



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

## **Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee**

### **FY27 Budget Briefing**

November 5, 2025

Jamison A. Herrera

Cabinet Secretary

# “Every day is Veterans’ Day”



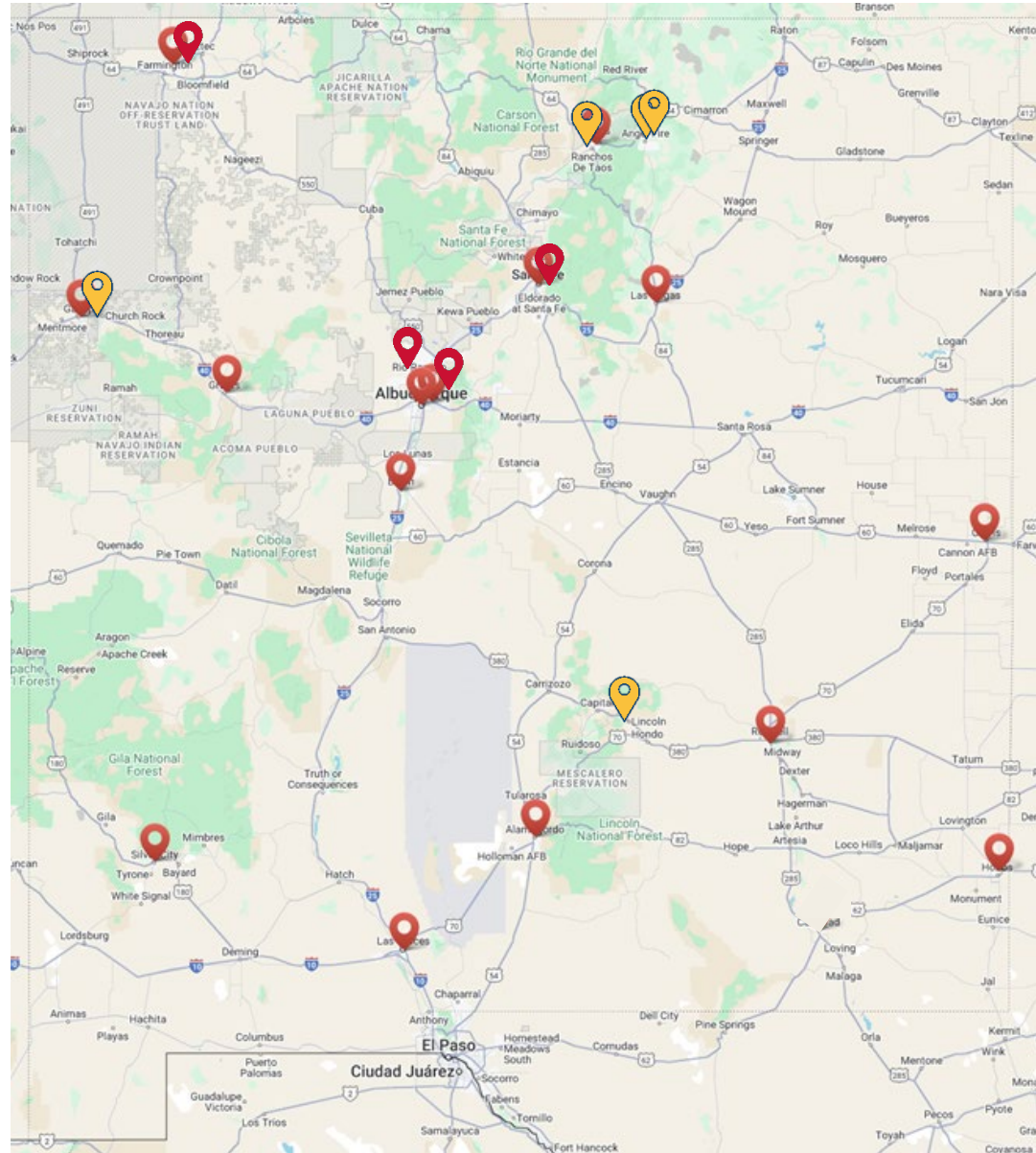
- **Mission**: Build healthier communities by connecting all veterans and their families to the highest quality care, services, and eligible benefits through advocacy and collaboration.
- **Vision**: All Veterans and their families in this state will be educated about and the have an opportunity to attain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

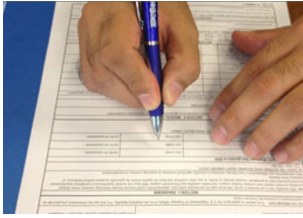


# NMDVS Locations

26 Locations Statewide

- Grants\*
  - Farmington (2)\*\*
  - Las Vegas\*\*
  - Taos (2)\*
  - Santa Fe (2)\*
  - Albuquerque (4)
    - Pinetree\*\*\*\*
    - VA Hospital\*
    - VARO\*
    - Goodwill\*
  - Angel Fire (2)
  - Belen\*
  - Clovis\*\*
  - Roswell\*\*
  - Hobbs\*
  - Alamogordo\*
  - Las Cruces\*\*\*
  - Silver City\*
  - Rio Rancho\*
  - Gallup (2)\*
  - Fort Stanton
  - Mobile Unit\*\*
- \* # of VSO @ location





# 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 enroll and utilize their GI Bill® education benefits.\*
- **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 FISCAL YEAR 2025

- **NMDVS  
State Cemeteries**

- The Taos State Veterans Cemetery capitalization from the County is ongoing. 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 Association (VA) for the Cemetery Compliance Audit Inspection.

- **HB 47**

- The constitutional change increased the property tax exemption veterans will receive. The amount increased to **\$10,000 in 2025**.
- 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. **(EFFECTIVE 2026)**

- **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.

# HONOR GUARD FISCAL YEAR 2025



- 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 - through 09/30	FY26 anticipated
# of services rendered	1101	747	130	725
Expended amount	\$ 186,700	\$184,100	\$35,500	\$200,200
% increase expended from previous fiscal year	28.45%	(1.4 %)	N/A	8.7%





# STATE BENEFITS FISCAL YEAR 2025



State Benefits Applications	FY24 Total	FY25 Total	FY26/QTR1
Tax Exemptions	2880	4352	1098
Disability Tax Exemptions	1738	3153	1407
License Plates	494	847	126
Park Passes	1094	1158	49
Game & Fish	683	785	168
State Scholarships	44	149	23
Lifetime Park Passes	N/A	N/A	5008
Total	6933	10444	7879
Percent increase	7%	51%	100% increase projected



# FIELD SERVICES OPERATIONS FISCAL YEAR 2025

<b>Field Services Interactions:</b>							
	Phone	Email	In Person	Fax	Mail	Unspecified	Total
<b>FY 24 Dept Totals:</b>	13682	10503	13641	371	360	1180	39737
<b>FY 25 Dept Totals:</b>	16458	13295	13921	718	628	873	45893
<b>% Change</b>	↑22.20%	↑26.58%	↑ 2.05%	↑93.53%	↑74.44%	↓ 26.01	↑15.49%

<b>Veteran Encounters</b>			
<b>Federal Benefits:</b>	FY 24	FY 25	% Change
VA Health Care Benefits	366	330	↓ 9.80%
Burial Benefits	431	342	↓ 20.70%
Education Benefits	41	18	↓ 56.10%
Pension Applications	561	593	↑ 5.70%
Administrative Requests	577	526	↓ 8.80%
Board of Veteran Appeals	19	12	↓ 36.80%
Appeals (non Board)	2215	1271	↓ 42.61%
Compensation Applications	2915	2594	↓ 11.00%
Additional Claim Support Documents	7861	8912	↑ 13.30%
	14986	14598	↓ 2.50%





# Mobile Unit

(2) accredited Veteran Service Officers traveling to rural communities and Tribal lands to bring services to all Veterans



# Healthcare Coordination Division



**OUTREACH EVENTS – 69**  
**COMMUNITY EVENTS- 41**  
**REFERRALS- 190**

**Suicide Prevention:** According to the 2024 National Veterans Suicide Prevention Annual Report, in 2022 (the latest data available,) 6,407 veterans died by suicide—17.6 Veteran suicides per day.

The Division 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 Division hosted SAMHSA for the New Mexico Governor’s Challenge site visit in July 2025. The project initiatives were established during the site visit.

Areas of emphasis:

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

**Behavioral Health and Veteran Homelessness:**

- Act as a liaison for veterans navigating VA healthcare enrollment and benefits Coordinate access to VA and non-VA medical services.
- Advocate for veterans with complex medical or social needs Support families and caregivers Collaborate with federal, state, and local partners.
- Build connections to federal, state and veteran-focused housing programs, vouchers and subsidies.
- FY26, DVS contracted with three organizations for direct referral if a veteran is at risk of becoming unsheltered or is currently unsheltered.

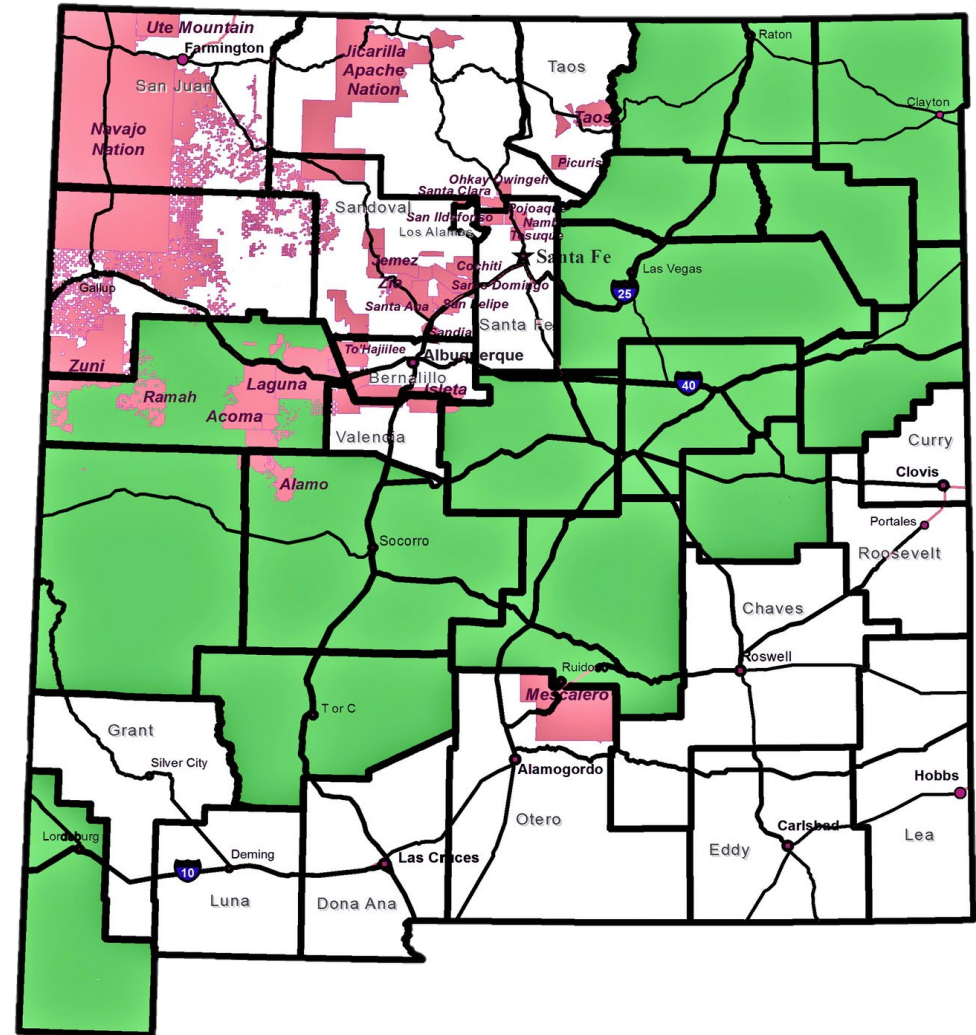


# Veteran Transportation

## 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 Veteran Affairs Grant. Highly Rural Transportation Grant (H RTG)
- 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.

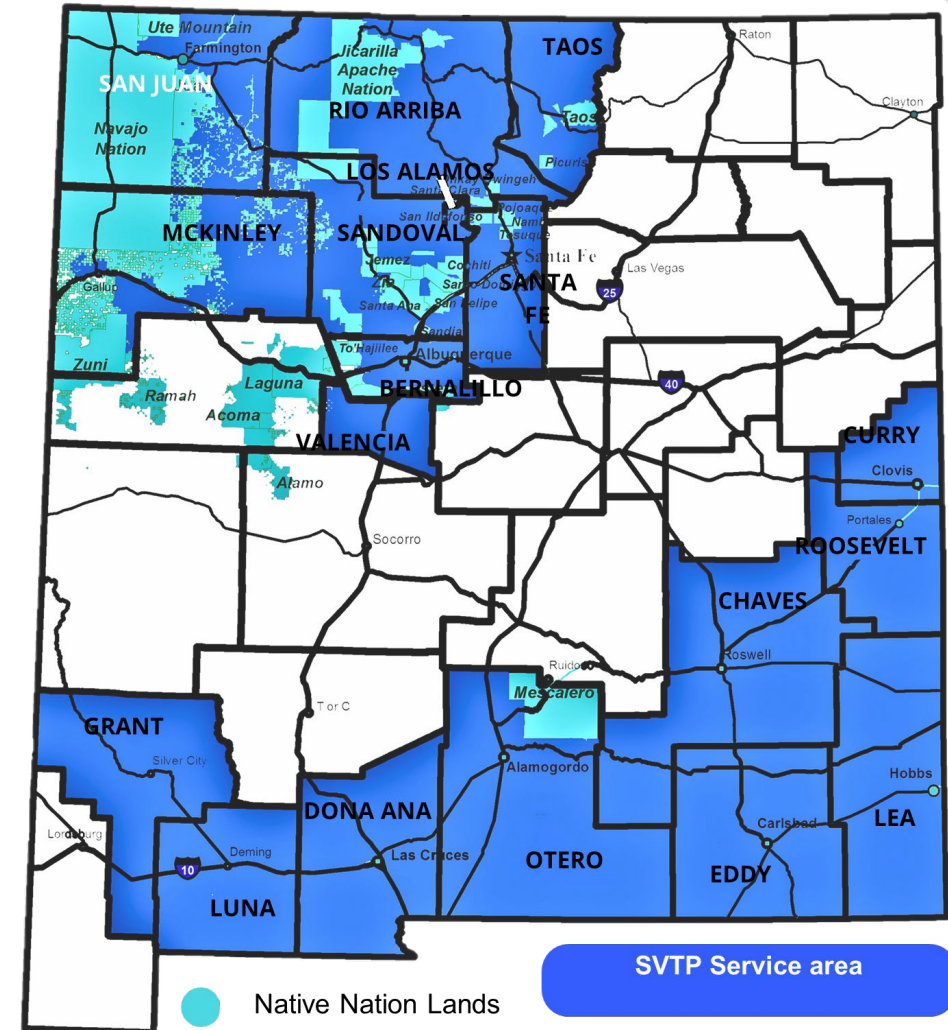


# Statewide Veterans Transportation Program



- To ensure all NM Veterans have access to the medical care, we now added 18 additional counties to our transportation program.

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





# Call: 505-249-5906

Free roundtrip, non-emergency, medical transportation for Veterans to VA authorized appointments





# STATE VETERANS TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM FISCAL YEAR 2025

	FY24	FY25	FY26 Projected
Federal grant award per federal fiscal year	\$250,000.00 (required state funds supplement)	\$550,000.00 (required state funds supplement)	\$600,000.00
Avg. Cost Per Mile (not including additional wait charge)	\$2.43	\$2.47	2.68
Total Miles Driven	170,690	157,418	224,000
Total Veterans Served	356	414	463
Total Round Trips	669	622	715



# 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 (4) Nations / Tribes (2) Borderline Pueblo / Tribe

	2025
Outreach Events, Town Halls, Community Engagements:	231
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.

	2025
Outreach Events, Town Halls, Community Engagements:	91
Number of Women Veterans and Families Served:	129



# State Approving Agency

## Responsible for:

- Review
- Evaluation
- Approval
- Oversight



- Approval Actions: A total of 81 approval actions were processed and uploaded into Salesforce by the SAA.
- Program Approvals: A total of 2,167 programs were approved by the SAA.
- 3.85% increase in programs approved compared to FY24

**Ensuring federal & state criteria are met at institutions so eligible Veterans and other GI Bill® beneficiaries may use their VA education benefits**

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>.

# Veteran Business Outreach Center



## VBOC supports 3 military installations:

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

NM VBOC National Recognition: honored as the 2025 SBA NM Veteran Champion of the Year.

- Outreach Impact: Successfully executed 17 outreach events engaging over 2,500 participants statewide.
- Business Growth: Supported the launch of five new veteran-owned businesses, creating 10 full-time employee positions. Performance Metrics and Program Impact
- Boots to Business (B2B): Conducted 14 workshops- serving 172 transitioning service members and veterans.
- Boots to Business Reboot: Delivered 12 workshops with 58 participants, broadening access to veteran entrepreneurs beyond active-duty installations
- Military Spouse Programming: Implemented a third signature program, “Military Spouse Pathway to Business,” advancing inclusivity and addressing a critical population segment.







# FY 27 Budget Request

The NM Department of Veterans Services has requested a **total** budget of **\$11,863.0** for the fiscal year 2027.

This is an increase in the General Fund of **\$1.102.2** (12.4%) increase from the FY26 Operating Budget.

## **200 Personal services and Employee Benefits: \$ 1093.8**

This appropriation request represents a critical need for General Fund support to address a \$1.1 million personnel and benefits budget shortfall for FY26. The shortfall is the result of several compounding factors, including an 86.7% increase in risk insurance premiums, rising employer health insurance costs, and the implementation of a critical realignment of Veteran Service Officer and Cemetery staff positions in FY24.

Funding for this realignment was not included in the FY25 Operating Budget, nor was an increase allocated in FY26 as submitted in the request. The financial impact has since grown due to reduced vacancy rate savings following the successful hiring of all classified positions on the agency's Organizational List (OL). In the absence of sufficient General Fund support for personnel in FY26, the agency is utilizing 89% of its enterprise veteran program revenue funds to remain solvent in FY26. This stopgap measure is not sustainable. These program revenue funds will not be available in FY27, placing the agency at significant financial risk and threatening its ability to maintain operations.

Full funding of this General Fund request is essential to preserve current staffing levels, prevent service disruptions, and support the retention of highly trained personnel who provide critical services to New Mexico's Veterans and their families. Without this appropriation, the agency will face operational and program instability.

This request is not for expansion; it is to sustain and retain the core infrastructure and highly trained workforce required to meet our mission. Continued underfunding will directly impact our ability to serve those who have served our state and nation.

- The agency has requested 4FTE to staff the recently capitalized Taos State Veterans Cemetery to be placed on the OL and funded through the Special Request this year and to be funded by General Fund in FY28.
- The agency currently has 2.5% vacancy rate (2 positions)
- The FY25 General Fund reversion totals \$48,490.79,(0.57%) primarily resulting from unexpended contract services and a minor portion of unused travel funds.

## **300 Contractual Services: \$ 8.4**

8.4 approved rate increase for FY27 Audit



# FY 27 Budget Request

## Key Initiatives for FY26 - Capital Funding Request Update

**Veteran Resource Center – (Original Request 15M)** The proposal is the establishment & creation of a “New Mexico Veteran Resource Center” built on a One Shop veteran-centric service delivery model. The concept of the One Stop Shop is to enable veterans and their families a single access point to information and service transactions.

### NMDVS VRC UPDATE

#### Veterans Resource Center Feasibility Study Key Updates:

All VRC survey data was submitted to the Arrowhead Center (NMSU) for review as of September 10<sup>th</sup> (110 Survey submitted from 10 counties; Sierra, Dona Ana, Taos, Bernalillo, Santa Fe, Valencia, Sandoval, San Juan, Catron, and Grant).

The Arrowhead Center is currently conducting a comprehensive review of the final feasibility data.

Once their internal review is complete, they will provide us with a draft version of the study for our feedback prior to submitting the finalized feasibility study to DVS.

- Feasibility study Cost was **\$55,000.00**
- Funding available for VRC is **\$10,200,000.00** for construction.
- GSD is estimating the cost will increase to a total of **\$26,065,000.00** when completed due to current price/square foot at \$800.00.
- Estimate an additional **\$16,000,000.00** for construction cost in legislative funding for the same size venue.
- **Next Steps:** We are awaiting the final feasibility study from the Arrowhead Center and will conduct our own assessment with GSD and provide any necessary feedback or inputs before the final feasibility study is completed and submitted.





Year/Rank: **2027-001** Priority: High

Project Title: Critical Repairs: Conditions and Safety

Class: Renovate/Repair

**Our FY27 ICIP Priority one (1) Total Project cost: \$3,233,000.00**

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 plan, design, repair, mitigate, and implement other necessary improvements to 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.

Ongoing mitigation efforts are addressing deficiencies resulting from inadequate and previous substandard construction.

Key projects underway include:

- The completion of Phase II of the sound wall at Gallup State Veterans Cemetery.
- Restoration work at the Angel Fire Vietnam Veterans Memorial amphitheater, which involves stucco repairs, handrails, stairs, and a walkway connecting to the adjacent Memorial Wall.
- Phase II irrigation installation for the Memorial Wall center flag plaza walkway and additional parking area.
- Installation of a burial information kiosk at the Taos State Veterans Cemetery to enhance visitor accessibility and services



## 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- NMDVSHealthcare2015 <https://www.instagram.com/newmexicoveterans/>