

# 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”

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

Vision: To recognize and serve all generations of veterans and their family members and approach each day as Veterans’ Day.



# NMDVS Division Services



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**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



\*FARMINGTON

\*TAOS

\*GALLUP

SANTA FE\*

\*LAS VEGAS

\* RIO RANCHO

\*GRANTS

\*ALBUQUERQUE

\* BELEN

CLOVIS\*

\*ROSWELL

\*SILVER CITY

\*ALAMOGORDO

HOBBS\*



\*CARLSBAD

\*LAS CRUCES



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

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## Veteran Encounters

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

### **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**

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## **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

### HGRT – 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

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

# 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

100k 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.



## S-8 Financial Summary

(Dollars in Thousands)

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	2021-22 Opbud	2021-22 Actuals	2022-23 Opbud	2023-24 PCF Proj	Base	----- FY 2024 Agency Request ----- Expansion	Total
<b>REVENUE</b>							
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
120 Federal Revenues	697.0	482.2	784.0	0.0	784.0	0.0	784.0
130 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	0.0
REVENUE, TRANSFERS	6,148.0	6,879.4	7,184.1	0	8,611.9	0.0	8,611.9
REVENUE	6,148.0	6,879.4	7,184.1	0	8,611.9	0.0	8,611.9
<b>EXPENSE</b>							
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
300 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	5,695.78	8,611.9	0.0	8,611.9
<b>FTE POSITIONS</b>							
810 Permanent	63.00	66.00	70.00	66.00	70.00	0.00	70.00
820 Term	4.00	3.00	4.00	3.00	4.00	0.00	4.00
FTEs	67.00	69.00	74.00	69.00	74.00	0.00	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!**

