

Fairfield County's Veterans Service Commission

Located in Lancaster, the Veterans Service Commission plays a crucial role in serving the needs of local veterans and their families. They offer many valuable programs and support such as:



- **Benefit Claims Assistance-** Helps veterans file claims (206 claims filed year to date) for VA disability compensation, health care, home loans, education, and burial and memorial benefits.
- **Advocacy and Representation-** Acts as a veteran's advocate in dealing with the Department of Veterans Affairs and other agencies with appealing denied claims or ensuring correct compensation is received.
- **Information and Referral-** Provides accurate resources for mental health and counseling services, employment and job training programs, housing assistance, and state and local benefits.
- **Community Outreach and Education-** Educates veterans and their families about benefits and resources through events, workshops, and one-on-one consultations.
- **Support for Families and Survivors-** Assists spouses, dependents, and survivors with Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, survivor pension, and educational assistance.
- **Other services include-** Transportation to VA Healthcare appointments (over 649 veterans transported year to date), emergency financial assistance (helped over 80 veterans year to date), and gray area retirement application assistance.

Currently, they are focused on improving internal training and customer service, establishing and maintaining working relationships with partner organizations, and improving outreach and engagement. In addition, the Veterans Service Commission is working to create a Veterans Claims Clinic that will extend these crucial services to more areas of Fairfield County with a start goal of early 2027.

To provide all the above-mentioned resources and with the constant evolving federal regulations, updated procedures and documentation as well as frequent staff training is crucial. Building trust and encouraging veterans to seek assistance can pose challenges. While many are aware that these services exist, some do not seek assistance due to personal pride, a belief that others are more deserving, a lack of trust in the VA system, or unresolved mental health issues and trauma.

The Veterans Service Commission ensures no veteran is left behind. Their mission goes beyond obligations. It is built on respect, dignity, and community support. With this service and others like it, comes challenges. Due to ongoing budgetary constraints, the office faces barriers in providing the comprehensive claims services that many veterans seek. Some organizations that offer similar services charge substantial fees. It is important to be cautious and ask questions.

To learn more about the Fairfield County Veterans Commission, to seek help, or to get involved, visit <https://www.fcvsc.org/>.