



Vets' Community
Connections

2022

SUMMARY REPORT

CONNECTING VETERANS, MILITARY, AND
THEIR FAMILIES TO SAN DIEGO COUNTY

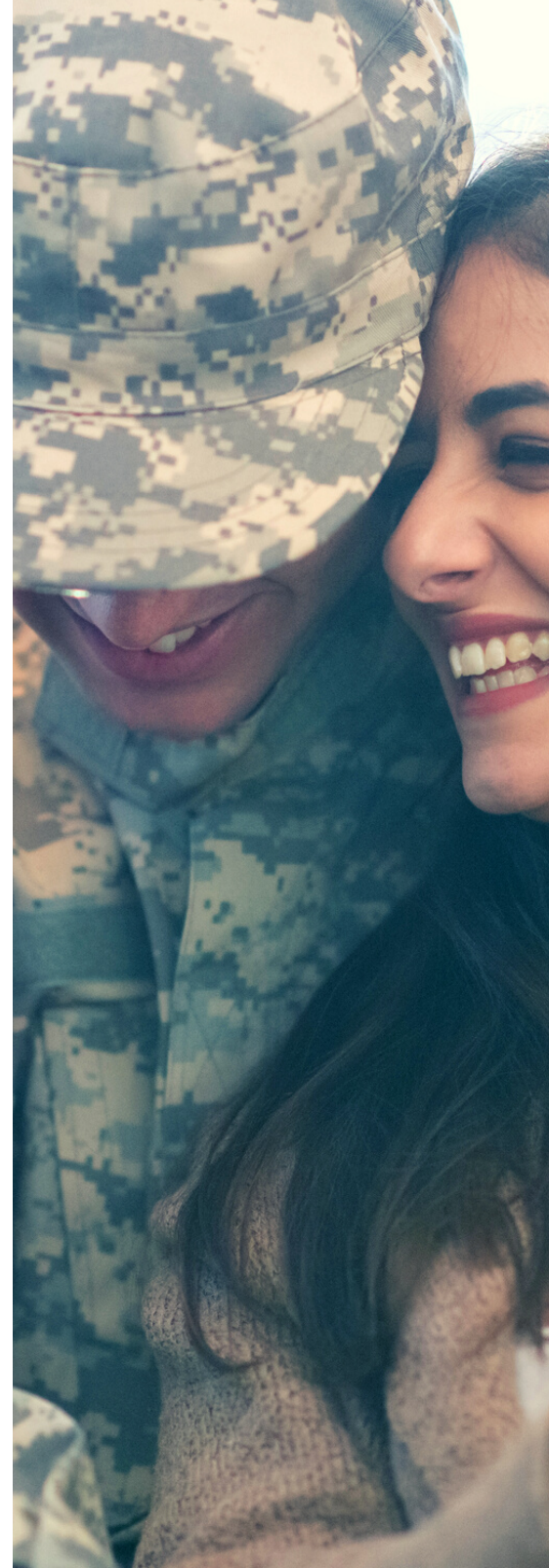


FY2022 SUMMARY

The overarching goal of Vets' Community Connections (VCC) has always been to assist veterans, military, and their families in successfully integrating into the community by expanding their local networks. The involvement of local individuals and organizations from all parts of the San Diego County community make this achievable.

VCC is proud to have embodied this mission throughout FY2022 by successfully connecting the greatest number of clients to the most significant amount of personalized resources in the history of our organization. Many contributing factors had an impact on VCC's success and historical increase, including the re-launch of our Careers in the Community program as a Spotify Podcast, ongoing engagement through community partnerships, opportunities to give back through Volunteer in the Community, and the continued emphasis on adding new, unique resource members to the VCC database. The unification of these efforts positioned VCC to serve the San Diego County military and veteran community effectively.

The following story epitomizes these efforts: An active duty spouse, and caregiver was referred to VCC from Navy Wounded Warrior Homes. Her active duty husband is recovering from cancer and has finally finished with chemo. After all they have been through, they are ready to start living their lives and begin exploring the San Diego community. They requested connections for restaurants that offer military discounts, self-care activities for herself, a reliable car mechanic, a beauty salon, entertainment, outdoor activities, training for their dog, group fitness opportunities, and a sports team for her husband. VCC was able to get her and her spouse connected to all these resources and more. She affirmed *"we are so grateful for VCC's assistance and are looking forward to getting out and enjoying all San Diego has to offer, especially after this difficult time. Thank you!"*



VCC Metrics in Review

FY22

FY21

FY20

Clients

4,253

2,093

1,173

Connections

7,808

3,422

1,431



Our Work

VCC exceeded our target goals for FY22 in just 9 months. Our Team connected 4,253 veterans, military, and their families with over 7,808 connections, more than doubling our clients and connections from the previous fiscal year. VCC's innovative efforts with community outreach included Liberty Military Housing neighborhood events, twice monthly presentations at University Student Veteran Associations, and increased engagement in the active duty spouse and veteran social media groups, which all contributed to our success.

Who We Serve

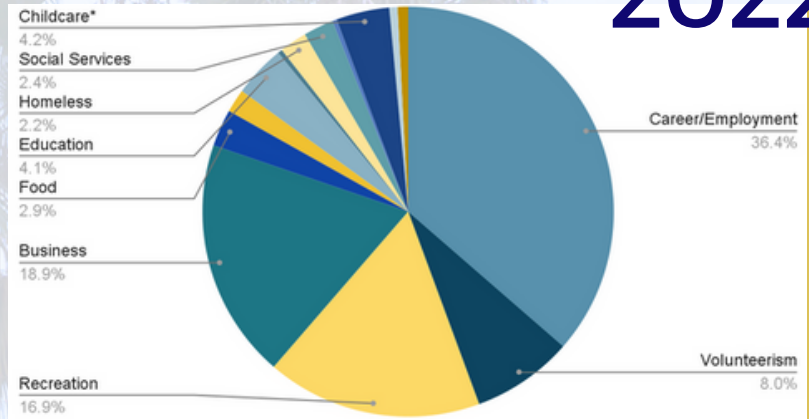
83% of the clients VCC served this year were Post 9/11 Veterans, active duty, Post 9/11 Veteran spouses, and active duty spouses, a 13% increase from FY21. The majority of VCC's clients were women.



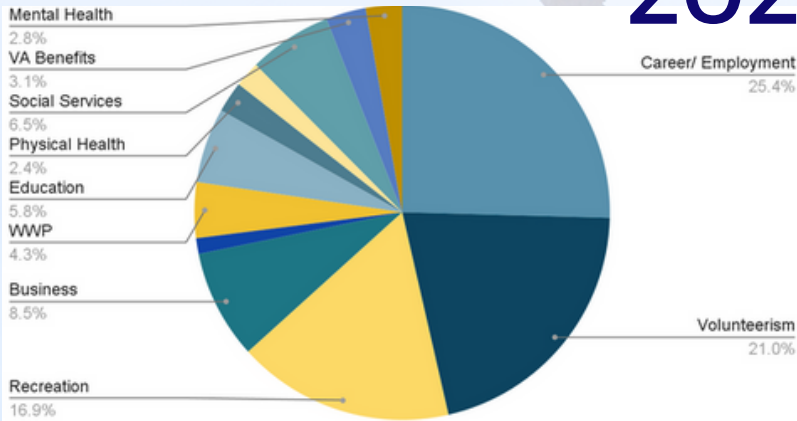
Connections

Career and employment, recreation, and business products and discounts were our top connection areas in FY22. There was a 502% increase in business connections, a 287% increase in career and employment connections, and a 172% increase in recreation connections from FY21.

2022



2021



Operation Ally

Due to the overwhelming resurgence in requests for business connections this past fiscal year VCC plans to relaunch Operation Ally in FY23. Operation Ally was suspended at the beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic as local businesses were greatly impacted by the pandemic, especially the many gyms, restaurants, and arts organizations VCC had worked to include in the program. VCC's end of year metrics demonstrate a strong recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The need is greater now, more than ever to get the the San Diego military affiliated community connected to businesses that support them.

Careers in the Community



Careers in the Community exploded in popularity during the early stages of the pandemic in the summer of 2020. As we experienced ongoing interest, we also experienced a consistent need to adjust and evolve as the pandemic carried forward. In Fiscal Year 2022, VCC continued to see career networking and resource requests to be at the top of our most requested needs. To continue meeting the needs of those we served, we shifted from a live webinar to a pre-recorded podcast format with a goal of making the information available through Careers in the Community even more accessible—from anywhere, at any time. With continued momentum, VCC propelled Careers in the Community into full podcast mode on two platforms: Spotify and Anchor. As a result, we have earned a renewed interest in the initiative. Featured speakers have included Amazon, the Center for Sustainable Energy, MedTechVets, Work for Warriors, FBI San Diego, and REBOOT. An active duty spouse, and Careers in the Community listener shared the following about their experience: *“My husband and I had recently PCS'd from WA state, and as a new spouse, I didn't know what potential job opportunities would be available to me in San Diego. A friend told me about VCC's Careers in the Community. After listening to a few episodes, I knew what I wanted to pursue. I contacted VCC's Connections Coordinator, and she put me in touch with the hiring manager from the episode I listened to. I now work full time for that company. Prior to listening to Careers in the Community, I had a different vision for myself, and my future, but now I love what I do, and can't imagine what my life would be like doing anything else. I would highly recommend Careers in the Community to others as it may just open your eyes to a whole new career path, as it did for me!”*

Volunteer in the Community

Volunteer in the Community connects local San Diegans to volunteer opportunities supporting veteran and military programs and events throughout the county. This year, over 600 individuals volunteered at over 50 events, a 17% increase from FY21. These events included beach cleanups hosted by the Travis Manion Foundation and Wounded Warrior Project supporting our fallen soldiers, care package distributions, holiday events, VA Ambassadorships, runs to remember, and so much more. 99% of VCC's Volunteer in the Community participants reported a positive experience volunteering. Volunteers welcomed avenues to engage with the veteran and military community enabling them to do more than just say 'thanks for your service.' The power of community is further exemplified through the experience of an active duty military member who has been a recurring volunteer since December, 2021. He shared: *“It always brings me good feelings every time I'm out and about volunteering knowing that I'm helping make something happen for the community and for a greater good. Being in the military taught me great values of why it's important to help out my community and others or special programs catered to specific outreach. Whether as simple as greeting people at the parking lot while accessing the traffic flow to cleaning and picking up trash by the beach- it's knowing that I'm making a difference in people's lives and doing something that counts. I live for this and thank VCC for the platform y'all continue to provide through your Volunteer in the Community program.”*

Our Impact

“Being a caretaker is challenging, and being a veteran is more complex than most recognize. Still, the whole world seems like a better place when you have support and understanding from a core group of people who genuinely understand. The VCC is that group.” -**Vietnam Veteran Caregiver**

“The VCC team is a great ‘finger on the pulse’ wealth of resources, ready to serve those in all sorts of ways, just ask. They more than likely have a super connection that’s available to assist.” -**Post 9/11 Navy Veteran**

“Our family is beyond grateful for the dedication VCC has for our military community!!” -**Active Duty Spouse**

“Refer to VCC. They are a really great, local organization- they pull rabbits out of hats!” -**VA Social Worker**

“Thank you very, very much. I’ve personally always tried hard to give back because I’ve been fortunate in the past. But I never expected anyone to help as much as you have during this hard time I’m having. Thank you, thank you. I appreciate this very much and this actually gives me a spark.” -**Post 9/11 Marine Corp Veteran**

“Thank you for this opportunity. I couldn't think of a more perfect volunteer opportunity for us.” -**Active Duty Marine Volunteer**

“I can't begin to tell you how much we need the extra food assistance right now, thank you for keeping us posted on events like this! #lifesaver” -**Active Duty Spouse**



IF YOU HAVE A BUSINESS
UNIQUELY POSITIONED TO
SUPPORT THE MILITARY
AND VETERAN COMMUNITY
IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY,
**NOW IS THE TIME TO JOIN
VCC'S OPERATION ALLY.**

Find out more at
vetscommunityconnections.org

**Thank you to our many core partners and
supporters who make the work of VCC possible-
we couldn't have done it without you!**

