New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services



Legislative Finance Committee FY24 Budget Briefing

October 18, 2022

Sonya L. Smith, Cabinet Secretary











"Every day is Veterans' Day"

Mission: To provide the highest quality care, service, and advocacy for veterans and their family members.

<u>Vision</u>: To recognize and serve all generations of veterans and their family members and approach each day as Veterans' Day.



NMDVS Division Services



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, memorials, and state cemeteries.

Healthcare: Educates veterans about available health benefits and connects veterans to community resources; manages transportation and homeless initiatives.

State Approving Agency (SAA): Reviews, audits, and approves state educational institutions to receive GI Bill® education benefits funding.*

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.

^{*}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.

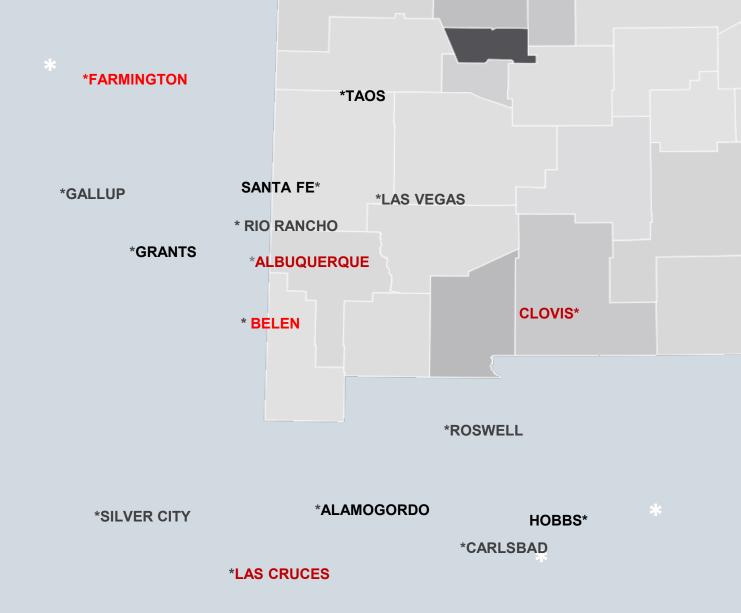


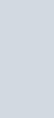
NMDVS Field Offices:

| Location | # of VSO's assigned | # Vacancies |
|--------------|---------------------|-------------|
| | | |
| Albuquerque* | 5 | 2 |
| Alamogordo | 1 | 0 |
| Carlsbad | 1 | 0 |
| Clovis* | 2 | 1 |
| Farmington | 2 | 1 |
| Gallup* | 1 | 0 |
| Grants | 1 | 0 |
| Hobbs | 1 | 0 |
| Las Cruces* | 4 | 2 |
| Las Vegas | 2 | 0 |
| Rio Rancho | 1 | 0 |
| Roswell | 1 | 0 |
| Santa Fe | 3 | 0 |
| Silver City | 1 | 0 |
| Belen | 1 | 1 |
| Taos | 1 | 0 |
| | | |

Current VSO Staff: 15 CVSO's, 4 Supervisors

Field Services vacancy rate: 7/28





FIELD SERVICES OPERATIONS CALENDAR YEAR 2022 (Jan- to date)

Veteran Encounters

| Total | 36,996 |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| Additional Office Asst. | <u>2537</u> |
| General Contacts | 6265 |
| Misc. Inquiries | 2108 |
| Phone Calls | 7978 |
| •Claims | 2663 |
| ■Emails | 9952 |
| Office Visits | 5493 |
| | |

NM DVS Veteran Service Officers, The Heart of the Agency

The Certified Veteran Service Officer, (CVSO) is a pivotal position in the success of carrying out the agency's mission, vision and goals. Alongside the specialized training and accrediting, each CVSO acquires at DVS, we pride ourselves in saying our CVSO staff possess characteristics that connect to our veteran community in a manner of excellence. Passion, unity, selfless service, & the everlasting respect for serving those who have served.



PACT ACT 2022

Sgt First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act 2022

What is the PACT Act?

- Expands VA healthcare and benefits for veterans exposed to burn pits, and other substances
- Veterans and their survivors are eligible
- Includes the Camp Lejeune Justice Act of 2022

DVS anticipates the new law will increase:

- Claims filing
- Appeals
- Survivors Benefits

NMDVS State Benefits Performance

| State Benefits Applications | FY21 Total/ QTR1 | FY22 Total /QTR1 | FY23 Total /QTR1 |
|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Tax Exemptions | 3036 / 464 | 3036 / 584 | 593 / 527 |
| Disable Tax Exemptions | 1068 / 215 | 1068 / 268 | 266 / 232 |
| License Plates | 689 / 201 | 689 / 169 | 239 / 224 |
| Park Passes | 385 / 142 | 385 / 99 | 238 / 228 |
| Game & Fish | 442 / 103 | 442 / 98 | 113 / 107 |
| State Scholarships | 121 / 36 | 121 / 14 | 28 / 27 |
| Total | 5741 / 1167 | 5741 / 1232 | 1477 / 1345 |
| Percent increase | base | 5.6% | 9.2% |









HONOR GUARD SERVICES

About Honor Guard Services

- Augment the military branches' burial services
- Currently there are 40 Honor Guard Teams in the state; 25 are active
- DVS conducts (2) trainings and competitions/year

| Fiscal Year | FY21 | FY22 | Fy23 - through 8/30 | FY24 anticipated |
|--|-------------|--------------|---|-------------------------------|
| # of services rendered | 247 | 714 | 135 (anticipated 850 through end of FY) | 925 (anticipated) |
| Expended amount | \$49,505.00 | \$142,800.00 | \$185,000.00 (anticipated) | \$200,000.00 (anticipated) |
| Percent increase from previous fiscal year | | 142.8% | 29.5% | 8.1% |

Veterans Medical Transportation Program

- 15 counties currently funded by VA Highly Rural Transportation Grant (HRTG)*
- Requested funding will expand transportation availability to all counties, and the number of vendors
- DVS is hosting, The State of Rural Transportation, December 9, 2022, to assess veteran transportation needs in NM. Partners include, DVS, VTS, DAV, Veterans Integration Center, Rail Runner and more.

Transportation Snapshot

DAV

Areas of coverage: Alamogordo, Espanola, Santa Fe, Farmington, Gallup, Grants, Las Cruces, Truth or Consequences, Raton, Las Vegas

| | FY21 | FY22 | FY23 | FY24 Estimation |
|---|--------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Contract Amount | \$ 38,986.46 | \$41,999.66 | \$47,000.00 | \$750,000.00 |
| Amount per mile | .55 | .56 | .76 | 380,710.66 |
| Total Miles Covered | 70,884.47 | 74,999.39 | 61,8211 | 380,710.66 |
| Total Veterans Served | 398 | 421 | 273 | 1535 |
| Total Trips (median 178 miles per trip) | 398 | 421 | 273 | 1535 |

<u>HGRT</u> – Federal Program

Areas of coverage: Cibola, Guadalupe, Mora, Quay, San Miguel, Socorro, Harding, Union, Colfax, Catron, Hidalgo, Sierra, Torrence Lincoln, DeBaca

| | FY21 | FY22 | FY23 | FY24 Estimation |
|---|---------------|-----------|-----------|-----------------|
| Fund Amount | \$ 102,000.00 | \$135,000 | \$126,000 | \$135,000 |
| Amount per mile | 1.97 | 1.97 | 1.97 | 1.97 |
| Total Miles Covered | 51,776.64 | 68,527.91 | 63,959.39 | 68,527.91 |
| Total Veterans Served | 208 | 276 | 257 | 276 |
| Total Trips (median 178 miles per trip) | 208 | 276 | 257 | 276 |

Veteran Transportation Totals

| Totals | FY21 | FY 22 | FY 23 | FY24 w/additional 750 k Estimation |
|-------------------------|------|-------|-------|------------------------------------|
| Total veterans assisted | 606 | 697 | 530 | 1,811 |

FY 24 Budget Request



General Fund Request is: \$8,611,900.00

The Fy24 request is an increase of 19.9% from the FY23 Operating Budget

Increases are needed in the following areas:

200 Personal services and Employee Benefits: \$577,800.00

With the additional workloads and responsibilities, the agency anticipates with the approved PACT ACT, an increased Veteran Medical Transportation Program and the Governors Challenge for suicide prevention, we are vigorously working to get all 74 DVS approved positions filled to support the needs of the agency.

- At a current glance, vacancy rate savings will show a rate of 17.6% with 13 vacant positions.
- By the end of FY23 this number will significantly decrease to an estimated 7-9%.
- Agency is in process of hiring 6 of the 7 vacant VSO positions, in which we anticipate all to be in place by the end of November 2022.
- 4 vacant positions are also currently being processed for action requests
- 3 vacant positions are Exempt high-level positions to which \$364.6 is the projected requirement to fill the appointments.
 - **The FY22 reversion amount of \$ 398,998 will reflect this vacancy savings that weren't filled in FY22.
- ** NMDVS worked with Comp and Class to research and modify the Eligibility Interviewer Job Descriptor, VSO.

NMDVS was able to do a realignment of the VSOs positions to be more competitive with Federal Veteran Service Officer's wages and allow our agency to retain our staff after the investments of training and accreditation expenditures.

300 Contractual Services

\$ 850,000.00

- 750K Veteran Transportation Services
- Honor Guard Services: steep increased expenses for FY 23 will be covered with the agency's fund balance account. Future use cannot be depended on as the fund is revenue driven and fluctuates.

State of New Mexico Veterans' Services Department **S-8 Financial Summary PCode** Department 67000 0000 0000000000 (Dollars in Thousands) 2021-22 2021-22 2022-23 2023-24 ----- FY 2024 Agency Request ---Actuals Opbud PCF Proj Expansion Total Base REVENUE 111 General Fund Transfers 5.165.6 5.510.8 6.150.1 0.0 7.577.9 0.0 7,577.9 112 Other Transfers 76.0 621.2 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 Federal Revenues 697.0 482.2 784.0 0.0 784.0 0.0 784.0 Other Revenues 209.4 265.2 250.0 0.0 250.0 0.0 250.0 150 Fund Balance 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 REVENUE, TRANSFERS 0 0.0 8.611.9 6.148.0 6.879.4 7.184.1 8.611.9 REVENUE 6.148.0 6.879.4 7.184.1 8.611.9 0.0 8.611.9 **EXPENSE** 200 Personal Services and Employee Benefits 4,682.8 4,055.2 5,276.8 5,695.8 5,944.8 0.0 5,944.8 Contractual Services 453,6 466.8 610,1 0.0 1,524.8 0.0 1,524.8 400 Other 1,011,6 974.2 1,297,2 0.0 1,142,3 0.0 1,142,3 **EXPENDITURES** 6,148.0 5,496.3 7,184.1 5.695.78 8,611.9 0.0 8,611.9 **EXPENSE** 6.148.0 5,496,3 7.184.1 8.611.9 0.0 8,611,9 5.695.78 **FTE POSITIONS** 810 Permanent 63,00 66,00 66.00 70.00 0.00 70.00 70.00 820 3.00 4.00 3.00 4.00 0.00 4.00 FTEs 67.00 69,00 74.00 69,00 74.00 74.00 **FTE POSITIONS** 67.00 69.00 74.00 69.00 74.00 0.00 74.00

FY24 NMDVS Final Budget request submitted for your favorable consideration.



The New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services

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Questions/Comments? Our Veterans Thank You!

