

June 4, 2011

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The wording in the legislation establishing the New Mexico Department of Veteran's Services is very broad and general. This gives the Department much latitude in establishing the programs and procedures needed to fulfill the current mandate: *To assist veterans, their widows, and their children with establishing the privileges they have earned through a Veteran's military service, and are therefore legally entitled to receive.*

The Department of Veteran's Services is committed to support the goals of the governor and the legal mandates of the legislature. The concepts and proposals this department is researching for future consideration and implementation are offered with this thought: *As a nation and as a state, we must do more than just remember the sacrifice of our veterans and their families. We are not just the beneficiaries of their bravery; we are the stewards of their sacrifice.*

We are called to steward the limited resources available through state funding in order to accomplish our mandate, and to *Serve Those Who Served*. With this focus, the department is planning FY13 programs with a proactive, strategically focused development plan.

Within the department, short term (6-12 month) and most mid range goals (1-2 years) will be tackled using intra-department management tools and leadership. Mid-to-long term goals (2-5 years) must be met via legislation, and strategic partnerships at the local, state and national levels. The key areas are:

BUSINESS

EDUCATION

GENERAL SERVICES

The sub-focus areas which this state should always emphasize are programs for Native American and Women Veterans. In every program this department undertakes, these two key sub-groups will always be addressed.

HISTORY

The most recent demographic models provided by the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) indicate approximately 180,000 New Mexico veterans. This population is beginning to age and reduce in size. 35%-40% of this group is over 65 years old; less than 1.5% are under the age of 25. The VA estimates that New Mexico experienced a 6%-10% decline in veteran population between 2000 and 2010. This indicates three (3) major strategic planning factors:

- 1) As the veteran population ages and dies, funding for elder services, death benefits and honors programs must be increased
- 2) In order to reduce or stop the trend towards lower veteran populations, a concerted effort must be made to attract veterans to New Mexico and provide incentives to stay
- 3) Veteran Services in New Mexico (existing and proposed expansions) should be strategically targeted and population-needs based

In looking at these three areas as we work together to develop and legislate strategic veteran's programs, it should be noted that according to VA statistics, New Mexico veterans receive the highest per capita disability benefits of any state. A separate recent VA Inspector General report noted the positive influence of robust veteran's service officers programs in helping veterans receive the maximum benefits to which they are entitled. A decrease in the veteran population will not affect state revenues via state income taxes. However, the loss of veterans will cost the state in numerous tax areas, as dollars from the disability payments will not be spent within this state.

BOTTOM LINE: Federal Veteran's Administration programs will always be the cornerstone for veteran support and services. The New Mexico Department of Veteran's Services plays a key role in helping veterans and their families access these services, as well as being the veteran's advocate for developing state veteran support programs. In addition, as additional 25-50 year old veterans move into the national workforce following planned Department of Defense personnel reductions, New Mexico will be well served to try and attract these experienced, productive citizens. This initial set of proposed legislation begins to address these issues.

SUMMARY

Despite a 12.5% funding cut last FY, DVS continues to provide quality service to the New Mexico veteran community. However, continued funding at current levels will not allow expansion of services in areas such as PTSD treatment, funeral honors, and full development of veteran business opportunities. In order to attain a goal of becoming "the most Vet-friendly/supportive state in the nation", increases in services and decreases in veteran tax dis-incentives will be necessary. By Federal VA statistics, only 4 states experienced a growth in veteran populations during the 2000-2010 decade. AS noted previously, New Mexico veteran population declined by 6-10%. In order to attract the quality workers, and subsequent federal dollars from a variety of veteran sources, we must work to become truly the #1 Veteran Friendly state in the nation. Every citizen of New Mexico will benefit. Most important, for the state with such a tremendous heritage of honorable, courageous service, we must prove ourselves to be serious about being the stewards of our Heroes sacrifices.

VA BENEFITS & EXPENDITURE TOTALS IN NEW MEXICO

(Fiscal Year 2009)

General Population of New Mexico (2010 U.S. Census)	2,009,671
Veteran Population of New Mexico (U.S. Dept. of Veterans' Affairs)(VA)	176,556
Percent of the Total Population of New Mexico that are Veterans	8.75%

NMDVS DATA (FY 2009)

Office Visits by Veterans to NMDVS Field Offices	17,486
Number of VA Claims Filed by NMDVS Service Officers	18,258

New Power-of-Attorney (POA) Assignments	920
VFW	343
American Legion	281
Disabled American Veterans (DAV)	268
Military Order of the Purple Heart (MoPH)	15
New Mexico Dept. of Veterans' Services	13

Number of VA Benefits Claims Referred by NMDVS to other Service Organizations	20,148
Service Connected	5,519
Non-service Connected	2,032
Death Benefits	1,296
Non-Power of Attorney (POA) Claims	975
Miscellaneous Visits	5,445
Phone Calls	4,851

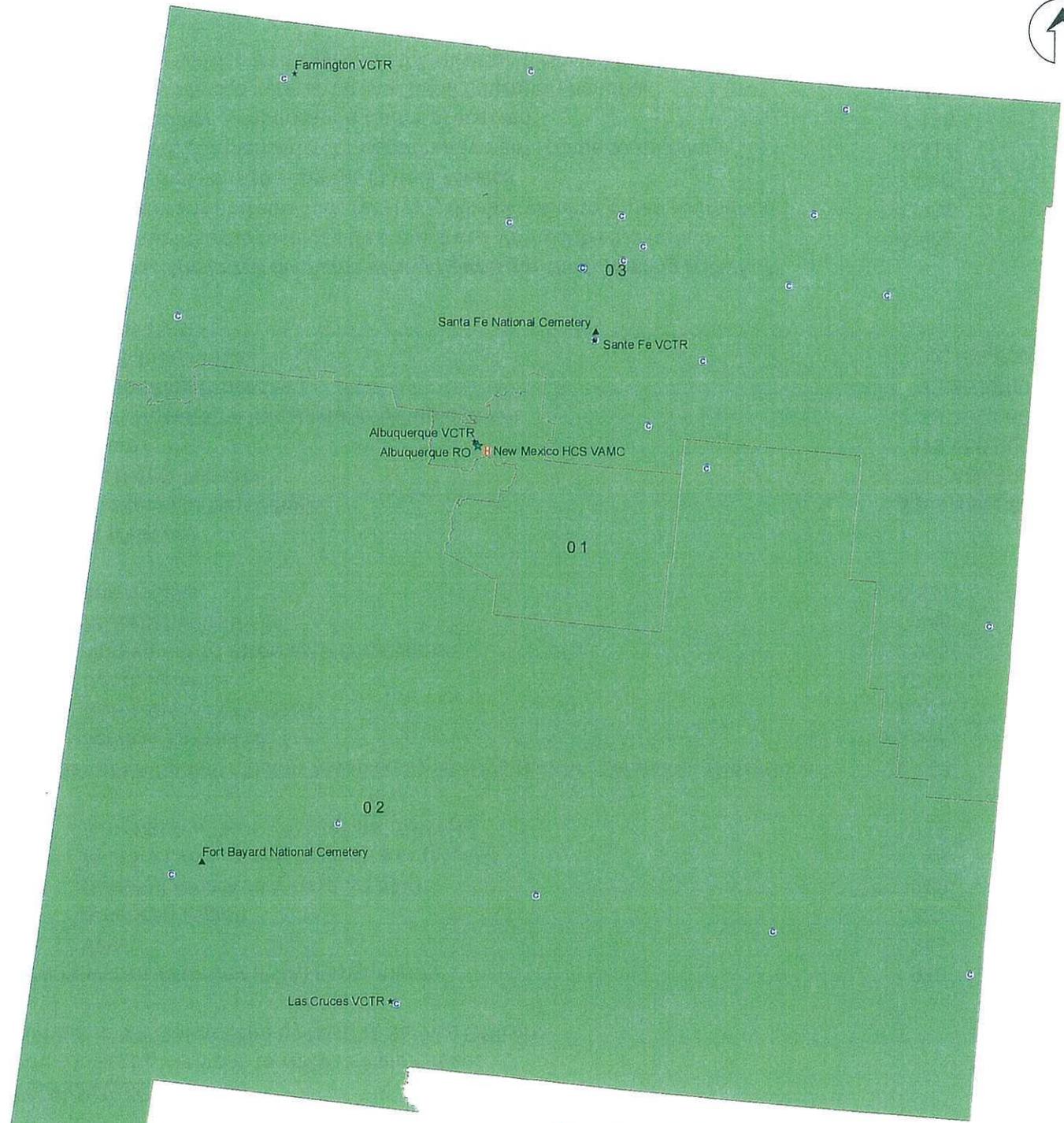
VA DATA (FY2009)

VA Expenditures in New Mexico	\$959,847,000
Compensation & Pensions	512,480,000
Medical Care	379,650,000
Education & Vocational Rehabilitation/Employment	38,203,000
General Operating Expenses	13,862,000
Insurance & Indemnities	12,198,000
Construction	

(FY 2008 data...the latest available yearly figures for the following criteria:)

Number of patients who received treatment at a VA health care facility	46,402
Number of veterans and survivors receiving disability/comp & pen payments	35,707
Number of VA pensions to veterans in New Mexico	2,690
Number of death compensation or pension payments made to survivors	4,317
Number of disability compensation claims processed	7,138
Number of New Mexico veterans using GI Bill Education benefits	4,723
Number of New Mexico participants in VA vocational rehabilitation	633

VA Facilities by Congressional District (111th CD): New Mexico

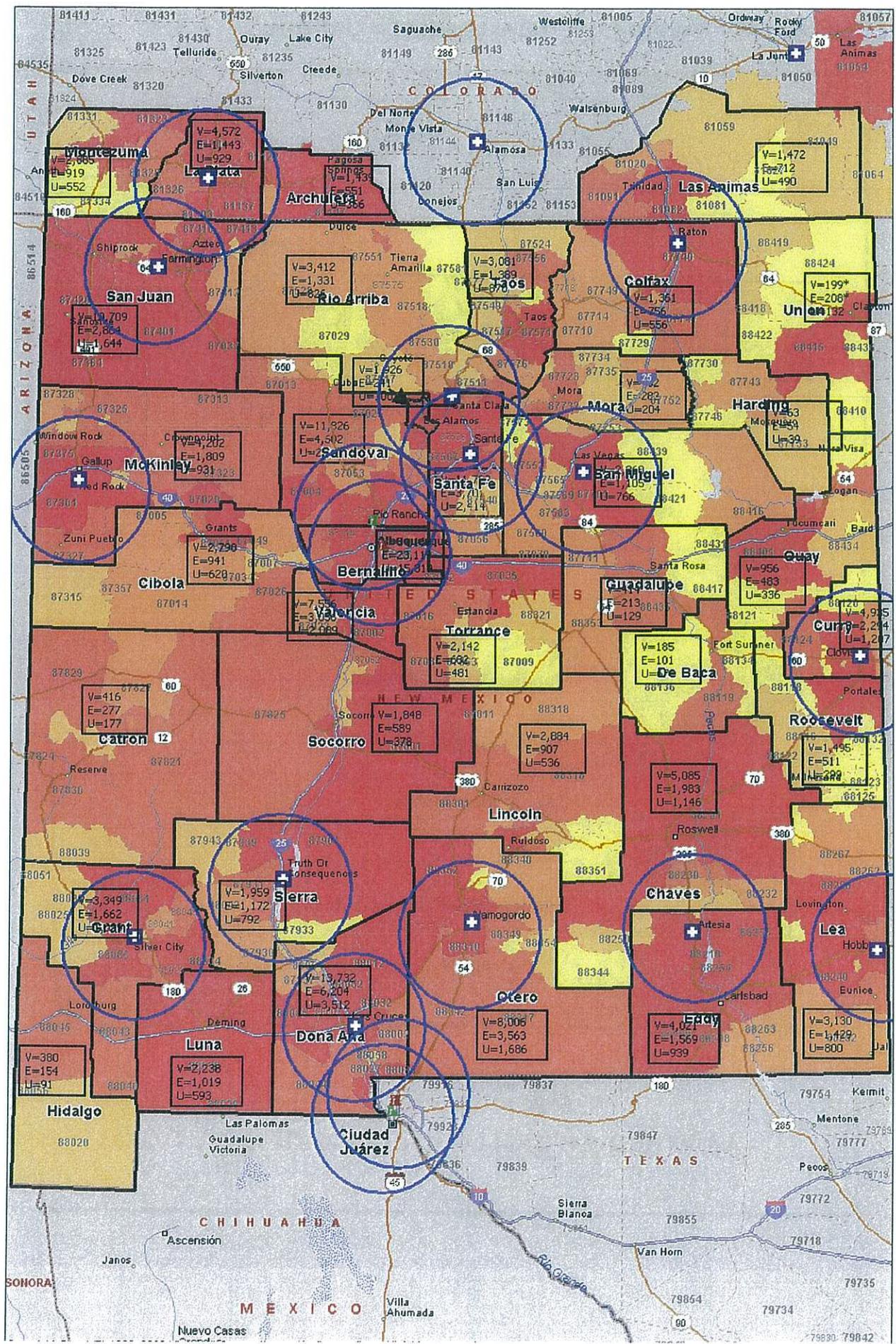


Veteran Population

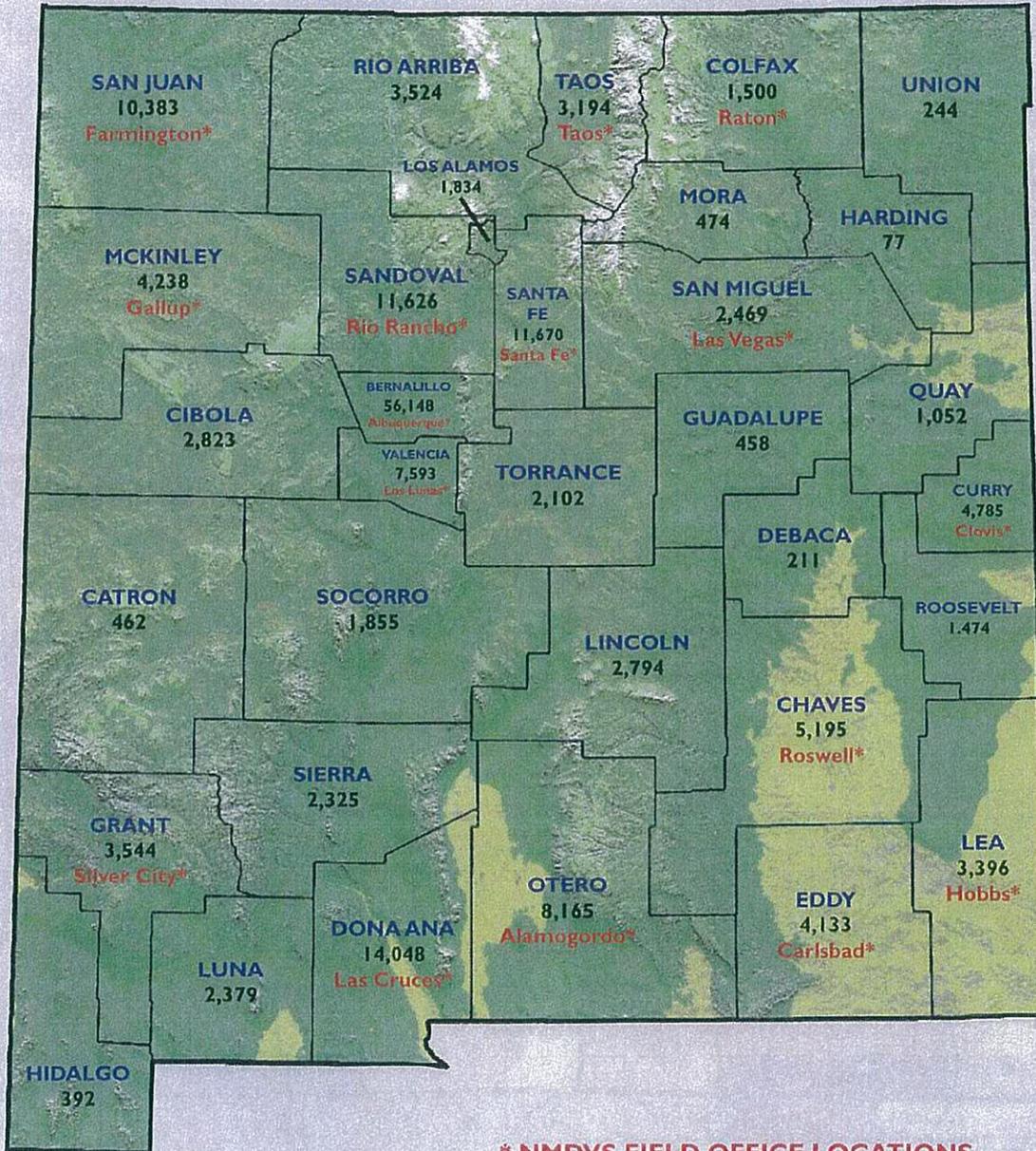


11,702 - 42,000
 42,001 - 55,000
 55,001 - 64,000
 64,001 - 83,000
 83,001 - 116,029

- VA Hospitals
- Community-Based Outpatient Clinic
- Independent Outpatient Clinic
- Veterans Center
- VA Community Living Center
- Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program
- Regional Office
- Cemetery

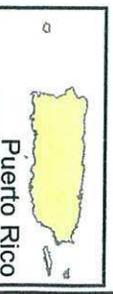
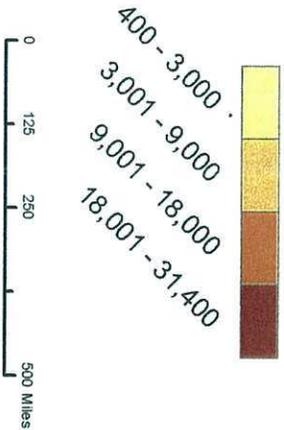
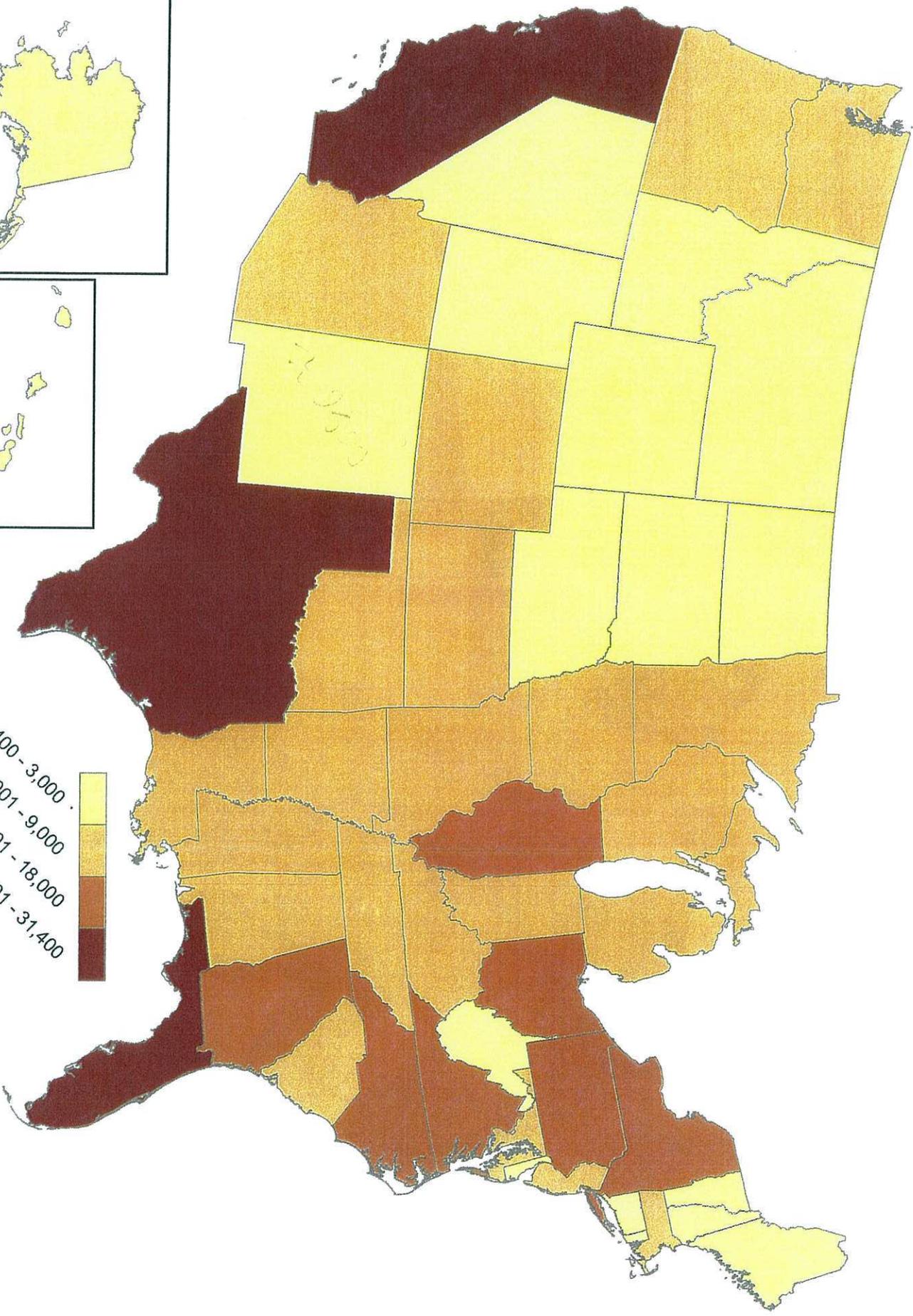
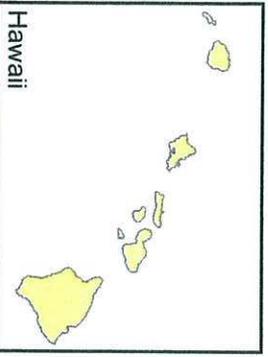
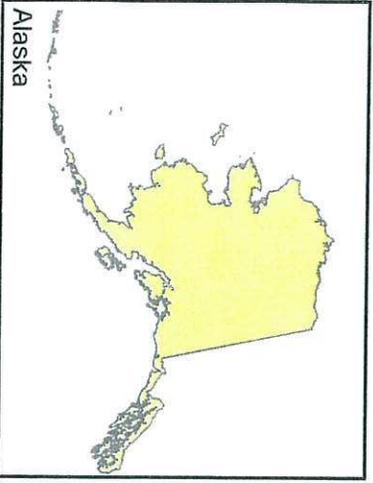


TOTAL VETERAN POPULATION BY COUNTY IN NEW MEXICO: 176,566

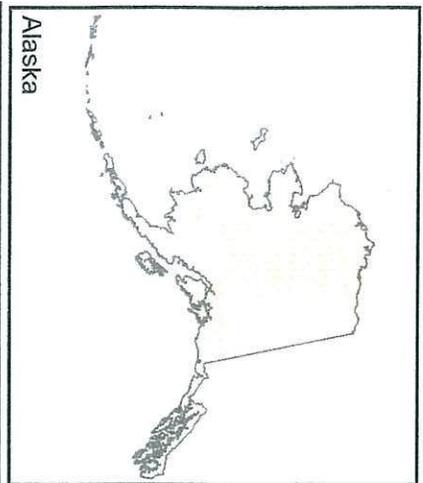


* NMDVS FIELD OFFICE LOCATIONS
www.dvs.state.nm.us * toll free 1-866-433-8387

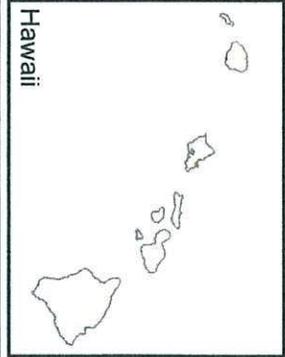
Veteran Population Under 25 Years Old by State: Fiscal Year 2010



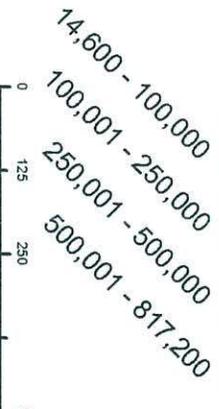
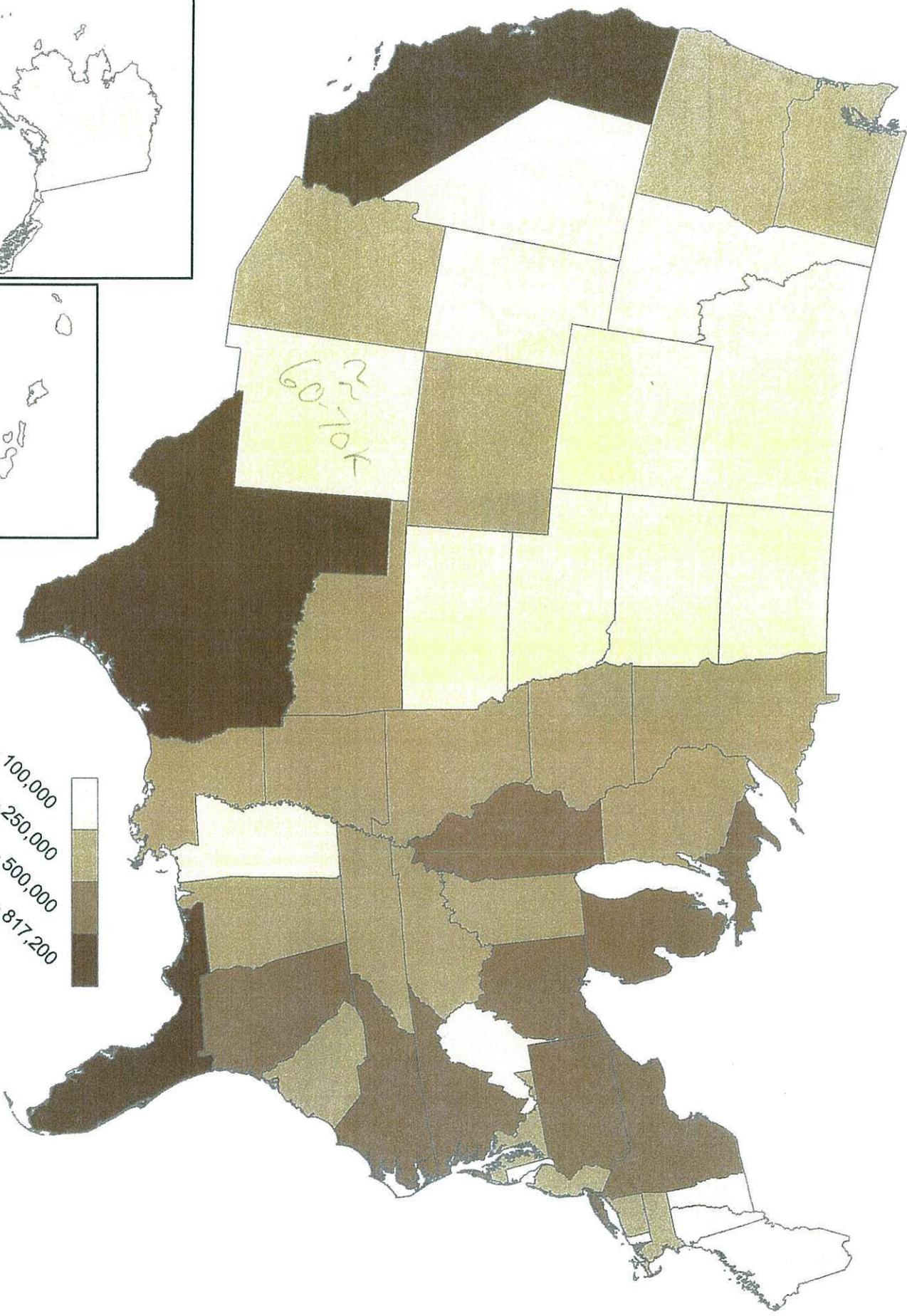
Veteran Population 65 Years and Older by State: Fiscal Year 2010



Alaska



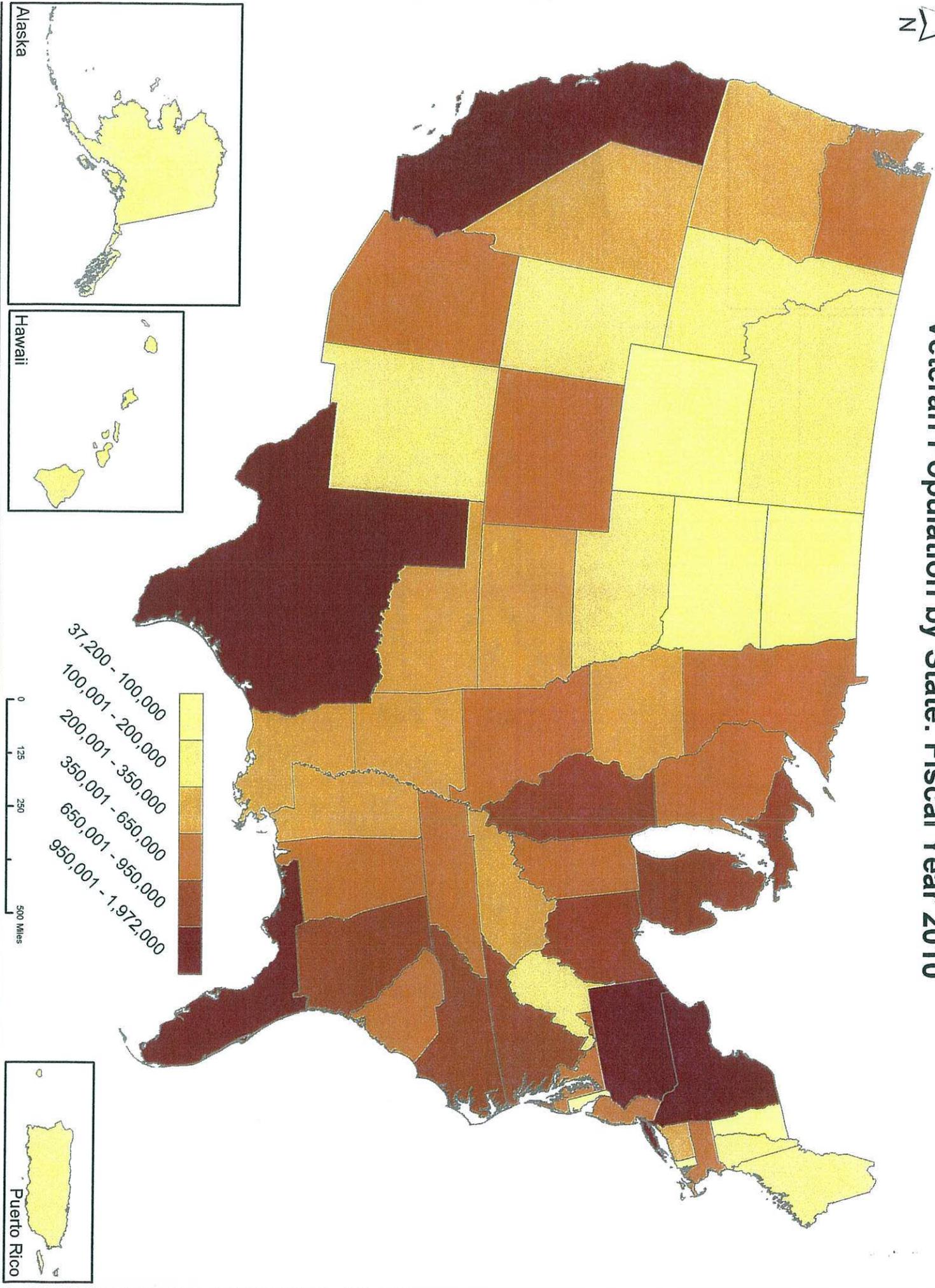
Hawaii



Puerto Rico



Veteran Population by State: Fiscal Year 2010





Percent Change in Veteran Population by State

The total Veteran population decreased 14.4% between 2000 and 2010

