FISCAL YEAR 2025
ANNUAL REPORT

Ottawa County
Veterans Services

(616)-393-VETS

www.miottawa.org







A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Jason Schenkel, Director
Ottawa County Veterans Services

Fiscal Year 2025 was an exceptional year for our department. We finalized key additions to our team by bringing on a Veteran Service Officer and an Outreach Specialist. These strategic hires allow us to operate more efficiently, strengthen our internal structure, and reduce reliance on outside organizations.

We made significant progress in leveraging technology to serve our clients better while safeguarding their sensitive information. Transitioning our electronic funding applications into OnBase has streamlined our internal workflows and improved overall efficiency. Additionally, we have embraced responsible AI platforms to help Veterans develop stronger, more effective federal claims.

Our outreach efforts continue to expand, building meaningful and impactful relationships throughout West Michigan. Through initiatives like Legacy Link, we are meeting Veterans where they are and increasing awareness of the benefits and services available to them.

We remain committed to action — Deeds, Not Words.

> **“IF WE ARE WILLING TO SEND THEM, WE MUST BE WILLING TO MEND THEM.”**
>
> -Til Vahalla Project

2025 BY THE NUMBERS

681 Total Veteran Service Officer (VSO) appointments.

200 Rides provided to Veterans, spouses, and surviving spouses.

$18,300 Provided to Veteran families for burial assistance.

72 Community outreach events attended to share and market the OCVS mission.

220+ Veterans served at our Annual Stand Down & Resource Fair.

13.4% Rise in VA expenditures reflects a $15.4 million increase in federal investment supporting Ottawa County veterans.

$38,760 Amount distributed through the Michigan Veterans Trust Fund in FY24.

275,000+ People reached utilizing OCVS outreach social media efforts.

What is the VA GDX Report?

The Geographic Distribution of VA Expenditures (GDX) Report is an annual publication from the VA that shows how much money is spent on veterans' benefits and services in each state, county, and Congressional district. It highlights where federal VA dollars are supporting veterans through health care, compensation, pensions, education, and other programs.

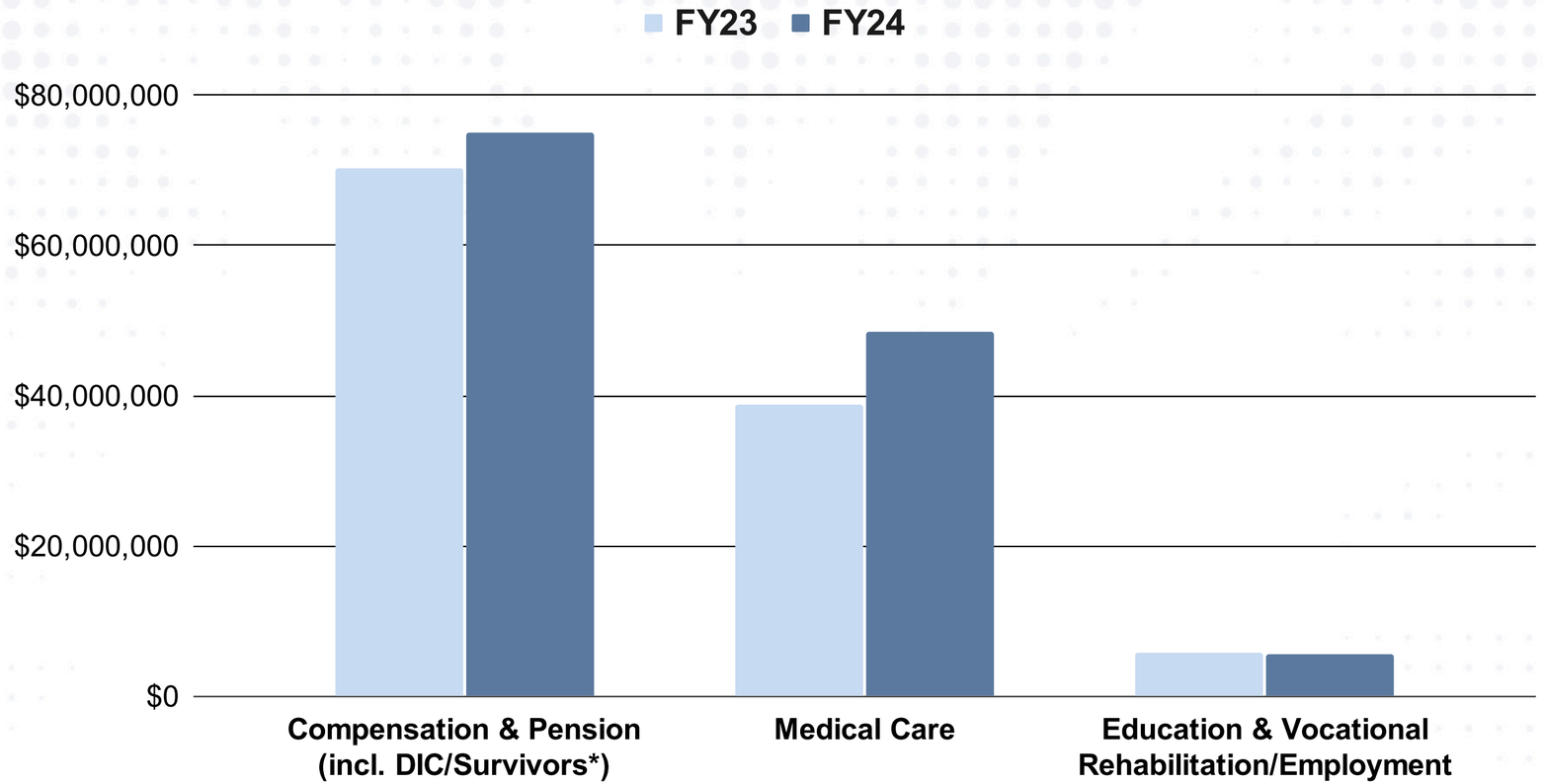
Why is the GDX Report one year behind?

The GDX Report reflects finalized spending from the previous federal fiscal year. The VA must complete the full year of payments, reconcile financial records, verify data accuracy across multiple programs, and compile national reports before publishing the totals. This review process takes time, which is why the report is typically released about a year after the spending occurred.

Federal Funds Only - GDX FY23-24

Category	FY23	FY24	$ Change	% Change
Total VA Expenditures (all categories)	$115,086,009	$130,462,920	$15,376,912	13.40%
Compensation & Pension (incl. DIC/Survivors*)	$70,216,514	$74,964,342	$4,747,828	6.80%
Insurance & Indemnities	$325,880	$551,849	$225,969	69.30%
Education & Vocational Rehabilitation/Employment	$5,760,277	$5,618,996	-$141,281	-2.50%
Medical Care	$38,783,338	$48,497,973	$9,714,635	25.00%
Memorial Benefits	NO DATA	$755,294		
Specially Adapted Housing & Auto/Adaptive Equip.	NO DATA	$60,515		
Loan Guaranty	NO DATA	$13,951		

VA Expenditures By Category



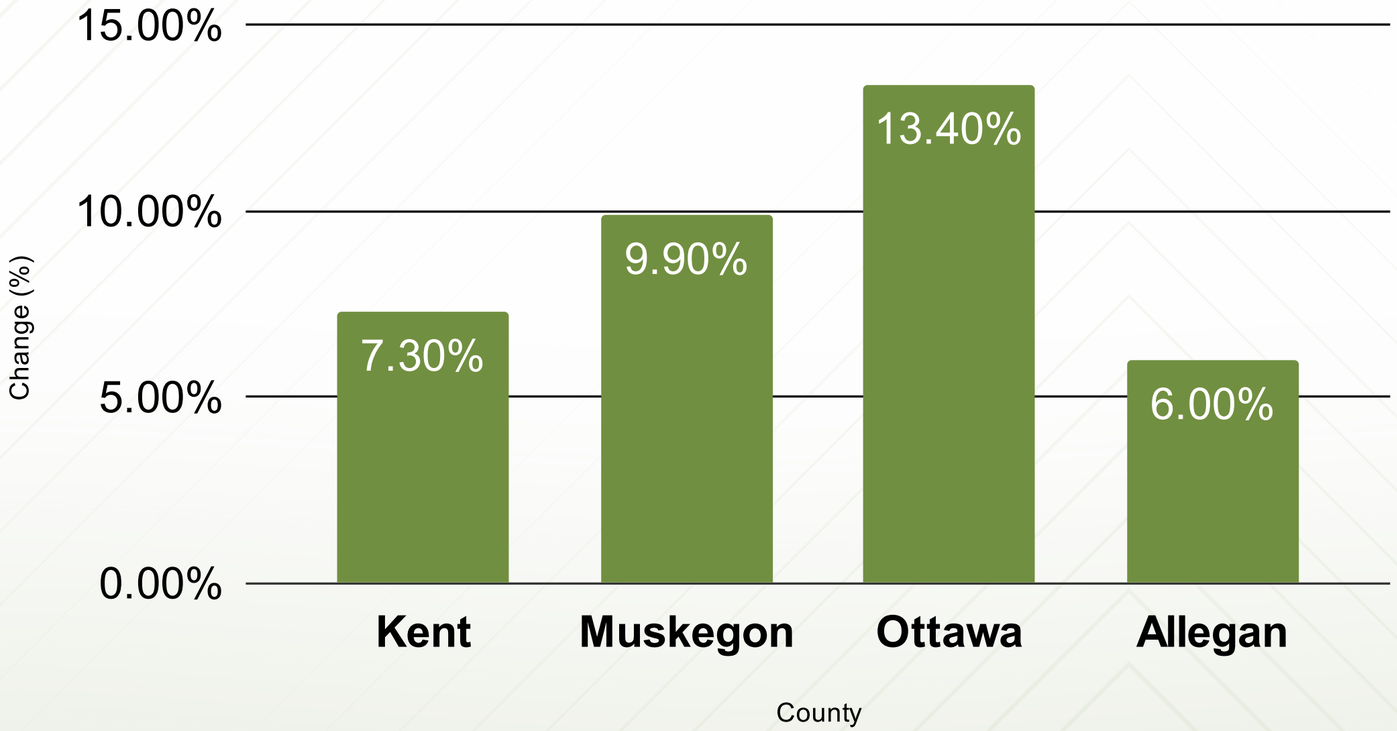
From **FY23** to **FY24**, Compensation and Pension benefits rose by **$4.7 million (6.8%)**, remaining the largest area of VA spending. Medical Care saw the greatest growth, increasing by **$9.7 million (25.0%)**, while Education and Vocational Rehabilitation benefits declined slightly by **$141,281 (-2.5%)**.







Total VA Dollars Change (%) by County



From **FY23** to **FY24**, Ottawa County experienced the largest percentage increase in total VA dollars at **13.4%**, outpacing Muskegon, Kent, and Allegan counties. This growth reflects increased demand for VA benefits and services among Ottawa County veterans.







COMMUNITY OUTREACH

275,000 + people reached on social media.

7,000 + average reach from social media posts.

Participated in **72 outreach events** connecting directly with veteran residents and families.

21,000 + link clicks connected veterans and families directly to services, events, and resources.

Launched **Legacy Link** senior veteran outreach program bolstering community presence.

Social media campaign **increased** medical transportation rides by **187%**.



KEY POINTS

- **$130.5 million** in federal VA dollars flowed into Ottawa County in FY24.
- Ottawa County experienced the **highest** percentage growth in VA funding among neighboring counties.
- **$75 million** in Compensation and Pension benefits supported Ottawa County veterans in FY24.
- Compensation and Pension spending increased by **$4.7 million** (6.8%) year over year.
- VA Medical Care spending increased by **$9.7 million** (25%) in one year.
- Nearly **$48.5 million** was spent on VA healthcare for Ottawa County veterans in FY24.
- **$5.6 million** supported veteran education and vocational rehabilitation in FY24.
- **$20,960** distributed through the Ottawa County Veterans Committee Fund in FY24.

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