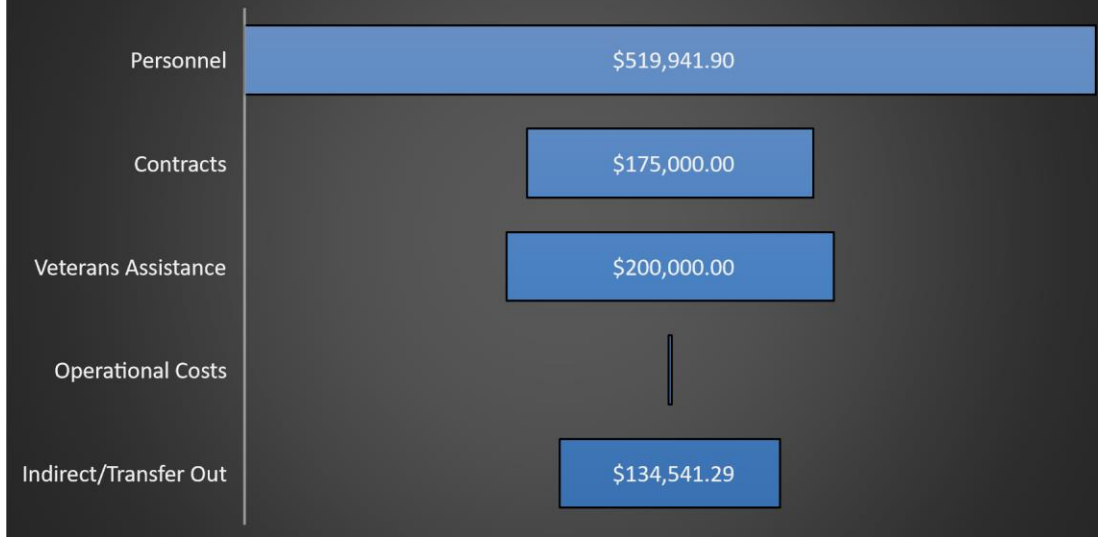
Direct Assistance County Expenses Contracts

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Veterans Program Budget



2029 Budget



2029 High Level Budget



Direct Assistance County Expenses Contracts

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Looking Forward in the Program



- Increasing direct assistance from \$100K to \$200K for 2024
- Increasing the number of Veterans in receipt of VA disability compensation from 25% to 30%
- Continued relationship building with community partners such as Bellingham Vet Center
- Potential collaborative projects with our Homeless Housing Program, veteran set asides in housing projects?
- Additional outreach events throughout the County
- Continued monitoring and evaluation of our veterans funding and the impact of the staff VSO work on the community



- Questions?