

A history and structure of the Valley Veterans Service Center.

The Valley Veterans Service Center (VVSC) was started by the Bitterroot chapter of the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) in 2002 and became a non-profit organization under a 501(C)3 in 2007. In the beginning, the VVA established a board to oversee and run the VVSC. In 2010, with the support of the Ravalli County Board of Commissioners, a mill levy was passed in Ravalli County to provide tax based support for the VVSC. From 2010 to 2014 the VVSC, as a non-profit, used the funds from the Mill levy to hire staff to support the VVSC. Early in 2015 the VVSC and Ravalli County Commissioners entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to provide better support and oversight for the VVSC. In that MOU the County agreed to hire County Veterans Service Officers to support the operations at the VVSC. Per the MOU, the Veterans Service Officers would be county employees working at the VVSC. This structure allows the VVSC to have VA accredited Veterans Service Officers working on claims for the Veterans in Ravalli County. The MOU also requires the VVSC to reimburse the county for the costs that it incurs to employ the staff of the VVSC.

To be clear, The County Veterans Service Officers at the Valley Veterans Service Center are county employees that are paid with funds levied from property taxes. The VVSC board oversees the office to ensure that the County Veterans Service Officers are acting in the best interests of Ravalli County's Veterans .