



DAV[®]
OF MINNESOTA

2021 Annual Report | 2022 Objectives

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDER

Over the last year, DAV of Minnesota continued to face ongoing challenges due to the pandemic. But we knew there was no option of stopping; we still had Veterans to serve - and we found new ways to fulfill those services. Our perseverance led to our recognition as one of only five DAV Departments nationwide that did not reduce services during COVID-19.

Not only did we not reduce services, in many cases our team increased our services for Veterans. Our DAV of Minnesota volunteers fulfilled a remarkable 75% of all Veteran Administration (VA) Medical Center Transportation services. We introduced a new Therapeutic Services Program in the state, providing access to music therapy for the first time for many Veterans. We were also able to return to a few in-person outdoor events, including a Hog Hunt in Texas and the Rainey Lake Fishing Trip.

Continued advocacy resulted in a productive legislative year for Veterans at both the state and federal levels. Support across the aisle increased critical benefits for disabled Veterans.

Our dedication to keeping our promises to Minnesota's Veterans never faltered. Our team of dedicated staff and volunteers flourished through adversity, and this passion is reflected in the sustained growth of our Veterans Service Organization. In fact, DAV of Minnesota is one of the only Veteran organizations that continues to experience growth. As we reflect on 2021, I am proud of this organization's resilience.

I would like to thank all our volunteers, staff, board members, and donors for your ongoing commitment to serving Minnesota's Veterans. Without you, much of what we accomplished this last year would not have been possible. Thank you for supporting DAV of Minnesota.



Ron Haugen
Commander



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ABOUT US



Disabled American Veterans, DAV of Minnesota is dedicated to a single purpose: keeping our promise to America's Veterans. We accomplish this by ensuring that Veterans and their families can access the full range of benefits available to them, fighting for the interests of America's injured heroes on Capitol Hill, providing employment resources to Veterans and their families and educating the public about the great sacrifices and needs of Veterans transitioning back to civilian life.

Made up of 19,000 members and 32 chapters across the state, this organization was built on the concept of "Veterans serving Veterans." Through our network of services, we are able to provide a lifetime of support for Veterans and their families.

DAV of Minnesota priorities include:

- Providing free, professional assistance to Veterans and their families in obtaining benefits and services earned through military service
- Community outreach for program services to all Minnesotans generally and to disabled Veterans and their families specifically
- Representing the interests of disabled Veterans; their families; their widowed spouses and their orphans before state and local government
- Extending DAV's mission of hope into communities through a network of local chapters
- Ensuring opportunities for disabled Veterans to volunteer with fellow Veterans

EXECUTIVE TEAM



Ron Haugen
Chapter 10
Department
Commander



Mick Aguirre
Chapter 2
Senior
Vice Commander



Ellsworth Fields
Chapter 28
1st Junior
Vice Commander



Oather Martin
Chapter 37
2nd Junior
Vice Commander



John Walker
Chapter 2
Treasurer



Rick Jarvis
Chapter 12
Judge
Advocate



Robert Saddoris
Chapter 38
Chaplain



Stephen Whitehead
Chapter 10
Adjutant



Scott Berndt
Chapter 39
Past Department
Commander



IN MEMORY OF

Bruce Pederson, 3rd Junior Vice Commander

Bruce served honorably for 35 years in the Minnesota Army National Guard. After retiring in 2009, Bruce was the Treasurer for Morrison County Chapter 12 before his role as 3rd Junior Vice Commander. DAV of Minnesota will remember Bruce for his incredible dedication to serving veterans.

OUR MEMBERS

DAV of Minnesota is made up of 32 chapters across the state that support local Veterans, families and their communities. Independently, chapters work to raise awareness, fundraise and create programs to fulfill our promises to those who have served. The unwavering commitment to supporting Veterans has not gone unnoticed.

Minnesota Highlights in 2021

Minneapolis Chapter 1 turned its focus and funds to higher education to support the growing population of young Veterans. Through fellowships with local colleges and universities they reduced potential barriers to higher education and made it an accessible and more affordable option. A majority of the individuals awarded fellowships were nontraditional students in their late 20's, 30's and 40's.

For years, DAV has been at the forefront in fighting to include bladder cancer, hypothyroidism and Parkinsonism as presumptive to Agent Orange. We thank Senator Tester for his unrelenting advocacy and legislative actions to add these three diseases as presumptive to Agent Orange exposure in this year's National Defense Authorization Act.



Stephen Whitehead
National Commander
Disabled American Veterans

Northwest Minnesota Chapter 41 operated its own transportation program to ensure no Veteran went without a ride. Within the first eight working days of the year, one volunteer drove more than 1,500 miles transporting Veterans to VA appointments. Chapter 41 stepped up to fulfill our promises to Veterans, even if that meant a 400-mile round trip to the nearest VA.

Park Rapids Chapter 38 introduced “Chapter 38 Outdoors” to provide Veterans with opportunities for pheasant and deer hunting, fishing trips and ice fishing tournaments. At one of the deer hunts, a Veteran shot a deer for the first time since 1983. His excitement was moving and a testament this program is reconnecting Veterans with the healing power of nature.

Anoka Chapter 39 created its own holiday giving program. Through their partnership with Anoka, Isanti, and Sherburne County Veteran Service Officers, they identify widows or families of Veterans in need and distribute gift cards around the holidays. In total, they donated \$20,000 worth of gift cards to these families.

Traction through legislation in the expansion of benefits
In a first for the VA, Veterans living with the harmful health consequences of burn pit exposure will receive presumptive disability status for three respiratory illnesses. Rhinitis and sinusitis—inflammation of the nose and nasal sinuses, respectively—along with asthma, will now be covered under a new VA policy, provided those symptoms developed within 10 years of a veteran's service in a qualifying country where burn pits were in use. It has taken time, but this issue continues to gain momentum.

VETERANS 312,843
BY ERA SERVED STRONG

103,168 Vietnam

45,769 Gulf (Post-9/11)

33,638 Gulf (Pre-9/11)

21,324 Korea

7,308 WWII

**101,636 served in other or non-named missions*

2021-2022 MEMBERSHIP

	CHAPTER #	CITY	CURRENT MEMBERS*	2021-22 GOAL
Minneapolis Chapter	1	Minneapolis	3,060	3,085
St. Paul Chapter	2	St. Paul	1,688	1,726
Russo-Golob Chapter	3	Hibbing	245	251
Cloverleaf Chapter	4	Askov	379	386
Gilbert W. Nordman Chapter	6	Duluth	899	908
North Central Chapter	7	Bemidji	640	638
St. Cloud Chapter	9	St. Cloud	916	934
Lyle C. Pearson Sr. Chapter	10	Mankato	775	779
Aitkin Chapter	11	Aitkin	132	137
Morrison Co. Chapter	12	Little Falls	501	502
Itasca County Chapter	13	Grand Rapids	458	462
Crookston Chapter	14	Crookston	199	205
New Ulm Chapter	15	New Ulm	597	604
Glaydon Iverson Chapter	16	Albert Lea	235	225
Washington County Chapter	17	Hugo	279	288
Carlton County Chapter	18	Carlton	657	635
Faribault Chapter	20	Faribault	290	289
Crow Wing County Chapter	22	Brainerd	425	428
Kolstad Chapter	23	Virginia	419	427
Western Chapter	24	Montevideo	326	336
Fergus Falls Chapter	25	Fergus Falls	299	308
Arnold Brandt Chapter	27	Austin	234	243
Mayo Southeast Chapter	28	Rochester	1,196	1,209
Lakeland Chapter	31	Detroit Lakes	260	270
South Central Chapter	32	Fairmont	370	375
Southwest Chapter	33	Marshall	234	239
West Central Chapter	34	Willmar	232	238
Hutchinson Chapter	37	Hutchinson	449	455
Park Rapids Chapter	38	Park Rapids	348	348
Anoka Chapter	39	Anoka	1,371	1,403
South Metro Chapter	40	Apple Valley	115	130
Northwest Minnesota Chapter	41	Roseau	77	87
Total, Department of Minnesota			18,855	19,099

**Membership numbers current as of December 9, 2021.*



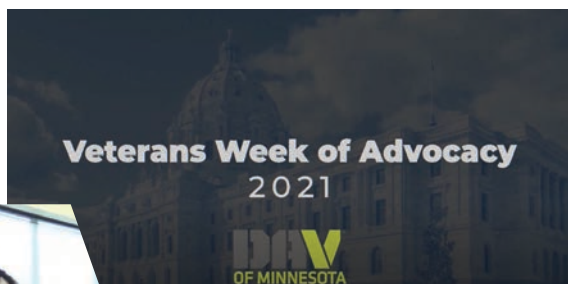
2021 EVENTS

National Commander

Stephen Whitehead served a second term as National Commander; he is the second National Commander in DAV's history to serve two consecutive terms.

Virtual Veterans Day on the Hill

With in-person restrictions due to COVID-19, 'Veterans Day on the Hill' was held virtually. This crucial event allows ongoing advocacy with state legislators, which resulted in a great legislative year for Veterans in Minnesota.



Virtual Testimony

National Commander Stephen Whitehead presented the 2021 Legislative Program of DAV virtually to the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives Committees on Veterans' Affairs in March. The plan includes:

- Mental health services and suicide prevention
- Strengthening VA health care and infrastructure
- Expanding caregiver support for severely disabled Veterans of all eras
- Ensuring Veterans exposed to toxic substances receive full and timely benefits
- Ensuring equitable benefits and services for women and minority Veterans
- Improving survivor benefits
- Ensuring VA has sufficient funding for Veterans health care and benefits
- Protecting Veterans in the claims and appeals process
- The national service program

Military Appreciation Day at the Farm

"Military Appreciation Family Day" at the Farm hosted by Sutton Ridge Farm was an event to honor and thank Disabled American Veterans and their families for their sacrifices. Events included speakers, live music, Veteran resource information booths, and farm-fun activities.

DAV Golf Classic

The 13th Annual Minnesota DAV Golf Classic was held in person at Crystal Lake Golf course was a success. Funds raised helped fund new vehicles and the expansion of the transportation program into new regions around the state.





LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The DAV of Minnesota advocates for bettering Veterans' programs. Although it looked different this year, continued engagement resulted one of the most productive legislative years for Veterans at both the state and federal levels in recent years.

Now in Minnesota, disabled Veterans no longer have to count their disability compensation as income for property tax purposes. This doesn't mean that every Veteran will get a refund, but it does mean no Veteran will have to show their disability compensation as income.

In August 2021, the Veterans Restorative Justice Act was signed into law by Gov. Tim Walz. DAV of Minnesota was a strong advocate for its passage over multiple years. This bill expands the framework for Veterans Treatment Courts statewide, which creates more accessibility and is not subject to the county in which the Veteran resides. Veterans Courts are intended to intervene early for low-level offenses as well as to help provide Veterans mental health resources with support and programs they need to recover. This has proven to help keep Veterans out of prison, cut down on recidivism, and even save taxpayers' money.



MINNFLUENCE

DAV of Minnesota has innovated an effective platform for Veterans, their families and concerned citizens to engage with their federal and state legislators.



“MinnFluence” is a one-of-a-kind tool to ensure Veteran advocates can keep up with current legislative issues and swiftly engage with federal and state lawmakers. MinnFluencers will receive updates on progress of legislation for Veterans, their families, and survivors. When important issues that could impact DAV of Minnesota arise, subscribers will automatically receive ready-to-send emails they can use to engage their respective elected officials. MinnFluence will also serve as an important tool for all Minnesotans to be able to track how their elected state representatives voted on key Veterans issues.

Minnesotans, whether Veteran or not, are encouraged to join the MinnFluence Network and start taking action for Minnesota’s Veterans, their families, and survivors. Opt into MinnFluence by visiting davn.org.

Together we can build a stronger, louder voice to support the men and women who have served.



LEGISLATIVE OBJECTIVES

A primary responsibility of DAV of Minnesota is to advocate for Veterans and their access to earned benefits. To do so, we work to inform the public and lawmakers of the challenges that Veterans face - from a firsthand perspective. In a cooperative effort with other Veteran service organizations, DAV of Minnesota has formed a comprehensive plan for the 2022 Legislative session.

Legislative priorities for 2022 include:

Amend the Property Tax Value Exclusion

Background: After decades of attempts, “Blue Water Navy” Veterans are receiving benefits for the illnesses caused by their exposure to Agent Orange. However, many of these Veterans died before receiving their earned benefits, and their surviving spouses are not eligible for the benefit earned as the current exclusion reads “within two years of the death of the Veteran.”

Proposal: Change the statute to ensure as many of these surviving spouses are cared for as possible, so they are able to utilize the benefit as intended.

Adjust the certification date for CVSO's to align with the application deadline of December 31st

Background: Some counties are using July 1st as a deadline to deny Veterans with a 100% permanent and total disability, a property tax exclusion on the first \$300,000 of their home. This is an unfavorable interpretation of the current statute.

Proposal: Change the current statute to provide the best possible benefit for the Veteran.

Increase access to the outdoors for Minnesota's Disabled Veterans

Background: Opportunities for Veterans to connect to outdoor activities can have an incredible impact. Minnesota offers less recognition, discounts, and benefits for disabled veterans than Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, Oregon, Texas, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

Proposal: Expand offers of reduced or no-cost hunting, fishing, and trapping to Minnesota's Disabled Veterans.

Increase eligibility of the property tax value exclusion to all Veterans 50% and greater service-connected

Background: The original eligibility level was set at 70% service-connected disabled for a \$150,000 exclusion. By expanding the eligibility to 50% we can increase the

number of eligible Veterans by nearly 10,000 who have been severely disabled as a result of their service. This allows for an adjustment to the amount of exclusion by making it percentage-based, increasing the majority of Veterans as home values rise year after year.

Proposal: Increase the level of home sales property tax exclusion for all Veterans 50% and greater service-connected at on a scale up to \$300,000 for Veterans with a 100% permanent and total disability.

Create a bonus for all post-9/11 Veterans

Background: The state of Minnesota has paid a bonus, as provided for by the State Constitution, to the Veterans of every war since WW1 - but has not yet done the same for GWOT Veterans.

Proposal: Establish a bonus for all post-9/11 Veterans funded by the State of Minnesota.

Increase grant support of VSO Grant

Background: It has been a decade since the level of aid provided to the VSO's in Minnesota has been adjusted, in that time inflation and other costs have made everything more expensive.

Proposal: Consider an adjustment to that aid provided in pursuit of our mission.



TRANSPORTATION THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

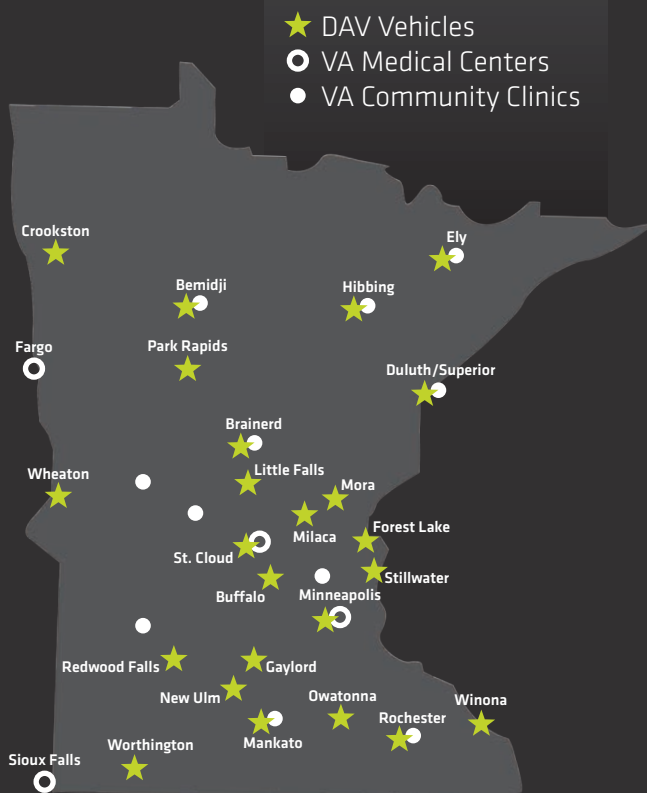
The DAV of MN Transportation Program provides free transportation to Veterans in Minnesota to attend their VA medical appointments at four regional medical centers, or locally based clinics. The program has 33 vehicles stationed in 20 communities around the state. COVID-19 mandates have placed restrictions on both how DAV of Minnesota transports Veterans and how we recruit and maintain volunteers. However, we have been resilient and found new ways to ensure that all Veterans have transportation to medical appointments, completely free of charge.

Safety has been our top priority for both the Veterans and volunteers. We are proud to report that over the 1.5 million miles driven since the start of the pandemic, not a single volunteer has contracted COVID-19 while driving.

DAV of Minnesota continues to grow the transportation program. This year, we increased Veteran Transports from 2020 by 4,486 Veterans and miles driven by 233,378 to a total of 869,776 miles. Recently, the Metro Program has been approved by the Minneapolis VA to expand services into the Anoka County area, servicing the Northwest

Metro VA Clinic and surrounding communities. Currently, we are in the process of purchasing the vehicle while working hand in hand with DAV Chapter 39 Anoka to recruit volunteers and get the program started.

The program has also been influential over the past year in forming and maintaining an ever-changing list of Minnesota's 87 counties and the Veteran Transportation services they offer. This list is distributed to the County Veteran Service Offices, VA staff at Fargo, St. Cloud, and Minneapolis and has proven to be a crucial service to all.



Schedule
a ride or
volunteer
to drive

Metro
612-467-2768

Central Minnesota
320-252-1670 ext. 6676

Northeast Minnesota
715-398-2406

Northwest Minnesota
855-277-9787

Southeast Minnesota
507-703-1139

VOLUNTEER DRIVERS

188

current/active
volunteer drivers

Metro 68
Central Minnesota 50
Northeast Minnesota 30
Northwest Minnesota 25
Southeast Minnesota 15

**21 new drivers going through training*



More than 180 volunteers help to sustain DAV of Minnesota's Transportation program. Without their commitment to serving our Veterans, we would not be able to continue this essential service. In 2021, our team gave 39,604 hours and transported 18,981 veterans to and from their VA or VA-scheduled medical appointments.

The transportation program is not only essential, but it also has the power to save lives. In April 2021, volunteer Mike Berneck of Northwest Minnesota went above and beyond to help a Veteran in emergency need. Mike transported the Veteran 9 hours and 550 miles from home to a rehab facility to receive treatment for mental health issues. This was far beyond a normal request, and Mike never faltered. Mike saved this Veteran's life because of his selflessness and the connection he made with him.

At this year's Fall Conference, we honored the five Volunteer Drivers of the Year from each region: Mike Berneck of Northwest, Ron Nindorf of Northeast, David Rowlands of Southeast, Rick Hartz of the Metro, and Fred Walz of Central Minnesota. Thank you to all of our incredible volunteer drivers!

Moving forward, the focus for the transportation program is on volunteer recruitment. The pandemic has complicated this process, but there is an ongoing need for drivers statewide. Interested volunteers are asked to call 651-291-1212 to become a driver.



2021 TRANSPORTATION FIGURES



869,776

Miles driven
by volunteer drivers



18,981

Veterans
transported



39,604

Hours invested by
volunteer drivers



\$1,130,298

In cost savings
to the VA

OUTDOOR PROGRAM



The DAV of Minnesota Outdoors Program is committed to providing Veterans with opportunities to heal through nature. From fishing to hunting, these experiences bring Veterans of all different backgrounds together, creating a support system and a sense of camaraderie. The outdoor program provides Veterans the opportunity to do what they love, including those who might not otherwise be able to participate due to disabilities.

This year, the outdoors program was able to host a few in-person events. One of those was in February, Jim Hockinson and Gary Bergland of Chapter 16 traveled to Texas to attend DAV's Wild Hog Hunt. Despite being greeted by a blizzard and record-setting low temperatures, they had an incredible experience connecting with other Veterans.

These trips give you the chance to take your mind off your struggles and to see life from a different perspective. This trip was an experience I will never forget.



Gary Bergland

HOUSEHOLD DONATIONS

The primary source of revenue for DAV of Minnesota is generated from the collection and wholesale of household donations, and both the statewide chapters and the department benefit from this commitment. Through collection boxes throughout Greater Minnesota, clothing drives, and Twin Cities residential collection, the DAV of Minnesota team schedules pick-up, deliveries, and distribution to our commercial partners.

Starting in 2020, DAV of Minnesota was honored to be chosen as the single featured charity partner at all Savers and Unique Thrift Community Donation Centers in Minnesota.

In 2021, clothing and household item donations allowed for the repurposing of over 7.5 million pounds of unused or unwanted items and provided approximately \$2.65 million in funding for DAV of Minnesota chapter and department activities, programs, and services. Learn more at davn.org/donate-volunteer-veterans/clothing-donations/ or by calling 651-487-2002.

2021 HOUSEHOLD DONATIONS

PRIMARY SOURCE OF
REVENUE
FOR DAV OF MINNESOTA



7,500,000

Pounds of unwanted
items repurposed



\$2,650,000

In funding for
DAV of Minnesota

2021 REVENUE AND EXPENSES

In 2021, DAV of Minnesota invested \$0.75 of every dollar into Veterans services in Minnesota. We are proud that dollars coming into DAV of Minnesota go back to Veterans in need through programs to include Veterans' services, transportation, charitable giving, management, and general operations.

Revenue, Gains, and Other Support

Grants	\$383,240
Contributions	\$18,845
National Service Allocation	\$145,583
Registration and Fees	\$9,488
In-Kind	\$51,302
Other Income	\$11,211
Gain/(Loss) on Investments	\$1,476

Total Revenue and Support before Enterprise Operations	\$621,145
Gross Income from Enterprise Operations	\$2,913,222
Gross Expenses from Enterprise Operations	(\$1,775,287)

Net Income from Enterprise Operations	\$1,137,935
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Total Revenues and Support	\$1,759,080
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Program Expenses

Veterans' Services	\$587,782
Transportation Network	\$355,275
Charitable Giving	\$4,650
Management and General	\$304,153

Total Expenses	\$1,251,860
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Change in Net Assets	\$507,220
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	\$868,709

Net Assets at End of Year	\$1,375,929
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BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Mick Aguirre
Chapter 2



Kerry Allison
Chapter 28



Lauri Brooke
Chapter 31



Mark Jaruszewski
Chapter 1



Ashley Laganieri
Chapter 28



Michael McLaughlin
Chapter 10



Dave Valtinson
Chapter 13



John Walker
Chapter 2

Non-voting board members



Scott Berndt
Chapter 39



Trent Dilks
Chapter 12
Executive Director

Since 1992, the Disabled American Veterans of Minnesota Foundation has operated as the organization’s “giving arm.” Separate from DAV of Minnesota, the foundation is run by a board of directors who manage the funding of programs and services for DAV of Minnesota, as well as other organizations across the state. This year, the DAV of Minnesota Foundation contributed over \$307,999 toward Veterans’ services and programs.

A primary function of the Foundation is to financially support grants. Two grants over the last year that supported Veteran’ health in very different ways included funding a mobile dental clinic and music therapy.

A \$28,600 grant will cover the costs for the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs mobile dental clinic. Funding includes a two-year vehicle lease which will allow for easy transport of the mobile dental equipment to Minnesota Veterans Homes located in Fergus Falls, Luverne and Silver Bay. It also will fund dental equipment that minimizes aerosols and maintains a safe air environment. The clinic is expected to serve over 250 residents.

The DAV of Minnesota Foundation introduced a new ‘Therapeutic Services Program’ in 2021. In partnership with Healing Rhythms Music Therapy, we are expanding accessibility and offering free music therapy to all Veterans, active duty and their families.



Other Grants:

- Holiday gift cards for volunteer drivers and Veteran Service Organizations, including Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans and Every Third Saturday (\$8,000)
- Assistance with a new wheelchair-accessible bus at Minneapolis VA Medical Center (\$60,000)
- 23rd Veteran, to fully fund one-year programs (6 courses) for Veterans to learn how to make blades using traditional blacksmithing techniques as part of the organization's overall mission to prevent Veteran suicide (\$16,200)
- Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans, to provide direct funding to aid disabled Veterans who are or are at high risk of becoming homeless (\$25,000)

The foundation is on the receiving end of donations from our generous community partners. In May, we received \$40,500 from the Greater Minnesota Auto Dealers Association at the 2021 Twin Cities Auto Show. This donation directly helped fund the DAV of Minnesota Transportation program with things like new vehicles, volunteer meals/appreciation and emergency kits.





Disabled American Veterans of Minnesota

State Veterans Service Building, Floor 3

20 West 12th Street

St. Paul, MN 55155

651-291-1212

davmn.org