

**Board of Chosen Freeholders**

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Services Are Available For Hunterdon Veterans During Pandemic

Hunterdon County's Veterans Services Officer (VSO) Richard Booth continues to be available for Veterans needing assistance, while generally working remotely to adhere to social distancing requirements during the pandemic, Freeholder Board Deputy Director Sue Soloway has reported.

Soloway, the Board's Veterans Liaison, stated, "Mr. Booth has been on the job and working throughout the COVID-19 health crisis, helping Veterans at a time when many resources may not have been available or accessible to our Veterans. He has been available to help Veterans remotely, but where it is absolutely essential, he has met at his office on Gauntt Place with Veterans. A plexiglass partition is in place and Rich and anyone he is meeting with must wear face coverings."

VSO Booth, a U.S. Navy Veteran, noted, "During the pandemic the two Veterans hospitals in the state have remained available to our Veterans for health care, but there are many precautions in place. Anyone needing help should call me at (908) 788-1361."

Booth added, "While generally working remotely to observe health protocols, I have been responding to and working with many of our Veterans who have needed help. As an example, recently I was able to gain a correction for a Veteran whose VA payment was greatly reduced due to a clerical error and this was done totally remotely, without contact."

VSO Booth is a certified Veterans Service Officer, having achieved accreditation through The National Association of Veterans Services Officers (NACVSO), which gives him permission to represent Veterans legally. Accreditation allows Booth to be a Representative for Veterans, such as Power of Attorney, to the Veterans Administration (VA) and allows him to communicate on their behalf. This accreditation also trained and gave Booth access to Veteran records on the Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS), an online claims service for Veterans, for quicker results.

VSO Booth is available weekdays, 8:30 to 4 pm; by phone: 908-788-1361, or by email: rbooth@co.hunterdon.nj.us. VA Customer Service can also be reached at 1-800-827-1000.