

2022 ANNUAL REPORT



hope



recovery



wellbeing



greater quality
of life



valued members
of the LA County
community



#YouMatter

Dear Veterans, Community Partners, and Stakeholders,

It is with great pride that we present the Los Angeles County Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (MVA) Veteran Peer Access Network (VPAN) Annual Report for 2022. This past year has been one of resilience, progress, and unwavering commitment to serving those who have bravely served our nation. Through dedicated efforts, innovative outreach, and strong community partnerships, we have worked tirelessly to support and enhance the well-being of our veterans and their families across Los Angeles County.

In 2022, VPAN remained steadfast in its mission to connect veterans with critical services, including healthcare, housing, education, and employment opportunities. We expanded our outreach efforts to ensure that every veteran—regardless of their background or circumstances—has access to the benefits and resources they rightfully deserve. Our partnerships with local community-based veteran-focused organizations have been instrumental in addressing the evolving needs of our veteran community.

A major milestone this year was the implementation of the PACT Act (Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act), a landmark piece of legislation that expands VA healthcare and benefits for veterans exposed to toxic substances during their service. The PACT Act represents one of the most significant expansions of benefits in VA history, providing much-needed relief for those affected by burn pits, Agent Orange, and other hazardous exposures. The PACT Act resulted in an a net increase in veterans we have assisted, and we continued to educate and assist veterans in understanding and applying for the benefits available under this new law. We remain committed to ensuring that every eligible veteran receives the care and support they deserve under the PACT Act.

VPAN has strengthened its commitment to tackling these issues through enhanced advocacy, program development, and direct services. Our dedicated staff, volunteers, and community partners have played an essential role in these efforts, ensuring that our veterans receive the support and recognition they have earned.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to fostering a future where every veteran in Los Angeles County can thrive. We will continue to work diligently to enhance our services, promote equity, and build stronger networks of support. This report highlights our achievements, challenges, and vision for the coming year.

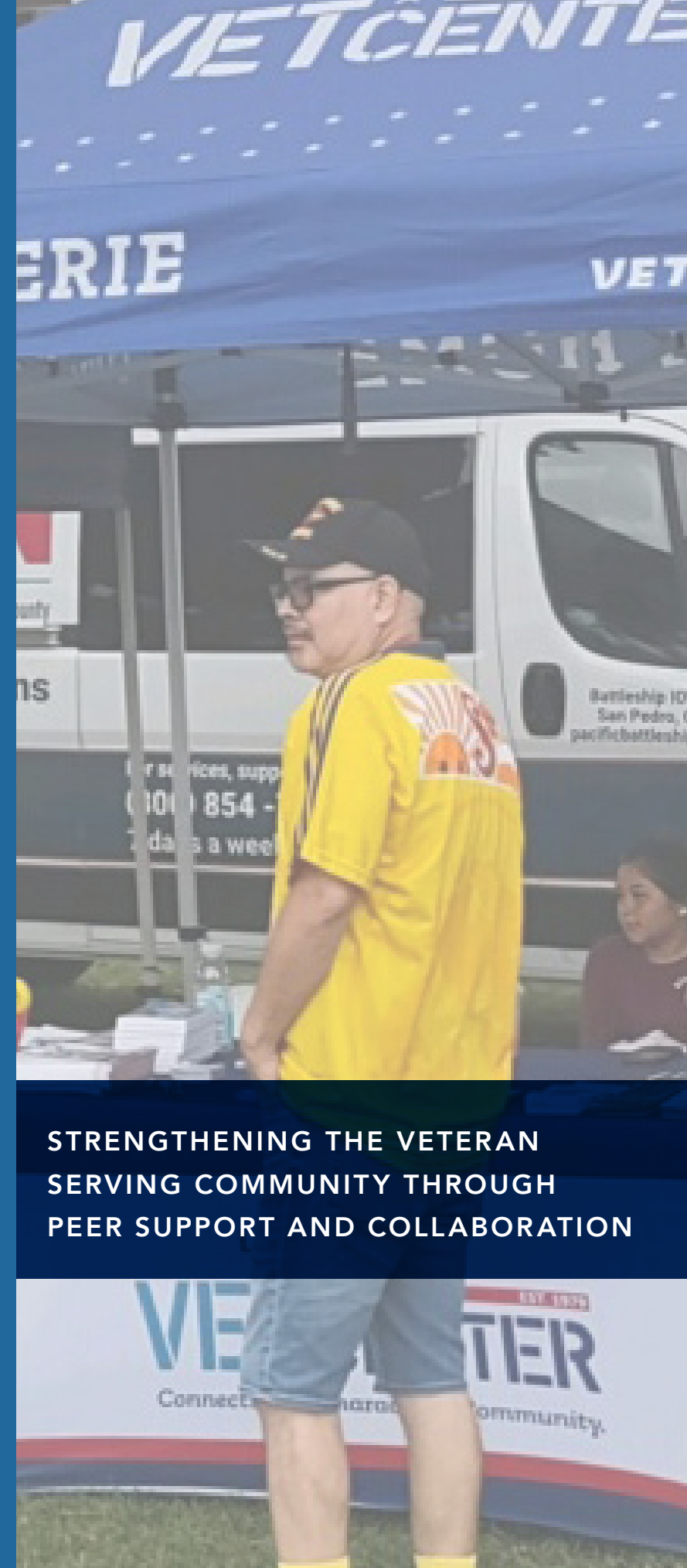
Thank you for your continued commitment to the veteran community. Together, we will continue to honor and serve those who have sacrificed so much for our freedom.

With respect and gratitude,



Jim Zenner
Director
Los Angeles County Department
of Military and Veterans Affairs

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**STRENGTHENING THE VETERAN
SERVING COMMUNITY THROUGH
PEER SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION**

VPAN: Bridging Gaps with Peer Navigation

The Need

Veterans often face barriers navigating fragmented service systems. In 2023, VPAN's model of peer-based navigation increased access to housing, healthcare, employment, and education by embedding staff in communities across the County.

By focusing on navigation, not direct service, VPAN reduces eligibility friction and connects veterans through a no-wrong-door, low-barrier approach. Peers conduct warm handoffs and ongoing follow-up, helping clients engage with the VA, CalVet, and local services based on eligibility and need. VPAN promotes responsible use of County resources by ensuring veterans access federal benefits when eligible, leading to long-term savings and more sustainable outcomes.

Housing instability and behavioral health remain primary concerns for transitioning and unhoused veterans. VPAN peers played a central role in connecting veterans to emergency, transitional, and permanent housing solutions, and guided them to mental health services through the VA, DMH, or local providers.

Peers build trust where systems often fall short. Their shared experience helps reduce stigma, correct misinformation, and provide a sense of belonging. This has led to higher engagement, earlier intervention, and better alignment between needs and services.

Expanded partnerships in 2023 enhanced coordination with legal aid providers, workforce agencies, and housing partners. This collaborative network enabled peer staff to activate wraparound services and resolve multi-layered veteran challenges more effectively.



VPAN SD1 collaborated with Vet Hunters & VFW POST 1944 for the toy drive and toy giveaway.



The Program

Community Driven Solution

Veterans often struggle with complex eligibility systems and mistrust of institutions. VPAN was created to close these gaps by embedding veteran and military family peers into field-based teams.

These peers are not service providers but navigators trained to guide clients to the right resources. Their primary role is to link veterans to the VA when eligible, or connect them to county or nonprofit services when the VA cannot meet the need. VPAN's success lies in its ability to leverage trust, reduce friction, and promote timely access.

It also serves as a veteran workforce development platform, employing peers with lived experience to support others, while creating meaningful careers and adding capacity to the local system. The model is driven by collaboration with Southern California Grantmakers and lead community-based organizations, each serving a Supervisorial District. Together, they implement a localized strategy to reduce barriers and ensure timely connection to care, housing, and economic opportunity.

VPAN Goals For 2022

↑ Develop a clear road map and "no wrong door"

↑ Increase Awareness

↓ Decrease Veteran Suicide

↓ Decrease Veteran Homelessness

↓ Decrease Veteran Under/Unemployment

We Provide Resources for the Following Programs:



Mental Health Treatment for trauma from combat exposure, military sexual trauma, relationship and intimacy issues



Substance Misuse Support Treatment for substance use disorders, including misuse of alcohol, prescription medication and other drugs



Housing Temporary and permanent housing for veterans and their families, help locating housing



Workforce Development and Employment Help with developing interview skills, resume creation, job coaching, plus volunteer and job opportunities



Healthcare Enrollment into VA healthcare, transportation to appointments, ensuring access to prescription medications



Education Support with school enrollment, vocational training, tuition assistance



Miscellaneous Food, childcare, transportation, financial assistance and more



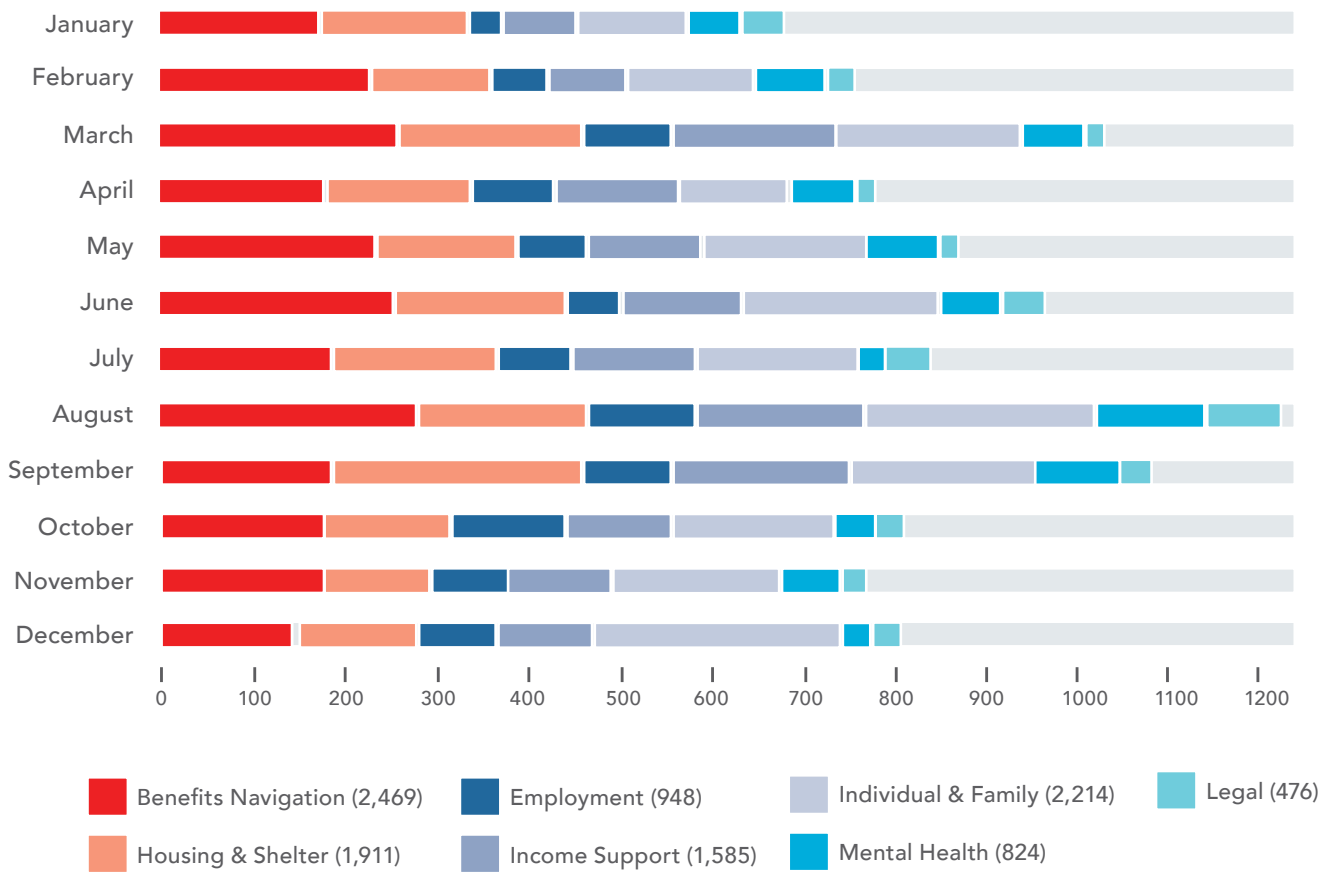
Legal Services Help with eviction prevention, discharge upgrade, applying for VA benefits, etc.



Social Connection/Recreation Opportunities to connect with other veterans in a variety of settings



Service Type Case Numbers By Month



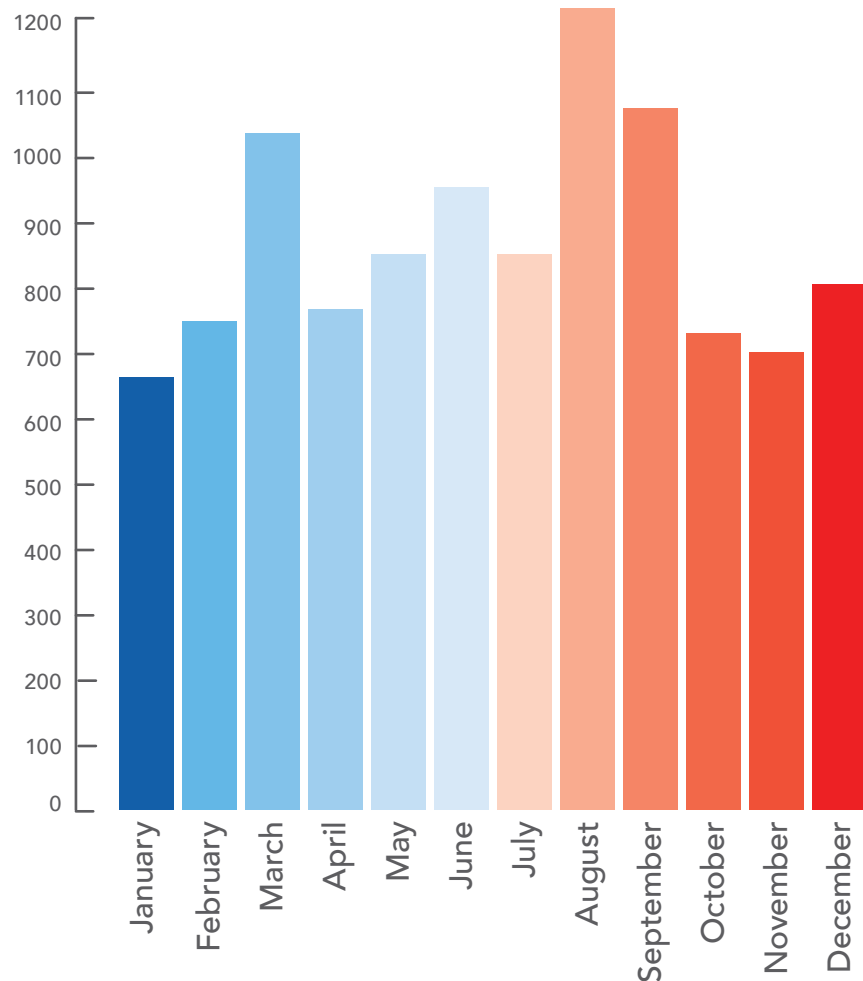
Service-related data for each Supervisorial District can be found on pages 18-22.



L.A. County is home to a population of more than 260,000 veterans, the largest veteran population in the country.



2022 marked a turning point for SD5 with the Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for their new rally point in Palmdale.



Clients Served By Month



Program Manager and Navy veteran Jesse Mendoza stands with Battle Buddy and MilFam Sabrina Herrera in front of the Battleship Iowa, site of the SD4 Rally Point, in February 2022.



DMH VPAN Support Line Consultant and Air Force veteran Crystal Williams answers a call in December 2022.



USMC veteran Jack with the new motor scooter Battle Buddy and fellow USMC vet James Schotter (VOALA-SD2) was able to acquire for him.

Of all Service Requests in 2022, these are the top 5 Needs.



1

INDIVIDUAL & FAMILY

- Caregiving Services
- Child Care



2

BENEFITS NAVIGATION

- Benefits Eligibility Screening
- ID / Documentation Assistance



3

HOUSING & SHELTER

- Permanent Supportive Housing
- Emergency Housing



4

INCOME SUPPORT

- Veterans Pension & Disability Benefits
- Emergency / One-time Financial Assistance



5

MENTAL HEALTH

- Treatment for trauma from combat exposure, military sexual trauma, relationship and intimacy issues



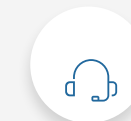
Number of
Veterans Served

4,271



Clients Served that
originated from a Referral
(% of Total Clients Served)

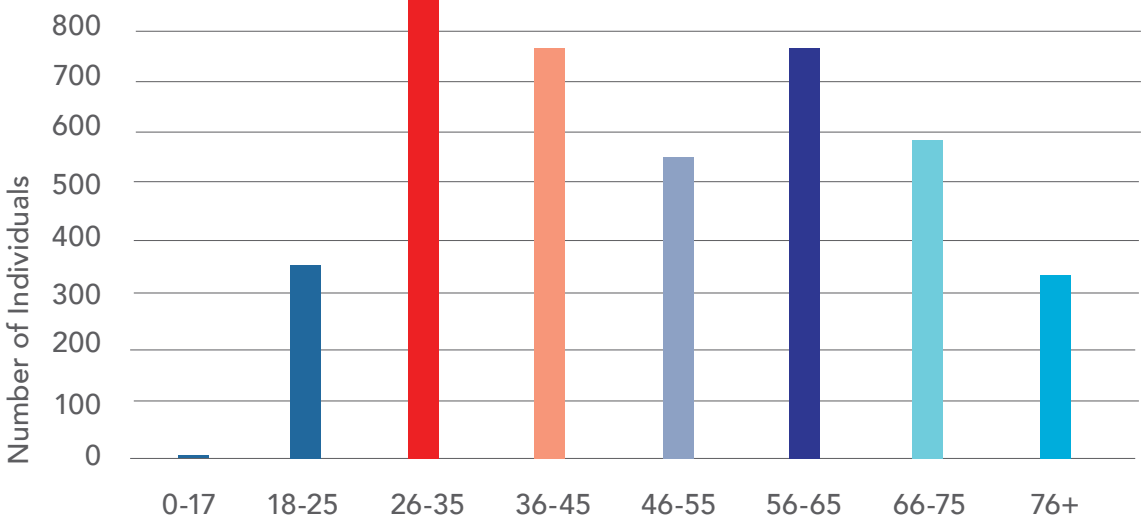
57%



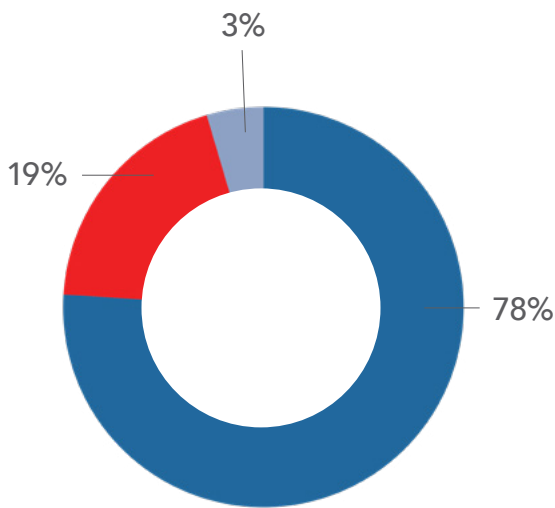
Number of
Service Requests

6,860

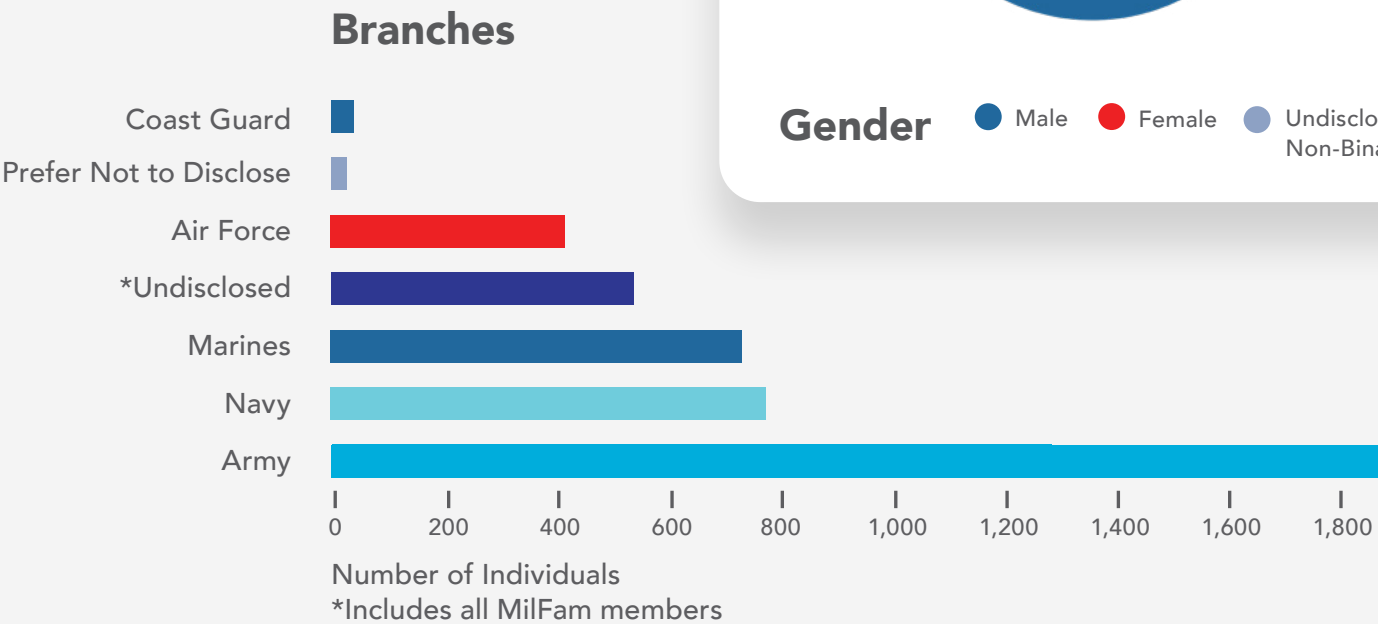
Who We Served in 2022



Age Range



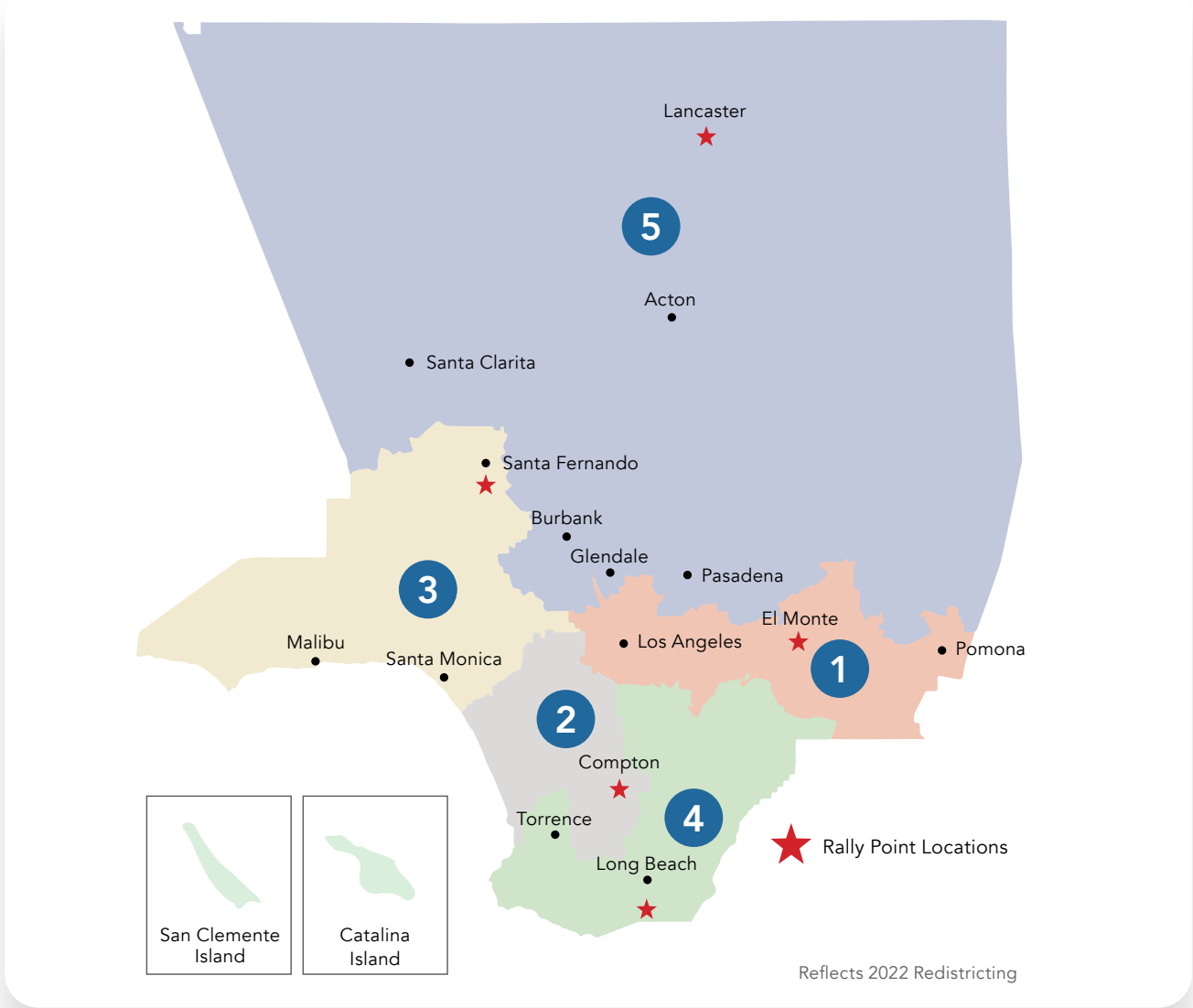
Gender



“ Being a part of a program that not only supports the veteran but the veteran family as well is very important to me. This program also helps address the family members who can be impacted by the challenges the veterans face. Often times families - spouses and children are eligible for benefits that they may not be aware of. ”



The VPAN Model in Action | VPAN Rally Point Map



The VPAN Hub-and-Spoke Approach

VPAN’s delivery model is built around a hub-and-spoke framework. The central hub, Bob Hope Patriotic Hall, houses leadership, training, and strategic coordination. Spokes, or Rally Points, are located in each Supervisorial District. Veteran peers at each Rally Point serve as the front line of engagement. They are also co-located at Community Access Points (CAPs) to ensure visibility and immediate access. This decentralized structure allows rapid response, localized outreach, and ongoing support where veterans live and work. VPAN fills the gap between eligibility and service access by ensuring that veterans are guided to the right system at the right time.

VPAN in your Supervisorial District - A True Team Effort

Each Supervisorial District operates its own VPAN team, led by a contracted community-based organization. These teams are staffed by peer coordinators and specialists responsible for all outreach, intake, navigation, and follow-up.

MVA assigns Benefits Navigators to each district, who work in tandem with VPAN peers to ensure veterans understand and apply for the benefits they’ve earned.

VPAN HQ	Bob Hope Patriotic Hall 1816 S. Figueroa St. Los Angeles, CA 90015 vpan@dmh.lacounty.gov
DISTRICT 1	JVS SoCal 1180 Durfee Ave., South El Monte, CA 91733 vpan@jvs-socal.org Veteran Benefit Navigator: Alex Figueroa afigueroa@mva.lacounty.gov
DISTRICT 2	VOALA 700 N. Bullis Road, Compton, CA 90221 vpan@voala.org Veteran Benefit Navigator: Michele Felix mfelix@mva.lacounty.gov
DISTRICT 3	Goodwill SoCal 10324 Balboa Blvd., Granada Hills, CA 91344 vpangoodwill@goodwillsoocal.org Veteran Benefit Navigator: Hector Castillo hcastillo@mva.lacounty.gov
DISTRICT 4	Battleship Iowa 250 S. Harbor Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90731 vpan@veteranswest.org Veteran Benefit Navigator: Ken Gonzalez Jr. kgonzalesJr@mva.lacounty.gov
DISTRICT 5	JVS SoCal 237 E. Columbia Way, Lancaster, CA 93535 vpan@jvs-socal.org Veteran Benefit Navigator: Keith Niesen kniesen@mva.lacounty.gov

VPAN Partners



VPAN’s success is built on strong partnerships with public agencies, nonprofits, and community-based organizations. These collaborations allow for real-time problem-solving and access to a wide range of services that would be otherwise inaccessible through a single agency.

“ One thing I really like about VPAN is that if you served, you are a veteran. We don’t worry about how someone was separated or what their disability rating is. ”

SoCal Grantmakers

Appointed as the fiscal and strategic intermediary by the Board of Supervisors in 2019, SCG manages grantmaking, vendor selection, and program oversight. Their Veterans Funders Group has played an integral role in shaping and funding VPAN’s community-driven model. SCG selected five lead CBOs to anchor each Supervisorial District and provide locally tailored outreach and services.

The County’s original 2019 motion empowered the Department of Mental Health to work with Southern California Grantmakers (SCG), which serves as VPAN’s fiscal intermediary and backbone organization. SCG coordinates funding and strategy, aligning philanthropic and public resources to advance veteran access.

VPAN’s peer model works because it centers lived experience, is non-clinical by design, and responds to complex needs with a human-first approach.

Los Angeles VeteransCollaborative

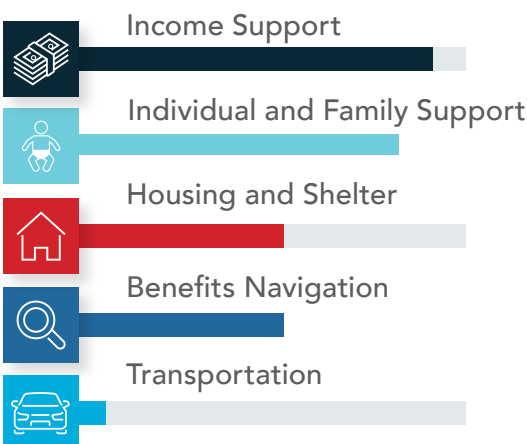
The Los Angeles Veterans Collaborative (LAVC) unites over 300 organizations and government entities to strengthen the regional veteran-serving network. LAVC’s backbone support complements VPAN’s goal of removing barriers and coordinating systems of care.

JVS SoCal

Supervisory District 1



Top 5 Needs



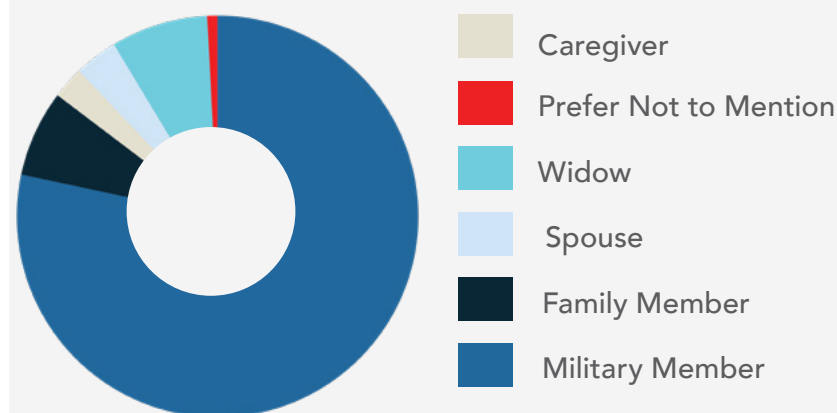
Total Clients 1150

Cases 2,490

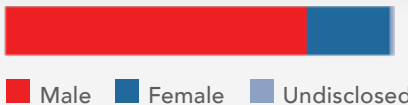
Referrals Sent 812

Time to Case Closure 27.6 days

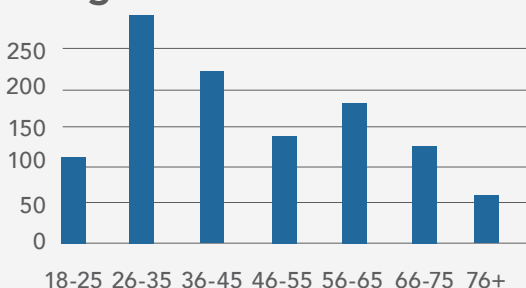
Breakdown of Clients



Gender



Age

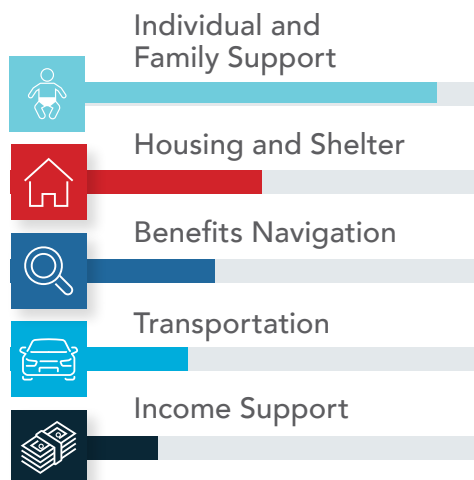


VOALA

Supervisory District 2



Top 5 Needs



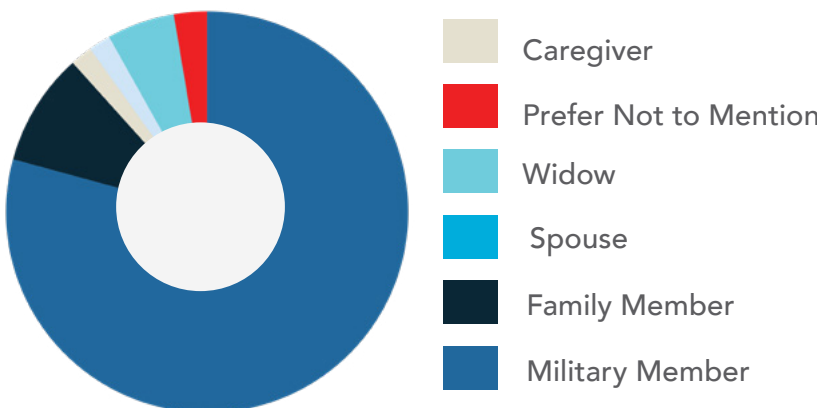
Total Clients 720

Cases 2136

Referrals Sent 890

Time to Case Closure 35.8 days

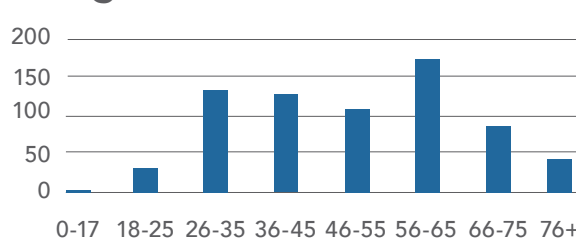
Breakdown of Clients



Gender

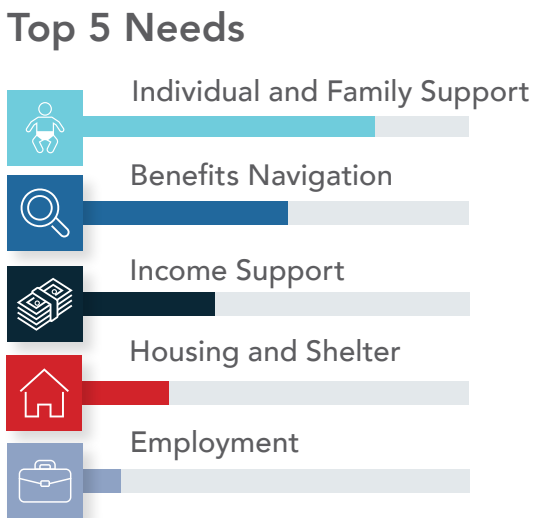
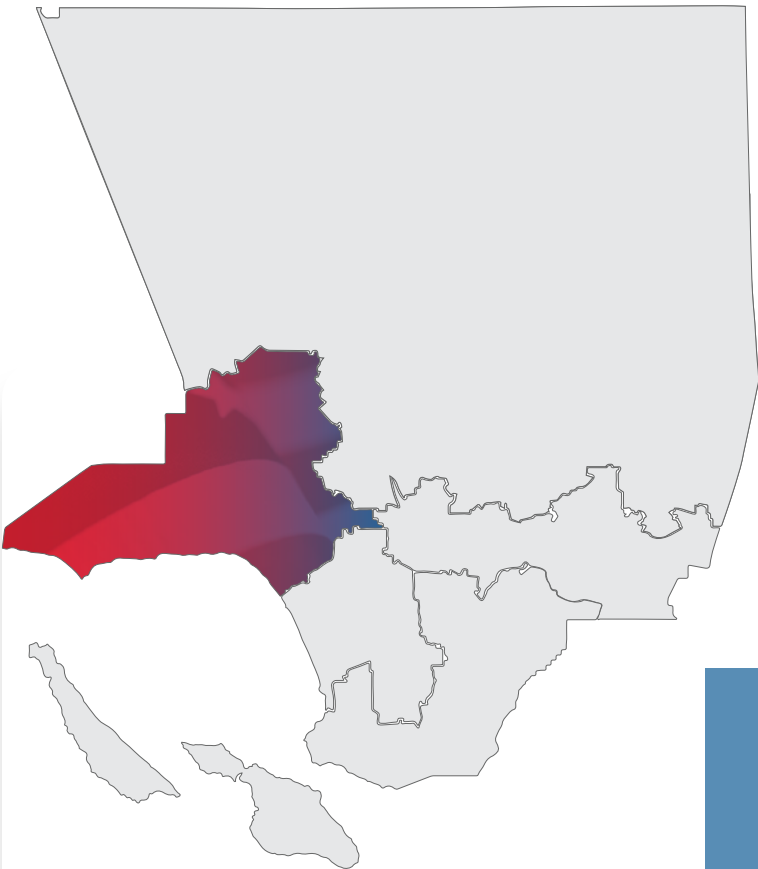


Age



Goodwill SoCal

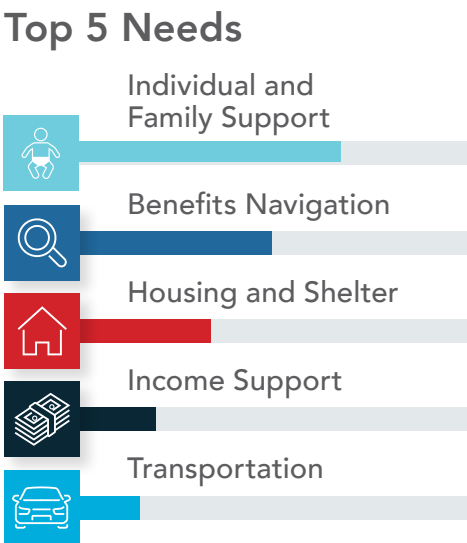
Supervisory District 3



Total Clients 668
Cases 1206
Referrals Sent 189
Time to Case Closure 43.5 days

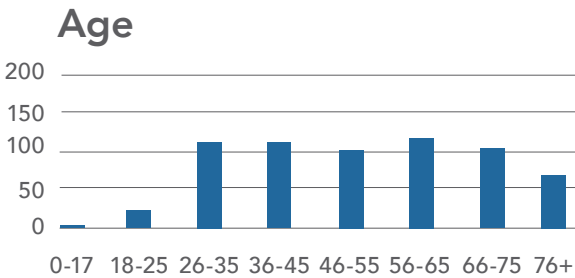
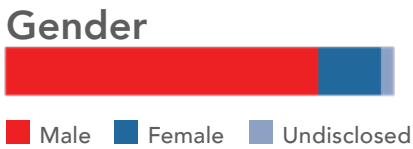
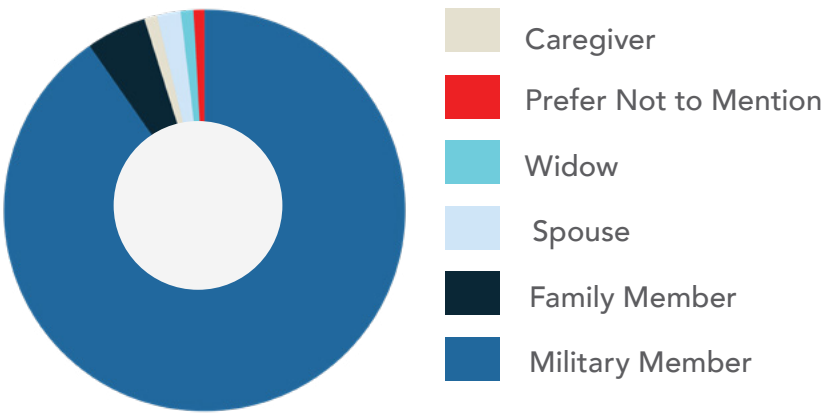
Battleship USS Iowa

Supervisory District 4

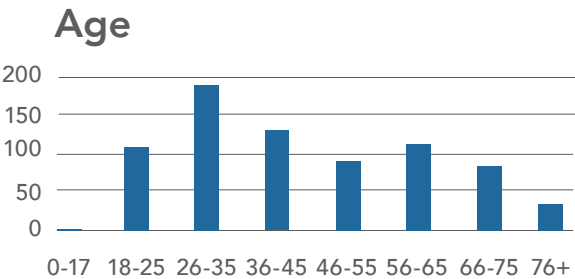
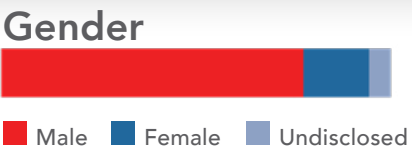
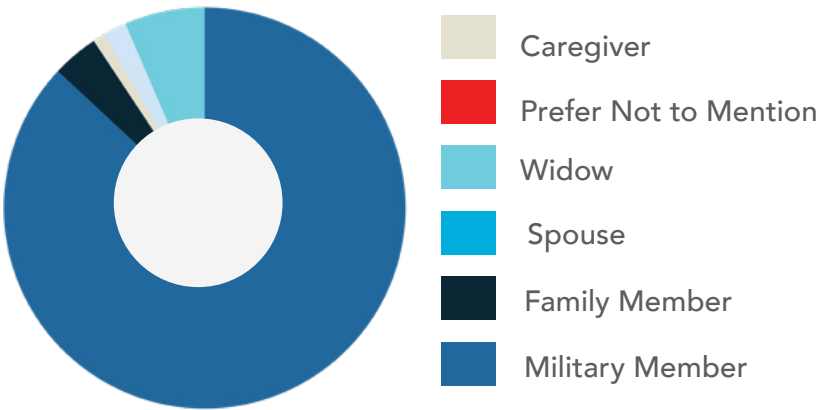


Total Clients 753
Cases 1729
Referrals Sent 626
Time to Case Closure 28.6 days

Breakdown of Clients

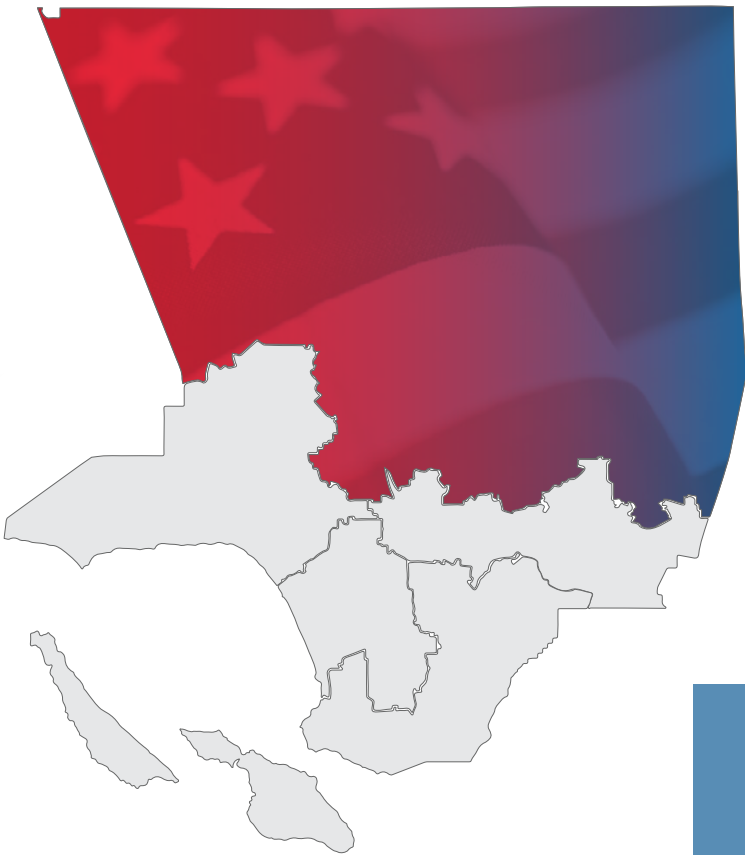


Breakdown of Clients



JVS SoCal

Supervisory District 5



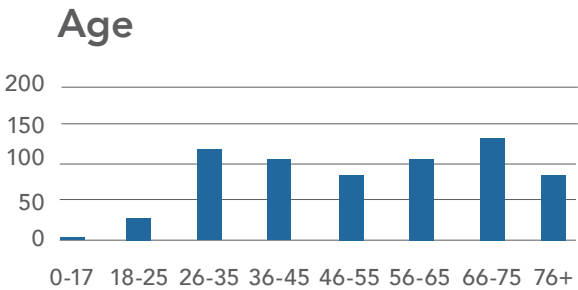
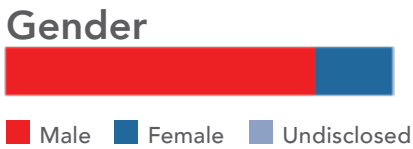
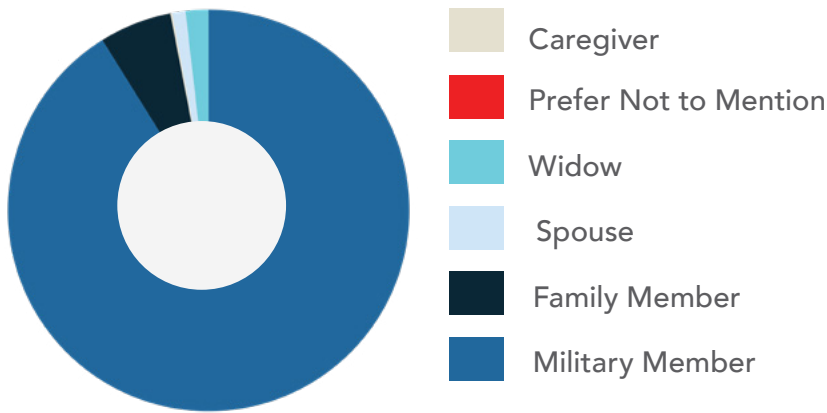
Total Clients 648

Cases 1529

Referrals Sent 558

Time to Case Closure 52.6 days

Breakdown of Clients



Glossary

BHPH	Bob Hope Patriotic Hall
CAP	Community Access Point
CBO	Community-Based Organization
DoD	Department of Defense
ETS-SP	Expiration Term of Service Sponsorship Program
JVS SoCal	Job. Vision. Success, Southern California
DMH	Department of Mental Health
MVA	Military and Veterans Affairs
LAVC	Los Angeles Veterans Collaborative
MH	Mental Health
MILFAM	Military Family
RP	Rally Point
SCG	Southern California Grantmakers
SD	Supervisory District
VA	Department of Veterans Affairs
VFWC	Veteran Family Wellness Center
VOALA	Volunteers of America, Los Angeles
VPAN	Veteran Peer Access Network
VSO	Veteran Service Organization



**For immediate assistance with claims/benefits,
please contact (877) 4LA-VETS**

**For immediate support, call the Veterans Crisis Line at
988 or text 838255**

VPAN Support Line: 1-800-854-7771 Press *3

Email:

info@mva.lacounty.gov

veterans@dmh.lacounty.gov

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