



**OREGON DEPARTMENT**  
*of* **VETERANS' AFFAIRS**



# **COUNTY VETERAN SERVICES**

**INFORMATIONAL BRIEFING TO THE HOUSE VETERANS & EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE**  
**MAY 21, 2019**

**KELLY FITZPATRICK, DIRECTOR**



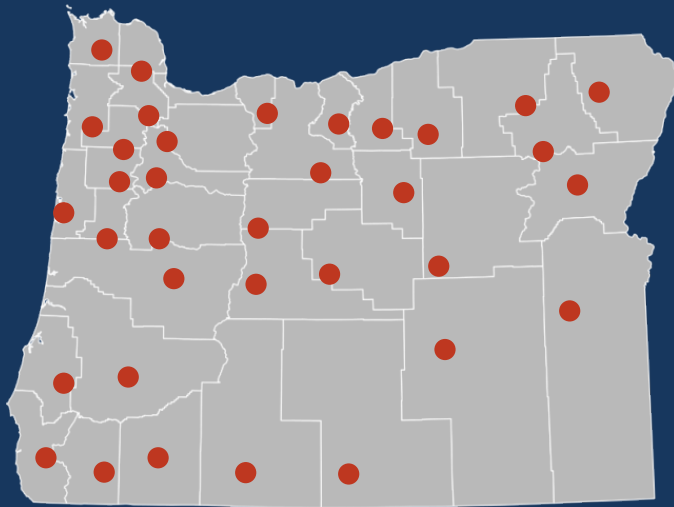
# RETURN ON INVESTMENT



VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



## STATE INVESTMENT

**\$8.7 million** for the 2017-19 biennium in state pass-through funding to 36 counties for veteran service office operations

## RETURN ON INVESTMENT

**\$2.6 billion** in federal VA disability compensation and pension payments to veterans in Oregon (FY 17 and FY 18)





# ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

## COUNTY and CVSO

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- County contributes funding for CVSO operations
- Employs or contracts with County Veteran Service Officers (CVSO)
- CVSOs act in direct advocacy to veterans and their families in
  - Preparing and presenting claims to the federal VA for disability compensation and pension payments
  - Assisting veterans with federal VA eligibility and enrollment for healthcare and education benefits
- CVSOs conduct outreach county-wide to connect veterans to benefits
- CVSOs act as a referral to other veteran resources

## ODVA

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- Holds Power of Attorney (POA) granted by federal VA for all federal VA claims
  - All CVSO work under ODVA's POA
- Provides initial and ongoing training, certification and technical assistance to CVSOs
  - Certifies CVSOs for federal VA accreditation
- Performs quality assurance oversight, and submits all county claims and appeals to federal VA
- Represents veterans and their families at federal VA claims appeals hearings
- Provides state pass-through funding for CVSO functions



# COUNTY PASS-THROUGH FUNDS

## AUTHORITY

- Duties of CVSO: “give aid and assistance to any veteran . . . in applying for all benefits . . . to which they are entitled.” ORS 408.410
- ODVA distributes funds appropriated to the agency (ORS 406.454) to establish a program to enhance and expand the services provided by the county veteran service officers (CVSOs) based on:
  - An equal amount to all counties
  - An amount based on the number of veterans residing in each county
- ODVA shall adopt rules to implement the distribution of funds, reporting and data collection requirements and service outcomes. ORS 406.456
- Implementation rules are found in OAR Chapter 274, Division 30

## APPLICATION PROCESS

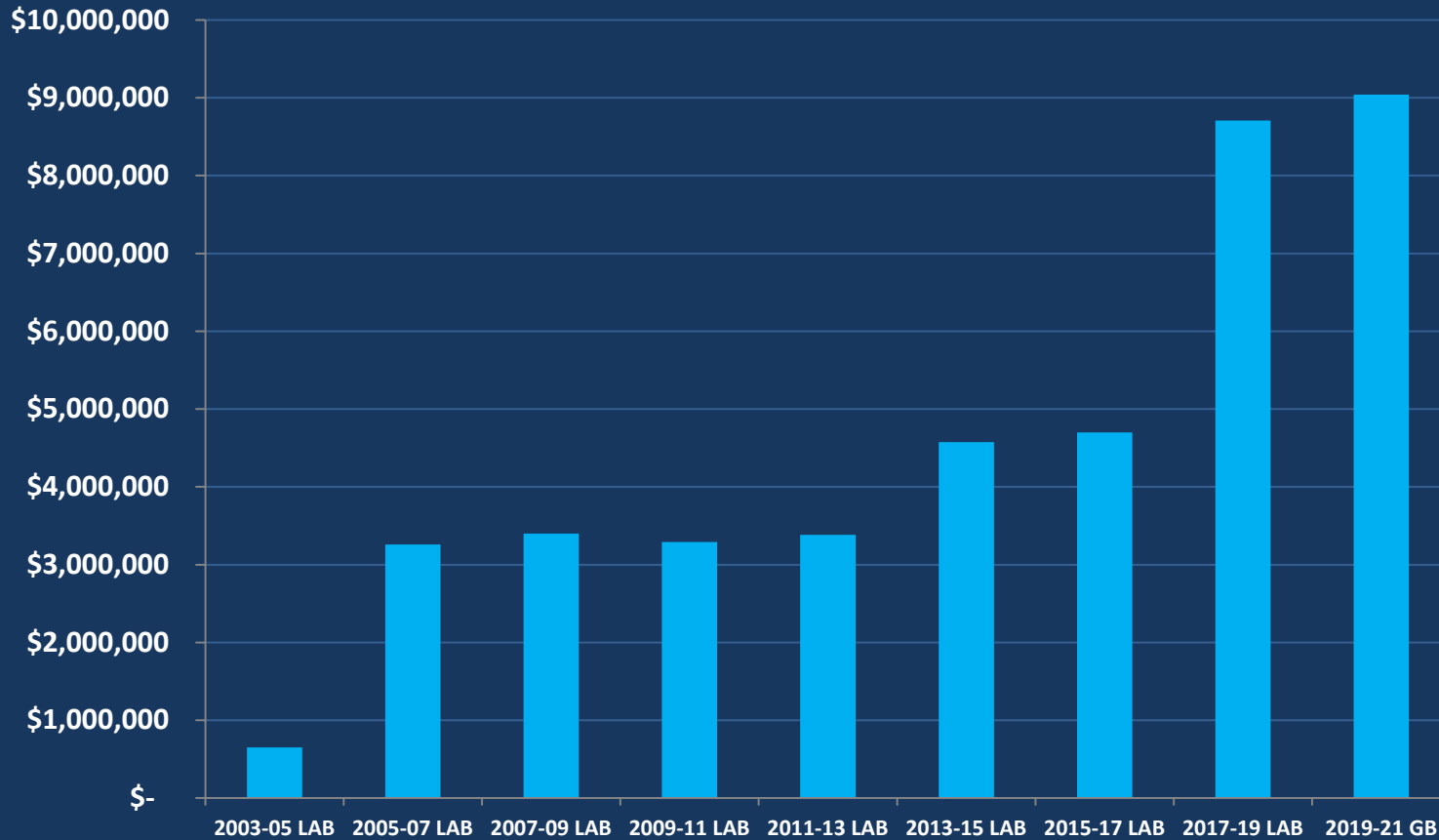
- County submits annual application for pass-through funds which includes:
  - County funds
  - Carry forward of all unspent funds
  - State pass-through funds
  - Other county funds (e.g., grants, donations)
- County submits annual spending plans to identify how additional pass through funds, and carry forward funds will be spent
- ODVA reviews and approves county applications

## REPORTING

- Counties must submit quarterly reports that includes activities and expenditures
- ODVA reviews quarterly reports for compliance with spending plans, statutes and rules
- ODVA works with CVSOs and county leadership when total spending falls below quarterly expectations



## HISTORICAL BUDGET FOR STATE PASS THROUGH FUNDING FOR COUNTY VETERAN SERVICES

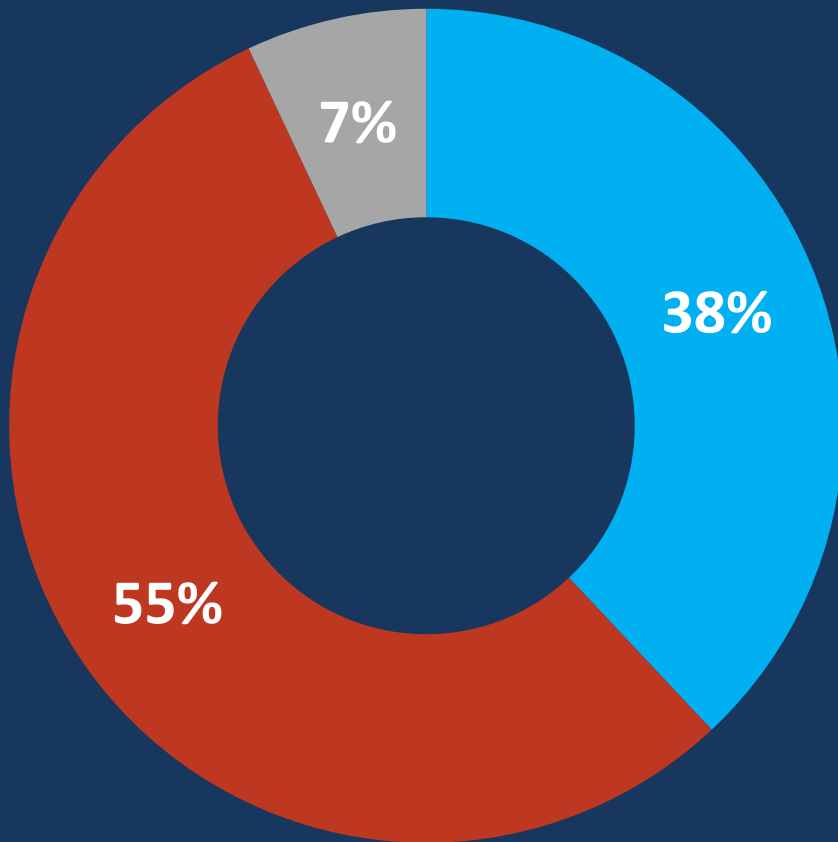


■ ALL FUNDS

LAB = LEGISLATIVELY APPROVED BUDGET; GB = GOVERNOR'S BUDGET



## COUNTY VETERAN SERVICES FUNDING [FY19]



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- \$4,407,309 - State Pass-Through Funding
  - \$6,313,796 - County Funds
  - \$852,818 - Total Carry Over from FY 18

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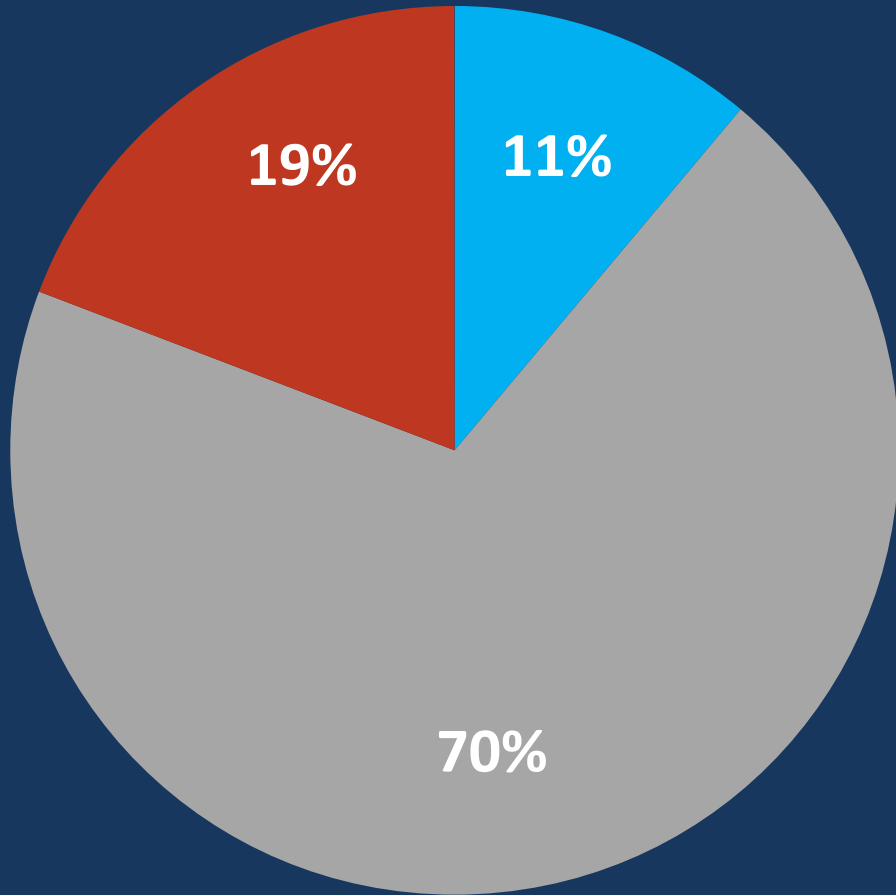
**\$11,573,923 - TOTAL FUNDS**

**65%** of Total Funds have been spent (as of 3/31/19; target spending is 75%)

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## FY 19 BUDGET TO ACTUAL SPEND BY ALL COUNTIES



**PERCENT OF TOTAL FUNDS SPENT** (AS OF 3/31/19)

- 75% and higher
- 60-74%
- 59% and below





# FUNDING HIGHLIGHTS AND CHALLENGES

## NEW FUNDING HIGHLIGHTS

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- Vehicle for enhanced outreach (e.g. rural and hard to reach parts of counties)
- Focused outreach to traditionally underserved veterans
- Office relocation for visibility/accessibility/space needs
- Enhanced outreach (billboard space, newspaper, radio spots, ads on buses)
- New personnel (full-time, part-time)
  - Outreach coordinator
  - Case manager/housing & homelessness specialist
  - VHA Healthcare navigator
  - Additional CVSO
  - Administrative assistant in a one-person office to cover while CVSO is conducting outreach or at another location
  - PT CVSO, to learn and eventually grow into the job when the aging current CVSO steps down (in a one person office, continuity is very difficult)

## NEW FUNDING CHALLENGES

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- Additional funds not quite enough to hire another full-time or part-time CVSO or Admin Support.
  - Some counties not in a financial position to put in additional funding to fully fund a new position
- High CVSO turnover (typically takes 2 years to become accredited and full competency with the complexities of fed VA laws)
- Difficulties in recruiting and hiring – CVSO positions unfilled
- County uncertainty about permanency of additional funding



## NEXT STEPS

A person is silhouetted against a dark, hazy sky, holding a large American flag that is waving in the wind. The scene is set on a hillside with some trees visible in the background. The overall mood is somber and reflective.

**QUESTIONS?**



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