



# Indian Affairs Committee (IAC) Update

October 22, 2025



**Jamison A. Herrera**

Cabinet Secretary

**Department of Veterans' Services**

*"Serving Those Who Served"*

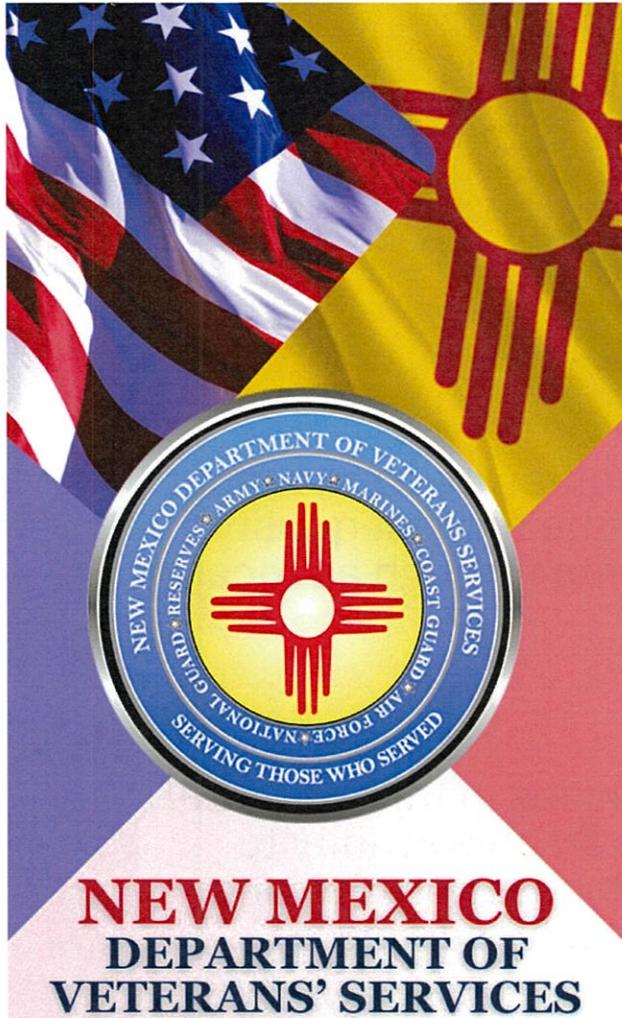


# “Every day is Veterans’ Day”

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**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.



# Tribal Liaison

Beverly Charley  
Tribal Liaison





**New Mexico Department of Veteran Services**

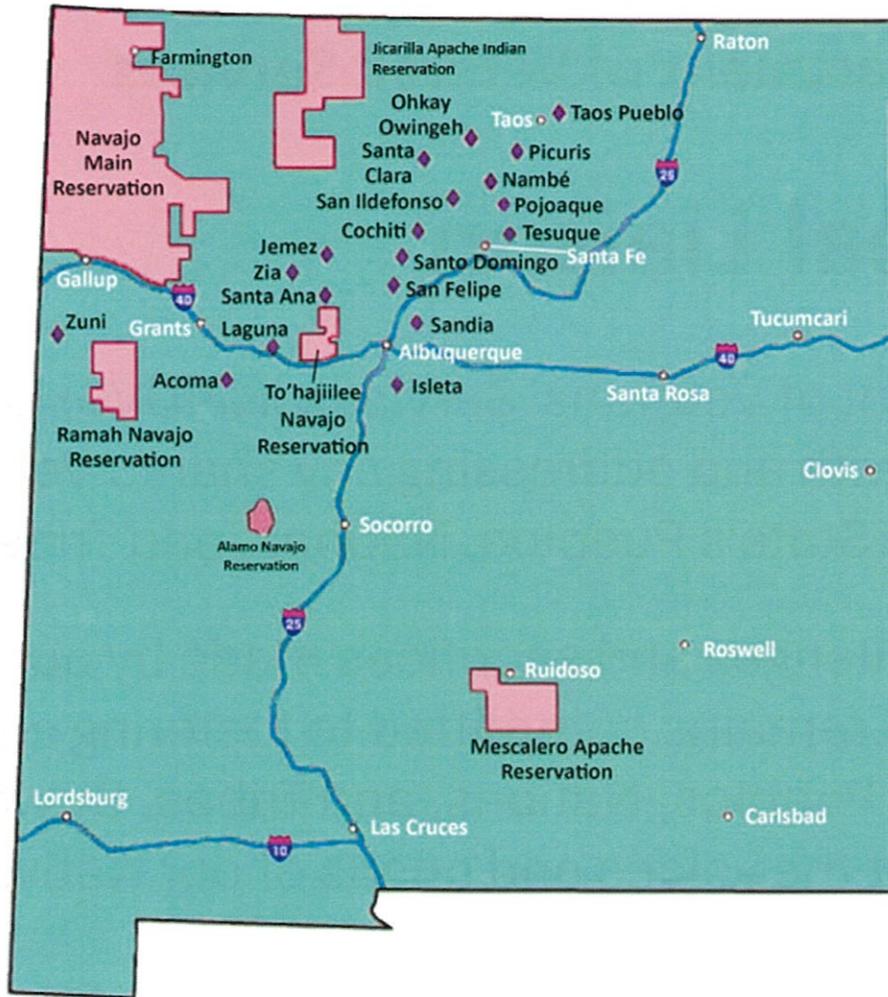


# **Tribal Liaison**

## **Mission**

The New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services (NMDVS) 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, NMDVS remains committed to fostering a strong partnership with the State's Pueblos, Nations, and Tribes. By working together, we can ensure that the voices and needs of our Native American Veterans are heard and respected.



(19) Pueblos  
(1) Navajo Nation  
(3) Apache Tribes and Nations



## Challenges



- Ongoing demand for updated Veterans Count data
- Sustained outreach efforts to Tribal Lands
- Difficulty engaging younger Native American Veterans on Tribal Lands
- Limited participation of Tribal Veterans and Leaders in Veterans' events
- Frequent turnover in Tribal Leadership
- Challenges in scheduling meetings with Tribal Leaders regarding Veterans Services
- Time and resource constraints associated with organizing a full-day Veterans Conference



## Key Activities



- Monthly (Virtual) NM Native American Veteran Collaboration meetings / Quarterly (in person) Meetings
- Advocate for involvement and training for Native American Tribal Veteran Service Officers (TVSOs) to ensure effective representation and efficient claims processing
- Provide assistance to support major events with Pueblos, Nations, and Tribes
- Serve as Point of Contact between State and Indian Pueblos, Nations, and Tribes



# Key Activities

New Mexico Native American Veterans Statewide:  
**7,349 / 6%** (2023) NMDWS

## 19 Pueblos: (US Census 2020 – 2021)

Pueblo of Acoma	115+-	Pueblo of Picuris	4+-	Pueblo of Santa Clara	89+-
Pueblo of Cochiti	126+-	Pueblo of Pojoaque	208+-	Pueblo of Santo Domingo	500+-
Pueblo of Isleta	278+-	Pueblo of San Felipe	115+-	Pueblo of Taos	100+-
Pueblo of Jemez	71+-	Pueblo of San Ildefonso	50+-	Pueblo of Tesuque	5+-
Pueblo of Laguna	600+-	Pueblo of Sandia	17+-	Pueblo of Zia	20+-
Pueblo of Nambe	97+-	Pueblo of Santa Ana	40+-	Pueblo of Zuni	427+-
Pueblo of Ohkay Owingeh	92+-				

1 Pueblo (Borderline): Ysleta Del Sur: 80+-

## 4 Nations / Tribes: (US Census 2020 – 2021)

Navajo Nation	14,000+-	Jicarilla Apache Nation	50+-	Mescalero Apache Tribe	400+-
		Fort Sill Apache Nation	115+-		

1 Nation (Borderline): Southern Ute Nation: 920+-



# Tribal Engagements & Collaboration

Accomplishments for FY 25 (July 1, 2024 – June 2025)



- Attended tribal resource fairs and outreach events across Nations, Pueblos, and Tribes
- Initiated monthly NM Veterans Tribal Collaboration Meetings with Tribal Leaders and Executive Assistants
- Conducted Quarterly Tribal Liaison Meetings and ongoing outreach with Pueblo of Isleta Veterans Association
- Participated in Indian Day at the NM Legislature honoring tribal veterans
- Attended inaugural meeting with Navajo Nation Veterans Advisory at Fort Defiance, AZ



# Tribal Engagements & Collaboration

Accomplishments for FY 25 (July 1, 2024 – June 2025)



- Collaborated with tribal partners to develop VA Accreditation Pathways; successfully enrolled 39 Tribal communities in NACVSO Training through the NMIAD grant.
- Presented the Tribal Program at the Hesperus Native American Veteran Entrepreneurship Bootcamp.
- Attended inauguration of Jicarilla Apache Nation President Adrian Notahsinnie (USMC Veteran)
- Supported planning and coordination for Veterans events with the Jicarilla Apache, Santo Domingo, Santa Clara, Tesuque, Laguna, Nambe, Taos, and Zuni tribal communities



## Healthcare & Behavioral Wellness



- Supported NM Native American Suicide prevention workshops across Native communities
- Participated in NMDOH Tribal Roundhouse for Native American Veterans healthcare awareness
- Represented DVS at Gathering of Nations Pow Wow with VA Healthcare collaboration
- Attended World Health Wellness Fair at Santo Domingo Pueblo
- Provided state benefits assistance to over 100 veterans and families in San Juan County (single biggest event)
- Attended behavioral health-focused legislative days with DVS Healthcare



## Veteran Conference, Retreats & Recognition



- Hosted inaugural NMDVS Veterans Conference at Buffalo Thunder Casino & Resort
- Participated in Tribute to Women Veterans Day with Albuquerque Veterans Organizations
- Attended NMDVS Women Veterans Conference
- Collaborated with Native American Training Institute to host NATI Veterans Symposium at Isleta Resort & Casino



## Veteran Conference, Retreats & Recognition



- Attended planning meetings for Northern NM LC-18 Veterans Retreat at Nambe Falls
- Supported PTSD-focused Veterans events with Pueblo of Tesuque
- Attended various Homeless Stand Downs in Gallup, San Juan County, and Navajo Nation
- Supported Gold Star Mothers Memorial Phase II dedication at Farmington Berg Park
- Assisted with flood-related holiday relief for Mescalero Apache and Santa Clara Pueblo veterans



## Education, Exhibitions & Public Events

- Engaged in planning and outreach for the Smithsonian “Why We Served” Exhibition at Fort Garland Museum, Invited tribal veterans to participate and lend memorabilia
- Conducted outreach at NM State Fair
- Supported “Honor Song” Premier hosted by Sovereign Mind Productions
- Participated in MMIW event at Shiprock Gym offering family support services

## Legislative & Leadership Outreach

- Cabinet Secretary attended meetings with Pueblo of Nambe Governor and tribal leaders
- Delivered DVS program briefing to Congressman Vasquez
- Attended NM State Tribal Summit, Reception & Educational Sessions

# VETERAN SERVICES STATE BENEFITS



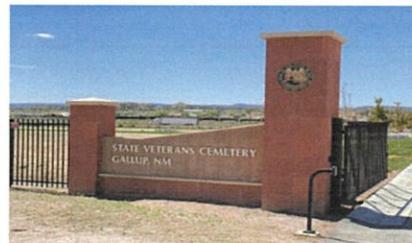
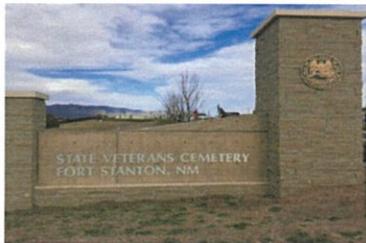
- **HB 47** was an amendment of property taxation owned by a veteran. The constitutional change increased the property tax exemption veterans will receive. The amount has increased from **\$4,000 to \$10,000 in 2026**.
- The property of a disabled veteran is exempt from property tax in the amount that 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.
- **HB 161** The bill has extended the **Veterans Lifetime Pass benefit to all Veterans** and not limit to 50% and higher disabled Veterans. It also extend the usage for the camping pass, changing it from one 3-day pass per year to unlimited use pass for all veterans.



# New Mexico State Veteran Cemeteries



- Fort Stanton State Veteran Cemetery (505) 205-6707
- Gallup State Veteran Cemetery (505) 905-9771
- Angel Fire State Veteran Cemetery (505) 225-4341
- Merchant Marine Historical Cemetery (505) 205-6707
- Taos State Veterans Cemetery (DVS FY25)
- Carlsbad State Veteran Cemetery (Construction TBD)





# Tribal Veterans Services Officers

Continued collaboration and partnership with Tribal VSOs ( 11 ) assisting all NM Veterans – Provide continuous on-going mentorship of Native American Tribal VSOs including the Pueblos, Nations, and Tribes.

August 11- 15 > Last NACVSO Accreditation = 7

<b>Pueblo of Laguna:</b>	Patrick Aragon	Terrance Bell	Christine Sarracino
<b>Pueblo of Zuni:</b>	Carlyle Quam	Angela Waseta-Rivera	
<b>Pueblo of Tesuque:</b>	Jeannette Jagles	Koty Duran	
<b>Pueblo of Isleta:</b>	Ulysses Abeita		
<b>Pueblo of Santa Clara:</b>	Virginia Halfmoon-Salazar		
<b>Mescalero Apache:</b>	Kelton Starr		
<b>Navajo Nation:</b>	ENVA – Lori John	NNVA – Vacant	

# Mobile Unit



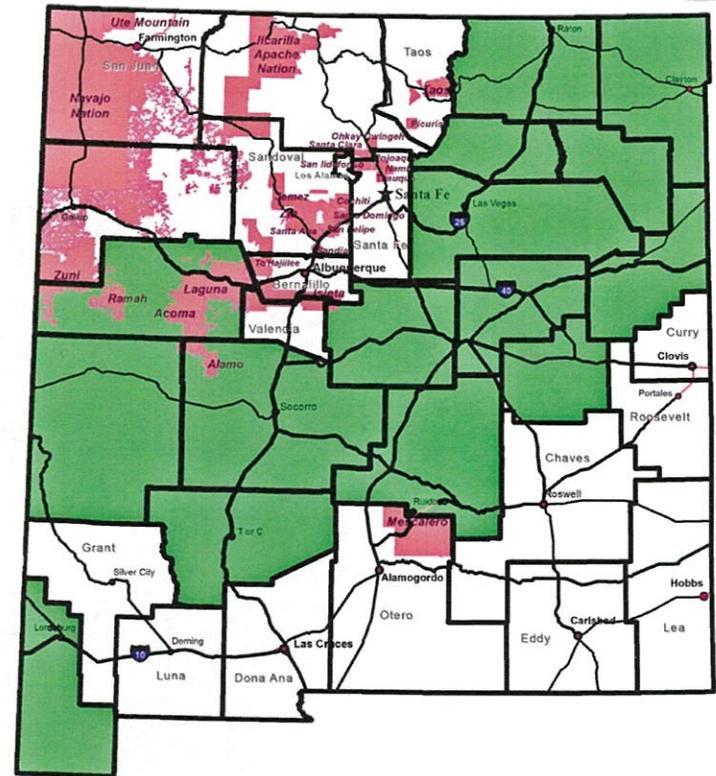
- (2) accredited Veteran Service Officers traveling to rural communities and Tribal land to bring services to those who've served



# Highly Rural Transportation Program (H RTP)



- The H RTP funding for free roundtrip, non-emergency, medical transportation for Veterans to VA authorized Appointments.
- H RTP is funded by a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Grant. Highly Rural Transportation Grant (H RTP).
- Focus is transportation in 15 “HIGHLY RURAL” counties: **Catron, Cibola, Colfax, De Baca, Guadalupe, Harding, Hidalgo, Lincoln, Mora, Quay, San Miguel, Sierra, Socorro, Torrance, and Union.**
- Services are available to any areas within Native or Tribal Lands

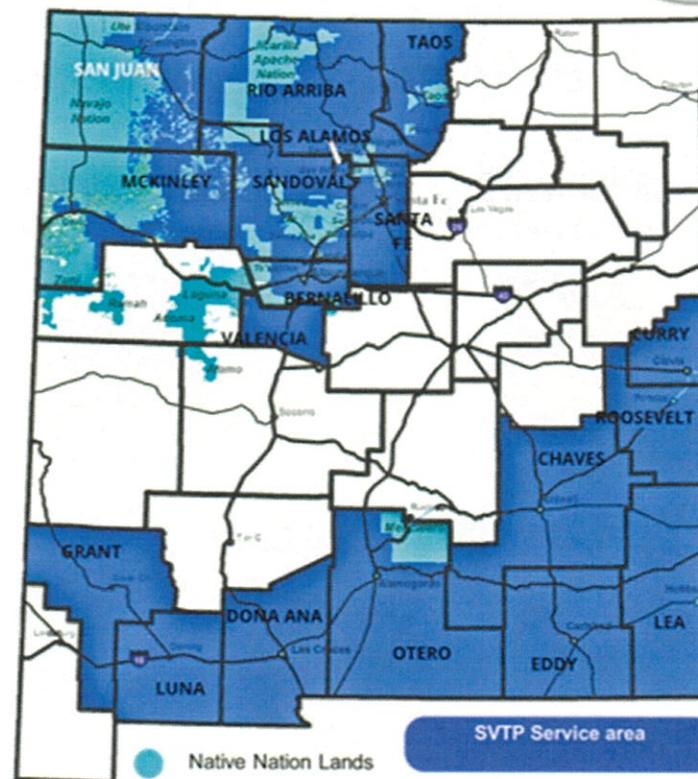


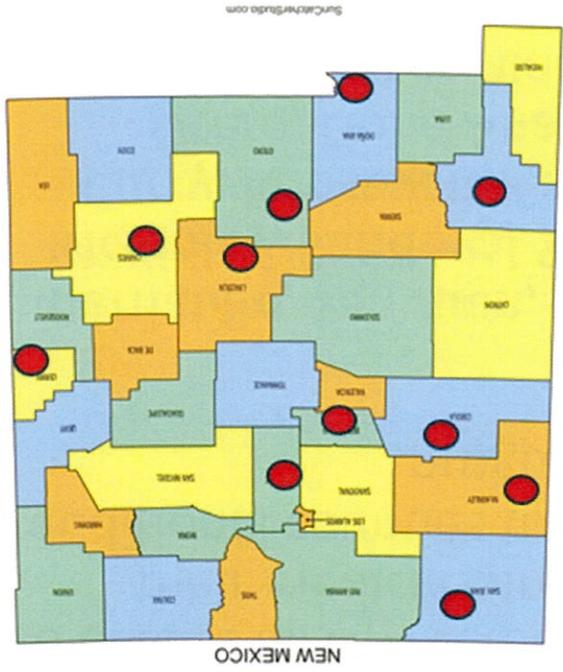
# Highly Rural Transportation Program (H RTP)



To ensure all NM veterans have access to their medical care, we added 18 additional counties to our transportation program.

**Bernalillo, San Juan, Rio Arriba, Taos, McKinley, Sandoval Santa Fe, Valencia, Curry, Roosevelt, Chaves, Lea, Eddy, Otero, Dona Ana, Luna, Grant, Los Alamos**





Seeking to collaborate  
with  
White Sands Missile  
Range.



**NM National Guard**



**HOLLOMAN AFB**  
377TH AIR BASE WING



**KIRTLAND AFB**  
377TH AIR BASE WING



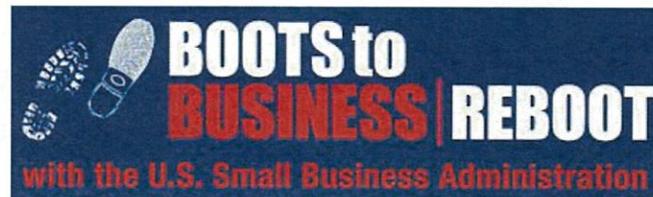
**CANNON AFB**  
27th Special Operations Wing

- VBOC covers 3 military installations:**
- ✓ Cannon AFB - Clovis, NM
  - ✓ Kirtland AFB - Albuquerque, NM
  - ✓ Holloman AFB - Alamogordo, NM

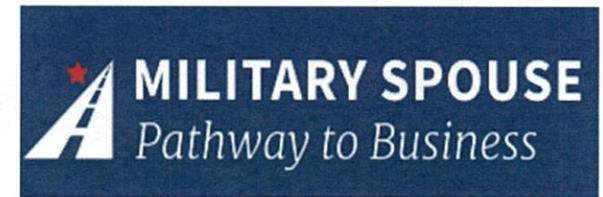
# Business Entrepreneurship Training Workshops



2-day training session at  
military Installations



1 or 2-day training in the community or  
virtual



1 or 2- day training in the  
community or virtual for military  
spouses.

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Support and Participated in the Native American Veteran  
Entrepreneurial Bootcamp hosted by UNM Rainforest

[www.nmvboc.org](http://www.nmvboc.org)



# Women Veterans Program Mission:



**The Women Veterans Program (WVP) will be an advocate for women veterans throughout New Mexico.**

We will work 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 services.



## NEW MEXICO IS RANKED #35

- Veteran Population in NM as of November 2024 is 150,935.
- Women Veterans in NM is 17,056.
- That means that Women Veterans represent 12.9% of the veteran population in NM.
- According to the VA population, there are only 7,609 utilizing their benefits.
- Still around 10,000 Women Veterans in New Mexico who have not come forth.

\*New Mexico ranks 18th in the country for gender diversity among veterans.



## NMDVS RESOURCES



**State Benefits**  
**(505) 827-6300**

**Healthcare Coordination**  
**505-383-2400**

**State Cemeteries & Memorials**  
**(505) 670-5824**

**Transportation Program**  
**(505) 429-5906**

**Veterans Business Outreach Center**  
**(505) 220-9932**

**Veteran Service Officers**  
**(505) 383-2400**

**Women Veteran Program**  
**(505) 372-9106**

[www.nmdvs.org](http://www.nmdvs.org)

[Vetdvs.Tribaliaison@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:Vetdvs.Tribaliaison@dvs.nm.gov)

**(575) 241-3322**





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## Indian Affairs Committee (IAC) Update

*Thank you*