



Leadership, Partnership, Stewardship

Wake County Business Plans *FY 2007 - 2009*

Community Services Department
Veterans Service Office

**Wake County/Community Services Department
Veterans Service Office Business Plan**

1. Statement of purpose

The Wake County Veterans Services Office (VSO) assists veterans and their families with obtaining local, state and federal benefits. The VSO helps them discover the benefits to which they are entitled and assists them with the application process.

2. Scope

The VSO functions to serve the veterans of Wake County in every capacity including but not limited to the following:

- Assisting veterans and their dependents in filing claims for non-service connected pensions, service-connected disabilities, and other benefits.
- Assisting veterans and their dependents in identifying medical treatment, transportation, necessary medicines, prosthetic items and adaptive equipment, and payment of medical bills.
- Assisting veterans and their dependents in filing for educational benefits at universities, junior colleges, vocational institutions, correspondence courses, and job training.
- Assisting veterans in obtaining VA Home Loan information.
- Assisting veterans in obtaining military records, correcting military records, and upgrading of discharges.
- Assisting veterans in formulating appeals when VA benefits are denied.
- Visiting veterans and their dependents in their private homes, hospitals, and nursing homes to conduct business concerning their benefits.
- Conducting weekly information sessions to veterans and their dependents.
- Providing an updated web link to Wake County’s website to inform the public about services available for veterans and their dependents.

3. Desired outcomes

The VSO will continue to assist veterans and their families in receiving all federal, state, and local funds by reaching the following monthly/annual goals.

<u>Client Contacts</u>	<u>Monthly</u>	<u>Annual Goals</u>
Telephone contacts	876	6000
Average Office visits	77	1200
Outreach visits	10	120
Veterans info sessions	4	50
Claims sent to NCDVA	54	450
Home visits	10	120

4. Priorities

- Increase veteran outreach
- Continue to build on existing community relations with Wake County veterans
- Conduct weekly veteran information sessions
- Enhance Wake County Veterans Services website
- Implement the Paperless Office for Warriors (POW) (FY 2007-08)
- Evaluate staffing needs

5. Status report

The demand for veteran services has continued to rise due to increased number of veterans relocating to Wake County. Since moving into the new location at 567 E. Hargett Street, office visits have increased by 88% due to improved accessibility to the physically challenged, access to the bus line, and quick and efficient service. In July 2006, the office added a full time VSO officer resulting in increased services intake capacity. Wake County Veterans Services also provides outreach in a variety of methods such as conducting information sessions (on and off site), developing the Wake County Veterans Services website, and visiting veterans organizations such as the Wake County Vet Council and the American Legion.

6. Demand analysis

Factors causing fluctuations in demand for veteran's services include socio-economics, The War in Iraq, medical services, and aging population.

- Socio-economics- the downward turn in the economy following 9/11 caused financial hardships for veterans who looked to the Federal VA for financial and medical benefits to help relieve them of some of their burdens.
- Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom military service members being demobilized from fighting in the Middle East receive briefings of their Federal VA benefits. They receive a briefing when they first arrive in the US, as well as a more detailed follow-up briefing at local armories. This dynamic has led to an increase in the number of veterans who are aware of their benefits and process for applying for the benefits with their local VSO.
- Medical Services- The Durham VA Medical Center has reported steady and large increases in the number of veterans requesting two-year free medical assistance (a benefit for soldiers returning from the Middle East). This is an indicator of an increasing veterans population. For the past two years, the Wake VSO has experienced a 10% increase (and growing) in the number of requests for on-site nursing home visits to determine eligibility for VA medical benefits.

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- Aging Population- While WWII and Korean War veterans are dying; they are steadily being replaced by Vietnam veterans who are aging and in need of more services. As of July 2006, an estimated 51,377 veterans were in Wake County, a large portion being Vietnam veterans.

According to data from July, 2006, there are:

- Wartime Veterans in Wake County – 21,439
- Persian Gulf – 9,575
- Vietnam Era – 1,214
- Korean Conflict – 4,662
- World War II – 5,988

7. Define approaches for achieving outcomes

The following is a list of strategies employed by Wake County Veterans Services in order to guarantee that the highest service is given to Wake County veterans:

- Veteran outreach
- Benefits counseling
- Community activism with local community outreach organizations
- Group information session conducted at various locations
- Training seminars

8. Performance measures

The VSO office measures performance by tracking the number of veterans seen per month, the number of processed claims, phone conversations with veterans or their families, and the amount of service information given to veterans. The VSO reports this information to the North Carolina District of Veterans Affairs monthly. The chart below shows projections for these performance measures:

	Projected 06-07	Actual 05-06	Goal 07-08
Veterans Served	1,531	1,742	2,090
Telephone Calls	12,060	13,358	16,030
Number of Claims	657	835	1,000
Customer Service Survey %	95%	93.4%	95%

9. Milestones of service accomplishments

The following is a list of milestones of service accomplishments:

- Hired and trained two new Veterans Services Officers
- Moved to the A.A. Thompson Center (567 E. Hargett St.)
- Revamped the Veterans Services website

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10. Resource requirements

- a. Staff** - Current staff levels consist of a Veterans Services Administrator, two Veterans Services Officers, and a Customer Service Representative/Assistant Veterans Services Officer. Staffing is sufficient to meet current workloads.
- b. Operations** - Operational budgets are expected to stay at current levels for the next fiscal year.
- c. Capital** - Capital requirements will be included in the County's capital funding programs.