



NEW MEXICO **DEPARTMENT OF** **VETERANS' SERVICES**

Legislative Finance Committee

FY28 Budget Briefing

October 20, 2026

Jamison A. Herrera

Cabinet Secretary

“Every day is Veterans’ Day”



- **Mission:** Build healthier communities by connecting all veterans and their families to the highest quality care, services, and eligible benefits through advocacy and collaboration.
- **Vision:** All Veterans and their families in this state will be educated about and the have an opportunity to attain all earned benefits through collaborative and synchronized efforts of all community service organizations.

NMDVS Locations



Veteran Services Locations

- Alamogordo
- Albuquerque (4)
- Belen
- Clovis
- Farmington
- Gallup
- Grants
- Hobbs
- Las Cruces
- Las Vegas
- Rio Rancho
- Roswell
- Santa Fe
- Silver City
- Taos



State Veterans Cemeteries and Memorial locations

- Angel Fire Cemetery
- Angel Fire Memorial
- Gallup Cemetery
- Ft. Stanton Cemetery
 - Historic Merchant Marine Cemetery
- Taos Cemetery
- *Carlsbad Cemetery, Est. 2028

* Mobile Outreach Vehicle



NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' SERVICES



- **Administrative Services:** Provides essential support to the agency to encompass required functions designed to ensure efficient and effective support. Support includes financial administration, contract and procurement processes, official record keeping, policy implementation, resource management, Human Resources, IT support, compliance and risk management, and facilities management.
- **Field Services:** Veteran advocates, assisting Veterans and eligible family members with filing federal claims and applying for state benefits.
- **State Benefits:** Manages state Veterans' benefits through education, outreach, and assisting Veterans and eligible family members applying for state benefits; operates state cemeteries and memorials.
- **Healthcare Coordination:** Educates Veterans about available health benefits and connects Veterans to community resources; manages transportation and homeless and suicide prevention initiatives.
- **State Approving Agency (SAA):** Reviews, evaluates, and approves eligible programs at educational institutions and training establishments in New Mexico for those individuals wishing to utilize their GI Bill® education benefits.* Provides oversight and technical assistance; performs compliance actions such as supervisory visits and risk-based surveys; promotes and safeguards quality education and training programs.
- **Veteran Business Outreach Center (VBOC):** Assists Veterans, reserve component members, and their eligible spouses with business planning, funding, marketing, and all other assistance needed to start or grow a business.
- **Veteran Tribal Liaison:** Works to promote government-to-government relationships by strengthening agency collaborations with tribal government, the Dept of Veterans Affairs and other key agencies to enhance access to services and benefits for Veterans in rural areas and tribal lands.
- **Women's Veteran Coordinator:** Advocates for women Veterans throughout New Mexico to ensure women Veterans and their eligible dependents are knowledgeable of available state and federal benefits and that women Veterans have equitable access to Veteran programs and specialized services.

**GI Bill® is a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). More information about education benefits offered by VA is available at the official U.S. government website at <https://benefits.va.gov/gibill>.*



STATE BENEFITS FY 2026

- **NMDVS
State Cemeteries**

- **The Taos State Veterans Cemetery open for veteran and dependent burial in June 2026** and to date has completed 13 burials as of September 15. This project is a priority to be included in the General Fund by FY 28.
- All three of our existing Cemeteries (3 of 30 nationally) were recognized by the National Cemetery Administration (VA) for the Cemetery Compliance Audit Inspection.

- **HB 47**

- The constitutional change increased the property tax exemption veterans will receive. The amount increased from **\$4,000 to \$10,000 in 2025**.
- **(EFFECTIVE 2026)**
10% - 90% Disabled Veterans' Property Tax Waiver exempt from property tax in the amount that shall be based on the **percentage of the veteran's disability rating as determined by federal law**, provided that the disabled veteran occupies the property as their principal residence. **In FY26 NMDVS issued 5,932 certificates.**

- **HB 161**



- DVS and EMNRD-New Mexico Parks division have collaborated and successfully implemented the new placards for veterans.
- The bill extended the **Veterans Lifetime Pass benefit to all Veterans** and extended the usage for the camping pass, changing it from one 3-day pass per year to unlimited use pass for all veterans. **In FY26 NMDVS issued 10,894 Veteran Passes**



HONOR GUARD FY 2026

- Augment the military branches' burial services
- Currently there are 33 Honor Guard Teams in the state; 26 are active
- DVS conducts (2) trainings and competitions/year

Fiscal Year	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY267 Anticipated
# of services rendered	1101	747	914	990
Expended amount	\$ 186,700	\$184,100	\$199,700	\$210,000
% increase expended from previous fiscal year	28.45%	(1.4 %)	7.1% services 22.4% expended amount	No data





STATE BENEFITS FY 2026

State Benefits Applications	FY25 Total	FY26
Tax Exemptions	4,352	6,308
Disability Tax Exemptions	3,153	8,807
License Plates	847	683
Monuments & Passes	1,158	1,098
Game & Fish	785	1,063
State Scholarships	149	93
Lifetime Park Passes	N/A	*10,894 (New for FY 26)
Total	10,444	28,946
Percent increase	51%	73% increase

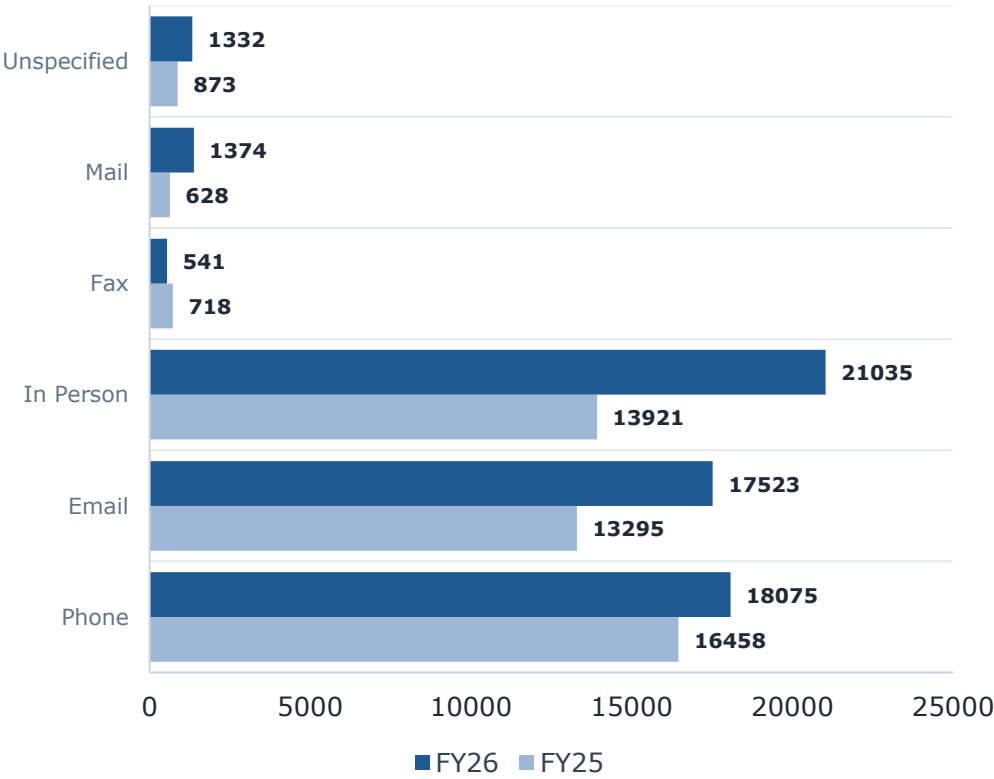
FIELD SERVICES OPERATIONS

REPORTING PERIOD: 06.30.2025–07.01.2026



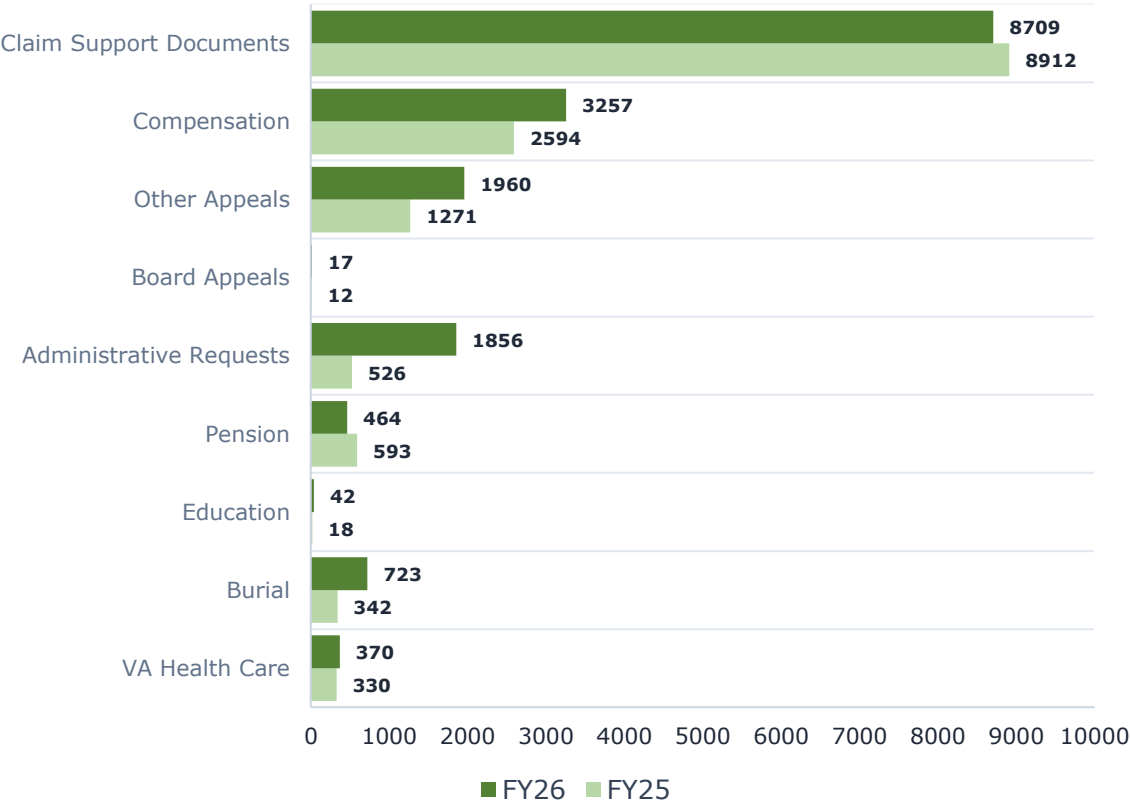
Field Services Interactions

Total interactions increased 30.48%, from 45,893 to 59,880



Veteran Encounters

Total encounters increased 19.18%, from 14,598 to 17,398





MOBILE OUTREACH VEHICLE

The New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services (NMDVS) Mobile Outreach Vehicle reached all 33 counties and 55 communities; serving more than 400 veterans and family members since its launch on January 30th, 2026.



HEALTHCARE COORDINATION DIVISION



OUTREACH REFERRALS – 511 VETERANS SERVED- 2,274

Suicide Prevention: According to the 2025 National Veterans Suicide Prevention Annual Report, in 2023 (the latest data available) 6,398 veterans died by suicide—17.5 Veteran suicides per day. In 2023, suicide was the 12th leading cause of death for Veterans and was the second-leading cause of death for Veterans under age 45.

The Healthcare Coordination Division's Suicide Prevention Coordinator serves as the state lead for the Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families (SMVF), a national initiative supported by SAMHSA and the VA. The Healthcare Coordination Division hosted SAMHSA for the New Mexico Governor's Challenge site visit in July 2025. The project's initiatives were established during the site visit.

Areas of emphasis:

- Lethal means safety and safety planning
- Promoting connectedness and improving care transitions / Linkage to Care
- Identifying Service Members, Veterans, and their Families and screening for suicide risk
- Veteran Suicide Mortality Review (VSMR)

NM Governor's Challenge SMVF teams include collaborative groups of community, municipal, military, veteran, and other stakeholders who meet monthly to discuss initiatives and efforts on mental health and resources.

Behavioral Health and Veteran Homelessness: The Healthcare Coordination Division partners with trusted local organizations across the state to provide direct support to veterans experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness, or those carrying the weight of trauma, depression, anxiety, or PTSD long after service. Services offered include:

- Serving as a liaison for veterans navigating VA Healthcare enrollment and benefits.
- Coordinating access to VA and non-VA medical services.
- Advocating for veterans with complex medical or social needs.
- Supporting families and caregivers.
- Collaborating with federal, state, and local partners.
- Building connections to federal, state and veteran-focused housing programs, vouchers and subsidies.



NM GOVERNOR'S CHALLENGE TO PREVENT SUICIDE AMONG SERVICE MEMBERS, VETERANS, AND THEIR FAMILIES (SMVF)



- The Healthcare Coordination Division purchased billboards throughout the state, and placed them in areas identified with the highest suicide rates per capita, to encourage anyone in a crisis to reach out for help
- Billboards started going up in June 2026 and will remain until the end of September, National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

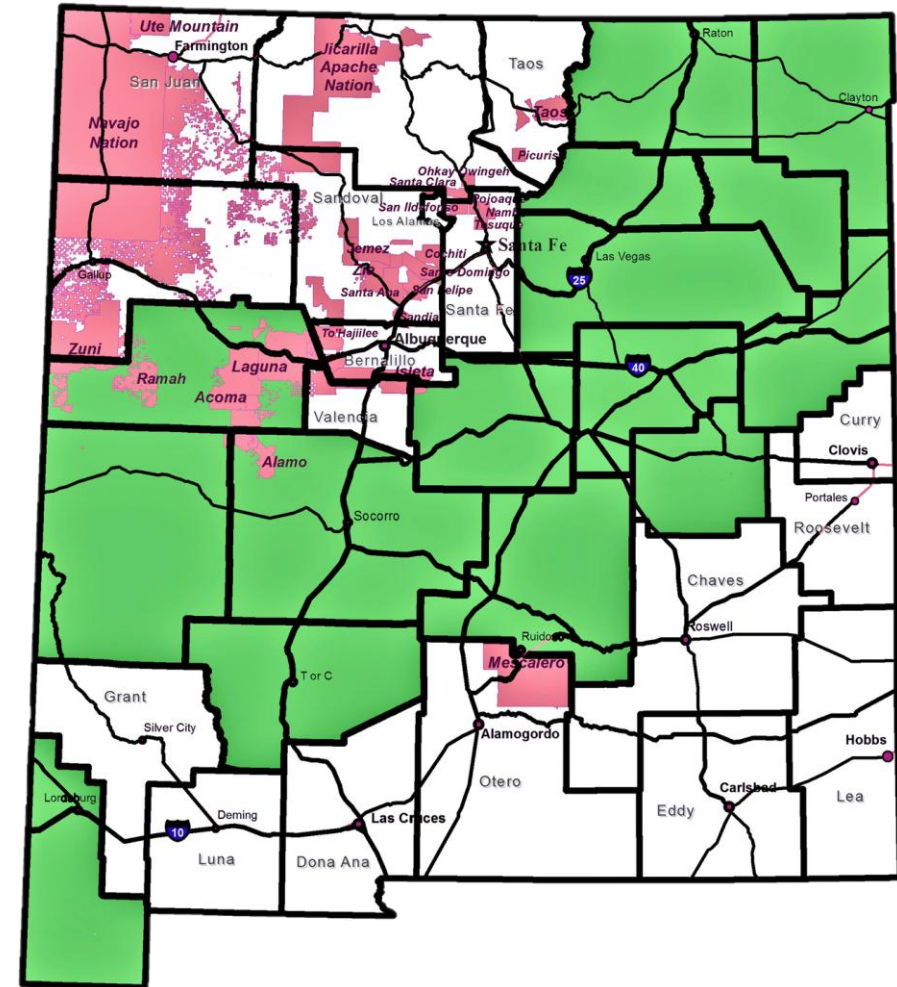


VETERAN TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM



Highly Rural Transportation Program (H RTP)

- The H RTP is funded by the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs' Highly Rural Transportation Grant (HRTG)
- The H RTP provides free, roundtrip, non-emergency transportation to veterans for VA authorized appointments
- Transportation focuses on 15 "HIGHLY RURAL" counties, and the tribal lands thereon: **Catron, Cibola, Colfax, De Baca, Guadalupe, Harding, Hidalgo, Lincoln, Mora, Quay, San Miguel, Sierra, Socorro, Torrance, and Union**



HIGHLY RURAL TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM



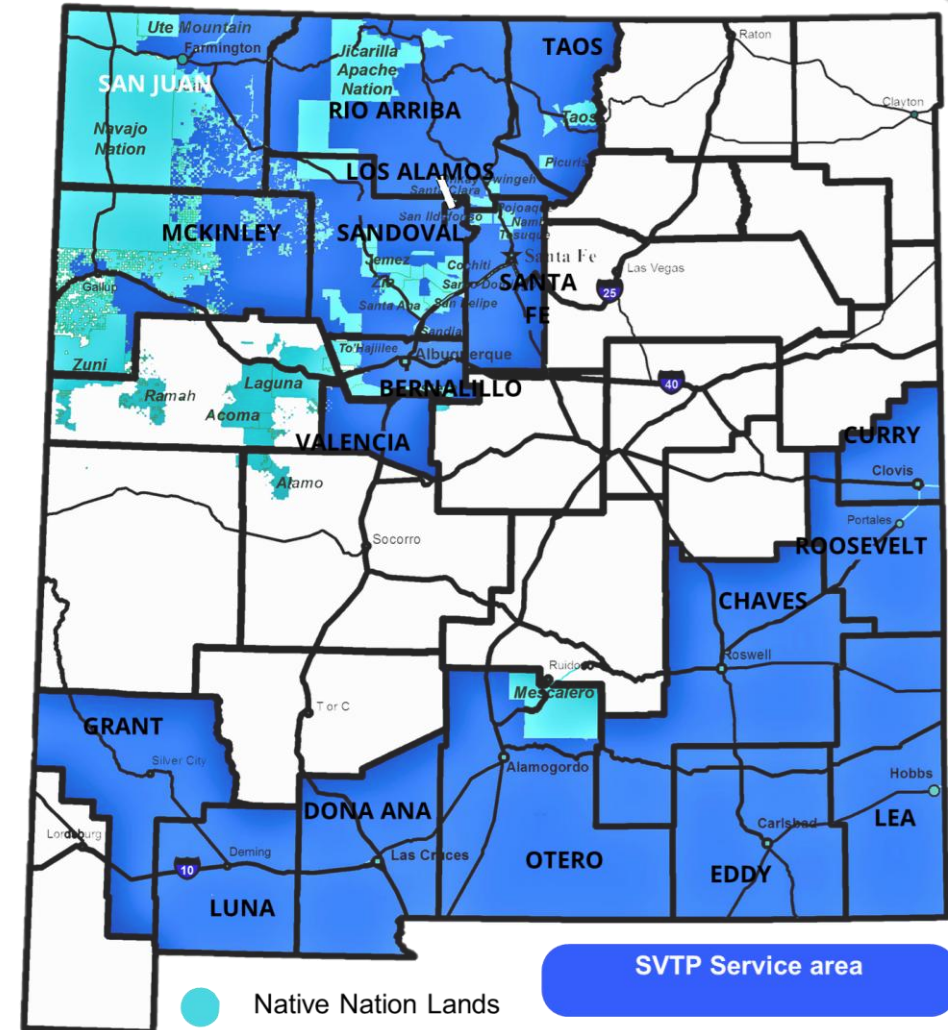
- The HRTG funding allowed NMDVS the opportunity to purchase billboard advertisement.
- Billboards were strategically placed throughout New Mexico, on interstates or state roads, leading into or from H RTP counties.



STATEWIDE VETERANS TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM



- To ensure all New Mexico veterans have access to medical care, with the help of state special funds, we expanded our transportation program to include the 18 additional counties that are not classified as “highly rural,” allowing NMDVS to provide transportation to veterans in all 33 counties.
- The 18 counties, and the tribal lands thereon, covered by state funding supplement include: **Bernalillo, Chaves, Curry, Doña Ana, Eddy, Grant, Lea, Los Alamos, Luna, McKinley, Otero, Rio Arriba, Roosevelt, San Juan, Sandoval, Santa Fe, Taos, and Valencia**



HIGHLY RURAL TRANSPORTATION GRANT 2 YEAR REPORT



	FY25	FY26
Federal grant award per federal fiscal year	\$550,000.00 (required state funds supplement)	\$600,000.00 (required state funds supplement)
Avg. Cost Per Mile (not including additional wait charge)	\$2.47	\$2.68
Total Miles Driven	157,418	147,046
Total Veterans Served	414	239
Total Round Trips	622	976



NMDVS PROGRAMS



TRIBAL LIAISON



Our Tribal Liaison is dedicated to collaborating with and addressing any shared Veterans' issues and concerns for the State's Pueblos, Nations, and Tribes.

Recognizing the unique challenges and sacrifices made by our Native American Veterans, the NM Department of Veterans' Services remains committed to fostering a strong partnership with the State's Pueblos, Nations, and Tribes. Current NM Native American Veterans Population: 40,000+ (19) Pueblos (5) Nations / Tribes (2) Borderline Pueblo / Tribe

	2026
Outreach Events, Town Halls, Community Engagements:	184
Number of Veterans and Families Served:	515

WOMEN VETERANS PROGRAM



The Women's Veteran Coordinator is dedicated to advocating for the unique needs of women Veterans across New Mexico, ensuring they and their families have equitable access to vital state and federal benefits. Recognizing that women Veterans face distinct challenges such as specialized health care, mental health support, housing, education, and employment the Coordinator works to remove barriers and provide tailored resources. By collaborating with agencies and community partners, this role enhances outreach and service delivery while advising policymakers to prioritize and address the specific concerns of women Veterans in all veteran programs. Total number of women Veterans in New Mexico is 20,142, June 2026.

	2026
Outreach Events, Town Halls, Community Engagements:	81
Number of Women Veterans and Families Served:	1256

STATE APPROVING AGENCY (SAA)

Responsible for:

- Review
- Evaluation
- Approval
- Oversight



- ✓ Compliance
- ✓ Standards
- ✓ Laws
- ✓ Regulations

Ensuring federal and state criteria are met at educational institutions and training establishments so eligible Veterans and other GI Bill® beneficiaries may use their VA education benefits for quality programs in the following categories:

- Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL)
- Non-College Degree (NCD)
- Apprenticeship and On-the-Job Training (OJT)
- Vocational Flight Training
- Licensing and Certification Tests



Type of Action Processed by the SAA	Total
Number of educational institution & training establishment reapprovals	84
Number of new (initial) approvals	4
Number of program approvals	2,158
Number of visits (supervisory, risk-based surveys, inspection)	15

GI Bill® is a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). More information about education benefits offered by VA is available at the official U.S. government website at <https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill>.

State Approving Agency for Veterans' Education and Training - New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services

VETERAN BUSINESS OUTREACH CENTER



VBOC supports 3 military installations:

- ✓ Cannon AFB – Clovis, NM
- ✓ Kirtland AFB – Albuquerque, NM
- ✓ Holloman AFB – Alamogordo, NM

- **Business Growth:** Supported the launch of nine New Mexico veteran-owned businesses, resulting in the creation of 14 full-time jobs.
- **Boots to Business (B2B):** Conducted 16 workshops serving 203 transitioning service members and veterans.
- **Boots to Business Reboot:** Delivered 10 workshops to 102 participants, expanding entrepreneurial training beyond active-duty military installations.
- Implemented a third signature program, **Military Spouse Pathway to Business**, conducting four workshops for 26 participants. Strengthened outreach through collaboration with all three New Mexico military installations and their Military Spouse Clubs.
- **Public Speaking and Outreach:** Delivered seven public speaking engagements at events held throughout the SBA Resource Partner Network.
- **Veteran Surplus Program Tours:** Launched quarterly tours to educate veteran-owned businesses about the program's benefits and available opportunities.
- **Small Business Lender Expos:** Implemented quarterly expos attracting up to 15 financial institutions and lending partners, including banks, microlenders, Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), and credit unions.





MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

FY 2026 Digital Reach

FY 2026



Year/Rank: **2028-001** Priority: High

Project Title: New Construction of a Veterans Resource Center

Class: Renovate/Repair



Our FY28 ICIP Priority one (1) Total Project cost: \$20,000,000.00

Contact Person: Edward Mendez Contact Phone: (505) 382-3760 E-mail: Edward.Mendez@dvs.nm.gov

Project Location: Veterans Resource Center Phase II (2406 Centre Ave SE Albuquerque NM 87106)

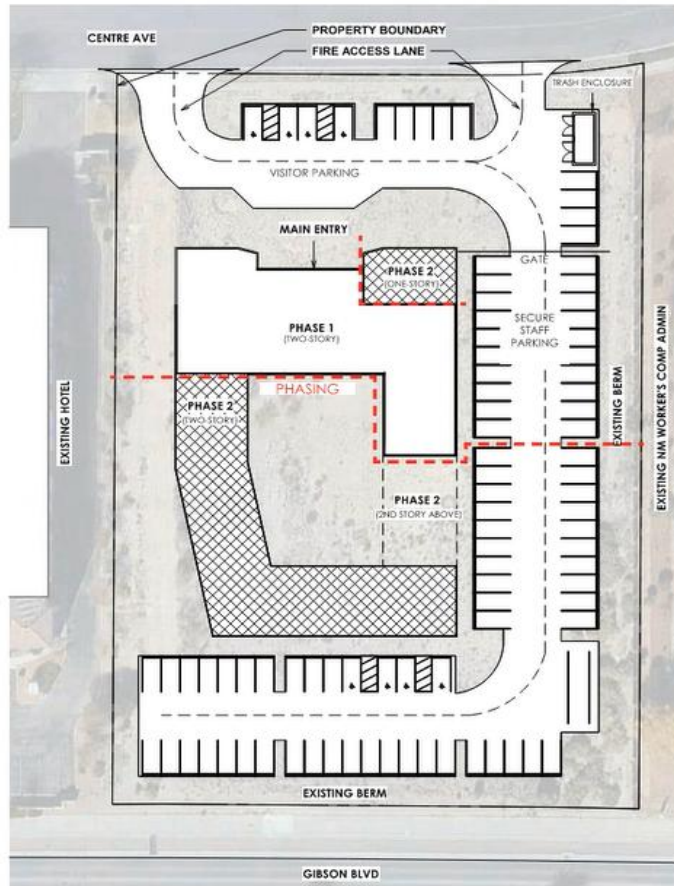
Legislative Language: To plan, design, construct, furnish, and equip a state-operated Veterans Resource Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico, including all required safety and security features to ensure a secure and supportive environment for veterans, visitors, and staff.

To date, the New Mexico Legislature has appropriated **\$10M** for Phase I, along with **\$1.2M** for the project's Feasibility Study, architectural and engineering work, planning, design, and initial construction activities.

The planned 25,000 square foot facility will provide dedicated office space for state and federal partners, enabling coordinated service delivery and improved access to critical programs. A Feasibility Study conducted by the New Mexico State University Arrowhead Center estimated the total project cost at **\$31.2M**. To advance the project to completion, the Department respectfully requests **\$20M** in capital funding for Phase II construction based on new General Services Department estimates.

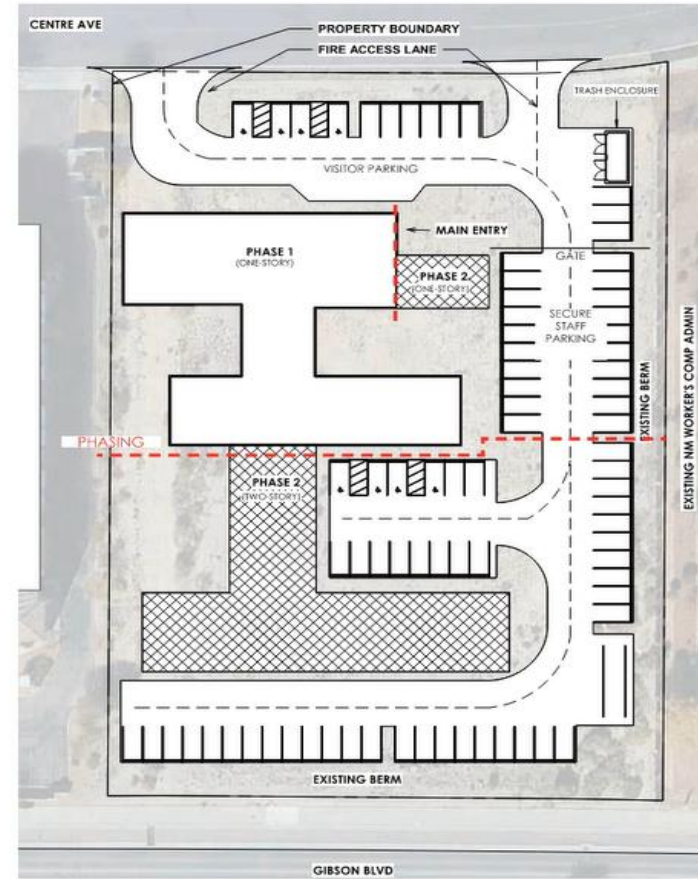
The Department of Veterans Services remains committed to prioritizing comprehensive support for New Mexico's Veterans and Transitional Service Members (TSMs). The proposed Veterans Resource Center will serve as a centralized hub for state and federal benefits, outreach, and reintegration services for Veterans and newly transitioning service members returning to communities across the state.

FACILITY CONCEPT RENDERINGS



Study 3

2 Acre Site
88 Parking Spaces
Phase 1 Footprint: 8,000 sf
Phase 2 Footprint: 9,000 sf



Study 4

2 Acre Site
80 Parking Spaces
Phase 1 Footprint: 12,000 sf
Phase 2 Footprint: 11,000 sf

Year/Rank: **2028-002** Priority: High

Project Title: Critical Repairs: Conditions and Safety

Class: Renovate/Repair



Our FY28 ICIP Priority Two (2) Total Project cost: \$4,000,000.00

Contact Person: Edward Mendez Contact Phone: (505) 382-3760 E-mail: Edward.Mendez@dvs.nm.gov

Project Location: Angel Fire

Legislative Language: To support the Mitigations planning, design, operation, and repair activities necessary to preserve, enhance, and improve sites and grounds.

It is imperative that the Department of Veterans' Services prioritize both the appearance and safety for all visitors and staff at the State Veterans Cemetery facility. Ensuring a respectful and secure environment is essential to honor those who have served.

Key projects underway include:

- Mitigation repair work for Angel Fire State Veterans Cemetery

Year/Rank: **2028-003** Priority: High



Project Title: Critical Repairs: Conditions and Safety

Class: Renovate/Repair

Our FY28 ICIP Priority Three (3) Total Project cost: \$4,075,000.0

Contact Person: Edward Mendez Contact Phone: (505) 382-3760 E-mail: Edward.Mendez@dvs.nm.gov

Project Location: Fort Stanton, Gallup, Angel Fire and Taos NM

Legislative Language: To support the planning, design, operation, maintenance, repair, and activities necessary to preserve, enhance, and improve sites and grounds

It is imperative that the Department of Veterans' Services prioritize both the appearance and safety for all visitors and staff at the State Veterans Cemeteries and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial facilities. Ensuring a respectful and secure environment is essential to honor those who have served.

Key projects underway include:

- Phase II of the sound wall at Gallup State Veterans Cemetery.
- Phase II of the Angel Fire overflow parking lot which includes asphalt paving of the current basecourse parking area.
- Ft Stanton irrigation project and Historic Merchant Marine Cemetery maintenance.
- Angel Fire security camera system upgrades around the Memorial Wall, the cemetery and overflow parking lot areas.
- Installation of a glass wind barrier on the existing Taos Cemetery committal shelter.



FY 28 BUDGET REQUEST

The NM Department of Veterans Services has requested a **total** budget of **\$14,280.4** for the fiscal year 2028.

This is an increase in the General Fund of **\$2,065.1** (19.8%) increase from the FY27 Operating Budget.

200 Personal services and Employee Benefits: \$ 1,583.5

Growing program demand requires 10 additional FTE across cemetery operations, suicide prevention, benefits assistance, healthcare coordination, public affairs, and rural outreach.

In addition, funding is required for:

- new healthcare plan premium increases with consideration for individuals switching to family coverage and SEPA 2&3 coverage with 10% increase for FY28
- newly qualified personnel for longevity pay
- GSD consolidated rate increases

300 Services : \$105.0

Permanent Funding for Critical Programs

- Newly acquired Taos State Veterans Cemetery operations
- Suicide Prevention Act Staffing
- Veterans Medical Transportation Program

400 Other: \$376.6

- Taos State Veteran Cemetery Operations
- Suicide Prevention Services
- Agency Operational lease, fuel, utility increases

Non Recurring Specials: \$500.0

- Statewide Transportation Program 100.0
- Rural Outreach Services to Veterans 300.0
- Homelessness Services for Veterans 100.0

- The FY26 General Fund reversion total \$20,586.76 (0.23%) primarily resulting from unexpended contract services and a minor portion of unused travel funds.

FY 28 BUDGET REQUEST



Veterans' Services Department

BU PCode Department
67000 P726 000000

State of New Mexico

S-8 Financial Summary

(Dollars in Thousands)

		2025-26	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	FY 2028 Agency Request		
		Opbud	Actuals	Opbud	PCF Proj	Base	Expansion	Total
REVENUE								
111	General Fund Transfers	8,853.9	8,621.1	10,460.3	0.0	11,485.7	1,029.7	12,515.4
112	Other Transfers	0.0	466.5	0.0	0.0	60.0	0.0	60.0
120	Federal Revenues	1,258.0	859.8	1,257.4	0.0	1,300.0	0.0	1,300.0
130	Other Revenues	375.0	225.9	97.5	0.0	405.0	0.0	405.0
150	Fund Balance	200.0	300.0	301.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
REVENUE, TRANSFERS		10,686.9	10,473.2	12,106.6	0.0	13,250.7	1,029.7	14,280.4
REVENUE		10,686.9	10,473.2	12,106.6	0.0	13,250.7	1,029.7	14,280.4
EXPENSE								
200	Personal services and employee benefits	6,988.6	7,683.0	8,453.5	8,894.5	8,812.0	998.6	9,810.6
300	Contractual services	2,095.6	1,335.3	2,042.0	0.0	2,433.7	0.0	2,433.7
400	Other	1,604.7	1,387.7	1,611.1	0.0	2,005.0	31.1	2,036.1
EXPENDITURES		10,688.9	10,406.1	12,106.6	8,894.54	13,250.7	1,029.7	14,280.4
EXPENSE		10,688.9	10,406.1	12,106.6	8,894.54	13,250.7	1,029.7	14,280.4
FTE POSITIONS								
810	Permanent	76.00	76.00	80.00	86.00	80.00	10.00	90.00
820	Term	5.00	0.00	5.00	0.00	5.00	0.00	5.00
FTEs		81.00	76.00	85.00	86.00	85.00	10.00	95.00
FTE POSITIONS		81.00	76.00	85.00	86.00	85.00	10.00	95.00

The graphic at the top of the slide features a central circular seal for the New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services. The seal has a blue outer ring with the text "NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS SERVICES" and "SERVING THOSE WHO SERVED". The inner circle is yellow with a red Zia sun symbol. Surrounding this central seal are seven smaller circular emblems representing different branches of the United States military: the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, and Coast Guard. The background of the graphic includes a stylized American flag and a New Mexico state flag.

NEW MEXICO
DEPARTMENT OF
VETERANS' SERVICES

“Serving Those Who Served” NMDVS Programs & Services

NMDVS Website- <https://www.nmdvs.org/>

Facebook –NewMexicoVeterans <https://www.facebook.com/nmdvshealthcare2015/>

Instagram- NMDVSHHealthcare2015 <https://www.instagram.com/newmexicoveterans/>