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## County's VA benefits haul leads state

San Bernardino County assisted with securing \$85 million in new or increased federal monetary benefits for local military veterans during fiscal year 2013-14, far surpassing the value of payments in other California counties, according to a report by the state Department of Veteran Affairs.

The report, released in the fall, details the amount of new or increased monetary benefits paid to eligible veterans by the federal government attributable to the assistance of County Veterans Services Offices (CVSOs).

The \$85 million figure represents roughly 16 percent of the \$546 million in new federal benefits generated for veterans statewide, the report showed.

Bolstered by a state-high 34,039 claims filed last fiscal year, the county generated more new benefits than neighboring counties Riverside, Los Angeles, San Diego and Orange, despite maintaining a lower veterans population.

The report indicated that there are 111,221 veterans in San Bernardino County. The average amount of new awards received here was \$2,497.

"This report confirms that San Bernardino County is very effective in helping our veterans," 1st District Supervisor Robert Lovingood said in a statement. "I am committed to ensuring local veterans receive the help they have earned and deserve."

Bill Moseley, director of the county Department of Veteran Affairs, said his employees far exceeded his expectations and continue to work diligently for veterans and their families.

The \$85 million is also a significant boost from fiscal year 2012-13, when the county secured \$53 million in new federal dollars for veterans, according to Lovingood's office.

All reported amounts are taken from award letters issued by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to the claimant as submitted by individual counties.

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