



# OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

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## Oklahoma Veterans Achieve Number ONE Among The 50 States

**(OKLAHOMA CITY)** – The Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs (ODVA) is excited to announce that Oklahoma has reached a special milestone. Oklahoma is now number ONE among the 50 states for veterans, per capita, in receipt of federal, service-connected disability benefits. This represents a \$2.4 billion cash infusion into the Oklahoma economy.

“We have an amazing veterans community here in Oklahoma and this could not have been accomplished without all the veteran service organizations banding together as a team and working really hard to achieve this,” said Joel Kintsel, ODVA Executive Director.

Out of approximately 300,000 Oklahoma veterans, there are about 100,000 veterans with some level of service-connected disability. Service-connected disability means that the federal VA has established that a veteran has a compensable injury or medical condition resulting from military service. For the 100,000 service-connected, disabled Oklahoma veterans, this reflects \$2.4 billion provided directly to the individual veterans.

“So much can be accomplished when we all work together. Hitting number one was a huge win for the Oklahoma team,” said Pete Peterson, Chairman, Oklahoma Veterans Council.

“Congratulations to our great Veteran Service Officers across Oklahoma for the outstanding achievement of being first among the 50 States,” stated Charles O’Leary, State Commander, American Legion. “All of us sacrificed during our time in the military and disability is the price we paid for that sacrifice.”

“The VFW is very proud to be part of Oklahoma’s accomplishment. This is proof of the power of veterans helping veterans,” said Jim Basset, State Commander, Veterans of Foreign Wars.

“I am tremendously proud of ODVA’s role in bringing Oklahoma to number one,” stated Larry Van Schuyver, State Commander, Military Order of the Purple Heart and Chairman, ODVA Veterans Commission. “Our Executive Director has shown tremendous leadership leading Oklahoma’s effort to the top.”

“Oklahoma has achieved this level of success in serving veterans because there is no competition in helping veterans. Oklahoma service organizations have unified in this effort. We are one team and one family taking care of veterans,” said Danny Oliver, State Adjutant, Disabled American Veterans.

“As a paralyzed Oklahoma veteran, this issue is near to my heart,” stated Bill Kokendoffer, State Commander, Paralyzed Veterans of America. “At the PVA, we are committed to serving paralyzed veterans and we are proud to be a part of the effort to be number one.”

It is estimated that nearly half of the Oklahoma veterans who are eligible for compensation for injuries and/or medical conditions arising from military service have not yet applied.

Oklahoma veterans who need assistance with filing a claim for service-connected disability are invited to call or visit on-line: (405) 523-4000; [www.oklahoma.gov/veterans](http://www.oklahoma.gov/veterans)

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**About ODVA**

The Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs provides resources and services to military veterans residing in the state of Oklahoma including assistance with state and federal veterans' benefits, disability claims, burial and survivor benefits, healthcare, employment, education, suicide prevention, entrepreneurship and veteran-owned businesses, women veteran services and veterans in agriculture. ODVA also operates seven long-term care facilities throughout Oklahoma. To learn more, visit [www.oklahoma.gov/veterans](http://www.oklahoma.gov/veterans)