

EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENTAL REPORTING: COMPARING COUNTY VETERAN
SERVICE OFFICER REPORTING PROCESSES

A Thesis

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Abstract
of
EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENTAL REPORTING: COMPARING COUNTY VETERAN
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Effectively produced governmental reports serve an invaluable public function. These documents provide legislative and municipal leaders, policy entrepreneurs, program administrators and the general public with a means of measuring governmental accountability and making informed policy decisions. Unfortunately, more often than not governmental reports are narrow and fragmented, can be ripe with inaccuracy and incomplete information. In certain cases they provide very little insight into the health and effectiveness of a public program or agency.

This thesis seeks to better understand how limited and inefficient means of public reporting can be evaluated and compared to other reporting models. I focus on the California Association of County Veteran Services Officers' Annual Report as a baseline case study for incomplete reporting practices, and use a process called Criteria Alternative Matrix Analysis to compare this reporting model with three very different reports generated by organizations with similar missions and service functions. Using this matrix, I score each alternative against key criteria identified by academic literature on the subject. My aim is to reveal ways in which each model may or may not comply with major theoretical principals identified in effective reporting and evaluation theory.

In comparing the baseline report to three different reports, I seek to not only find ways to promote more informed decision-making on the part of legislators and administrators alike, but

also to identify in general terms ways in which any governmental report might be compared to similar models in an effort to identify strengths and weaknesses in the authors' reporting methods. Finally, I assert that principals for comparison, evaluation and expanding reporting practices found in this thesis are important for improving public reporting in general.

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

Reports and agency evaluations serve valuable functions in the public sector. If done effectively, they help inform decision makers, provide transparency for stakeholders and ensure organizational and programmatic charters are carried out successfully. Where many organizations fall short in reporting involves determining what information should be included and how that data can be used to effectively evaluate a program. Often insufficient, inaccurate and sometimes even misleading data is used to make assumptions about organizational or programmatic efficiency and effectiveness. These shortcomings have major implications for leaders trying to decide how to allocate scarce resources and create strategic priorities. If the wrong variables or insufficient data get reported, leaders may not make informed decisions, the public cannot hold an agency accountable and there is little if any assurance the public interest is being served appropriately.

Given this problem, how do leaders develop evaluation and reporting methods that measure the right variables? Additionally, if their current method of reporting is flawed, how do they identify weak points and fix or alter that process in order to produce more accurate reporting and evaluation processes in the future? This thesis examines ways in which public leaders can answer those questions by reviewing the reporting practices of the County Veteran Service Officer program in California, whose primary function is to assist veterans and their dependents in obtaining state and federal veteran related benefits. I use this program as a lens through which analysts can better understand how reporting methods in an organization can be weighed against methods used by similar programs and to identify strengths and weaknesses in California's reporting

model. I will first present brief background information on the County Veteran Service Officer (CVSO) program and an examination of why it is imperative that CVSO's in general, report programmatic activities in an effective manner. In subsequent chapters, I explore the questions posed above through a detailed examination of reporting and evaluation literature, the execution of my methodological scoring model, and finally through a discussion of my findings and recommendations for potential policy changes to the current reporting model employed in California. Although this thesis covers some generalized reporting and evaluation topics, its focus centers on the importance of accurate and effective reporting in CVSO type programs, as there is significant need for improving veterans benefit assistance services as outlined in the proceeding section.

BACKGROUND

Combat veterans returning from the War on Terrorism face many obstacles transitioning back into society, which are often compounded by fragmented local, state and federal support services, benefit claims processes, incomplete and ineffective reporting practices. These issues also include a stagnant economy, and for some veterans, service connected disabilities that severely limit their ability to pursue gainful employment. For these veterans, one of the only alternative means of supporting themselves is to obtain disability benefits while they wait for better economic forecasts and work to overcome transitional issues, again perhaps related to service-connected disabilities, unemployment and the more general challenge of reintegration into civilian life. Given the current economic climate, veterans of all generations are increasingly dependent upon disability compensation and pension payments as their primary source of

income both during and after the transition from active military service. With more than 1.8 million veterans in California, roughly 300,000 receive such benefits, which infused the state's economy with more than \$3.3 billion in fiscal year 2011 (California Department of Veterans Affairs [CDVA], 2012; U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs [USDVA], 2011).

While the number of California veterans receiving benefits as the result of a disabling injury acquired while on active military duty (hereafter referred to as "compensation") and benefits as the result of a disability after military service (hereafter referred to as "pension") equate to billions of dollars each year, the state's per capita compensation and pension payment totals are below the national average. Thousands of California's nearly two million veterans await claims approvals and adjustments in a backlogged United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) claims system (eBenefits, 2010; Cover, 2012; Glantz, 2012; Maze, 2012; USDVA, 2011). From 2008-2012, the USDVA reported a fifty percent increase in claims due to issues including drawback of troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, complications with multiple combat deployments, and exceedingly more complex injury claims resulting from relatively new advancements in detecting injuries like Gulf War Syndrome, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury (USDVA, 2011). Consisting of 19% percent more types of medical conditions than those from years prior to 2008, disability claims are not only more complicated but more numerous: reports cite a backlog of over 880,000 total pending claims with more than 580,000 claims being 125 days or older (Maze, 2012; USDVA, 2011; USDVA, 2012a).

State and National Policy Concerns

Congress recently acknowledged the severity of the backlog situation and held a series of hearings to review the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) procedures for processing disability claims and dealing with the backlog (House Committee on V.A., 2012). In response, the Veterans Benefit Administration (VBA), a department of the USDVA, undertook a transformational strategy aimed at reducing claims processing wait-times with more efficient internal practices. However, little has been said at the federal level about the external processes contributing to the complexity and origination of those claims (USDVA, 2012b). Journalists from around the country have begun to note this issue in recent articles citing the backlog in claims processing as well as the lag in policy development aimed at improving claims submission and processing at the local, state and federal levels (Cover, 2012; Glantz, 2012; Maze, 2012). In other words, the problem exists not only with the USDVA's ability to process backlogged claims once it receives them, but also with services aiding in the submission of claims in the first place.

Glantz (2012) states that with the volume and complexity of claims on the rise across the country there are important policy questions surrounding the subject. In particular, what programs, services and organizations exist to help veterans submit these claims and how are their performances evaluated? Veterans may submit claims in a number of ways including self-submission to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, through utilizing a Veterans Service Organization (VSO) such as the American Legion or

Disabled Veterans of America (DAV), and through state and locally funded veterans outreach programs that usually take the form of a County Veterans Service Officer or Office (CVSO).

County Veterans Service Officers

State governments across the U.S. employ the CVSO model as a means of veterans' advocacy and service delivery within their communities. Currently, twenty-eight states are members of the National Association of County Veterans Services Officers (NACVSO), an organization comprised of individual state CVSO organizations that seek to promote the "rights of veterans and dependents of the United States through a progressive legislative platform" (National Association of County Veterans Services Officers [NACVSO], 2012). NACVSO estimates that 75% to 90% percent of all benefit claims originate from County Veteran Service Offices, a statistic that speaks to the importance of these programs for veterans and the claims system in general. Although the NACVSO organization suggests some efforts to collaborate and share business practices between state CVSO organizations exist, there are varying CVSO models and processes for internally evaluating and reporting on the efficacy of each program throughout the country. The variety of models and processes between states prompts an intriguing question: which models are the most effective?

California's CVSO Model

The California Association of County Veterans Service Officers, Inc. (CACVSO), a founding member of NACVSO and one of the oldest county veterans office associations (established in 1946), is responsible for coordinating the efforts of individual

county veterans offices and reporting their effectiveness in claims processing to the state legislature and Department of Veterans Affairs. Each year CACVSO publishes its *Annual Report and Directory*, which reflects the monetary benefits obtained by individual CVSOs. These totals are used by the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CDVA), a state agency charged with coordinating state veterans benefits, services and programs, to communicate the activities of CVSOs to the state legislature. These reports are also used to calculate the cost of processing claims in each county office as a means of partially refunding local governments for the administrative and employment costs associated with creating and processing compensation and pension claims. It should be noted that while these reports serve as informative guides for state officials and the public at large, they expose startling disparities between CVSO offices. CACVSO's annual reports suggest no apparent correlation between benefits obtained and total county population, veteran population, or geographic proximity to Veterans Affairs facilities or military bases (see Appendix A). Despite these flaws, as the most populous state in the country, California's model provides one of the broadest samples of reporting practices for CVSOs in the country.

Subvention Funding For County Veterans Service Officers

Currently 56 of 58 California counties receive subvention funds from the state CDVA to encourage the implementation of CVSOs in county governments. While primary funding for CVSOs is the responsibility of individual counties, some costs associated with filing compensation and pension claims are subsidized by the state using subvention funds. In order to calculate what each county receives in subvention monies

for a given year, each CVSO semiannually reports the amount of workload units or man-hours associated with processing benefit claims to the CDVA. In fiscal year 2011-2012, the CDVA issued \$2.6 million to county governments in support of the subvention program. While California Military and Veterans Code §927 requires that no more than 50 percent of an individual county office budget be funded by subvention funds, cash-strapped counties rely partially on state subvention monies to support veterans in their communities. The amount authorized for the subvention program in the California Military and Veterans Code §972.1 is \$11million, meaning that nearly \$7.4 million each year is not being utilized in support of benefit and service claims at the county level (California Military and Veterans Code §927, 2012). While the reason such a small amount of the available funds is allocated for the program each year is unclear, there is an argument to be made that justification for further funding could be based on more holistic reporting practices. Simply put, if California's CVSOs were to alter their reporting practices toward showcasing data on multiple services and showing the value of all benefits accessed via individual offices, they might be able to argue for increased funding especially given the disparity between the amount allotted each year and the amount authorized in statute.

SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

Given the worthiness of the endeavor to assist veterans after more than a decade of our country being at war, it seems appropriate that state legislators and local administrators understand the current state of affairs related to programs like the County Veterans Service Offices. The best way for them to make educated budgetary and policy

decisions toward improving those services is to understand not only what services are provided by the federal government and non-profit organizations, but also what each state and county veteran service organization is doing in addition to simply filing compensation & pension benefit claims. My assertion is that adequate reports and program evaluations can help fulfill this need. The current model of reporting in California is flawed and offers little more than questionable and inaccurate view of services provided by CVSOs throughout the state. This thesis attempts to understand how CVSO reporting practices could be improved or weighed against similar program's reporting practices a manner that provides clear and purposeful policy recommendations.

In the following chapter, I review literature covering theoretical and practical understandings of effective reporting and evaluation methods, measures and applications. This review serves the dual purpose of presenting pertinent areas of reporting and evaluation theory and identifying the key criteria associated with effective reports and evaluations that I employ in my analysis in subsequent chapters. The third chapter utilizes those key criteria in a method known as Criteria Alternative Matrixes (CAM) Analysis, in order to compare the current reporting model used by the California County Veterans Service Offices to models used by similar programs for veterans. The fourth chapter explores the CAM Analysis findings in detail. Lastly, the fifth chapter makes recommendations for improving or altering the current CACVSO reporting model, presents potential policy implications for the program in general. This final chapter also provides more general suggestions for comparing policy alternatives using CAM-like

tools and suggests ways in which programs outside of this study can utilize principles from academic literature to universally improve reporting and evaluation practices.

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

Before CACVSO (or the CDVA) considers improving CVSO reporting practices it must first understand the theory behind program evaluation and effective reporting practices. In this chapter, I review a body of literature providing clarification on two sets of questions surrounding the process and purpose of reporting appropriate and effective information to decision makers. First, what is program evaluation, why are evaluations important in the decision-making process, and how is organizational or programmatic effectiveness measured? Understanding why organizations need to evaluate the effectiveness of programs and services is critical to any effort that advocates for more holistic reporting practices as a means of informed decision-making. The second topic examines how program evaluations get reported and used. If leaders use evaluations as a means of informed decision-making it is crucial the reports they receive contain accurate and relevant information.

The following sections clarify these questions but are limited to a “macro” view of theoretical concepts as there are many “micro” or subtopics within the literature that extend beyond the purpose of answering my research question. These micro topics include extensive theory on models of program evaluation, decision-making practices and performance reporting, on which I only touch lightly upon. After clarifying each question above, I identify assumptions and criteria found in that body of literature, which I use in later analyses of CACVSO’s reporting practices. The third section of this chapter examines literature focused specifically on program evaluation and reporting practices for veterans programs in order to identify important criteria not conceptualized in the more

general literature described above. The fourth and final section summarizes key observations and criteria found in the preceding three sections in an effort to introduce my methodological research approach.

For the purpose of this review, I define evaluation as the theoretical and conceptual framework used by leaders to understand an organization viability and performance. Reports and the practice of reporting differ from evaluation in that reports comprise a collection of data and a presentation of relevant and accurate information used in the evaluation of an organization or program. Put simply, evaluations are a process measuring efficiency and effectiveness of a program and reports are tools meant to facilitate that process. I begin with an examination of effective program evaluation and its importance for leaders in the decision-making process.

SECTION I: THEORIES ON PROGRAM EVALUATION AND ITS IMPORTANCE

Policy makers and leaders of organizations must have a means of understanding a program's history and background, its current inputs, outputs and utilization of resources in order to make sound policy decisions about its future. Stone (2002) contends that decision makers cannot make completely rational decisions because that would require perfect information and evaluation of all possible outcomes. Instead leaders act with "bounded rationality" or by utilizing incomplete or limited information to make decisions. Given this assumption, what types of limited information do policy makers use to make bounded yet informed decisions? In many instances, program evaluations and reports serve as those incomplete yet critical mediums of information.

Politicians, pundits and theorists alike cite the importance of program evaluation in public sector decision-making processes, but arriving at a common definition of how to best evaluate programs can be a subject of some disagreement (Chelimsky, 1983; Stone, 2002; Berner & Bronson, 2005; and Peters, 2007). By definition, program evaluation “applies systematic inquiry to help improve programs, products, and personnel, as well as the human actions associated with them” (American Evaluation Association, n.d., p. 1). Evaluations may also improve the knowledge and understanding of how programs work, justify funding, and provide a system of accountability for multiple stakeholder groups. While arguments for the importance and definition of program evaluation tend to be generalized and universally accepted in the literature, opinions on the best method of evaluation vary widely.

Early theorists like Gouldner (1959) describe traditional methods of evaluation based on mechanistic and generalized criteria in what is known as the “Rational or Goal Oriented System” of evaluation. The Rational Model took a limited and systematic approach to evaluation, which focused primarily if not entirely on goal specific actions or attainment within an organization or program. This method failed to take into account the diverging yet unique needs and situations of individual organizations by applying a “one-size-fits-all” approach to evaluation. Gouldner points out that critics acknowledge the Rational Model’s over-emphasis on goals and suggest this view may be too narrow. Theorists consequently began to focus on the development of “Natural System Models” of evaluation that have more open and holistic measures incorporated in their processes. These measures included more humanistic criteria such as group morale and cohesion as

important elements in the evaluation of an organization or individual program, and were largely considered to be a viable alternative to traditional, narrower methods of evaluation. The Natural Systems Model paved a path for more modern evaluation methods that consider the diverse needs of individual organizations in addition to specific emphases on goal attainment as indicators of organizational effectiveness.

Buckley (1967) and Scott (1977) were some of the first authors to acknowledge the importance of developing “Open Systems” of evaluation which emphasize adaptability, flexibility and resource acquisition that “conform” to the unique contexts and needs of an organization. They stress that practitioners should create evaluation methods tailored to their organization and reject the notion that any one model is best or can be universally employed. Put simply, these authors refute the idea that any “one-size-fits-all” model of evaluation can truly describe organizational effectiveness, and argue in favor of creating methods that adapt to the needs of individual institutions and programs.

Despite different methodological approaches to program evaluation such as Collaborative Evaluation, which focuses on small group cohesion and inputs as a means of evaluation (Berner & Bronson, 2005), or Output Evaluation which focuses on outputs rather than inputs as a means of measuring the contributions of a public program (Peters, 2007), theorists acknowledge and generally agree with the significance of Buckley (1967) and Campbell’s (1977) notion that a well defined, consistent Open System of evaluation measurement is the best theoretical approach to evaluation and consequently to informed decision-making (Rainey, 2009; Rossi & Freeman 1993; Scott, 1977; Scott, 2003). Thus, while members of an organization may utilize a specific methodological approach to

evaluate a program (i.e. Collaborative Evaluation or Output Evaluation), they should tailor that model to meet the needs of their organization.

Even though theorists do not agree on a single best methodological approach, most agree with the notion of implementing an open and adaptable system of evaluation in order to assess and consequently make informed decisions about the future of an organization or program. This assertion is echoed by authors like Chelimsky (1983) who note that thorough program evaluation often leads to appropriate policy actions and helps identify areas of inadequate service delivery in public programs. This assertion prompts another question: given the constructs of an open and adaptable system, what factors constitute effective or “thorough” evaluation?

Rossi & Freeman (1993) suggest that “systematic examination of program coverage and delivery” should be the goal of public program evaluation (p. 165). This means organizations should aim to develop an evaluation system that tracks and reports the effectiveness of program delivery and outcomes. These authors emphasize the importance of a broad spectrum of data collection and analysis as well as the importance of monitoring what occurred within a particular program as critical elements in any evaluation plan. While they support a systematic approach, they recommend individualizing evaluation plans to meet the needs of different organizations.

Much literature centers around two key measurement indicators of adequate evaluations: efficiency and effectiveness. For many leaders and decision makers these two factors often serve as the primary purpose of an evaluation in an attempt to discover if an organization is operating efficiently and/or if it is carrying out its mission/goals

effectively. Rainey (2009) notes that greater emphasis is often placed solely on efficiency or the value of outputs compared to the value of inputs even though many outputs from public programs are not easily described in monetary terms. In some cases it may be more appropriate to evaluate a public program based on its effectiveness as a public good. One problem with this approach is the challenge of defining what programmatic effectiveness means for a particular program, and then measuring it.

Measuring Effectiveness

Peters (2007) contends that many organizations shy away from attempts to measure the effectiveness of programs in favor of measuring procedural efficiency due largely to the challenge and subjectivity inherent in defining “effectiveness” in an evaluation process. Rainey (2009) points out that despite multiple attempts by scholars across disciplines to define effectiveness, most efforts resulted in ambiguous and generalized explanations. While many theorists share Peters and Rainey’s sentiments on defining effectiveness, some early scholars, including Scott (1977) and Campbell (1977), sought to narrow that ambiguity by creating frameworks in which organizations can still attempt to measure effectiveness.

Building on the work of Buckley (1967) who suggested organizations utilize an “Open System” model of evaluation tailored to the needs of an individual organization, Scott (1977) began to formulate a framework for measuring the effectiveness of a program based on two key criteria: flexibility and adaptability. Scott (2003) emphasized the importance of adapting criteria to individual programs in an effort to best measure effectiveness. Encapsulating the core values of an Open System, these two elements

become overarching themes in many if not all current models of evaluation as adaptable and flexible individual evaluation plans and related effectiveness criteria are commonly accepted and almost universally employed components of most methodological evaluation approaches. In addition to this framework, Campbell (1977) identified thirty criteria, which he contends indicate organizational effectiveness. These criteria include many indicators mentioned by earlier authors such as efficiency, flexibility and adaptability as well as more “traditional” ideas from authors like Rossi & Freeman (1993) who emphasize output measurement and a systematic approach to evaluation through criteria such as productivity and goal achievement [see Figure 1 for a complete list of Campbell’s indicators].

Figure I: Campbell’s Indicators of Organizational Effectiveness (Campbell, 1977)

Overall Effectiveness	Growth	Control	Role and Norm Congruence	Stability
Productivity	Absenteeism	Conflict/ Cohesion	Managerial Interpersonal Skills	Value of Human Resources
Efficiency	Turnover	Flexibility/ Adaptation	Information Management and Communication	Participation and Shared Influence
Profit	Job Satisfaction	Planning and Goal Setting	Readiness	Training and Development Emphasis
Quality	Motivation	Goal Consensus	Utilization of Environment	Achievement Emphasis
Accidents	Morale	Internalization of Organizational Goals	Evaluation by External Entities	Managerial Task Skills

While Campbell’s (1977) list was one of the first comprehensive attempts to aid an evaluation of programmatic effectiveness, subsequent theorists such as Rainey (2009) point out multiple “subjective” and “objective” criteria that may help define effectiveness, and in some cases even appear counterintuitive to one another in what is

known as the “competing values approach.” Quinn & Rohrbaugh (1981, 1983), some of the first to write on this topic, developed a spatial model of effectiveness based on three axes or what they describe as “value dimensions” of competing values. These authors recognize that while vigilant attempts to identify criteria or measures of effectiveness by theorists like Campbell (1977) paved a pathway for studying the topic, they fell short by narrowing down the key criteria into a generalized list that may or may not meet the needs of every organization’s individual understanding of or goals for, measuring effectiveness.

Quinn & Rohrbaugh (1983) contend that effectiveness is based on values; thus, evaluation criteria must incorporate individualized criteria identified by leaders within a given organization. They argue that rather than utilize a generic list such as Campbell’s, organizations should create a unique list of effectiveness criteria based on three dimensions of competing values (one, Organizational Focus or emphasis on the internal and external wellbeing of the organization; two, Organizational Structure, or design based on control versus flexibility; and three, Organizational Means and Ends or the use and acquisition of resources with emphasis on inputs or outputs) (Rainey, 2009, p. 163). They argue that defining an organization’s effectiveness relies on many competing values or interests, thus a generalized “cookie-cutter” list of measures like Campbell’s does not adequately explain the effectiveness of an organization.

Expanding on the idea that organizations must measure effectiveness based on a competing set of values, Quinn & Rohrbaugh (1981) believe that taking a “multivariate” approach will help mitigate contentious values within an organization and may be the

best theoretical method of measuring effectiveness. These authors identified four models of effectiveness which, despite being inherently contradictory to one another, should be considered of equal importance and incorporated in an organization's evaluation plan in order to meet the competing values or interests within that institution. The four models are: the human relations model which emphasizes flexible processes, morale, cohesion and human development within the organization; the internal process model which emphasizes maintaining internal control via structure, streamlined processes, internal auditing and accountability; the open systems model which emphasizes responsiveness to the environment; and the rational goal model which emphasizes a focus on planning and maximizing efficiency (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1981; Rainey, 2009, p. 163). In effect, Quinn and Rohrbaugh acknowledge that many values and interests contribute to the measurement of effectiveness which may appear to contradict one another, but those contradictions or competing values should not deter leaders from attempting to measure as many aspects (i.e. the four models just mentioned) of effectiveness within the organization as possible.

Section I: Summary

The first section of this review examined literature aimed at answering three questions: what is program evaluation, why are evaluations important in the decision-making process, and how is organizational/programmatic effectiveness measured? After a detailed analysis of the literature, some clear inroads can be made toward answering those questions. First, it is evident many theorists agree with the notion that evaluations can serve as important mediums of information for decision makers if they are objective

and uniquely tailored to the needs, goals and values of an individual organization or program. Second, despite many efforts to create “the best” model for program evaluation, most theorists would argue that leaders should design an evaluation plan that incorporates many competing values, interests or opinions about the appropriate measures of effectiveness. Lastly, despite those competing values and the inherent difficulty in defining effectiveness, leaders should implement multivariate approaches with flexible measures and adapt their evaluation plans to meet the current needs of the organization. As Ammons (2002) points out however, organizations must report or measure appropriate criteria which lead to innovative managerial thinking and ultimately organizational or programmatic change. Even if leaders attempt a multivariate approach that meets the needs of competing interests, how are those interests reported, and information measured and disseminated to leaders in the most influential manner? The next section highlights literature on reporting theory in order to answer these questions.

SECTION II: HOW IS INFORMATION REPORTED AND USED IN PROGRAM EVALUATION?

“Numbers in politics are measures of human activities, made by human beings, and intended to influence human behavior. They are subject to conscious and unconscious manipulation by the people being measured, the people making the measurements, and the people who interpret and use measures made by others.”

Stone (2002)

Similar to evaluation theory, opinions over methods of reporting vary widely in the literature. As Stone (2002) alludes to above, numbers or data can be misleading and are subject not only to human error but human interpretation (and misinterpretation). For many, the idea of data being collected by an organization brings to mind detailed accounting statistics which can be vague and limiting for consumers of that information,

especially decision makers. Take for instance the CVSO's reporting practices mentioned in Chapter 1. The primary problem in the CVSO's reporting model is its inability to explain the data presented in the report. Of course, text often accompanies data measures in a report with the attempt to explain said data, but such text can be equally misleading and is similarly subject to human interpretation. Given these realities, how do organizations choose relevant data and then present it in reports that ultimately help decision makers evaluate programs?

Most scholars agree that information in reports should be accurate and presented in an effective manner in order to minimize potential misgivings with numbers, data and information (Ridley, 1938; Rossi & Freeman, 1993; Cuccia et al., 1995; Kaplan & Norton, 1996). But how do organizations collect and report the "right" data? The subsequent sections examine literature related to reporting in an effort to answer two primary questions: how is information reported and how is that information used to make informed decisions? I present general background on reporting theory before answering the questions above.

Background on Reporting Theory

Early scholars of reporting such as Graves (1938) and Ridley (1937) wrote extensively on the importance of reporting and the development of theoretical constructs that guide the practice today. Graves, for instance, emphasized the importance of public reporting for not only public outreach but also accountability. Foreshadowing more modern constructs of reporting and to some extents evaluation theory in general, he felt there were many ways to report information and that each institution must develop its

own method of reporting while remaining consistent and accurate at the same time. His emphasis on the ability of well-developed reports to influence policy and organizational change lends further support to earlier claims in the first section of this review that stress the importance of holistic evaluations on informed decision-making.

Adding to the notion that reports contribute to informed decision-making, Ridley (1937) suggested that progress and change should not happen by chance but rather reports should serve as leading agents of change. Ridley emphasized the importance of developing appropriate measures and avoiding the use and reporting of, useless statistics. He proclaimed that only meaningful data should be reported which again echoes effectiveness measurement theory discussed in the first section of this review:

organizations must choose the data and measures most meaningful to their competing yet important values, goals and interests. Both authors highlight the importance of reporting only meaningful data as well as hint at nascent understandings of philosophical elements of evaluation theory such as the Natural and Open Systems Models championed much later by Gouldner (1959) and Buckley (1967).

Although many early scholars like Ridley and Graves understood the importance of flexible, individualized yet systematic reporting processes, much government reporting still follows private accounting procedures and formats. Bhattacharyya (1971), a proponent of Management Reporting which emphasizes the monitoring of data regarding accomplishments and not merely accounting statistics, criticizes those reporting practices which rely too heavily on simple accounting principles (i.e. value of outputs over inputs, expense and revenue charts, etc.). Bhattacharyya notes that reports based too precisely on

formal plans and accounting practices run the risk of being ineffective. As mentioned in the first section, public programs are difficult to understand in accounting terms because those services often have no monetary value attached; thus they must use multiple types of data if a report is to be effective.

Bhattacharyya suggests two main types of criteria be considered in management reporting: efficiency criteria which emphasizes the quantity of outputs, and effectiveness criteria which emphasizes the quality of technical specifications and opinions of consumers. These categories allow the inclusion of not only accounting data but also more subjective information like consumer feedback, environmental factors and group cohesion that aid in making more holistic reports and consequently more informed decisions. Recent literature including Broadbent & Guthrie (1992) and Sinclair (1995) echo criticisms directed at the traditional over-emphasis on accounting principles in government reports and suggest that while some private accounting practices may be useful in government reports, many are not; thus, the aforementioned researchers advocate for more complex systems of public reporting.

What Data Needs to be Reported and How is that Data Used to Inform Decision Makers?

Much literature in the field is concerned with what types of information are the most useful for reporting the efficiency and effectiveness of an organization or program. Primarily accounting reports suffice in explaining the overall efficiency of an institution; measures of effectiveness however, are again more difficult to determine (Ammons, 2002; Peters, 2007). The situation is also convoluted because of vast amounts of literature detailing different methodological approaches to reporting that achieve the goals of

measuring efficiency and effectiveness. These approaches include theories on Management Reporting, which emphasizes monitoring accomplishments and not merely accounting data (Bhattacharyya, 1971) and Strategic Management Approaches described by Bryson (2004) which detail a very specific reporting plan based on the results of strategic goals. Both approaches take from a more popular, albeit controversial method known as Performance Reporting.

In response to traditional yet narrow accounting-like reporting systems, scholars, managers and policy makers have been paying a considerable amount of attention toward Performance Reporting (PR), which uses measurement and budgeting systems as a means to provide a broader view of organizational effectiveness (Rainey, 2009). Often, PR or the measures that comprise it, are developed during an organization's strategic planning process as leaders identify and invent institutional or programmatic goals (Bryson, 2004). Scholars such as Ho (2003) contend that PR, albeit more time and resource consuming than accounting-like reporting, provides a more holistic view of an organization's overall effectiveness (i.e. the goals set out through mitigation of competing values) and ultimately lead to better policy and programmatic outcomes than simple accounting-like reports.

Additionally, some scholars note an absence of performance data in reports may lead to organizational conflict and poor lines of communication between employees, customers, managers and policy makers which hinder effective and informed decision-making processes (Ho, 2003; Bryson, 2004). Although many authors and leaders alike note the increased value PR brings to consumers of public reports, critics cite the

difficulty in determining performance measures for public organizations as well as the potential drawbacks of bureaucratically centralized performance measurement systems which are often determined by top leaders rather than a diverse set of stakeholder interests (Bryson, 2004; Kelly, 2008). Ammons (2002) notes that many PR critics cite an over-emphasis on workload units rather than “higher-order measures” or institutional goals, interests and values that may detract from the usefulness of performance reports for leaders. If this problem is avoided, Ammons contends that proper performance measurement criteria can result in reports that ultimately help lead to adequate managerial thinking and change. Thus, Ammons suggests that proper identification and emphasis on competing yet diverse values in the pre-reporting or planning phases can result in reports that help leaders make informed decisions.

Despite flaws in the strategic planning element of PR, this method of public reporting has gained wide acclaim as it is thought to provide deeper insight into organizational effectiveness, aid in informed decision-making, and ultimately increase accountability, which many argue is the primary function of reports (Hood, 1991). While performance reporting is simply one approach to reporting the effectiveness of an organization, it is clear that arguments made by scholars like Graves (1938) and Sinclair (1995) in favor of individualized, holistic and detailed reports with diverse sets of measures (i.e. both accounting statistics, performance measures and criteria based on the competing values of stakeholders and leaders alike) contribute not only to making informed decisions but holding public institutions accountable. Unfortunately, one problem with this assertion is the difficulty in defining the term “accountability.”

Difficulty Defining Accountability

Authors like Sinclair (1995) and Cunningham & Harris (2001) note the ambiguity and subjectivity of the term “accountability.” Often, as Cunningham and Harris (2001) point out, reports serve the purpose of helping to hold an organization or program accountable to stakeholders although the definition and importance of accountability can be vague and sometimes misleading. Sinclair (1995) contends that accountability is subjective and can be viewed in any number of ways; thus it is imperative that reporting practitioners understand and define what accountability measures help consumers of those reports better understand the organization. Quite simply, a detailed accounting table does not achieve accountability because it only explains one aspect of the program in rather narrow terms.

Accountability, according to Cunningham and Harris (2001) can be achieved in any number of ways. Thus a multivariate approach, similar to ones employed in evaluation theory, which conforms to the needs and values of a particular organization, is the most effective means of measuring accountability within that institution. Hood (1991) suggests that detailed reporting aids decision makers in formulating increased organizational or programmatic requirements for accountability and accounts for a sound understanding of inputs and outputs. Leaders and decision makers must strategize about their competing values and determine the most meaningful measures for making informed decisions: for example, some may simply value accounting statistics while others may value customer or employee satisfaction. Either way, the only way to ensure a report holds that institution or program accountable is to define what accountability

measures are important and collect data on those criteria. Thus, information identified by consumers of reports, which conforms to the competing values of that organization, must be included in an effective report.

Section II: Summary

After reviewing the literature on reporting theory and practices a few assumptions can be made which add significant value to an evaluation of CVSO reporting practices. First, it is clear that both early and modern scholars on reporting agree that reports should contain diverse forms of data; a simple accounting spreadsheet or over-emphasis on workload unit data cannot adequately inform decision makers nor hold that institution accountable to its stakeholders. Second, given that knowledge, it is important that reports contain data on efficiency criteria (i.e. accounting statistics) and effectiveness criteria which should be determined through careful examination of that organization's competing values. Finally, reports should be accurate, well designed and consistent if they are to serve as tools for informed decision-making and public accountability.

SECTION III: VETERANS-SPECIFIC REPORTING PRACTICES

Unfortunately, literature related to the reporting of veteran benefits is limited and primarily directed towards health and medical related practices. Some elements of these publications can be applied to broader veteran specific programs but rarely stress theoretical constructs outside of the more generalized evaluation and reporting literature discussed in earlier sections of this review. For instance a report by the Institute for Defense Analysis (2006) suggests that veterans healthcare reporting practices should be standardized in order to account for variance and inaccuracies amongst different Veterans

Administration hospitals. While this information is critical for creating accurate reports, it does not highlight any specific criteria related solely to evaluating veterans programs.

Despite the dearth of veterans benefits reporting, a few reports conducted by governmental agencies relate specifically to the reporting processes of County Veterans Service Officers. The first and arguably more general report by the Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations [TACIR] (2012) highlights some important factors of the CVSO program that should be measured in reports to decision makers. The second report by the California State Auditor's [CSA] (2000) office provides invaluable insight into the flaws and potential improvements upon the current reporting method of California's CVSOs. I briefly describe elements of these documents that extend beyond the more general literature described in previous sections of this review.

TACIR's (2012) review of Tennessee's CVSOs arose from prospective state legislation aimed at assessing and potentially changing the pay scale of Tennessee-based CVSOs. The report shows that each county office carries varying workloads, thus making universal pay changes difficult to recommend without careful and comprehensive understanding and verification of individual workloads. The authors suggest that factors such as total county population, percentage of veterans receiving benefits, amount of claims processed relative to the total veteran population within that county, and the number of veterans served by each CVSO should factor into funding calculations. They argue that reports detailing this type of information helps state legislators make more informed decisions about the program (specifically funding). This assertion suggests that current methods of reporting based solely on calculations of benefit claims or estimated

benefits attained by veterans in individual counties do not provide enough information to make sound decisions about all aspects of the CVSO program.

The CSA (2000) audit of California's CVSO program provides one of the clearest and most direct accounts of both flaws in the current reporting system and proposed changes aimed at mitigating those shortcomings. Many of the flaws mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis are highlighted in the CSA audit including the over-emphasis on benefit attainment estimations by individual county CVSOs. The publication notes the current reporting system's failures as follows:

"...certain reported benefits and savings were reported inaccurately and should be viewed with caution...even if the department reported these figures correctly, such benefits should not function as the only measures of whether the CVSOs are serving veterans successfully" (CSA, 2000, p. 11).

Auditors recommend that more emphasis be placed on measurements of other CVSO functions including education benefit advising, homeless veteran services, and assistance for veterans in accessing Veterans Administration health services which saves the California Medical Assistance (Medi-Cal) Program considerable amounts of money. They contend that helping process federal benefit claims is only part of what the CVSO program does and consequently that should not be the sole criterion by which leaders in both state and county governments evaluate programmatic effectiveness.

Additionally, the CSA report offers two sets of suggested improvements to the current reporting model. First, the agency contends that individual counties should set internal CVSO performance measures based on the strategic goals and needs of veterans within that locale. These measures could include year-to-year evaluations of individual staff members based on such factors as the number of claims processed by each employee in the CVSO office. The second set of reporting improvements are generalized towards

statewide practices aimed at creating broader and more holistic reporting measures/practices. CSA suggests that the California Department of Veterans Affairs set standards for staff training, create statewide goals and priorities for CVSOs, better explain in reports to the legislature why the current county data based on benefit claims processing varies from county to county, and assist county governments in professional development and standardization of CVSO reporting practices, which may improve benefit data accuracy. Finally the CSA suggests the state promote the practice of local governments developing individualized county priorities for veterans and measure the attainment of those goals each year.

Section III. Summary

While the body of literature related specifically to veterans program reporting practices is limited, there are two key reports that help clarify elements outside of the general academic literature that factor into effective CVSO reporting practices. These studies suggest primarily that CVSO reports broaden their current reporting model beyond number of benefit claims and estimated dollar values of those benefits in favor of a model that encompasses measurements from multiple aspects of the program. Additionally, both reports identify the need to create measures specific to each county's needs, goals and arguably, in some cases, competing interests with the state veterans agency.

SECTION IV: LITERATURE REVIEW CONCLUSION

The purpose of this review was to provide a macro-view of literature surrounding three main topics: evaluation theory and measures of effectiveness, reporting theory, and literature expanding upon the reporting and evaluation practices in not only veterans programs in general but specifically County Veterans Service Offices. The first section covered in some detail the theory behind evaluation and measuring effectiveness as a means toward informed decision-making. Scholars in this field generally agree that program evaluation, if carried out in a manner that encompasses and measures the competing values of an organization or program, can be an instrumental tool for leaders and stakeholders alike. Furthermore, the literature repeatedly mentioned that leaders must adapt an evaluation plan to the needs and competing values of that organization.

The second section of this review built upon many of the theories espoused in the first section through analyzing literature on general reporting practices. Scholars in this field acknowledged that effective reports help decision makers evaluate the current state of an organization or program. In order to do this, reports must use multiple points of data centered on two key criteria: efficiency and effectiveness. Finally, the literature suggested that reports be tailored to measure the competing interests behind the activities of an organization, and that reporting practices and measures be well defined, accurate, consistent and holistic.

Finally, the third section of this review attempted to identify aspects of veterans program evaluation and reporting unique to that demographic. Unfortunately, most of the literature contains many of the same principles discussed in the more general

understandings described in the first two sections. However, this section showed that many of the principles emphasized by the two specific publications on the subject correlate closely with the theoretical concepts encompassed in the Open Systems theory discussed by authors like Buckley (1967) and Scott (1977). These principles include the development of consistent yet broader and multivariate evaluation measures as well as reports on individualized goals and values from the smallest to largest units of authority (i.e. goals at the county and state level). With a better understanding of how leaders can approach evaluating organizational and programmatic effectiveness I begin the third chapter of this thesis.

CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY

Analysts use a number of techniques to compare policy alternatives, which makes selecting one method over another a highly subjective undertaking, as certain methods may be more appropriate than others for a given situation. Commonly, theorists such as Bardach (2009) suggest analysts faced with multiple policy alternatives create an “outcomes matrix” to serve as a means of deconstructing each alternative and evaluating it based on key criteria or desired outcomes, although he does warn against the exclusive use of these tools for making decisions without additional analyses and discussion (p. 49). While outcomes matrixes take many forms, they allow analysts to compare multiple policy alternatives in an objectively scientific manner. In this chapter, I describe a process similar to ones noted by Bardach to evaluate reporting practices used by CVSOs in California and three similar organizations providing veterans based services. I begin with a brief background on my methodological process, Criteria Alternative Matrix Analysis, before moving into a detailed section that describes each reporting practice alternative and key criteria.

SECTION I. CRITERIA ALTERNATIVE MATRIX

This thesis utilizes an outcome or decision matrix process known as Criteria Alternative Matrix, or CAM, Analysis in order to evaluate multiple reporting practices employed by CVSOs and other organizations with similar functions (i.e. providing veterans services). Munger (2000) argues that CAM is useful in comparing alternatives and in getting “good, accurate measures of the levels of satisfaction of the criteria for each alternative” and that “the CAM approach is a genuinely scientific approach to

decision analysis” (p. 14). In modeling this matrix, Munger suggests policy analysts list each alternative on one axis of a table with key criteria listed on the opposing axis. Once a graph is generated, the analyst assigns weights to individual criterion and scores each alternative based on its performance in meeting that objective. This process, if done correctly, helps an analyst make objective and relatively scientific recommendations about the best policy alternative.

Furthermore, Bardach (2009) recommends that outcomes matrix practitioners select one “principal objective” or criterion to be maximized with other criteria acting as supplemental or secondary evidence (p. 36). For example, if the main problem with California’s CVSO reporting practices is that they only report one aspect of their mission (compensation and pension claims statistics), the “principal objective” in that outcomes matrix might be reporting on multiple points of data or organizational/programmatic functions. In this case, individual alternative performances in meeting this criterion would be weighed higher than proceeding criteria for scoring purposes (i.e. criteria such as flexibility and adaptability would have lower relative values). Once all alternatives receive weights for each criterion, scores are totaled and then analysts proceed in making recommendations based on those scored outcomes.

Munger and Bardach both note the difficulty in assigning weights to criteria for the purpose of scoring alternatives. They recommend a detailed rationalization of scoring methodology before an analyst scores each alternative. Thus, I provide justification and explanatory analysis to support each of my scores in Chapter 4. If done carefully, the CAM analysis provides a sound means of comparing alternatives and making rational and

well-rounded policy recommendations. The model used in this thesis follows the basic outlines described by Munger and Bardach, starting with a detailed explanation of each alternative and key criteria found in Chapter 2.

SECTION II: MODEL COMPOSITION - ALTERNATIVES AND KEY CRITERIA

Alternatives

In order to evaluate the California CVSO reporting model, this thesis examines three alternative models used by organizations with similar mission objectives (localized or regional veterans service offices). Each model, including the one used by California's CVSOs, is outlined on a macro level but given the space constraints of this thesis, with the exception of the CACVSO 2011 Annual Report (Found in Appendix A.), I do not attach copies of the exact reports, but instead provide hyperlinks after each description for reference purposes.

1. California CVSO Model – The California Association of County Veterans Service Officers (CACVSO) develops a professionally published annual report detailing the scope of the CVSO program within the state for a given year (California Association of County Veterans Service Officers, Inc., 2012). This report lists more than thirty-five specific job functions conducted within individual CVSO offices in addition to Compensation and Pension claims processing described in Chapter 1. The only detailed statistics provided in the report are comprised of CVSO workload units and estimates of the monetary value of compensation and pension claims processed in individual counties. The report does not include data associated with any other job function conducted by CVSO offices. Additionally, there are news updates from a number of the 56 counties

who are members of CAVSO. Finally, the report gives an update on veterans and CVSO related legislation at the state and federal levels as well as a directory for all CACVSO member offices. To reference this report, see Appendix A. or visit <http://www.cacvso.org/page/2011-1-18-25-annual-report/>.

2. *Tennessee CVSO Model* – Similar to the model implemented in California, the Tennessee Department of Veterans Affairs (TDVA) publishes a yearly report detailing the performance of its CVSO program (Tennessee Department of Veterans Affairs, 2012). Mirroring the CACVSO report, many services or job functions of CVSO offices are listed with little or no supporting data for those functions. Again, the only detailed statistical data present for services rendered relates specifically to Compensation and Pension claims estimates. One major difference between the TDVA and CDVA reports is the source of each publication. The TDVA report is drafted by a state agency rather than a professional organization, and therefore may have a more objective interest in reporting statistics. That being said, the report is unclear regarding the totals provided in its limited data section, and therefore readers cannot assume that compensation and pension statistics in the TDVA report are any more accurate than those found in the CACVSO publication. To reference this report visit <http://tn.gov/veteran/>.

3. *Waushara CVSO Model* – Unlike the first two reports described in this section which are professionally designed and published, the third alternative is relatively plain and straight forward, but was selected specifically for its variance in format and detailed statistical reporting. Waushara County Wisconsin's Veterans Service Office, like many other individual counties across the country, develops a yearly report of services provided

in their individual county office (Waushara County Veterans Office, 2012). The Waushara CVSO report provides statistics for a number of job functions in the office in addition to the compensation and pension claims estimates featured prominently in the first two models. These include services such as the use and value of transportation grants, home improvement loans and state education benefits for veterans. While fairly limited in content (the document is only two pages in length), this report provides a more quantitative and holistic approach to CVSO reporting that goes beyond the more qualitative and statistically limited reports used by the first two organizations. To reference this report visit: <http://www.co.waushara.wi.us/veterans.htm>.

4. Disabled American Veterans Model – The fourth and final reporting alternative was selected for its independent status. Whereas the first three alternatives report the function of governmental actors, this final report was drafted by a charitable non-profit organization known as Disabled American Veterans (DAV), which provides similar benefit assistance to veterans and their families to those offered by CVSOs (Disabled American Veterans, 2012). One major difference with this organization is that it has an active legislative agenda and national voice on veterans issues that may create some bias in its reporting practices. Despite those facts, the DAV's Annual Report is the most comprehensive and detailed example among the four alternatives. For instance, rather than stating each job function (or service) provided by individual DAV field offices as in the first two alternatives, this report provides qualitative summaries and quantitative data for almost every job function. In fact, the DAVs report provides countless statistical data points for almost every aspect of its services, which allow for a holistic understanding of

the organization's programmatic output for a given year. To reference this report visit:

www.dav.org.

Key Criteria

Criteria used in my analysis originate from topics discussed in the second chapter of this thesis as they relate to reporting and evaluation theory with one exception being that I include an estimated cost for each alternative. Public Policy and decision matrix literature suggests the cost of each alternative be included as a scored criterion in the analysis, and thus I will make a modest attempt to measure this criterion in my analysis (Munger, 2000). Each additional criterion was specifically selected to measure the effectiveness of reporting methods used by the alternatives described above, but they do not necessary represent every aspect of good reporting. Additionally, I have excluded any criteria related to aesthetics or readability as three of the reports were professionally edited and published while Waushara County's report was an internal document and therefore cannot be evaluated based on aesthetic criteria. It should be noted however, that many reporting theorists advocate for well-drafted and aesthetically appealing reporting processes and therefore the omission of such criteria should be considered a limitation of this study.

Furthermore, I omit two criteria commonly used in CAM Analysis due to the subjective nature of scoring them in my matrix. Traditionally CAM theorists emphasize the measurement of "political feasibility" (whether legislators vote for one policy over another) and "organizational feasibility" (whether appointed officials support the policy and implement it in their organization), but given the information available and the

somewhat subjective nature of measuring these criteria, they will be excluded from this analysis and can be considered another limitation of the study (Munger, 2000, p. 15). That being said, the California legislature recently passed two bills, Senate Bill 1006 (Trailer Bill) requiring more accurate performance-based formulas for CVSO reporting, and Assembly Bill 2198 (Neilsen) requiring CVSOs report more service-related data than is currently being published, which speak to the political feasibility of altering reporting practices within the state. Finally, in keeping with Bardach's notion of selecting a "principal objective," I have listed each criterion in the descending order in which they are weighed for scoring in this analysis (i.e. Individualization will be the principal objective and therefore, carries the highest total value in the model). Detailed scoring rational will be included in the proceeding section.

Individualization – All three sections of Chapter 2 discussed in some form or another the importance of employing an "Open Systems Model" or individualized method of evaluation and reporting. This analysis evaluates each alternative's level of individualization (i.e., whether the report subjective and tailored to the needs and values of the organization, and whether it takes a multivariate approach) and adaptability (i.e., whether the report is formatted in a way that can change with the needs, goals and objectives of the organization). Given the prominence of this factor throughout the literature, this criterion serves as the "principal objective" and consequently carries the heaviest weight in scoring the alternatives described above.

Competing Values -As noted in the first section summary of Chapter 2, many theorists emphasize the importance of representing the competing values of an

organization in evaluations and reports (Quinn & Rohrbaugh 1981,1983; Rainey, 2009). They suggest organizations evaluate and report on factors that represent a broad cross-section of interests within that organization as well as its stakeholder's interests. For the purpose of evaluating each reporting alternative in this analysis, each model is scored on the amount of detail expressed involving potentially competing values or in this instance job functions/services provided in the report (i.e., amount of services detailed in report).

Measures of Efficiency and Effectiveness – This criterion focuses on measures of efficiency (i.e. accounting data) and effectiveness (qualitative analysis) within each report. These measures differ from the competing values mentioned above in that theorists note the importance of providing both quantitative and qualitative information on individual interests, values and goals within a report. Each alternative is evaluated based on its use of efficiency and effectiveness details for a given job function or service (e.g., CVSO processed 150 claims this year for a value of \$10 million dollars which is up from last year by \$2 million due to an influx of veterans moving into the county vs. Claims: 150, Value: \$10 million FY 2011).

Defined and Accurate Data Measures – While verifying the accuracy of data in each alternative extends beyond the scope of this analysis, the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 highlighted the importance of well-defined and accurate measures within reports. Given the limitation of verifying data accuracy, scoring of this criterion may be subjective but remains an important aspect of report evaluation, and therefore a modest attempt is made to rationalize and weigh each model against this variable. Scoring for this criterion is based on two factors: first, are measures well-defined or accompanied by

a qualitative summary and second, whether the statistical data is an estimated or actual value.

Cost to Produce Report – Traditionally analysts consider the cost of an alternative as an integral part of CAM measuring. While the exact costs of producing each alternative used in this model are unknown, I score based on estimated costs to produce each document using an inverse scaling system (i.e., a score of 1-point would be awarded for an expensive report where as a score of 5-points would be awarded for an inexpensive report). One problem with this approach is measuring cost can be highly subjective and potentially flawed. For instance, awarding 5-points for the cheapest alternative may appear to devalue a well-produced yet expensive report having a value of 1-point. Thus, while keeping costs for tasks like reporting low is generally thought of as a good practice, receiving a lower score in this matrix may not necessarily signify the real-world value of a more expensive report and should be considered a limitation of this study.

SECTION III: CAM SCORING METHODOLOGY

This CAM utilizes the scoring model described in Table 3.1 with the highest weight assigned to the “principal objective” (Individualization) and each subsequent criterion carrying a lower overall value. Since all alternatives pay at least some amount of attention to each criterion, all weights carry a minimum value of 1 point. Additionally, three of the key criteria are comprised of two factors, therefore the total amount of points for that criterion are split into two equal categories (e.g., Individualization is comprised of *individualization* for 1-5 points and *adaptability* for 1-5 points with a total of 10 possible points). The total maximum score for an individual alternative is 35 points;

however, it should be noted that the alternative with the highest overall score may not necessarily be the best policy alternative for a given problem, but merely serves as an example of an alternative that best meets the demands of the criteria emphasized in this analysis.

An alternative could potentially carry the highest score but may not be the best fit for an organization (e.g., due to low political feasibility, high production cost, etc.). That being said, it should be understood that CAM is simply one means of evaluating and comparing alternatives, and therefore its outcomes and related recommendations are limited to the criteria used in that analysis. As noted by Bardach and Munger, assigning weights and scoring alternatives based on an individual analyst's assumptions is highly subjective. To help explain my rationale, I provide a descriptive analysis detailing the methodological reasoning behind each scored outcome in Chapter 4.

Table 3.1 CAM Scoring

Table 5.1 Exam Scoring		
Criteria	Factors	
Individualization: 10 points; scale 2 x 1-5	Individualization 1-5 points	Adaptability 1-5 points
Competing Values: 8 points	Report reflects detailed cross-section of services provided 1-8 points	
Measures of Efficiency and Effectiveness: 6 points; scale 2 x 1-3	Efficiency 1-3 points	Effectiveness 1-3 points
Defined and Accurate Data Measures: 6 points; scale 2x 1-3; 1-3	Qualitative and Quantitative Measures 1-3 points	Accuracy of Data Measured 1-3 points
Cost of Report: 5 points; inverse scale	Estimated Cost to Produce Report 5 points	
*Scaling 1-8 (1 = minimally achieved; 4 = moderately; 8 = significantly) 1-5 (1 = minimally achieved; 3 = moderately; 5 = significantly) 1-4 (1 = minimally achieved; 2.5 = moderately; 4 = significantly) 1-3 (1 = minimally achieved; 2 = moderately; 3 = significantly) *Cost Scaling 1-5 (1 =high cost; 3 = moderate cost; 5 = low cost) Total Possible Score: 35 points		

CHAPTER 4 – CAM ANALYSIS RESULTS

This chapter presents the application of my CAM analysis in relation to the alternative methods of reporting veterans service-like data. It includes quantitative and qualitative summaries of scoring rationale and overall results. I begin with Table 4.1, which outlines the numerical scores assigned to alternatives before moving on to a results analysis explaining my rationale for scoring each criterion. Additionally, I provide both qualitative explanation and visual aids or tables for each criterion throughout this results analysis in order to make the ranking and scoring of each alternative visually distinguishable. Finally, the last section of this chapter summarizes the results before moving on to the fifth and final chapter of this thesis.

SECTION I: CAM SCORING OUTCOMES

The results of my analysis align well with theories discussed in the literature review chapter of this thesis related to effective reporting and evaluation methodology. While no single alternative received a perfect score, two very different reports tied for the highest score with twenty-nine total points. Waushara County and the DAV's reporting models, despite being drastically different, were consistently better in two key areas emphasized in the literature. First, both models were highly individualized and adaptable to the interests of the organization. Secondly, both models scored significantly higher in the competing values category as their detailed summaries of many job functions and services provided information both quantitative and qualitative in nature missing from the lowest two alternatives.

SECTION II: CAM DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS ANALYSIS

This section describes my methodological approach to scoring each alternative in five sub-sections broken down by criterion. Included in these summaries are five tables listing scores and brief explanations that serve as visual aids. I begin with the key criterion, individualization, which carried the highest possible value. My explanation then continues with detail on each criterion in descending order of individual scoring values. It is important to note the scoring described here is based on an individual analyst's assumptions of how each alternative meets the values associated with individual requirements. Different analysts may have different scoring outcomes. The purpose of this section is to explore my rationale for scoring in the most objective manner possible, although the subjective nature of CAM Analysis should be considered a weakness of the study.

Individualization – As noted in Chapter 3, many theorists suggest the identification of a key criterion to be emphasized in decision or alternative matrixes. This analysis identified individualization of reporting practices as the most important factor in effective reporting and as such assigned it a total possible score of ten points divided between two sections: individualization and adaptability of report. As such, this criterion is scored as follows:

- DAV (9 points) – This model received the highest total sub-score for individualization (5 points) due to its status as a private non-profit report that was highly tailored to its organizational goals, needs and objectives. Furthermore, it is assumed that given the non-profit status of the organization it had a relatively high ability to adapt its reporting methods to meet the changing momentum of the organization (4 points).
- Waushara County (7 points) – Given the relatively simple format of this report, it was assumed that the report had moderately high individualization (4 points); however, there are most likely requirements from the governing body (county government), which limit its adaptability (3 points).
- CACVSO (6 points) – This report was drafted by a professional organization, which makes it likely that it is highly individualized (4 points) to represent the interests of the institution. Unfortunately, the rather formulaic and limited data content from year to year suggests that it is inflexible and somewhat lacking in adaptability (2 points).

- TDVA (5 points) – This alternative received the lowest total score for this criterion due to moderate individualization (3 points) related to qualitative content, as well as the assumption of low adaptability (2 points) as it was produced by a state agency which may not have the ability to be as flexible to changing needs, goals and interests within the CVSO program.

Table 4.2 Criterion Explanatory Analysis: Individualization

Alternatives	Key Criterion		
	Individualization (10 points)		Score
	<i>Individualized 1-5 points</i>	<i>Adaptability 1-5 points</i>	
1. CACVSO	Drafted by a professional organization, this report reflects the interests of the organization and is highly individualized - 4 points	The same format and lack of data is present across multiple years of this report, low adaptability assumed - 2 points	6
2. TDVA	Drafted by a state agency, this report may not be as individualized as other alternatives but does include a number of qualitative summaries related to individualization, moderate individualization - 3 points	Again, reports drafted by a state agency are assumed to be less flexible to the changing needs of an organization/program, low adaptability assumed - 2 points	5
3. Waushara	Drafted by a local government, this brief report is individualized given its simple format and the internal purpose of the document, moderate individualization - 4 points	This report may have some restrictions as outlined by governing and funding bodies but appears to be highly adaptable due to simplistic nature and selective detailing of what is assumed to be individualized success and interests high adaptability - 3 points	7
4. DAV	Drafted by a private non-profit organization, this report has relatively loose reporting requirements and is assumed to be highly individualized - 5 points	Given the freedom of this organization to report almost anything it wants it can be assumed that this publication is highly adaptable - 4 points	9
* Total Possible Score: 10 points			

Competing Values – This criterion measured not only the number of items reported on but also the content present to describe each alternative organization's competing values, interests, goals and varying job functions. As the criterion with the second highest possible point total (eight points), each alternative's scores were assessed as follows:

- DAV (7 points) – This report provided a significant amount of information in both qualitative and quantitative formats related to multiple job functions and competing interests within the organization. It was by far the most comprehensive report evaluated in this study.
- Waushara County (7 points) – Tied with the DAV report, this alternative provided concise and valuable qualitative and quantitative information on a number of job functions and competing interests within the county veterans office. Despite being relatively limited in length, these summaries on competing values or interests provided detail not found in the two lowest scoring yet much longer alternative reports.
- TDVA (6 points) – This report contained a number of detailed qualitative sections describing not only job functions but also demographic and geographic details that speak to competing values and needs within the state of Tennessee.
- CACVSO (5 points) – While given the lowest score in this section, this alternative provided qualitative summaries on a number of interests as well as gave updates for a few of its 56 member counties. However, unlike the top

three alternatives, this model had less detail and individualized information on the organizational goals and services provided and consequently, received the lowest total score.

Table 4.3 Criterion Explanatory Analysis: Competing Values

Alternatives	Key Criterion	
	Competing Values (8 points)	Score
1. CACVSO	Report lists a number of services and job functions as well as updates from some of the 56 CVSO offices within the state, moderately represents competing values and interest of organization - 5 points	5
2. TDVA	Report addresses a number of different organizational functions in qualitative summaries as well as several state demographic and geographic details, moderate to highly representative of competing values and interests in the organization - 6 points	6
3. Waushara	Report lists a number of detailed summaries of its main functions, while limited in overall content it is fair to assume this internal document lists the primary functions of the organization and highly represents the competing values of its organization - 7 points	7
4. DAV	Report details almost every if not all job functions performed in qualitative and quantitative summaries and appears to be highly representative of the competing values of the organization as a whole - 7 points	7
* Total Possible Score: 8 points		

Measures of Efficiency and Effectiveness – This third criterion carried a total possible point value of six points broken down into two variable scales worth three points each. Each alternative was scored based on the inclusion of efficiency and effectiveness measures as follows:

- DAV (6 points) – This alternative provided significant measures of efficiency data (3 points) accompanied by qualitative explanations of those measures (3 points). The format and detail of these measures was not only consistent with the recommendations of the literature, but also allowed the consumer of the report to gain a holistic understanding of the organization in both qualitative and quantitative terms.
- Waushara County (6 points) – Again despite the limited length of this report it received an equally high score as the previous alternative. Efficiency (3 points) and effectiveness (3 points) data for multiple job functions allowed the consumer to quickly and easily gain an understanding of the organization's functions for the previous year.
- CACVSO (4 points) – While lacking on efficiency measures (1 points) this alternative provided multiple qualitative or effectiveness summaries (3 points) throughout the report. If more efficiency or quantitative measures were provided, this report would have received a perfect score.
- TCDVA (4 points) – Similar to the CACVSO model, this alternative severely lacked in efficiency measures (1 point) despite providing valuable qualitative effectiveness summaries or measures (3 points). As such, it is likely that this

alternative would have received a perfect score in effectiveness measures if more than one section of data for one job function had been provided.

Table 4.4 Criterion Explanatory Analysis: Measures of Efficiency and Effectiveness

Alternatives	Key Criterion		
	Measures of Efficiency and Effectiveness (6 points)		Score
	<i>Efficiency</i> 1-3 points	<i>Effectiveness</i> 1-3 points	
1. CACVSO	While some demographic statistics are present only one section of job function data is provided, low on efficiency measures - 1 points	Effectively offers qualitative explanations of job functions, moderate effectiveness measures - 3 points	4
2. TDVA	Many demographic statistics are present only one section of job function data is provided, low on efficiency measures - 1 points	Provides many qualitative summaries of services and job functions, moderate effectiveness measures - 3 points	4
3. Waushara	Very basic in nature but lists efficiency data for each major job function in addition to demographic data, high on efficiency measures - 3 points	Report offers a qualitative summary for each efficiency measure provided, highly reports effectiveness measures - 3 points	6
4. DAV	Provides a multitude of statistical data for varying job functions, high on efficiency measures - 3 points	Contains detailed qualitative summaries of almost every job function and efficiency measure, high on effectiveness measures - 3 points	6
* Total Possible Score: 6 points			

Defined and Accurate Data Measures – This criterion was worth a total of six points broken down into two variable scales, Defined Data Measures and Accurate Data Measures, each worth a maximum of three points scored as follows:

- DAV (5 points) – The data provided in this report had some explanation for characteristics such as where it was derived, how data was measured and straightforward presentation and definition (3 points). It was assumed that given the non-profit status of this organization, the accuracy of data (2 points) was difficult to evaluate. On one hand there is an obligation to stakeholders to present accurate data, but on the other there may be some element of self-preservation bias or temptation to inflate outcomes through data.
- Waushara County (4 points) – This alternative had little to no definition of data measures provided (1 point) but due to its nature as a public organization it was assumed that it may be highly accurate due to the public call for transparency (3 points).
- TDVA (4 points) – Similar to Waushara County, this alternative provided little definition of data measures (1 point) but was assumed to be highly accurate (3 points) in what little data it did provide due to its public accountability as a state organization.
- CACDVA (2 points) – This alternative scored the lowest due to its limited and rather ambiguous data measures (1 point) as well as its status as a professional organization, which makes oversight and therefore accuracy of published data difficult to assume (1 point).

Table 4.5 Criterion Explanatory Analysis: Defined and Accurate Data Measures

Alternatives	Key Criterion		
	Defined and Accurate Data Measures (6 points)		Score
	<i>Defined Data Measures 1-3 points</i>	<i>Accurate Data Measures 1-3 points</i>	
1. CACVSO	Little to no data explanation or definition of job function data provided - <i>1 point</i>	Limited data section is summary of estimates as well as report produced by a professional organization with little oversight, low accuracy assumed - <i>1 point</i>	2
2. TDVA	Little to no explanation or definition of job function data provided - <i>1 point</i>	While limited in data definition, report generated by a state agency so high accuracy in data assumed - <i>3 points</i>	4
3. Waushara	Little to no explanation or definition of data measures provided - <i>1 point</i>	Due to public nature of this document from a governmental agency suggests accuracy can be assumed - <i>3 points</i>	4
4. DAV	Some data well defined and explained in qualitative summaries - <i>3 points</i>	It can be assumed that some obligation to be accurate for transparency to stakeholders is present, but overall accuracy of data is difficult to validate due to independent nature, self preservation bias and legislative agenda, moderate accuracy assumed - <i>2 points</i>	5
* Total Possible Score: 6 points			

Cost to Produce Report – As stated in Chapter 3, assessing this criterion was highly subjective but it was important to include it in the analysis. The cost of producing the following reports was assumed to vary considerably and each organization was likely to have had different audiences and intentions for publishing, which may justify higher production expenses. As such I used an inverse scaling system so that the most inexpensive report received the highest point value (5 points) with the most expensive receiving the lowest value as follows:

- Waushara County (5 points) – This alternative received the highest score for having the least expensive production cost. That being said, the report was simply an internal document in memo format rather than a professionally edited report, which more than likely would not have served the same purposes of the other three reports that were drafted for much larger audiences.
- CACVSO (3 points) – Given that this report was produced by a professional organization rather than a government entity, it was assumed that the overall production costs were lower as fewer restrictions for publication vendors, etc. would apply to a non-governmental entity.
- TDVA (2 points) – This alternative was thought to have rather large production costs due to it originating from a large state entity with many publication restrictions and limited ability to contract with publishers, etc.
- DAV (2 points) – Although aesthetics were not evaluated in this analysis, this report was the largest and most elaborate publication amongst the four

alternatives. It was assumed that extensive resources were used to draft this report especially in data collection with its universe covering the entire United States.

Table 4.6 Criterion Explanatory Analysis: Cost to Produce Report

Alternatives	Key Criterion	
	Cost (5 points)	Score
1. CACVSO	This report was professionally edited and published at the expense of a non-governmental professional organization which may have a lower total cost compared to reports generated by government entities, moderately inexpensive to produce - 3 points	3
2. TDVA	Drafted by and agency at the state level, this report's professionally edited and published format suggests relatively high costs, expensive to produce - 2 points	2
3. Waushara	Due to very basic format and limited length (2 pages) this report received the highest score for having the lowest production cost; however, this format would not be an acceptable document for mass public or legislative consumption and therefore is a limitation of this model - 5 points	5
4. DAV	Given the elaborate aesthetic and professional format it is fair to assume that the costs associated with drafting and publishing this report are significant and it is likely to be the costliest alternative - 2 points	2
* Total Possible Score: 5 points		

SECTION III: SUMMARY OF CAM ANALYSIS RESULTS

Despite the subjective nature of scoring alternatives based on critical criteria found in the literature, decision matrixes and CAM Analysis in particular, serve as valuable aids for analysts and policy makers alike. This analysis sought to understand how one organization's reporting model could be compared to other models used by similar organizations. It is clear through both the literature and this methodological modeling that many alternatives have elements of good reporting practices, yet the ones

that score the highest are significantly individualized and express the competing values of that program or organization.

Interestingly, this model revealed that two reports—albeit polar opposites in length, content and aesthetic presentation—each align well with the principals described by reporting and evaluation theorists. This confirms that the “Open Systems” model of reporting discussed by so many scholars was correct in affirming that a one-size-fits-all approach to reporting should be avoided. The best reports are individualized in a manner that reflects the varying or competing interests of an organization, which is why the DAV and Waushara County reports scored the highest in this modeling especially when compared to the more formulaic reporting methods employed by CACVSO and TDVA.

CHAPTER 5 – SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

This thesis served the two-fold purpose of not only identifying a system of comparing a problematic reporting practice to similar models in order to identify specific strengths and weaknesses, but also in helping the reader visualize ways in which governmental reporting methods can be compared, evaluated and improved in general. While the focus of this paper centered on CVSO reporting practices, the theoretical principals behind effective reporting, and in some cases methodological decision modeling like CAM, could be applied to almost any agency's reporting practice. Furthermore, there are three notable conclusions in addition to general lessons for reporting evaluation and improvement specific to California's CVSO reporting. I first discuss these more general reporting and evaluation conclusions before moving on to CVSO specific recommendations.

General Conclusions

The first chapter of this thesis suggested that more general reporting and evaluation method assertions could be drawn from the findings of my analysis. I argue that two very clear suggestions can be made about the ways in which public (and to some extent private) reporting can be improved with a better understanding of theory and decision modeling similar to CAM Analysis. First, it is clear that although this thesis focused on one particular type of public program, reporting and evaluation theory can be almost universally applied to evaluate and potentially improve any agency or program's current reporting practices. Many theorists discussed in Chapter 2 suggested the use of an

Open Systems model of reporting, tailored to the individual needs and competing values of an organization, as the most effective and efficient means of reporting. Interestingly, the findings of this analysis support the Open Systems claim through the scoring of the two highest, yet strikingly different, models of reporting found in the Waushara and DAV models. These drastically different reports were generated in organizations that provide similar or the same general services and program design, and my analysis showed that both reports paint an accurate and efficient picture of programmatic outcomes and effectiveness within a public program or agency. Quite simply, theory suggests there is no singular pattern or “one” right way of reporting, but given the flexible and individualized principles discussed in Open Systems reporting literature, organizations can develop adequate and valuable reporting methods that go well beyond traditional and often flawed accounting-like reporting processes.

The second more general, yet equally important conclusion about reporting is that decision makers and practitioners alike can use decision matrixes like CAM Analysis to evaluate and compare their current practices with similar organizations or varying alternative models they themselves create. CAM Analysis, despite having some potential for human error and scoring bias, is a valuable tool that allows an analyst to apply more rational and scientific principles to the seemingly subjective nature of comparing policy alternatives. While analysts and administrators should proceed with caution when utilizing this system as a means of comparing and selective an alternative, it is evident that CAM and other decision matrix processes can help us make decisions about alternatives and consequently more informed policy recommendations in general.

CVSO Conclusions And Recommendations

First, this examination revealed that despite carrying the lowest overall score, the CACVSO had many strengths in addition to its weaknesses. Some of the areas in which this model scored highly include a relatively low assumed production cost and a moderately individualized reporting model. Had I chosen to include the readability or aesthetic presentation of each report, this model may have scored closer to the top two models. Areas in which the CACVSO model scored low include; providing details on the competing values of the organization and in reporting multiple points of data for efficiency and effectiveness measures. Finally, it should be noted that the CACVSO model is by no means ineffective or inadequate overall; it is simply not as inclusive or as holistic as models employed by similar organizations examined in this thesis.

Secondly, my findings suggest that CACVSO can improve its current model by incorporating some of the elements found in the two very different but highest scoring models. The most salient areas for improvement include first, incorporating a higher level of individualization based on the needs or competing values of the CACVSO organization through detailed reporting of data regarding the multiple job functions within the organization; and second, including measures of efficiency and effectiveness data into its reports. Simply put, it is safe to assume that had CACVSO reported these types of data on multiple job functions similar to the process employed by the DAV and Waushara County, it would have scored much higher in this analysis.

Thirdly, there are a number of potential policy implications related to the current model used by CACVSO and the CDVA as well as the impacts of changing that model.

As suggested in Chapter 3, there are a number of legislative changes aimed at improving California's CVSO reporting model that have not yet come to fruition, and there are still questions as to how effective those changes will be once implemented. This thesis has continuously emphasized the need for a holistic report that includes accurate data on multiple job functions. If CACVSO and the CDVA fail to implement new practices that measure and report data on job functions beyond compensation and pension estimates, the relevance of these reports for decision-making and stakeholder accountability may be overlooked at a time when many of our state's veterans need these services more than ever. Additionally, justification for continued or increased funding and possibly public support of the CVSO program may be in jeopardy if more holistic reporting practices are not employed following the upcoming legislative changes.

Finally, the goal of this thesis was not to criticize the CVSO program but rather to emphasize ways in which the current model of reporting could be improved in a manner that justifies further support of the program. It is clear that California's CVSO program carries a heavy burden and significant influence in helping the state's veterans; although, problems lie in the fact that most readers would not be able to fully understand the value of those services as presented through limited data in reports published by CACVSO and supported by the CDVA. At a time when veterans in California need and are seeking the services gained through CVSOs, it is important that legislators, local leaders and program administrators make decisions that positively impact this program. Implementing more holistic and robust reporting practices on CVSO services will not only improve the livelihood of California's veterans but also the longevity of this program in general.

**APPENDIX A. – CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF CVSO 2011 ANNUAL
REPORT AND DIRECTORY**

California Association of
County Veterans Service Officers, Inc.

2011 Annual Report and Directory



Professional Veterans Advocates Serving California's Veterans and Their Families



Report prepared by
Bill J. Moseley
Director
Department of Veterans Affairs
San Bernardino County



with editorial assistance from
Sally Gibson



The CACVSO is the California Association of County Veterans Service Officers whose members represent 54 of California's 58 counties. County Veterans Service Officers (CVSOs) oversee and direct the activities of their individual county veteran services offices where veterans receive free claims assistance and information and referral to local, state and federal programs.

What is the CACVSO?

The CACVSO:

- promotes the welfare and rights of veterans statewide through legislative lobbying,
- promotes the mission of CVSOs throughout the state, and
- provides training and education to county veteran service officers and their employees,
- provides members with a collaborative network of resources, information and ideas.

In this year's annual report and directory...

The 2011 CACVSO Annual Report and Directory covers the following topics:

"The Way It Began and Where We Are Now"

includes:

- the origin of CVSOs
- CVSO role in California veterans' benefits delivery
- how veterans find us
- what we do
- the benefits acquisition process
- veteran service representative training
- CVSO funding
- the value of benefits obtained for our veterans

"In 2011"

highlights some individual CVSO activities from the past year

"At The Capitol"

provides an overview of the CACVSO priorities and legislative platforms at both the state and federal levels

"The Directory"

lists county veterans service officers, their contact information, office locations and hours of operation



The Way It Began and Where We Are Now

The Way It Began...

American men and women have long set aside their comfort and personal safety to serve in the Armed Forces to secure and protect the freedoms we all enjoy. In response, a grateful nation has created and maintains a wide array of veterans' benefits.

Evolving from a tradition of compensating veterans for service-incurred injuries, a broad range of benefits are now available for America's veterans.

The U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs has three main branches which administer monetary benefits, medical care, and cemeteries. In addition to the benefits provided by the USDVA, benefits are currently available from 1,170 other federal domestic assistance programs with over 4,000 separate agencies responsible for their administration.

The number and complexity of available benefits can make it difficult for veterans to access them, if, that is, they have knowledge of their existence.

In response to this possible disconnect between veterans and their benefits, trained professionals at the local level were first introduced in California in 1926 to help veterans in the community identify, apply for, and obtain all benefits to which they are entitled. The idea quickly spread to other California counties and Veterans Service Offices have since become a mainstay of county governments throughout the state and nation and are an essential link between veterans and veterans' benefits.



And now...

With close to 2 million veterans, California has more veterans than any other state in the union, as shown in the map to the right. All told, California is home to more than 7 million veterans, dependents and survivors of veterans, representing approximately 27% of California's adult population. The sheer number of potential claimants in the state presents quite a challenge to California's benefits delivery system.

California's veterans can get claims assistance at federal VA regional offices located in Oakland, Los Angeles, San Diego and Reno, Nevada. Unfortunately, approximately 65% of California's veterans live outside these four regional office service areas.

This is one of the gaps that CVSOs fill. In addition to 53 main offices, CVSOs manage branch offices in an additional 48 cities and towns throughout the state. This statewide network of more than 100 veterans' service centers allows California's veterans greater access to trained professionals who can help them get all the benefits to which they are entitled. County veterans service offices are often the initial local point of contact for claimants accessing the VA benefit system.

Veteran Population by State
as of September 30, 2011
(in thousands)



California Stats

7,000,000+
veterans,
dependents
and survivors

4 Federal
VA offices

65% California
veterans
living outside
a federal VA office
service area

100+
COUNTY
VETERANS
SERVICE
OFFICES

How Do Veterans Find Us?

Clients are referred to county veterans offices by federal, state and service organizations in recognition of their accessibility and acknowledged expertise in the field of veterans' benefits and services. CVSO staff also work closely with congressionally-chartered veteran service organizations such as VFW and American Legion, not-for-profit organizations and private attorneys to maximize the benefits their veterans receive.

CVSOs also receive referrals from county departments of public social services when veterans and their families apply for public assistance programs. Often, these clients are unaware of the federal benefits and services for which they may qualify. CVSOs determine client eligibility for veterans' benefits and help them with the application process. When successful, these awards represent a tax-payer benefit as well, since monetary VA benefits help mitigate costs of other publicly-funded programs.



What We Do

Our membership is committed to providing the highest quality service to California veterans and we will remain responsive to their needs. CVSOs help veterans and their families with the following:

Locally...

- Claims assistance
- Case management
- Fiduciary services
- Homeless assistance
- Indigent burials
- Information and referral
- Jail and hospital outreach
- Job referrals
- Veterans preference points for local government exams
- Peddler's license
- Transportation services
- Veteran's advocacy

At the State level...

- Business license, tax and fee waiver
- California college tuition fee waiver
- Disabled veteran license plates
- Disabled veterans business enterprise opportunities
- Employment and unemployment
- California farm and home loans
- Fishing and hunting licenses
- Motor vehicle registration fees
- Property tax exemptions
- State park and recreation passes
- Veterans homes of California
- Veterans preference in California civil service exams
- Property tax exemptions

Federally...

- Correction of military records and discharge upgrades
- Dependency indemnity compensation
- Disability compensation or pension
- Educational assistance
- Federal tort claim assistance
- Funeral and burial assistance
- Government life insurance
- Home loan guaranty
- Outpatient medical and dental treatment
- Small Business Administration
- Social Security Administration

Benefits Acquisition

One of the most vital services provided by CVSOs is filing claims for benefits for veterans, dependents and survivors.

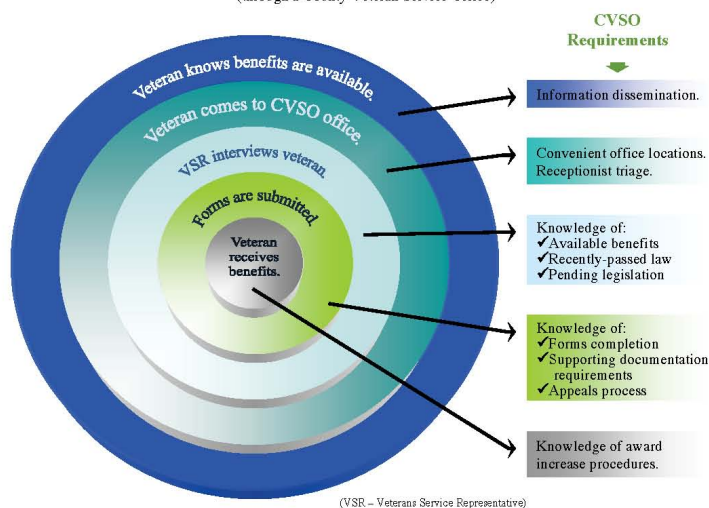
At every step of this process, illustrated at right, CVSOs provide immeasurable help to their clients whether providing education, completing complex paperwork or advocating on their behalf.

The first step of this process is for veterans to be aware of possible benefits for which they may qualify. In addition to the referrals mentioned, CVSOs actively disseminate information regarding their services to veterans in their communities through outreach events, targeted mailings and word of mouth.

Once a veteran makes his or her way to a CVSO, a veteran service representative (VSR) evaluates the client's eligibility for benefits, completes and submits application forms and follows up with case management.

Benefits Acquisition Process

(through a County Veteran Service Office)



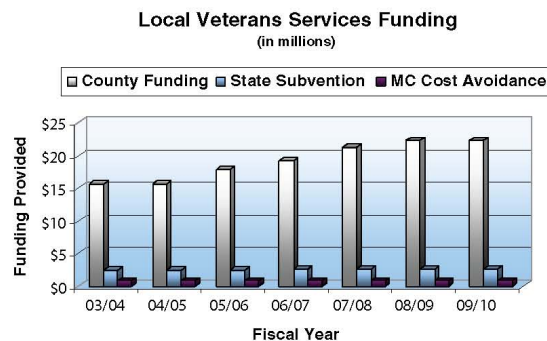
VSR Training

Before VSRs can assist clients, they must be thoroughly trained in veteran law and VA procedures, then they must pass a rigorous written examination to receive accreditation from the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CDVA) and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA).

To keep current, CVSOs and their staff participate in quarterly regional training and week-long, state-wide training sponsored by the CACVSO three times a year. They also participate in the USDVA Training Responsibility Involvement Preparation of claims program, which provides additional training and expanded access to veteran data systems.

CVSO Funding

The cost of maintaining a CVSO is primarily a county general fund expense; however, counties with an established CVSO receive some State reimbursement funds as authorized by the California Military and Veterans Code (MVC). Depending on the revenue source, these funds are distributed either based on specific performance measurements or as a percentage of net County cost. It is important to emphasize that while state general funds and federal pass-through funds distributed by the CDVA assist counties in maintaining their CVSOs, the primary cost of the CVSO program statewide is a County expense, as opposed to a State expense, as is illustrated in the graph at right. Funds received by CVSOs are subject to both internal county audits and regular audits by the CDVA in accordance with the California Code of Regulations.



CVSO Value

In accordance with the state's MVC, the CDVA annually computes the amount of new and increased monetary benefits paid to eligible clients by the federal government that are attributable to the work of CVSOs (see table on next page). For FY 2010-2011, CDVA reported to the State Department of Finance and the State Legislature that CVSOs obtained \$328 million in new federal benefits for California's veterans and their families (annualized value of new monthly benefits/increases plus value of new one-time benefits). This represents a remarkable return on the state's investment of \$2.6 million paid to CVSOs.

While this is an impressive amount, it does not include a large number of client services performed by CVSOs for which the value of return is impossible to calculate. Out of three workload indicators measured, 86% of the activities fall into this category. CVSO staff complete various forms, process mail and handle about half a million telephone contacts with veterans annually to answer questions, resolve complaints, develop claims, and otherwise serve our veteran community.

Federal Monetary Benefits Obtained for Veterans by County Veterans Service Offices, Fiscal Year 2010-2011

Participating County	Number of Monthly Benefit Payments	Value of Monthly Benefit Payments*	Avg. Value of Monthly Benefit Payments	Annualized Value of Monthly Payments	Number of One-Time Benefits† Obtained	Value of One-Time Benefits† Obtained	Avg. Value of One-Time Benefits† Obtained	Benefits Realized By CVSO Clients‡
Alameda	135	\$150,508	\$1,115	\$1,806,096	139	\$1,685,211	\$12,124	\$3,491,307
Amador	27	\$26,330	\$975	\$315,960	40	\$486,388	\$12,160	\$802,348
Butte	183	\$132,002	\$721	\$1,584,024	202	\$1,436,765	\$7,113	\$3,020,789
Calaveras	17	\$4,901	\$288	\$58,812	17	\$33,361	\$1,962	\$92,173
Colusa	4	\$6,380	\$1,595	\$76,560	8	\$59,595	\$7,449	\$136,155
Contra Costa	832	\$465,635	\$560	\$5,587,620	900	\$4,458,891	\$4,954	\$10,046,511
Del Norte	96	\$69,912	\$728	\$838,944	104	\$1,083,995	\$10,423	\$1,922,939
El Dorado	166	\$120,079	\$723	\$1,440,948	172	\$1,209,253	\$7,031	\$2,650,201
Fresno	326	\$211,839	\$650	\$2,542,068	335	\$2,001,926	\$5,976	\$4,543,994
Glenn	9	\$10,358	\$1,151	\$124,296	14	\$139,158	\$9,940	\$263,454
Humboldt	380	\$239,923	\$631	\$2,879,076	418	\$2,651,116	\$6,342	\$5,530,192
Imperial	64	\$53,541	\$837	\$642,492	73	\$383,814	\$5,258	\$1,026,306
Inyo	19	\$18,042	\$950	\$216,504	24	\$107,696	\$4,487	\$324,200
Kern	852	\$562,217	\$660	\$6,746,604	858	\$4,897,220	\$5,708	\$11,643,824
Kings	171	\$129,035	\$755	\$1,548,420	177	\$818,600	\$4,625	\$2,367,020
Lake	211	\$124,645	\$591	\$1,495,740	264	\$1,398,790	\$5,298	\$2,894,530
Lassen	40	\$27,104	\$678	\$325,248	44	\$548,569	\$12,467	\$873,817
Los Angeles	1,033	\$661,849	\$641	\$7,942,188	1,203	\$6,854,018	\$5,697	\$14,796,206
Madera	71	\$64,475	\$908	\$773,700	76	\$481,722	\$6,338	\$1,255,422
Marin	80	\$125,389	\$1,567	\$1,504,668	91	\$640,088	\$7,034	\$2,144,756
Mariposa	4	\$3,552	\$888	\$42,624	4	\$30,339	\$7,585	\$72,963
Mendocino	140	\$147,803	\$1,056	\$1,773,636	163	\$1,195,452	\$7,334	\$2,969,088
Merced	166	\$96,339	\$580	\$1,156,068	196	\$1,343,807	\$6,856	\$2,499,875
Modoc	21	\$15,265	\$727	\$183,180	21	\$178,548	\$8,502	\$361,728
Mono	6	\$4,926	\$821	\$59,112	6	\$27,655	\$4,609	\$86,767
Monterey	469	\$362,845	\$774	\$4,354,140	538	\$3,804,203	\$7,071	\$8,158,343
Napa	177	\$139,437	\$788	\$1,673,244	184	\$1,621,461	\$8,812	\$3,294,705
Nevada	150	\$166,032	\$1,107	\$1,992,384	157	\$1,354,619	\$8,628	\$3,347,003
Orange	831	\$512,850	\$617	\$6,154,200	857	\$4,498,383	\$5,249	\$10,652,583
Placer	1,907	\$2,190,782	\$1,149	\$26,289,384	1,960	\$11,421,898	\$5,827	\$37,711,282
Plumas	22	\$10,285	\$468	\$123,420	26	\$148,360	\$5,706	\$271,780
Riverside	1,971	\$1,210,896	\$614	\$14,530,752	2,211	\$11,178,135	\$5,056	\$25,708,887
Sacramento	411	\$314,776	\$766	\$3,777,312	434	\$2,569,068	\$5,920	\$6,346,380
San Benito	49	\$44,287	\$904	\$531,444	50	\$449,335	\$8,987	\$980,779
San Bernardino	1,295	\$1,213,310	\$937	\$14,559,720	1,553	\$13,872,773	\$8,933	\$28,432,493
San Diego	965	\$773,310	\$801	\$9,279,720	1,006	\$5,535,025	\$5,502	\$14,814,745
San Francisco	480	\$328,424	\$684	\$3,941,088	515	\$3,341,251	\$6,488	\$7,282,339
San Joaquin	442	\$385,374	\$872	\$4,624,488	479	\$3,835,182	\$8,007	\$8,459,670
San Luis Obispo	421	\$264,616	\$629	\$3,175,392	462	\$3,071,209	\$6,648	\$6,246,601
San Mateo	234	\$250,561	\$1,071	\$3,006,732	244	\$1,712,792	\$7,020	\$4,719,524
Santa Barbara	358	\$271,850	\$759	\$3,262,200	387	\$3,045,670	\$7,870	\$6,307,870
Santa Clara	713	\$509,162	\$714	\$6,109,944	782	\$5,393,293	\$6,897	\$11,503,237
Santa Cruz	189	\$156,764	\$829	\$1,881,168	202	\$2,252,968	\$11,153	\$4,134,136
Shasta	482	\$319,104	\$662	\$3,829,248	569	\$4,308,047	\$7,571	\$8,137,295
Siskiyou	117	\$127,316	\$1,088	\$1,527,792	126	\$581,770	\$4,617	\$2,109,562
Solano	827	\$432,199	\$523	\$5,186,388	961	\$4,478,070	\$4,660	\$9,664,458
Sonoma	539	\$400,042	\$742	\$4,800,504	570	\$4,576,915	\$8,030	\$9,377,419
Stanislaus	741	\$568,371	\$767	\$6,820,452	871	\$6,481,573	\$7,442	\$13,302,025
Tehama	35	\$34,698	\$991	\$416,376	35	\$347,652	\$9,933	\$764,028
Trinity	17	\$12,551	\$738	\$150,612	17	\$216,394	\$12,729	\$367,006
Tulare	411	\$175,927	\$428	\$2,111,124	450	\$2,280,761	\$5,068	\$4,391,885
Tuolumne	222	\$165,884	\$747	\$1,990,608	234	\$1,572,579	\$6,720	\$3,563,187
Ventura	261	\$195,572	\$749	\$2,346,864	268	\$2,347,938	\$8,761	\$4,694,802
Yolo	141	\$108,090	\$767	\$1,297,080	162	\$895,680	\$5,529	\$2,192,760
Yuba-Sutter	364	\$219,794	\$604	\$2,637,528	399	\$2,663,565	\$6,676	\$5,301,093
Statewide Total	20,294	\$15,337,158	\$756	\$184,045,896	22,258	\$144,008,546	\$7,178	\$328,054,442
09/10 Totals	22,193	\$14,525,680	\$762	\$174,308,160	24,169	\$125,357,721	\$6,293	\$299,665,881
Change from Previous Year	↓ 8.56%	↑ 5.59%	↓ 0.79%	↑ 5.59%	↓ 7.91%	↑ 14.88%	↑ 14.06%	↑ 9.47%

*New and increased benefits

†Single and retro payments

‡Annualized value of monthly payments + Value of one-time payments

Source: California Department of Veterans Affairs, 2011

In 2011

In Plumas County



In Greenville, California, the Plumas County Veterans Day Parade is cause for celebration.



In Humboldt County



Last year was a busy one for Humboldt County Veterans Services. In addition to biannual T.A.P. classes at the local Coast Guard bases, they participated in five area Stand Downs!

The happy crew at Humboldt County Veterans Service Office are all smiles as they participate in one of five area stand-downs.



In San Bernardino County



Above, Veterans Services Manager Rhoda Rhoades discusses benefits with a veteran.

An Evening of Support For Our Heroes: San Bernardino County Veterans Affairs joined San Bernardino County Behavioral Health and California State Assemblyman Paul Cook in hosting an Evening of Support for Our Heroes. The evening started early with a vendor's fair in the afternoon, followed by presentations.



Left, representatives from the VA Healthcare System and CalVet are set up and ready to answer questions. Below, guests listen to informative presentations.



Operation Recognition: This is the third year that San Bernardino County Veterans Affairs has partnered with the County Superintendent of Schools to present high school diplomas to those veterans who left high school to join the military during a time of war. Here, friends and families of graduates enjoy the festive atmosphere while waiting to be presented with the "Class of 2011."

In Merced County



The Merced County Veterans Services Office participated in the Battle for the Vets outreach event in June, 2011 in Los Banos. This special event was organized to welcome home and honor local military service members and to assist them and their families with the transition to civilian life. County VSO representatives answered questions, disseminated information to visitors and completed applications for benefits. Those in attendance enjoyed live music and entertainment, free food, giveaways and a Car & Bike Show. Veterans also spoke to visitors about their military service.



In Ventura County



Employees at the Ventura County Veterans Services Office have been participating in a number of diverse activities throughout the county in 2011, including Ventura County Superior Court Veterans Court, the court's Mentors for Veterans program, the Military Community Collaborative, Veterans Day events in Ventura and Oxnard, and the 2011/2012 St. Vincent DePaul Winter Warming Shelter.



In Fresno County



The Veterans Service Office in Fresno kept busy in 2011, when more than 500 people attended their Veterans Job Fair held in May, nearly 800 veterans attended the Stand Down in September, and approximately 25,000 enjoyed the Veterans Day Parade on November 11th. This office does a great job of partnering with the community to bring veterans' issues to the public.



In Yuba & Sutter Counties

The Yuba-Sutter Counties Veterans Service Office stays active in the community with their involvement in various annual events including the Yuba-Sutter Veterans Stand Down each August, the Veterans Day Parade and the Veterans Town Hall in November.



Visitors look on as the colors are presented at the Yuba-Sutter Veterans Stand Down.



Veterans proudly carry the American flag during the Yuba-Sutter Veterans Day Parade in Marysville.



At The Capitol

CACVSO State Legislative Priorities 2011

Introduce legislation to appropriate the full \$11 million in subvention funding as reflected in Military and Veterans Code Section 972.1(d).

California is home to 2.1 million veterans. Currently, the state budget allocates \$7.6 million to the County Veterans Service Offices (CVSO) in 56 California counties. As a result of this chronic underfunding by the state, CVSOs are understaffed and many are facing or have faced cutbacks and staff reductions. In spite of this, CVSOs, who are the first contact for many veterans in all 58 counties, were able to bring in \$100 in federal veterans benefits for every \$1 spent by the state. Without this funding, California's veterans will not get the government benefits for which they earned through their military service.

Introduce legislation that would permit the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) to collect data on veterans and to give that data to the Department of Veterans Affairs (CDVA).

This data would be collected upon initial incarceration and would be provided regularly to the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CDVA). The data would be used to connect incarcerated veterans and their families with the benefits they are still entitled to while incarcerated. More importantly, the data would be used assist the veteran upon release from incarceration.

CACVSO Federal Legislative Priorities 2011

Support legislation that would provide increased access for County Veterans Service Offices (CVSO) to VA information systems for use in developing and monitoring claims submitted on behalf of veterans.

CVSOs are local government agencies responsible for assisting veterans and their dependents and survivors in obtaining benefits to which they may be entitled. To do so, CVSOs need maximum possible access to VA client and claims databases. Enhancing this access will result in better, timelier services to claimants and reduce the workload in VA call centers.

Support legislative, regulatory or policy changes that would create a federal/state/local government partnership to reduce the VA claims backlog and expand outreach services to veterans.

VA has expressed the belief that one important way to reduce the crippling claims backlog is to insure that the initial submission of claims packages are as complete as possible. Individual claimants are unfamiliar with the requirements of the VA claims system and it is therefore necessary to have competent, trained intermediaries, such as CVSOs, participate in the preparation and submission of claims. Many CVSOs do not have the resources for community outreach that would enable them to reach the maximum number of possible benefit claimants. Federal/state/local partnerships will enable State and County veterans service programs to reach and assist more claimants thus helping to reduce the chronic VA claims backlog.

Support legislation that would authorize VA pharmacies to honor prescriptions written by non-VA physicians.

Currently, the VA medical system provides prescription medication to eligible veterans only if the prescription is written by a VA physician. If a veteran wishes to have the VA fill a prescription from a non-VA provider, he or she must make a medical appointment with a VA physician for the sole purpose of getting authorization for a medication already prescribed by the non-VA provider. This process places an unnecessary burden on the VA medical system by requiring its providers to duplicate work that has already been done in the private sector. Waiting times for appointments for this purpose can also result in adverse consequences when the medication is prescribed for an urgent or emergent medical need (and the veteran cannot afford the cost of a private pharmacy).

Support legislation that would eliminate the Means Test for veterans to qualify for VA medical care.

The VA currently uses Means Tests (income limits) as one of the factors in determining a veteran's eligibility for VA medical care. These income limitations have prevented some veterans who would otherwise qualify for enrollment, from obtaining their primary healthcare through the VA. In light of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010, we believe all veterans have earned the right and should be able to enroll and obtain their healthcare through the VA if they so choose.

CACVSO State Legislative Platform 2011

California Veterans Homes

Support legislative, regulatory or policy changes that provide increased access to California's Veterans Homes for those veterans suffering from Organic Brain Syndrome, Dementia, and Alzheimer's disease.

Support legislation to provide educational assistance to nursing students who commit to serve a specified number of years in California Veterans' Homes.

Other State Veterans Issues

Support legislation that would:

- create a Governor's Memorial Certificate similar to the Presidential Memorial Certification. Include information directing survivors to the CVSOs.
- increase the fee collected for Death Certificates and allocate that increase to help fund County Veterans Service Offices.
- provide state income tax relief to retirement pay of military retirees.

- exempt certain Disabled Veterans Business Enterprises from specific state licensing or certification fees.
- make it a criminal offense to intentionally misdirect or mislead a veteran, or anyone acting on the veterans behalf, concerning benefits or entitlements.
- establish a system of "credit points" for imprisoned veterans with honorable military service that could be considered in reference to early release.
- establish priority enrollment and registration for veterans in community colleges, state colleges, and universities.
- give a hiring preference in state civil service to veterans.
- require state agencies to coordinate with CDVA to improve state services provided to veterans.

Support the legislative priorities of the state Veterans Service Organizations that are in-line with our own legislative priorities.

Explore legislation that would change Military and Veterans Code to more accurately reflect the roles and responsibilities of the County Veterans Service Offices (CVSO).

CACVSO Federal Legislative Platform 2011

Support legislation that would:

- include "Blue Water Navy" veterans into the set of veterans with presumed exposure to Agent Orange.
- increase the maximum age limit of children covered by CHAMPVA and TRICARE to 26 to match the new healthcare programs passed in 2010.
- provide for payment of Concurrent Retirement and Disability Pay (CRDP) for all military retirees regardless of the percentage of their service-connected disabilities.
- eliminate Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) - Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) offset.
- re-instate the burial/plot allowance for all honorably-discharged veterans.
- increase current VA burial/plot reimbursement allowances and provide periodic increases to VA burial/plot reimbursement allowances.
- grant presumptive service connection for hepatitis C, "blast injuries," and acoustic trauma for service in a combat zone.
- increase the amounts paid under Improved Death Pension to be equal to the amounts paid under Improved Disability Pension.

- increase funding for the HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) voucher program.
- increase funding for transitional housing for women veterans with children.
- provide for a pro-rata additional allowance for dependents for all levels of compensation.
- establish outreach services to underserved veterans groups.
- eliminate the requirement for war-time service as an eligibility requirement for non-service connected and death pension.

Support legislation or regulatory or policy changes which expand and/or increase VA responsibility to educate veterans on their entitlements.

Support legislation or regulatory change to insure that all VA National Cemeteries are American Disability Association (ADA) compliant.



The Directory

ALAMEDA COUNTY

Stewart Smith, County Veterans Service Officer

6955 Foothill Blvd., Suite 300
Oakland, CA 94605
Hours: Mon - Fri, 9a - 5p
Phone: 510-577-3547 Fax: 510-577-1947

Tracy Murray, Assistant Veterans Service Officer

Phone: 510-577-1966

Gail White, Veterans Representative

24100 Amador St., 3rd Floor
Hayward, CA 94544
Hours: Tue & Thu 9a - 5p
Phone: 510-265-8271

Donnell Lewis, Veterans Representative

VA Vet Center
1504 Franklin St., Ste. 200
Oakland, CA
Hours: Wed, 8a - 4:30p
Phone: 510-763-3904 Fax: 510-763-5631

Bruce Khoy, Veterans Representative

Family Resource Center
39155 Liberty St., Ste. F620
Freemont, CA 94538
Hours: Tue & Thu, 8:30a - 4:30p
Phone: 510-795-2686 or 510-577-1926

AMADOR COUNTY

Floyd Martin, County Veterans Service Officer

Highway 49 & New Airport Rd.
Mail: 810 Court St.
Jackson, CA 95642
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Phone: 209-267-5764 Fax: 209-267-0419

BUTTE COUNTY

Patrick Hoover, County Veterans Service Officer

196 Memorial Way
Chico, CA 95926
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CALAVERAS COUNTY

Chele Beretz, County Veterans Service Officer

509 East Saint Charles St.
San Andreas, CA 95249
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COLUSA COUNTY

Thomas R. Parker, County Veterans Service Officer

Carol S. Pearson, Assistant Veterans Service Officer
901 Parkhill St.
Colusa, CA 95932
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CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

F. Michael Hoffschneider, County Veterans Service Officer

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Phone: 925-313-1481 Fax: 925-313-1490

100 37th St., #1033

Richmond, CA 94805
Hours: Tue, 1 - 3p
Phone: 510-374-3241 Fax: 510-374-7955

DEL NORTE COUNTY

Lindell Scarbrough, Assistant Veterans Service Officer

810 "H" St.
Crescent City, CA 95531
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EL DORADO COUNTY

Edward Swanson, County Veterans Service Officer

130 Placerville Dr., Ste. B
Placerville, CA 95667
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Phillip Navarro, Veterans Service Representative

1360 Johnson Blvd., Suite 103A
South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150
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FRESNO COUNTY

Charles Hunnicutt, County Veterans Service Officer

3845 North Clark St., #103
Fresno, CA 93726
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GLENN COUNTY

Brandon Thompson, County Veterans Service Officer

Cindy Holley, Assistant Veterans Service Officer
525 W. Sycamore, Ste. A
Willows, CA 95988
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HUMBOLDT COUNTY

Renā Maveety, County Veterans Service Officer

825 5th St., Room 310
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IMPERIAL COUNTY

Saul Sanabria, County Veterans Service Officer

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El Centro, CA 92243
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INYO AND MONO COUNTIES

Yvette Mason, Assistant County Veterans Service Officer

207 West South St.
Bishop, CA 93514
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KERN COUNTY

Chuck Bilakis, County Veterans Service Officer

1120 Golden State Ave.
Bakersfield, CA 93301
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Phone: 661-868-7300 Fax: 661-868-7301

455 Lexington St.
Delano, CA 93215
Hours: 1st & 3rd Tue, 9:30a - 3p;
2nd & 4th Fri, 9:30a - 3p
Phone: 661-725-3101

400 N. China Lake Blvd.
Ridgecrest, CA 93555
Hours: Wed, 10a - 3p
Phone: 760-375-1564

315 Lincoln St.
Taft, CA 93268
Hours: 4th Tue, 9a - 12n
Phone: 661-868-7300

1801 Westwind Dr.
Bakersfield, CA 93301
Hours: Mon, 10a - 2p
Phone: 661-632-1800

750 Lake Isabella Blvd.
Lake Isabella, CA 93240
Hours: 1st & 3rd Tue, 9:30a - 2p

1775 Hwy 58
Mojave, CA 93501
Hours: 2nd & 4th Thu, 10:30a - 3:30p
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KINGS COUNTY

Joe Wright, County Veterans Service Officer

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LAKE COUNTY

Jim Brown, County Veterans Service Officer

285 N. Main

Mailing: 255 North Forbes St.
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15145 Lakeshore Dr.
Clearlake, CA 95422
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Phone: 707-994-0646

LASSEN COUNTY

Susan Hawkins, County Veterans Service Officer

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Susanville, CA 96130
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LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Col. Joseph N. Smith, County Veterans Service Officer

Robert Saxon, Chief - Veterans Services
2615 S. Grand Ave., Ste. 100
Los Angeles, CA 90007
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Robert Ortiz, Veteran Services Officer

335 East Ave. K-10
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Ernest Hughes, Veteran Services Officer

11301 Wilshire Blvd., Building 206,
Room B-32
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Hours: Mon - Fri, 8a - 3p
Phone: 310-268-4690 ext. 48425
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351 East Temple, Room B-307

Los Angeles, CA 90012
Hours: Mon - Fri, 7:30a - 3:30p
Phone: 213-253-2677 ext. 14605
Fax: 213-253-5123

Peter Roman, Veteran Services Officer

1427 West Covina Pkwy.
West Covina, CA 91790
Hours: Mon - Fri, 8a - 12n

Phone: 562-388-8008
Fax: 562-388-8047

8644 Norwalk Blvd.
Whittier, CA 90606
Hours: Thu, 1 - 4p
Fax: 562-695-9040

Andre Brinney, Veteran Services Officer

17600-B Santa Fe Ave.
Rancho Dominguez, CA 90221
Hours: Mon - Thu, 7a - 3p
Phone: 310-761-2221
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Joseph Sapien, Veteran Services Officer

Sepulveda VA Outpatient Clinic
Bldg. 200, Goldline 2nd floor
16411 Plummer St., Rm. B-114
Sepulveda, CA 91343
Hours: Tue - Fri, 7a - 3:30p
Phone: 818-891-7711 ext. 9146

MADERA COUNTY

Charles Hunnicutt, County Veterans Service Officer

200 W. 4th St.
Madera, CA 93637
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Phone: 559-675-7766 Fax: 559-675-7911

MARIN COUNTY

Mort Tallen, County Veterans Service Officer

10 North San Pedro Rd., Suite 1010
San Rafael, CA 94903
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Phone: 415-499-6193 Fax: 415-473-3166

MARIPOSA COUNTY

Robert Johns, County Veterans Service Officer

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MENDOCINO COUNTY

Alice Watkins, County Veterans Service Officer

360 N. Harrison St.
Mail: P.O. Box 1306
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405 Observatory Ave.
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George Froschl, Veterans Service Representative

189 N. Main St.
Willits, CA 95490
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MERCED COUNTY

Darren Hughes, County Veterans Service Officer

Kay Spears, Supervising Veterans Claims Representative
3605 Hospital Rd., Suite E
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Phone: 209-385-7588 Fax: 209-725-3848

MODOC COUNTY

Harry Hitchings, County Veterans Service Officer

211 E. 1st St.
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Phone: 530-233-6209 Fax: 530-233-1235

MONO COUNTY

(See "Inyo and Mono Counties")

MONTEREY COUNTY

Thomas Griffin, County Veterans Service Officer

1200 Aguajito Rd., Room 105
Monterey, CA 93940
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Donald Jackson, Military & Veterans Service Representative

1000 S. Main St., Room 107
Salinas, CA 93901
Hours: Mon&Wed 1-5p; Tue&Thu 8a-12n & 1-5p; Fri, 8a-12n
Phone: 831-796-3585 Fax: 831-757-3475

William Zeigler, Military & Veterans Service Representative

VA Outpatient Clinic
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Fri 1 - 5p
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NAPA COUNTY

Patrick Jolly, County Veterans Service Officer

900 Coombs St., Ste. 257
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NEVADA COUNTY

Pamela Davinson, Veterans Service Officer

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ORANGE COUNTY

John Parent, County Veterans Service Officer

County Operations Center
1300 South Grand Ave., Building B
Santa Ana, CA 92705
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Tue, 9:30a - 4p
Phone: 714-567-7450 Fax: 714-567-7674

PLACER COUNTY

Rick Buckman, County Veterans Service Officer

1000 Sunset Blvd. Ste. 115
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PLUMAS COUNTY

Mike McCloud, County Veterans Service Officer

270 County Hospital Rd., #206
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RIVERSIDE COUNTY

William Earl, County Veterans Service Officer

4360 Orange St.
Riverside, CA 92501
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Jeannette Phillips, Veterans Representative II

County Administrative Center
749 N. State St.
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Clinton Hollins, Veterans Representative II **Jose Gonzalez, Veterans Representative II**

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SACRAMENTO COUNTY

Ted Canty, County Veterans Service Officer

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SAN BENITO COUNTY

Tom Griffin, County Veterans Service Officer

Shari Stevenson, Veterans Service Officer
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Tue & Thu, 1 - 5p
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SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY

Bill J. Moseley, Director

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Fri 8a - 4p
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Rachel Hay, Veterans Service Manager

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Darlene Lee, Veterans Service Representative II

Loma Linda VA Medical Center
11201 Benton St.
Loma Linda, CA 92357
Hours: Mon, Tue & Thu, 8a - 3p
Phone: (909) 583-6018

Misty Taylor, Veterans Service Representative II

56357 Pima Trail
Yucca Valley, CA 92284
Hours: Tue, 9a - 3p
Phone: 760-228-5234

73629 Sun Valley Dr.
Twentynine Palms, CA 92277
Hours: Wed, 8:30a - 12n
Phone: 760-361-4636

Dawn Ortiz, Veterans Service Representative II

Veterans Home of California
100 East Veterans Pkwy., Building 100
Barstow, CA 92311-7003
Hours: Mon & Thu, 8a - 4:30p
Phone: 760-252-6257

SAN DIEGO COUNTY

Tom Splitgerber, County Veterans Service Officer

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San Diego, CA 92123
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Phone: 858-694-3222 Fax: 858-505-6961

Chris Gunn

Michael Piepenburg

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Oceanside, CA 92056
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Phone: 760-643-2049

SAN FRANCISCO COUNTY

Cheryl D. Cook, Assistant Veterans Service Officer

27B VanNess Ave.
San Francisco, CA 94102
Hours: Mon - Thu, 9a - 12n & 1 - 4p
Phone: 415-503-2000 Fax: 415-503-2010

VA Medical Center

4150 Clement St., Building 2, Room 169
San Francisco, CA 94121
Hours: Tue - Thu, 7:30a - 12n & 1 - 4p
Phone: 415-379-5613 Fax: 415-750-2256

SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY

Ron Green, County Veterans Service Officer

105 S. San Joaquin St.
Stockton, CA 95202
Hours: Mon - Fri, 8a - 5p
Phone: 209-468-2916 Fax: 209-468-2918

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

Dana Cummings, County Veterans Service Officer

801 Grand Ave.
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408
Hours: Mon - Fri 9a - 5p
Phone: 805-781-5766 Fax: 805-781-5769

Senior Center

240 Scott St.
Paso Robles, CA 93446
Hours: 2nd Thu, call for appointments
Phone: 805-237-3881

SAN MATEO COUNTY

Jeffrey Young, County Veterans Service Officer

400 Harbor Blvd., Bldg. B
Belmont, CA 94002
Hours: Mon - Fri, 8a - 4p
Phone: 650-802-6598 or 802-6446
Fax: 650-595-2419

VAPAHCS Next Step Center

795 Willow Rd., Bldg. 323A
Menlo Park, CA 94025
Hours: Wed, 8:30a - 12n & 1-3:30p
Phone: 650-566-0240

Peninsula Vet Center

2946 Broadway St.
Redwood City, CA 94062
Hours: Mon - Fri, 8a - 4:30p
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SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

Mozart Booker, County Veterans Service Officer

108 E. Locust
Lompoc, CA 93436
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315 Camino Del Remedio
Santa Barbara, CA 93110
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SANTA CLARA COUNTY

Ken Kershaw, County Veterans Service Officer

68 North Winchester Blvd.
Santa Clara, CA 95050
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Phone: 408-553-6000 Fax: 408-553-6016



80 Great Oaks Blvd.
San Jose, CA 95119
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SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

Allan R. Moltzen, County Veterans Service Officer

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Lorena Yaquez, Veterans Service Representative

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Watsonville, CA 95076
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(by appt.)
Phone: 831-763-4419 Fax: 831-763-4720

SHASTA COUNTY

Bob Dunlap, County Veterans Service Officer

1855 Shasta St.
Redding, CA 96001
Hours: Mon - Fri, 8a - 12n & 1 - 4p
Phone: 530-225-5616 Fax: 530-245-6454

SISKIYOU COUNTY

Tim Grenvik, County Veterans Service Officer

105 E. Oberlin Rd.
Yreka, CA 96097
Hours: Mon - Thu, 8a - 5p
Phone: 530-842-8010 Fax: 530-841-4314

SOLANO COUNTY

Ted Putillo, County Veterans Service Officer

675 Texas St., Suite 4700
Fairfield, CA 94533
Hours: Mon - Fri, 9a - 12n & 1 - 4p
Phone: 707-784-6590 Fax: 707-784-0927

SONOMA COUNTY

Chris Bingham, County Veterans Service Officer

3725 Westwind Blvd., Ste. 10.

P.O. Box 4059
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
Hours: Mon - Fri, 8a - 5p
Phone: 707-565-5960 Fax: 707-565-5980

STANISLAUS COUNTY

Carolyn Hebenstreich, Assistant Veterans Service Officer

121 Downey Ave., Suite 102
P.O. Box 1143
Modesto, CA 95353
Hours: Mon - Fri, 8a - 4:30p
Phone: 209-558-7380 Fax: 209-558-8648

SUTTER AND YUBA COUNTIES

Marvin King, Jr., County Veterans Service Officer

5730 Packard Ave. Ste. 300
Marysville, CA 95901
Hours: Mon - Fri, 8a - 5p
Phone: 530-749-6710 Fax: 530-749-6711

TEHAMA COUNTY

Bill Johnson, County Veterans Service Officer

633 Washington St., Room 15
P.O. Box 729
Red Bluff, CA 96080
Hours: Mon - Thu, 12n - 4p;
Outreach Fri mornings
Phone: 530-529-3664 Fax: 530-529-7933

TULARE COUNTY

Ken Cruickshank, County Veterans Service Officer

205 North "L" St.
Tulare, CA 93274
Hours: Mon - Thu, 7:30 a - 5:00 p;
Fri, 8 a - 12 n
Phone: 559-684-4960 Fax: 559-685-3370

Veterans Memorial Building

1900 W. Olive Ave.
Porterville, CA 93257
Hours: Mon - Fri, 9a - 2p
Phone: 559-781-7963 Fax: 559-781-7979

TUOLUMNE COUNTY

Beth Barnes, Assistant Veterans Service Officer

105 E. Hospital Rd.
Sonora, CA 95370
Hours: Mon - Fri, 9a - 12n & 1 - 4p
Phone: 209-533-6280 Fax: 209-533-6282

VENTURA COUNTY

Mike McManus, County Veterans Service Officer

John Jackson, Veterans Claims Officer
James Rodriguez, Veterans Claims Officer
Rochna Alaniz, Veterans Claims Officer
855 Partridge Dr.
Ventura, CA 93003
Hours: Mon - Fri, 9a - 4p
Phone: 805-477-5155 Fax: 805-477-5418

YOLO COUNTY

Billy Wagster, County Veterans Service Officer

120 West Main St., Suite A
Woodland, CA 95695
Hours: Mon - Fri, 7:30 a - 12 n & 1 - 4 p
Phone: 530-406-4850 Fax: 530-666-7456

YUBA COUNTY

(See "Sutter and Yuba Counties")

Alphabetical Listing of CVSOs and Staff

This is a list of CVSOs and their lead workers as included in the directory above. It is not a comprehensive list of all CVSO staff.

Alcaarez, William	Solano	Mason, Yvette*	Inyo/Mono
Barnes, Beth*	Tuolumne	Maveety, Rena.....	Humboldt
Beret, Chele	Calaveras	McCloud, Mike.....	Plumas
Bikakis, Chuck	Kern	McManus, Mike	Ventura
Bingham, Chris	Sonoma	Moltzen, Allan R.....	Santa Cruz
Booker, Mozart	Santa Barbara	Moseley, Bill.....	San Bernardino
Brinney, Andre	Los Angeles	Munley, Phillip A.	Contra Costa
Brown, Jim.....	Lake	Murphy, Rhonda	Santa Barbara
Buckman, Rick.....	Placer	Murrey, Tracy	Alameda
Canty, Ted	Sacramento	Navaro, Phillip.....	El Dorado
Cook, Cheryl D.*	San Francisco	Ortiz, Dawn	San Bernardino
Cruichshank, Ken	Tulare	Ortiz, Robert.....	Los Angeles
Cummings, Dana	San Luis Obispo	Parent, John.....	Orange
Earl, William.....	Riverside	Parker, Charles R.	Colusa
Ennis, Michael L.....	Alameda	Pealer, Jeff	Sacramento
Foley, James	Nevada	Pearson, Carol S.*	Colusa
Froschl, George.....	Mendocino	Phillips, Jeannette	Riverside
Gamblin, Eric	Nevada	Piepenburg, Michael	San Diego
Gonzalez, Jose	Riverside	Putillo, Ted.....	Solano
Green, Ron.....	San Joaquin	Rhoades, Rhoda.....	San Bernardino
Grenvik, Tim.....	Siskiyou	Roman, Peter	Los Angeles
Gunn, Chris	San Diego	Sanabria, Saul.....	Imperial
Gurst, Lawrence.....	Alameda	Sapien, Joseph.....	Los Angeles
Hawkins, Susan	Lassen	Saxon, Robert*	Los Angeles
Hay, Rachel	San Bernardino	Scarbrough, Linndell*	Del Norte
Hebenstreich, Carolyn*	Stanislaus	Smith, Joseph N.	Los Angeles
Hitchings, Harry.....	Modoc	Snook, Dale.....	Plumas
Holley, Cindy*	Glenn	Spears, Kay*	Merced
Hollins, Clinton.....	Riverside	Splitgerber, Tom.....	San Diego
Hoover, Patrick.....	Butte	Stenberg, Carl	Mendocino
Hughes, Darren.....	Merced	Swanson, Edward	El Dorado
Hughes, Ernest.....	Los Angeles	Tallen, Mort	Marin
Hunnicutt, Charles	Fresno	Taylor, Misty.....	San Bernardino
Jackson, Donald.....	Monterey	Thomas, Bob.....	Santa Barbara
Jackson, John	Ventura	Thompson, Brandon	Glenn
Johns, Robert	Mariposa	Vazquez, Lorena.....	Santa Cruz
Johnson, Bill	Tehama	Wagster, Billy	Yolo
Jolly, Patrick.....	Napa	Watkins, Alice	Mendocino
Kershaw, Ken	Santa Clara	White, Gail	Alameda
King, Marvin Jr.....	Sutter/Yuba	Wright, Joe	Kings
Lee, Darlene	San Bernardino	Young, Jeffrey.....	San Mateo
Lewis, Donnell	Alameda	Zeigler, William	Monterey
Martin, Floyd.....	Amador		

Bold Type denotes County Veterans Service Officer

*Acting on behalf of County Veterans Service Officer



For more information regarding the CACVSO
or its member counties, visit
www.cacvso.org

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