



Anoka County

MINNESOTA

Veteran Services

Government Center
2100 3rd Avenue, Suite 216
Anoka, MN 55303
(763) 324-4500

VETERANS ADVOCATE

Fall 2021

ANOKA COUNTY VETERAN SERVICES OPEN FOR VISITS BY APPOINTMENT

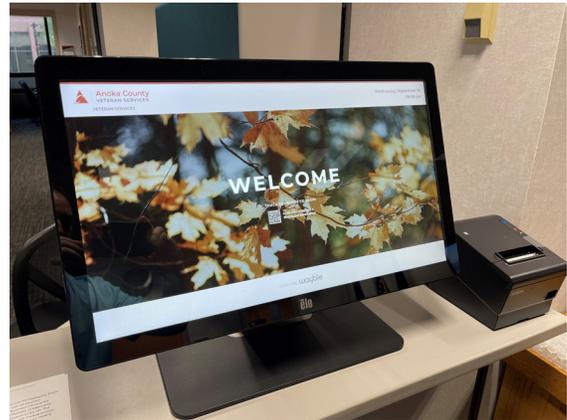
Beginning in June 2021, the Anoka County Veteran Services Office reopened to the public on an appointment basis. Previously, the office served clients on a walk-in basis, however, now by requiring appointments, we can speak with the client before the appointment to ensure they are aware of any supporting documentation or evidence they must bring to the appointment.

To schedule an appointment with a Veteran Services Officer, call (763) 324-4500.

NEW DCC APPOINTMENT AND CHECK-IN SOFTWARE

The Anoka County Veteran Services Office is transitioning to a new, public facing appointment and check-in program called DCC (Digital Customer Connection). Veterans, dependents, and survivors will be able schedule appointments with our Service Officers online using a weblink or a QR code. When arriving at our office for their scheduled appointment, they will use our new kiosk to check in. Some of the features of the DCC program include:

- Online appointment scheduling for: In-person, Video, Chat, Phone and Virtual Rooms.
- Confirmations and reminders.
- Check-in instructions.
- Text messaging capability.
- Document uploads and more.



Once a visitor arrives at the Anoka County Veteran Services Office, they check in at a kiosk -- which will be easy to find via signage -- by scanning a QR code with their smartphone. This will automatically notify the county staff member they wish to meet with that the visitor has arrived. Instructions about where to go in the building will be sent to the smartphone.

If someone wants to make an appointment, but does not have a smartphone, they can call Anoka County Veteran Services at (763) 324-4500 to speak with one of our staff who will make an appointment for them.

UPCOMING CHANGES TO THE ANOKA COUNTY VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD

With the changing landscape of local Veteran Service Organizations, local support groups, and stakeholders, changes are being discussed for the Anoka County Veterans Advisory Board to ensure the group can meet the needs of Veterans in our

community for years to come.

The Veterans Advisory Board was created by the Anoka County Board of Commissioners in March of 1981, and much has changed since then. The Advisory Board was originally comprised of 7 appointed members from local Veterans groups to work closely to ensure the needs of Veterans were being met. Over the past 40 years, many more organizations and groups have formed with a common purpose of supporting Veterans, and it became clear that all should be welcomed into the meetings.

Recently, an effort to create an Anoka County Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Network started. In the process, we discussed how they can be integrated into the local support networks and we decided that a change to the description of the Veterans Advisory Board would be necessary to ensure that the group would be open to as many local stakeholders as possible, now, and in the future. The group would be renamed the Anoka County Veterans Support Network. Similar to the current Veterans Advisory Board, there will be quarterly meetings with stakeholders, and the Anoka County Veteran Services Office will serve as a facilitator for these meetings. This renamed group will allow for all local Veteran Service Organizations, support groups, and stakeholders to collaborate and ensure that the needs of our Veterans are met.

The next meeting will be held:

****Monday, September 20, 2021 - 2:00 PM****

**Anoka American Legion Post 102
400 W. Main Street
Anoka, MN 55303**

VA EXPANDS BENEFITS FOR DISABILITY CLAIMS FOR CONDITIONS RELATED TO CERTAIN TOXIC EXPOSURES

AGENT ORANGE

VA will begin implementing provisions of the William M. Thornberry National Defense

Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (Public Law 116-283), adding three conditions to the list of those presumptively associated with exposure to herbicide agents, more commonly known as Agent Orange. Those conditions are bladder cancer, hypothyroidism and Parkinsonism.

VA will apply the provisions of court orders related to *Nehmer vs. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs*, which may result in an earlier date for entitlement to benefits for Veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam War. Vietnam War era Veterans and their survivors, who previously filed and were denied benefits for one of these three new presumptive conditions, will have their cases automatically reviewed without the need to refile a claim. VA has sent letters to impacted Veterans and survivors.

AIRBORNE HAZARDS AND BURN PIT EXPOSURE

VA added 3 presumptive conditions related to particulate matter exposure. The new presumptive conditions are asthma, rhinitis, and sinusitis. To be eligible for benefits, you must have gotten one of these conditions within 10 years of your separation from active service.

This will expand benefits for Veterans who served in:

- Afghanistan, Djibouti, Syria, and Uzbekistan during the Persian Gulf War, from September 19, 2001, to the present, or
- The Southwest Asia theater of operations from August 2, 1990, to the present.

If you have a pending claim for one or more of these conditions, you don't need to do anything. The VA will send you a decision notice when they complete their review. If you have not filed a claim, please call Anoka County Veteran Services at (763) 324-4500 to schedule an appointment with a Veteran Services Officer.

LOCAL VETERAN SERVICE ORGANIZATION MEETING SCHEDULE

Anoka American Legion Post 102

Meeting on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM
400 West Main Street
Anoka, MN 55303

Coon Rapids American Legion and Auxiliary Post 334

Meeting on the fourth Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM at the Anoka American Legion
400 West Main Street
Anoka, MN 55303

Lino Lakes American Legion Post 566

Meeting on the first Monday of each month at 6:30 PM at the Lino Lakes American Legion
7731 Lake Drive
Lino Lakes, MN 55014

Coon Rapids VFW Post and Auxiliary Post 9625

Meeting on the second Monday of each month.
Auxiliary meets at 6:30 PM and VFW Post meets at 7:00 PM at the Coon Rapids VFW
1919 Coon Rapids Blvd NW
Coon Rapids, MN 55433

Anoka DAV Chapter 39

Meeting on the second Thursday of each month at 6:30 PM at the Coon Rapids VFW
1919 Coon Rapids Blvd NW
Coon Rapids, MN 55433

**If your organization's meeting information is not listed here, email the dates and times of your meetings to veterans@co.anoka.mn.us

2021 ANOKA COUNTY HOLIDAYS

The Anoka County Veteran Services Office will be closed on the following dates in observance of Federal Holidays:

November 11, 2021 (Veterans Day)
November 25-26, 2021 (Thanksgiving)
December 24, 2021 (Christmas Observed)

ABOUT ANOKA COUNTY VETERAN SERVICES

Anoka County Veteran Services provides professional, caring and quality assistance to veterans and their dependents in obtaining benefits through county, state and federal programs. As advocates, we work with the US Department of Veterans Affairs, Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs and nationally chartered Veteran Service Organizations to ensure that our veterans and their dependents receive the benefits they have earned through military service.

When visiting the Anoka County Veteran Services Office you will be referred to a service officer for assistance. Our County Veteran Service Officers (CVSO's) are highly trained, professional advocates that share an understanding of the challenges our veterans and their dependents face. Our CVSO's attend the most current training on the extent, the meaning and the application of laws that have been passed by the U.S. Congress in the interests of veterans and their dependents. They also know the rules and regulations adopted by the Department of Veterans Affairs to clarify and implement those laws. Our CVSO's will apply specialized knowledge in the best way suited to the needs of every individual veteran or other beneficiary who visit our office for assistance.

Our hours of operation are:

Monday - 8:00am - 4:00pm
Tuesday - 8:00am - 4:00pm
Wednesday - 8:00am - 4:00pm
Thursday - 8:00am - 4:00pm
Friday - 8:00am - 3:00pm
Closed on all Federal Holidays

Phone: (763) 324-4500

Fax: (763) 324-1040

Email: veterans@co.anoka.mn.us

Website: www.anokacounty.us/veterans

VETERANS CRISIS LINE

The Veterans Crisis Line connects Veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified,

caring Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, or text. Veterans and their loved ones can call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1, chat online, or send a text message to 838255 to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Support for deaf and hard of hearing individuals is available.



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