

Central Hampshire Veterans Services District

Our mission is to aid, support, and advocate for the Veterans of our communities and/or their dependents. A secondary mission is to work with local groups to arrange for Memorial Day and Veterans Day Parades, and other patriotic events. We serve Veterans and their families in the communities of Northampton, Amherst, Pelham, Chesterfield, Williamsburg, Goshen, Worthington and Cummington. This new district has given all of the member communities' access to a veterans' service office on a full-time basis. There are now three Veterans' Service officers with diverse backgrounds and experience to better answer questions, solve problems and deal with the struggles unique to those who have served our armed forces.



The Central Hampshire Veterans Services District assists Veterans and their families in eight communities.

One cold winter day a veteran who was residing in a homeless shelter decided he wanted more out of life besides drugs. This also happened to be the day that the UVA (Soldier On, as we know it today) did their outreach at the homeless shelter where he was staying. The Veteran was told that if he came to the UVA he would have three meals a day, a warm place to sleep and possibly the chance to become drug free. He jumped at this chance and came to Northampton, enrolled in VA healthcare and stayed at Soldier On. Our office put the Veteran on Chapter 115 benefits and helped him apply for Social Security Disability and VA Service Connection Disability Compensation. After he was awarded SSDI, he used the income to move out of the homeless shelter and we assisted him in getting subsidized housing in Florence through the Northampton Housing Authority. He was a model tenant there. He finally was awarded his VA service-connected disability compensation and he has since been able to move into the community to his own apartment. Today, he volunteers at the VAMC and Soldier On, helping veterans who struggle now as he struggled then. He also visits area schools to talk about his war experience and joined a fellow Veteran on part of a cross country bicycle journey. He is a full and active member of our community, an inspiration to our staff, and a reminder of why we are here.

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Staffing Proposal for FY2012

Position Title	Full or Part time	Annual Salary	Funding Source(s)	Budgeted FTE	Change from FY2011	Union affiliation
Director	Full Time	55,045	General Fund and Regional District Assessments	1.0		NAPEA
Veterans Service Officer	Part time 20 hours	22,220	General Fund and Regional District Assessments	.57		NAPEA
Veterans Service Officer	Part time 18 hours	15,912	General Fund and Regional District Assessments	.51		NR
Principal Clerk	Full Time, 40 hours	35,360	General Fund and Regional District Assessments	1.0		AFSCME



Where Our Funding Comes From

The annual budget of the Central Hampshire Veterans Services District (CHVSD) is supported through the General Fund, Cherry Sheet Reimbursements of benefits and Regional Assessments from member communities.



How We Spend Our Money

This chart shows how much of the annual budget of the CHVSD is spent on staff (PS) and on Ordinary Maintenance (OM), primarily direct benefits to veterans and their families.

Some Accomplishments At A Glance

beyond our day-to-day operations



Working with the VA homeless program and Northampton Housing Authority, we provide VA Supportive Housing (VASH) Section 8 vouchers to formerly chronically homeless and disabled veterans. Our office is recognized as the regional experts in the VASH program. Currently there are 180 VASH vouchers across Western Massachusetts, and all but 25 are handled by the Northampton Housing

Authority. At this time, we screen all veterans given these vouchers through NHA to determine possible state and federal benefits eligibility. This program will be successful in addressing chronic homelessness among veterans if the VSO's of all our cities and towns work collaboratively.

- Called a meeting of local faith community representatives hosted at Smith College to initiate a formalized chapter of the National Guard's Military Spiritual Support Network to help coordinate support services for returning and deployed soldiers and their families in our communities.

The Year Ahead

- In the coming year, we want to increase our use of social media tools, like our Facebook page (find us and 'like' us here: <http://www.facebook.com/northamptonvets>), to reach more community veterans. Returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan are increasingly turning to these tools to learn about Veterans Services. We've enhanced and regularly monitor our city website pages (www.northamptonma.gov/veterans) which have been getting more hits through Google searches.
- We'll continue to work with members of the faith community and the National Guard's Military Spiritual Strength Network to enhance community supports for returning veterans and their families.

CENTRAL HAMPSHIRE VETERANS DISTRICT

	Actual FY 2010	Budget FY 2011	Budget FY 2012	\$ Change FY11-12	% Change FY11-12
<u>Appropriation by Major Object</u>					
Personal Services	92,447	93,914	129,011	35,097	37.4%
Ordinary Maintenance	619,017	158,860	501,710	342,850	215.8%
Other than Ordinary Maintenance	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Total	711,464	252,774	630,721	377,947	149.5%
<u>Appropriation by Major Activity</u>					
Administration	100,792	111,574	143,071	31,497	28.2%
Veterans' Benefits	594,624	126,900	471,650	344,750	271.7%
Burials	12,000	10,000	12,000	2,000	20.0%
Ceremonial Military Affairs	4,048	4,300	4,000	(300)	-7.0%
Total	711,464	252,774	630,721	377,947	149.5%
<u>Financing Plan</u>					
General Fund	260,870	184,504	433,668	249,164	135.0%
Vets Services Regional Assessments	47,459	50,749	97,876	47,127	92.9%
State Reimbursements (Cherry Sheet)	403,135	17,521	99,177	81,656	466.0%
Total	711,464	252,774	630,721	377,947	149.5%

Central Hampshire Veterans Services

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by the numbers

- 8** Communities we cover: Northampton, Amherst, Pelham, Williamsburg, Chesterfield, Goshen, Cummington and Worthington
- 9** of every 1,000 Northampton **residents** received financial benefits from our office this year, more than any other community in the Commonwealth (Boston is 1.42 per 1,000 residents and Chicopee is 2.67 per 1,000!). Many more came to us for non-financial services
- 302** Residents District-wide receive Ch. 115 benefits from our office
- 50** Current VA Disability Claims we have open
- 12** Residents we have assisted to receive VA disability benefits in 2010
- 3** CHVSD staff who are serving in positions of regional and statewide leadership: The Department Secretary serves as the Treasurer of the Western Mass. Veterans' Services Officers Association and the Hilltown VSO will serve this year as its incoming president and the Director will serve this year as the incoming Vice President of the Massachusetts Veterans Service Officers Association and sits on the Advisory Council with the Secretary of Veterans' Services