ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

COURTESY • ACCOUNTABILITY • RESPECT • EXCELLENCE

Presentation to

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS

Acting Director Terry Prince
March 2, 2022

COURTESY • ACCOUNTABILITY • RESPECT • EXCELLENCE

6-POINT PLAN UPDATE

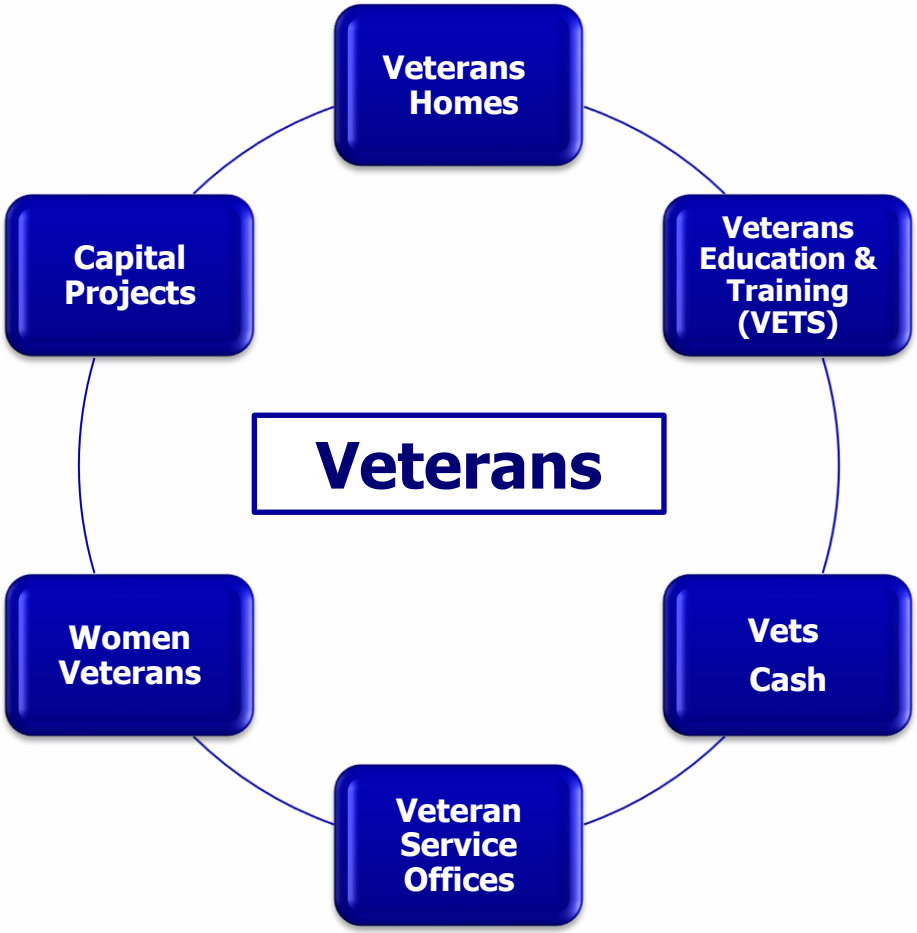
1. Restructure senior leadership
   - Clear Chain of Command
2. Improve culture and communication
   - All staff have email
   - Tuesdays with Terry – Direct link
   - Website redesign/Collateral updates
   - Internal/external newsletter
   - Veteran-CENTERED in all efforts

3. Prioritize infection control
   - Superb support from IDPH, MOU with USDVA, Infection Prevention Committees
4. Hire experts in key roles
   - LaSalle Home Administrator, IDVA Chief of Staff, Senior Veterans Home Administrator, Women's Veterans Program Manager, Public Information Officer, Legislative Liaison
5. Implement clear plans and policies
   - Policies in place for COVID prevention, masking, testing, PPE, staffing
6. Enhance department technology
   - Computer refresh in-progress; updated cell phones for VSOs

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

MISSION

Empower veterans and their families to thrive in Illinois - through robust benefit programs that advance their quality of life.



ADDITIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Since April 1, 2021

- Opened Veterans' Home at Chicago
- Collaboration with IDPH for wastewater surveillance pilot program
- Updated essential policy procedures in collaboration with IDPH and USDVA
- Achieved highest vaccination rate of all state agencies
- Leadership site visits to all homes regularly
- Served 45,000+ veterans in Veteran Service Offices & State-Approving Agency
- Annual report – revamped and on time
- Began IDVA strategy development with external consultant

ILLINOIS VETERANS' HOMES

COURTESY • ACCOUNTABILITY • RESPECT • EXCELLENCE

VETERANS' HOME AT CHICAGO

- 200 bed facility – all private rooms and bathrooms; Pioneer model
- This $121 Million facility creates 300 new jobs in the Chicagoland area
- Eleven residents already in the building since January 2022

VETERANS' HOME AT QUINCY

- Working with CDB/USDVA
- 200 new construction jobs in the Quincy community (at project peak)
- $230 Million invested in the community through the "Rebuild Illinois Program"

REBUILD ILLINOIS

On target to open Summer/Fall 2024

ONGOING HOME PROJECTS

Anna

General building repairs and improvements: $2,666,700

LaSalle

Generator, chiller and mechanical systems replacement: $2,603,600
Home renovation: $4,194,400
Nurse call and fire alarm systems replacement: $583,100

Manteno

Emergency water upgrades: $9,934,118
Renovation for isolation rooms: $518,238
HVAC upgrade: $4,313,900

Quincy

Cemetery restoration and expansion: $1,386,025

HOMES OVERVIEW

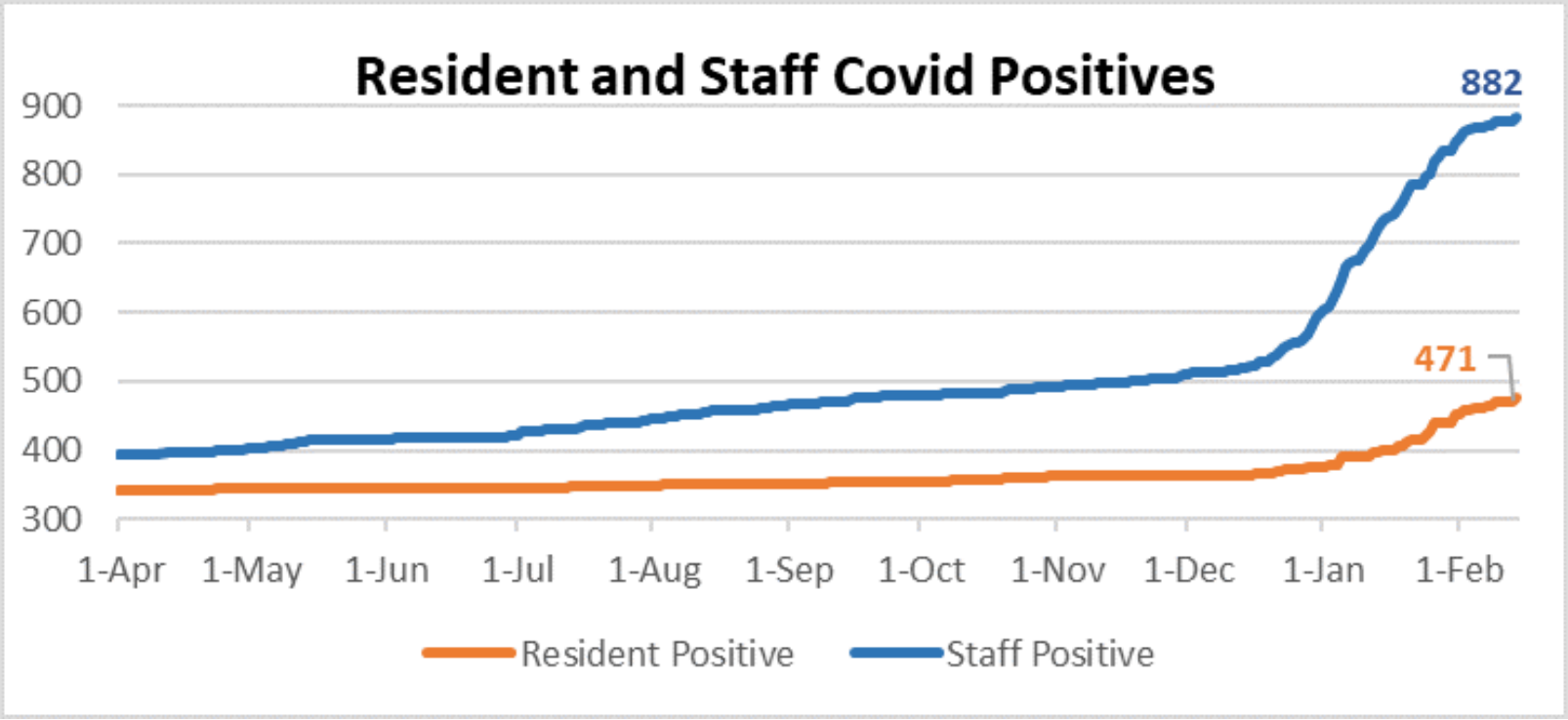
Home census and admissions since July 1, 2021 & anticipated admissions through June 30, 2022

	Current Census	Admitted	Anticipated	Total*
Anna	39	13	11	**50**
Chicago	8	8	38	**46**
LaSalle	88	10	38	**126**
Manteno	159	27	34	**193**
Quincy	261	31	47	**308**

*Current Census + Anticipated

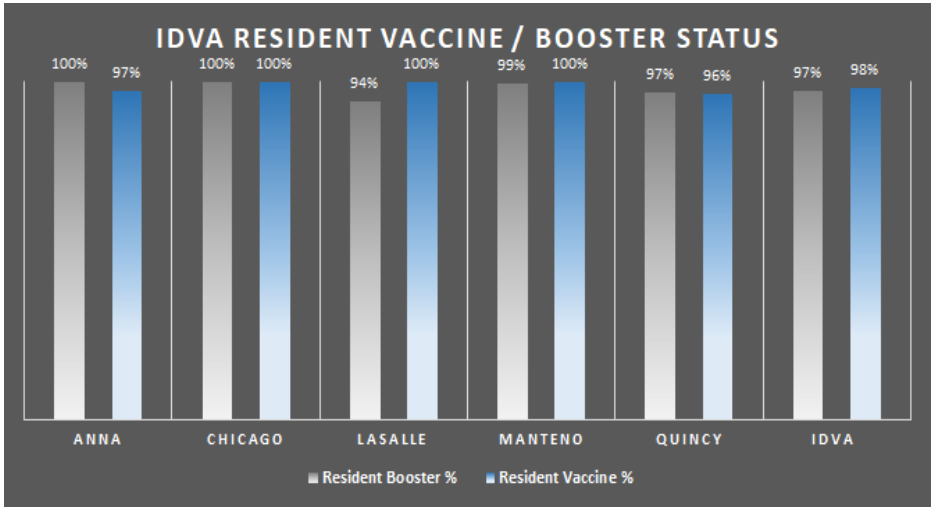
HOMES OVERVIEW

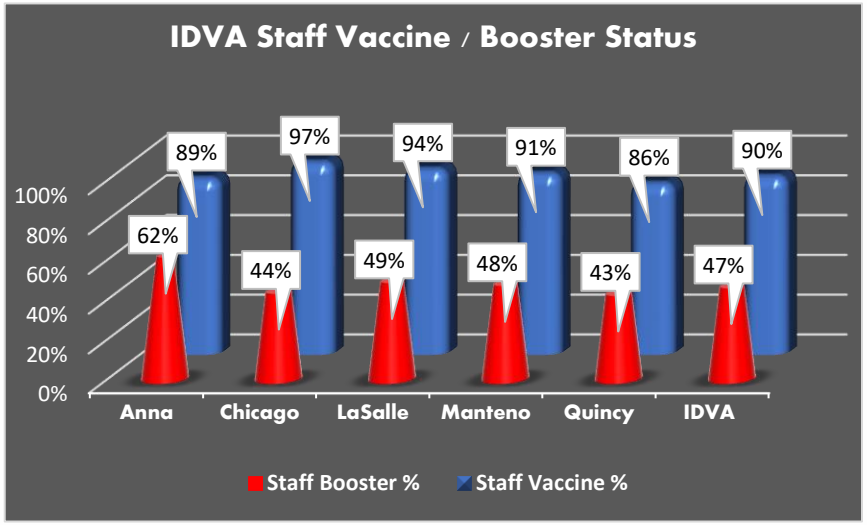
On-going COVID monitoring efforts



HOMES OVERVIEW

Vaccination/Booster information





SUPPORTING ILLINOIS' VETERANS

COURTESY • ACCOUNTABILITY • RESPECT • EXCELLENCE

FIELD OVERVIEW 2021

Veterans Service Officers had
more than 95,605 touchpoints
with veterans through office visits, emails, phone calls, faxes, and events

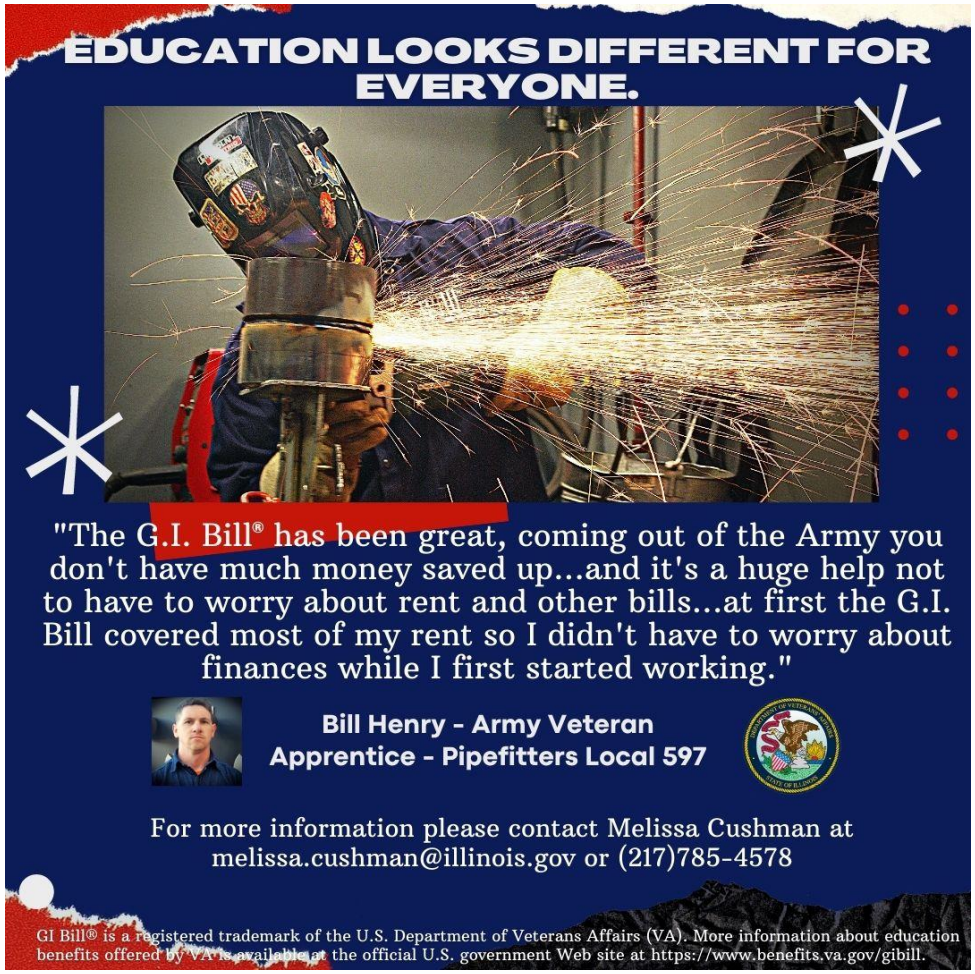
Accomplishments during FY21

- In-office and remote services
- IDVA University internal training
- Hiring to fill key positions
- Four office moves for accessibility and proximity to veteran populations
- Represented claims in 103 Appeal Hearings
- Established 3,601 new veteran profiles
- Issued 2,685 hunting and fishing licenses and 285 camping fee waivers

SAA OVERVIEW

Accomplishments during FY21

- Covered 1,237 MIA-POW Scholarship claims
- Processed 306 Educational Opportunity Grants
- Maintained the approval of 1,240 education and training facilities.
- Highest possible score achieved on U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs program inspection.



VETERANS' CASH GRANTS

Recently funded grant programs include:

- **Code Platoon**
  Coding boot camp for veterans
- **Donka, Inc. – Operation Bright Futures Program**
  Adaptive technology, computer training, and job readiness services to persons with physical, visual and learning disabilities
- **Allenforce – SheForce**
  Women veterans provided direct services and peer support services for mental health needs
- **Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Illinois**
  Advocacy services to veterans, dependents & survivors
- **Illinois AMVETS**
  Support Veterans Service Department by providing salary for a Veteran Service Officer

ENGAGEMENT WITH VETERANS

COURTESY • ACCOUNTABILITY • RESPECT • EXCELLENCE

STRONGER COMMUNICATION

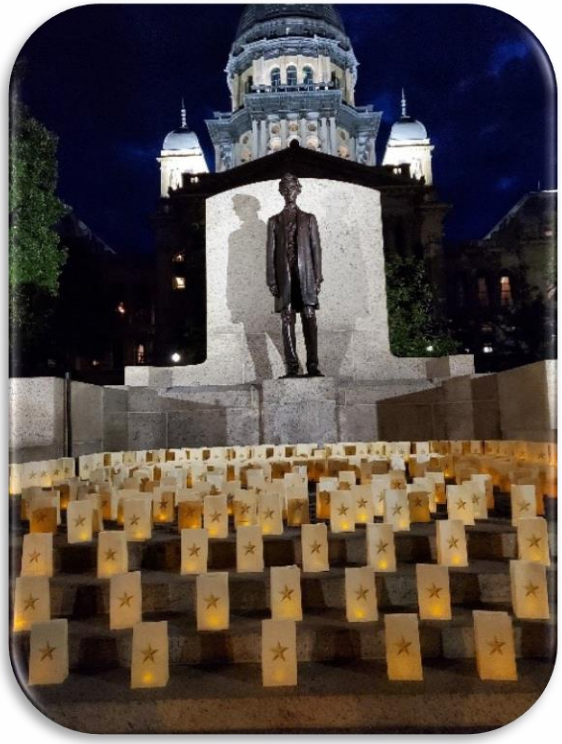
Website update

- Easy and intuitive navigation
- Upgrade allows veterans to learn about earned benefits and how IDVA can help obtain them
- Presents information and resources clearly
- Reflects approachable and helpful organizational culture

Social media

- Facebook primary social media platform for veteran connection
- Recognize events, branch anniversaries, remembrance days
- Stream virtual events
- Informational campaigns

MORE VETERANS EVENTS



Gold Star Mother's Day
Virtual Event

Veterans Day at the
Illinois State Fair

Purple Heart Day

WORKING FOR VETERANS

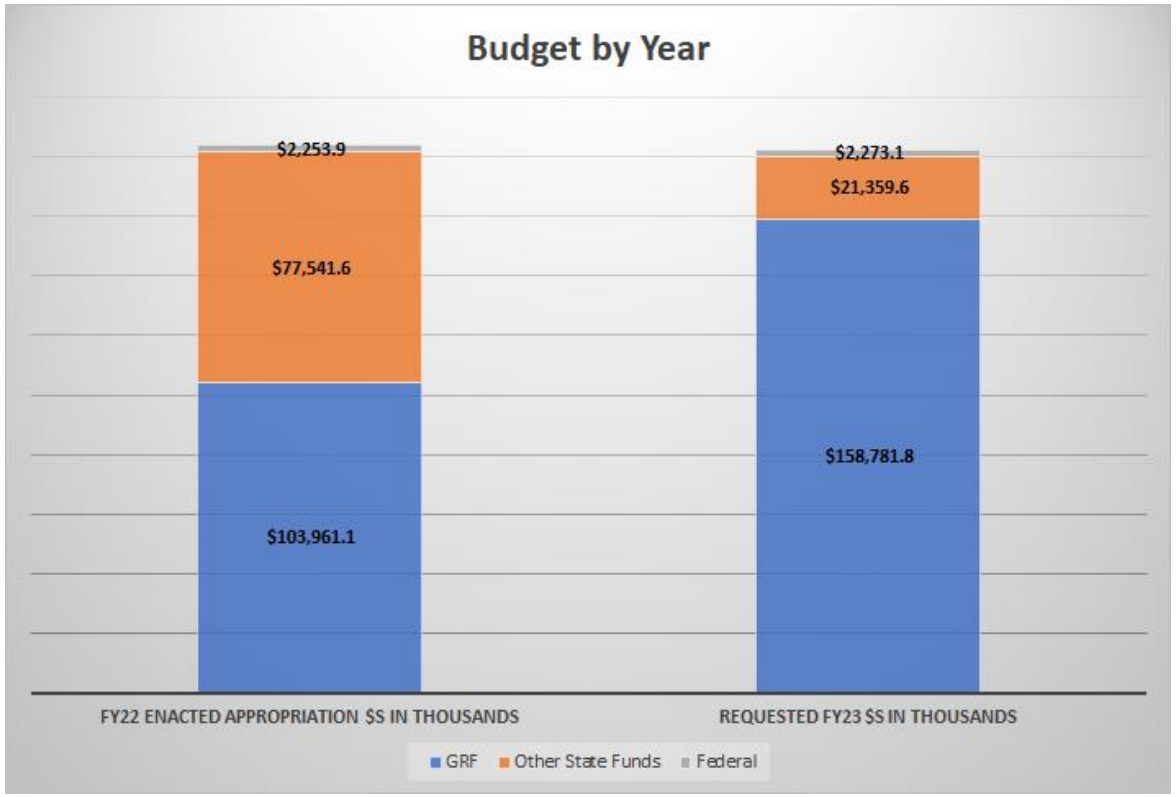
- Veterans suicide prevention efforts with Department of Human Services
- Formation of Veterans Service-Related Ailments Task Force
- Interagency Task Force with Illinois Office to Prevent & End Homelessness
- VSO relocation for easier access
- Women Veterans Month & Day
- Internal strategic planning to support veteran-centered culture
- Veterans Accountability Unit – June 1, 2022
- VSO training conference – inviting County VACs

FY23
BUDGET REQUEST

COURTESY • ACCOUNTABILITY • RESPECT • EXCELLENCE

REQUEST HIGHLIGHTS

- IDVA Budget Highlights:
  - **Total Budget Request of $182.4 Million**
  - Veterans Homes
  - VSOs
  - Suicide prevention
  - Homeless Veterans Programs
  - Education and grants



CONTINUED EFFORTS

FY23 budget will support continued efforts by IDVA for veterans

- Veteran admissions to new Chicago Home
- Serving a robust community of veterans in Veterans' Homes
- Hiring to support new Home admissions
- Expanding programming, including veteran suicide prevention efforts
- Supporting initiatives such as Women Veterans Day
- Working for veterans and their families through Veteran Assistance Programs, Vets Cash grant programs, and GI Educational Program

SUMMARY

The Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs continues to serve veterans and their families by placing them at the **absolute center** of our every effort. Veterans answer the call to serve, and we will empower them to thrive in our state as an expression of our gratitude for their service to our country.

We appreciate the dedicated and generous support of the General Assembly and look forward to even bigger things in 2022-2023.

THANK YOU

COURTESY • ACCOUNTABILITY • RESPECT • EXCELLENCE