

Ho-Chunk Nation Division of Veterans Affairs

“Our main goal is to get a veteran service connected, so they can receive disability compensation for anything that may have happened to them while on active duty.”

– Margaret Garvin, Veterans Service Officer

Program Description

The Ho-Chunk Nation Division of Veterans Affairs (DVA) serves roughly 394 veterans who are members of the Ho-Chunk Nation. The division offers the same services as a county veteran service office and provides additional tribal services. Those services include an annual emergency assistance fund. The department works to make all disabled veterans service connected, enabling them to access U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) care.

Successful Strategies

Partnership

The Division of Veterans Affairs maintains a strong partnership with other Ho-Chunk tribal departments and the regional and county VA offices in Wisconsin. The division issues referrals to the two tribal clinics and the regional VA hospital. DVA also partners with the Executive Housing Department, which runs a veterans home ownership program that provides low interest loans to tribal veterans seeking housing. Other tribal department partnerships include Social Services, the Department of Health, and the Ho-Chunk Housing Community Development Agency, which provides a veteran housing program with 10 available units. The DVA mainly serves homeless veterans.

Cultural Considerations

DVA makes every attempt to accommodate the different religions present within the Ho-Chunk community. As a tribal office, DVA also follows the cultures and traditions of the Ho-Chunk people.

Operated by: The Ho-Chunk Nation of Wisconsin

Location: Black River Falls, WI

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Community: The Ho-Chunk Nation of Wisconsin is without a reservation, but owns tribal lands throughout the state. Its tribal headquarters and administration are located in Black River Falls, WI.



LTSS Research: Veteran Support

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Training

DVA stresses the importance of accreditation for veteran service officers. An assistant veteran service officer recently obtained accreditation, which increases DVA's capacity to serve tribal veterans.

"I think it's amazing that we have a Veterans Office within the Nation...I am very thankful that Ho-Chunk Nation feels that they need to have employees focusing on veterans full time."

– Margaret Garvin

Funding

The majority of the funding for the program comes from National Professional Development funds, which are sponsored by Ho-Chunk Nation. DVA also receives a small grant from the state of Wisconsin.

Future Considerations

DVA is not always able to meet the needs of elder veterans, especially regarding rehabilitation and respite services. Additional funding would allow the program to include these services. Improved data collection would also improve tracking of individuals served and services provided.

Lessons Learned

When coordinating with other tribal departments and VA offices, DVA has developed an electronic confirmation process for veteran paper work. This is a useful tool in reducing confusion between the departments.