



ND DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WHO WE ARE

08

Full-time Team Members

01

Temporary Team Members

70

County & Tribal Svc Officers

WHAT WE'RE ABOUT

Mission: To assist veterans of North Dakota and their dependents in obtaining all benefits to which they are entitled, both Federal, State and Local by direct contact or through the assistance of County & Tribal veteran service officers.

Vision: Consistent quality service and support to Veterans and dependents throughout ND. Attract and retain veterans to ND with competitive programs, benefits and services.

Values: Knowledge, skills and abilities to appropriately serve our Veterans and dependents. Coordination and collaboration with Local, County, State and Federal partners.

Goals/Objectives: Trained, dedicated and proficient Veteran Service Officers. Programs, benefits and services in ND which can compete with other states and territories to attract and retain veterans in ND.

WHO WE SERVE

Focus 1: Veterans

53,608 Veterans.
VA Estimated 53,608 Veterans in ND (Source: VA GDX 2020)



Focus 2: Dependents

69,690 Dependents of Veterans.
*Per US Census.gov household of 2.3



Focus 3: VSO's

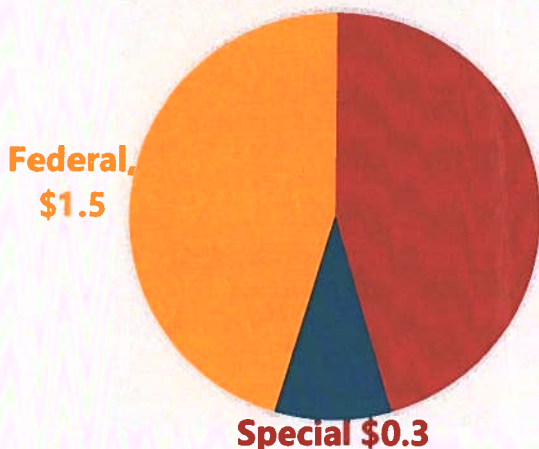
70 Veteran Service Officers (VSO).



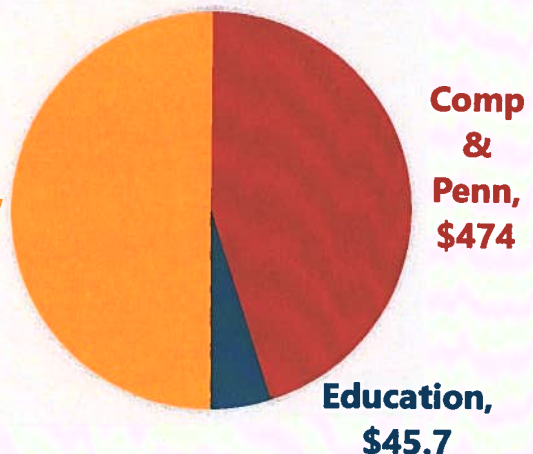
NDDVA 2021-2023 Funding:
\$3.3M

2020 & 2021 Economic Impact:
\$1,067,191,000

In Millions



General Funds, \$1.5
Medical, \$529



ND DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

2019-2021 Biennium

Claims to VA:

3,315 new claims filed.
* \$35M in new awards
* \$9.3M retroactive payments
* \$440M Comp and Pension
628 appeals filed.
*85% remand (Nt'I Ave: 39%)

Education Benefits:

\$22.8M in GI bill and Voc. Rehab
**First time in ND: Credit for military courses to all ND IHL
**100% catalog reviews annually
** 200+ OJT APP approved

Transportation since 2018

*4,378 veterans served
*14,244 trips
*37,803 hours driving
*1.4 Million miles driven
Largest HRTG program in US

Filed

3,315

VA Claims
for Benefits
2019-2021

Awarded

\$440M

Comp &
Pension

Approved

135

Courses at
IHL for
military
credit

Transported

4,378

Veterans
1.4 million
miles

WHAT WE DO



Financial

Assist in application for Compensation, Pension claims. Provide Loans and Grants using Post War Trust Fund & other funds.



Legal & Legislative

Established virtual Veterans court, now transitioning to physical court docket. Lead in veteran legislative efforts.



Health & Wellbeing

Assist in application for health benefits at VA. Provide Grants for urgent unmet Health needs with PWTF and other funds.



Education and Employment

Approve ND IHL for GI Bill. Approve OJT and Apprenticeship programs. Application for GI Bill and Vocational Rehab.



Housing

Leading committee to end Veteran Homelessness in ND. Provide grants and loans for housing. Apply for assistance.



Training and Support:

NDDVA trains and supports the 70 plus County and Tribal Veteran Service Officers. Initial training and 2x per year.

HOW WE MEASURE SUCCESS

Veteran VA Claims:

Claims for disability compensation, pension and education benefits are based on win/lose. ND is among the highest success rates in USA. VA Compensation and pension paid to ND Veterans has doubled in last 9 years.

Education:

Continuity, collaboration and communication with stakeholders provides the best services to all IHL in ND. MOA between NDDVA Commissioner and NDUS Chancellor is our guide. Military courses for College credit same at all IHL-first in ND history.

Health & Wellbeing:

Access to healthcare is measured by success of applications to VA healthcare, NDDVA grants and transportation services. Transportation is # obstacle to healthcare for VA. ND has largest HRTG program in nation.

New programs:

Programs developed in ND being adopted by other states and Federal VA. ND adoption of programs in other states. *ND first on new Rural Cemetery program *ND leading way in PTSD dogs, transportation, HBOT, appeal process.

**HB1025 ND Department of Veterans Affairs Budget
Commissioner Lonnie Wangen
Senate Hearing March 10, 2023**

Per the request of Senate HR Appropriations Chair Senator Dever please find the below 16 items with responses.

1. Cite the North Dakota Century Code chapter(s) associated with the agency and list its major statutory responsibilities.

37-01-25.1: Reinstatement to former position – Appeals – Penalty (Employment rights)

37-01-34: Recordation of discharge papers

37-01-36: Certified copy of record furnished veteran without charge

37-01-42: Honorary High School Diplomas-WWII, Korea and Vietnam

37-14: Veterans Relief and Rehabilitation

- Veterans Loan
- Post War Trust Fund
 - Grant Program & other needs
- County Veteran Service Officer Appointment-Duties

37-18: Department of Veterans Affairs

- Establish Department of Veterans Affairs
- Commissioner appointment, duties and department divisions
 - Coordinate, supervise, implement programs and benefits
 - **Advise, Assist, Process and represent claims for Federal benefits**
 - CVSO: qualifications, standards, training, educate and assist.
 - Disseminate information and do all things necessary and proper to carryout intent of NDCC37-18
- Release of records and information
- Funding authority
- Commemorative Memorial Coin

37-18.1: Administrative Committee on Veterans Affairs

37-19.1: Veterans Preference

39-03-04: Qualifications of patrolmen-Veterans have preference

39-04 subsections 10.10, 10.14, 10.5, 10.8 and 18: Motor vehicle plates and exempt from registration fees

39-06-14 (6): Veterans indicator on driver's license

40-33.1-05: Veterans preference Municipal steam heating authorities

43-07-20: Employment preference in contract

57-02-08: Property Tax Exemption and Homestead credit

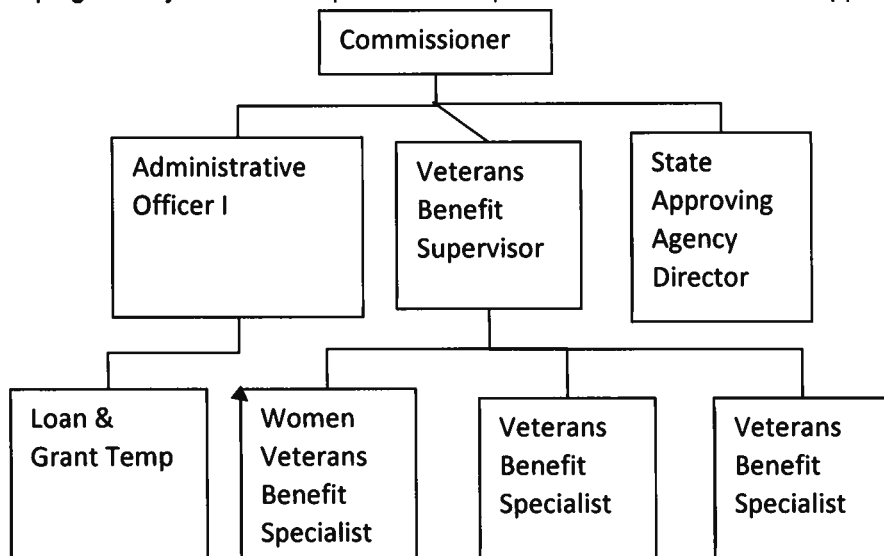
2. Explain the purpose of the agency's various divisions/programs - Attach organizational chart.

The mission of the North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs is to assist veterans of North Dakota and their dependents in obtaining all benefits to which they are entitled, both federal and state, either by direct contact or through the assistance of the County and Tribal Veterans Service Officers.

- Coordinate, supervise, implement programs and benefits
 - NDDVA Aid Loan program
 - NDDVA Grant programs
 - Highly Rural and State Rural Transportation programs
 - Commemorative Memorial Coin Program (funeral honor coins)
- Advise, Assist, Process and Represent claims for Federal benefits
- County Veteran Service Officer (72 VSO's 50 offices): qualifications, standards, training, educate and assist.
- Disseminate information and do all things necessary and proper to carryout intent of NDCC37-18

The State Approving Agency (SAA), together with the Federal government, manages veterans' education benefits. The SAA's role is to approve and supervise the programs of education and training for eligible veterans, dependents, National Guard members, and reservists. The SAA must specifically approve each plan of education or training in which a veteran or eligible person wishes to use GI. Bill® benefits. Other responsibilities include:

- Reviewing, Evaluating and Approving programs based on state and federal criteria
- Conducting on-site inspection visits to approved facilities and facilities requesting program approval
- Providing technical assistance
- Engaging in outreach activities that foster the use of the GI Bill
- Helping military installations provide base personnel with educational opportunities



3. Report any financial audit findings included in the most recent audit of your department or institution and action taken to address each finding.

- Audit conducted March of 2021
 - 1 formal recommendation on Federal Transportation Grant
 - \$3,051 coding of federal grant admin expenses error found
 - Admin fees coded as direct expense to grant as directed
 - Action taken by NDDVA to address recommendation:
 - NONE: Error was caught by NDDVA and corrected the month after error was made. This was 2 years prior to audit.
 - Subrecipient agreements missing required information

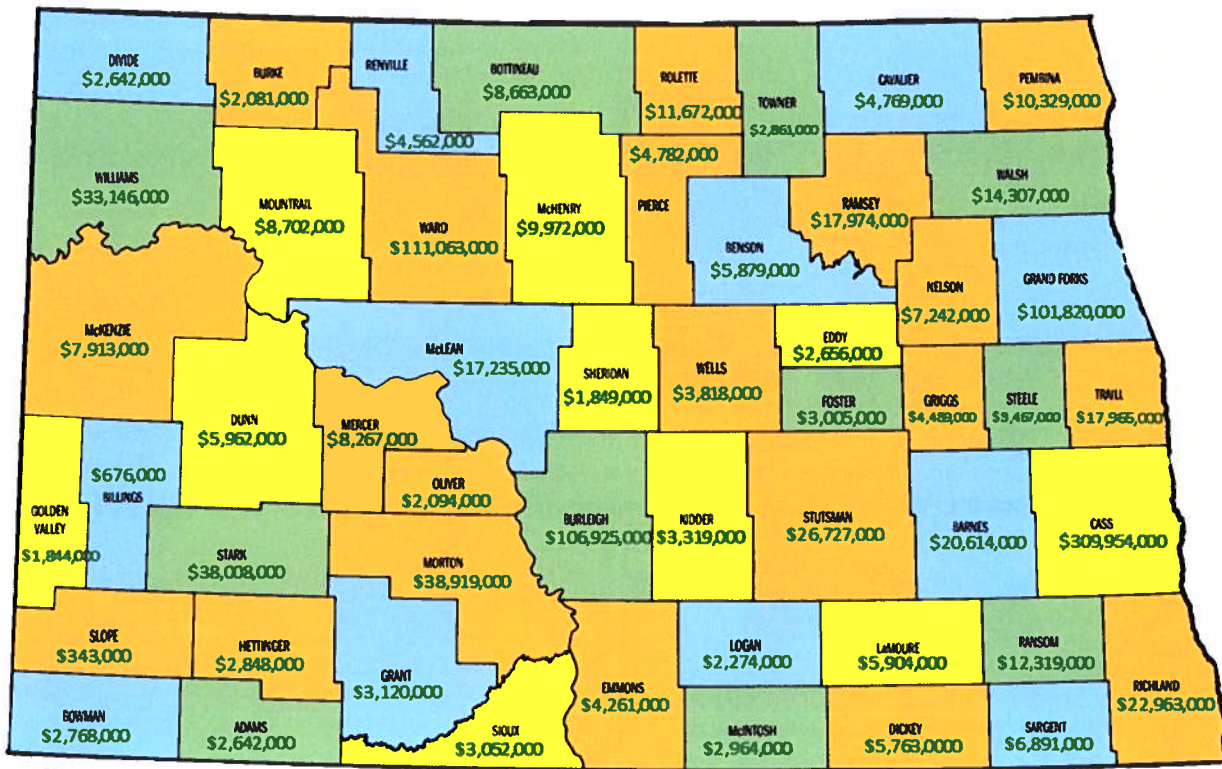
- NDDVA had required information referenced in subrecipient grant agreements and included in grant agreement as an attachment.
- Action taken by NDDVA to address recommendation:
 - NDDVA copied the required information from attachment section and pasted directly into the body of the agreement. This was done prior to audit conclusion

4. Discuss current biennium accomplishments and challenges and next biennium goals and plans.

Accomplishments

- Education
 - Approval of new Institute of Higher learning at Minot State University
 - Columbia College
 - Continuing to facilitate the MAAC council
 - 100% review of all IHL and NCD catalogs-reviewed annually
 - Approval of Extension locations at the following schools (extension locations are teaching sites that the school operates that are administratively dependent upon the main campus)
 - Bismarck State College – 3
 - Dickinson State – 2
 - Lake Region State – 7
 - NDSCS – 4
 - NDSU – 5
 - University of Jamestown – 2
 - University of Mary – 4
 - University of North Dakota – 3
 - Williston State – 3
 - Continued approval of 105 apprenticeship and OJT facilities within the state of North Dakota
 - Up 8 facilities from previous biennium
 - Over 200 independent APP/OJT programs
 - **\$45,700,000** in Federal Education benefits in ND (2020 & 2021)
- Grants and Loans processed
 - Grants 103 biennium to date
 - Loans 28 biennium to date
- Health and Wellbeing
 - Governors Challenge
 - NDHOPES \$5 Million Grant
- Housing
 - Homeless Veterans Committee. Coordinate services, on database, by name list. Functional Zero!
 - Fisher House **\$9 Million** project approved
- Legal Services
 - Veterans Court Established 2022. Opening ceremony planned for spring of 2023
- CVSO/TVSO support and training
 - New VSO trained 2021-2022: 25 (compared to 2019-2020: 18)
- Benefits -VA
 - Total Claims estimate for **2021-2022 2639** (compared to 2019-2020 **3710**)
 - Total appeals in **2021-2022 755** (compared to 2019-2020 545)
 - Retroactive payments **2021-2022: \$ 17,700,778.53**
 - Compared to 2019-2020 of \$ 9,596,649.16
 - **\$1,067,191,000** in VA funds to ND (2020-2021)

- \$529,000,000 medical
- \$474,000,000 Compensation and Pension
- \$45,700,000 Education



Total Federal Benefits & Expenditures in ND 2020 and 2021
\$1,067,191,000.00

NDDVA Base Budget 2021-2023: \$1,501,824. Return on State Investment: 710%

Just the Comp & Pension of \$474,000,000 in ND @ 5% sales tax = \$23,700,000
(\$15.80 return for every NDDVA dollar)

Challenges

- Staffing
 - 30% cut in staffing levels in 2017 300% Increase in workload
 - 2019-21 NDDVA had more volunteer staff than Paid employees
 - COVID-19 proved volunteer staffing unsustainable for critical needs
 - Staff compensation:
 - Average of 34% lower pay than CVSO and VA equivalent

Next Biennium goals and plans

- Fisher House construction started
- ND Veteran Homelessness at functional zero
- Veterans Court opened
- Veterans benefits staffing with sustainable workload and goal of growing the **\$1 Billion in VA expenditures!**
- Federal grants considered

5. Compare the agency's request/recommendation totals, including full-time equivalent (FTE) positions, for the next biennium compared to the current biennium.

Optional Requests	2021-2023	2023-2025			House Actions	
	Current Budget	NDDVA Request	Governor Recommends	Difference Request	House Action	Difference Request
Total:	\$	\$1,061,622.00	\$ 325,376.00	\$736,246.00	\$326,376.00	\$735,246.00
1. Equity Funding	0.00	\$ 289,710.00	\$ 102,000.00	\$187,710.00	\$85,000.00	\$204,710.00
2. FTE Deputy Commissioner	0.00	\$199,756.00	\$ -	\$199,756.00	\$ -	\$199,756.00
3. FTE Veteran Benefits Specialist	0.00	\$175,510.00	\$ 107,510.00	\$68,000.00	\$125,510.00	\$50,000.00
4. Additional DAV Van funding (2)	0.00	\$18,800.00	\$18,800.00	\$ -	\$18,800.00	\$ -
5. Retirement Payment Annual and Sick Leave	0.00	\$19,066.00	\$19,066.00	\$ -	\$19,066.00	\$ -
6. Scanning Project	0.00	\$358,780.00	\$78,000.00	\$280,780.00	\$78,000.00	\$280,780.00
						\$ -
Total FTE	8	10	9	1	1	0

*Difference Governor to House -\$1,000

**Also removed \$50,000 from PTSD Dog funding.

6. Explain the funding included in each program/line item either in total or by division depending on the size of the agency:

- a. Amounts included in the base budget and their purpose and use; and
- b. Amounts included in the request/recommendation and justification for the change from the base budget. Discuss changes relating to:
 - (1) Salaries and wages;
 - (2) Operating expenses;
 - (3) Capital assets;
 - (4) Grants;
 - (5) Any special line items;
 - (6) Estimated income - Special funds;
 - (7) Estimated income - Federal funds;
 - (8) General fund; and
 - (9) FTE.

Agency: Department of Veterans Affairs

Agency No: 32100

		2	3	4	5	6
		2019-21	2021-23	2023-25 Base	2023-25	2023-25 Total
		Biennium	Biennium	Budget	Optional	Budget
		Expenditures	Appropriations	Request	Budget	Request
					Changes	
Veterans Affairs Administration - 321-100						
32152 - Transport Vans						
691000	Equipment Over \$5000	-	-	18,800	18,800	37,600
692000	Motor Vehicles	13,845	18,800	-	-	-
Total: Transport Vans		13,845	18,800	18,800	18,800	37,600
32162 - Grants-Transportation Program						
511000	Salaries - Permanent	30,132	-	-	-	-
513000	Temporary Salaries	-	68,000	68,000	-	68,000
536000	Office Supplies	339	-	-	-	-
601000	IT - Data Processing	6,998	-	-	-	-
602000	IT - Communications	672	-	-	-	-
712000	Grants, Benefits & Claims	882,423	1,152,000	1,058,085	-	1,058,085
Total: Grants-Transportation Program		920,564	1,220,000	1,126,085	-	1,126,085
32170 - Vets Affairs Administration						
511000	Salaries - Permanent	668,964	780,207	860,386	236,040	1,096,426
512000	Salaries - Other	-	-	-	376,776	376,776
513000	Temporary Salaries	37,680	70,000	2,000	-	2,000
516000	Fringe Benefits	341,515	385,671	373,852	117,040	490,892
521000	Travel	26,482	80,145	80,145	-	80,145
531000	Supplies - IT Software	20,851	13,344	13,744	-	13,744
532000	Supply/Material - Professional	783	781	781	-	781
534000	Bldg, Grounds, Vehicle Supply	3,689	3,442	3,942	-	3,942
535000	Miscellaneous Supplies	6,445	574	574	-	574
536000	Office Supplies	5,796	2,046	3,377	-	3,377
541000	Postage	4,437	750	750	-	750
542000	Printing	1,063	500	500	-	500
551000	IT Equipment under \$5,000	2,298	-	1,000	-	1,000
553000	Office Equip & Furniture-Under	4,122	-	400	-	400
561000	Utilities	5,757	6,264	6,264	-	6,264
571000	Insurance	3,712	4,800	5,800	-	5,800
581000	Rentals/Leases-Equipment&Other	12,065	14,528	14,528	-	14,528
582000	Rentals/Leases - Bldg/Land	63,425	64,710	68,210	-	68,210
591000	Repairs	2,025	2,500	2,500	-	2,500
601000	IT - Data Processing	32,560	41,621	46,860	9,888	56,748
602000	IT - Communications	6,518	4,545	4,545	1,200	5,745
603000	IT Contractual Services and Re	18,338	-	-	-	-

State of North Dakota

220 - Budget Request Summary - Agency

Run Date: 1/6/23

2023-25

Detail by Org Level, Financial Class and Account

Run Time: 4:09:09 PM

Agency: Department of Veterans Affairs

Agency No: 32100

		2 2019-21 Biennium Expenditures	3 2021-23 Biennium Appropriations	4 2023-25 Base Budget Request	5 2023-25 Optional Budget Changes	6 2023-25 Total Budget Request
611000	Professional Development	6,633	20,200	20,200	-	20,200
621000	Operating Fees and Services	886	500	500	-	500
623000	Professional Fees and Services	384	4,822	4,822	60,000	64,822
712000	Grants, Benefits & Claims	214	-	-	-	-
Total: Vets Affairs Administration		1,276,643	1,501,950	1,515,680	800,944	2,316,624

32172 - Service Dogs

712000	Grants, Benefits & Claims	37,500	50,000	50,000	-	50,000
Total: Service Dogs		37,500	50,000	50,000	-	50,000

32174 - State Approving Agency

511000	Salaries - Permanent	136,370	140,006	143,410	-	143,410
516000	Fringe Benefits	67,581	69,844	69,064	-	69,064
521000	Travel	5,434	18,258	18,258	-	18,258
531000	Supplies - IT Software	96	2,136	2,136	-	2,136
532000	Supply/Material - Professional	-	1,489	1,489	-	1,489
534000	Bldg, Grounds, Vehicle Supply	6	1,274	1,274	-	1,274
535000	Miscellaneous Supplies	-	523	523	-	523
536000	Office Supplies	-	2,825	2,825	-	2,825
541000	Postage	-	1,187	1,187	-	1,187
542000	Printing	60	1,973	1,973	-	1,973
551000	IT Equipment under \$5,000	-	6,279	6,279	-	6,279
552000	Other Equipment under \$5,000	-	264	264	-	264
553000	Office Equip & Furniture-Under	-	1,279	1,279	-	1,279
561000	Utilities	1,592	1,735	1,735	-	1,735
571000	Insurance	42	1,636	1,636	-	1,636
581000	Rentals/Leases-Equipment&Other	-	4,810	4,810	-	4,810
582000	Rentals/Leases - Bldg/Land	14,534	14,748	14,748	-	14,748
591000	Repairs	-	1,030	1,030	-	1,030
601000	IT - Data Processing	7,041	8,214	9,650	-	9,650
602000	IT - Communications	974	2,873	2,873	-	2,873
603000	IT Contractual Services and Re	-	685	685	-	685
611000	Professional Development	2,535	5,021	5,021	-	5,021
621000	Operating Fees and Services	-	315	315	-	315
623000	Professional Fees and Services	-	3,620	3,620	-	3,620
Total: State Approving Agency		236,266	292,024	296,084	-	296,084

32175 - Veterans Home Cemetery

712000	Grants, Benefits & Claims	-	291,500	-	291,500	291,500
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	2 2019-21 Biennium Expenditures	3 2021-23 Biennium Appropriations	4 2023-25 Base Budget Request	5 2023-25 Optional Budget Changes	6 2023-25 Total Budget Request
General - GEN					
001 GENERAL FUND	1,282,487	1,570,624	1,584,480	819,744	2,404,224
Total: General	1,282,487	1,570,624	1,584,480	819,744	2,404,224
Federal - FED					
H1345 Rural Transportation Grant	963,205	1,220,126	1,126,085	-	1,126,085
H1355 State Approving Agency	236,266	292,024	296,084	-	296,084
H1361 VETERANS CEMETERY GRANTS	-	291,500	-	291,500	291,500
H1370 CRF Federal CARES Money	2,860	-	-	-	-
Total: Federal	1,202,331	1,803,650	1,422,169	291,500	1,713,669
Total: Department of Veterans Affairs	2,484,819	3,374,274	3,006,649	1,111,244	4,117,893

7. Discuss the purpose and use of any one-time funding items for the current biennium.

General Fund	Current Biennium 2021-2023		
	Budgeted	Expected use	Balance
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
No One-Time funding	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

Non-General Fund (Federal Grant. Melvin Norgard)	Budgeted	Expected use	Balance
		\$ 291,500.00	\$ -
Veterans' Home Cemetery repairs	\$ 291,500.00	\$ -	\$ 291,500.00

*This is an authorization to accept and expend funds if Federal grant is awarded (VA priority group 4)

8. Identify and justify the need for any one-time funding being requested/recommended.

General Fund: Optional One-Time Requests	2023-2025			House Actions	
	NDDVA Request	Governor Recommends	Diff. of Request	House Action	Diff. of Request
Total:	\$396,646.00	\$115,866.00	\$(280,780.00)	\$115,866.00	\$(280,780.00)
Additional DAV Van funding	\$18,800.00	\$18,800.00	\$ -	\$18,800.00	\$ -
Retirement Payment Annual and Sick Leave	\$19,066.00	\$19,066.00	\$ -	\$19,066.00	\$ -
Scanning Project	\$358,780.00	\$78,000.00	\$(280,780.00)	\$78,000.00	\$(280,780.00)
			\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

Non-General Fund: (Federal Grant. Melvin Norgard)	2023-2025			House Actions	
	NDDVA Requested	Included in Exec. Budget	Difference	House Actions	Diff. of Request
Total:	\$291,500.00	\$291,500.00	\$ -	\$291,500	\$0
Veterans' Home Cemetery repairs	\$291,500.00	\$291,500.00	\$ -	\$291,500	\$0

*This is an authorization to accept and expend funds if Federal grant is awarded

*VA Priority Group 4

DAV Vans

\$18,800

NDDVA is requesting additional DAV van funding of \$18,800 be added to \$18,800 (amount in the 2021-2023 budget) for a total of \$37,600 in the 2023-2025 biennium.

Current DAV Van inventory in ND is 9 vans serving the urban areas of:

- Bismarck (2 vans): Bismarck/Mandan, Jamestown, Valley City (communities between Bismarck and Fargo)
- Beach (1 van), Beach, Medora, Dickinson (communities between Beach and Fargo and Beach and SD Ft. Meade)
- Lidgerwood (1 van): Communities from Lidgerwood, Wahpeton and to Fargo
- Minot (1 van): Minot and communities along highway 2 and I29 to Fargo
- McHenry County (1 van): Communities along highway 75 to Jamestown and to Fargo
- Pembina Count (1 van): Communities along I29 to Fargo; Grand Forks, Hillsboro

NDDVA's budget for vans:

- 2017-2019 included \$37,200 for the purchase of up to 2 transportation vans, no vans were purchased.
- 2019-2021 budget included: \$18,800, one (1) van was purchased at a cost to NDDVA of \$13,845.
- 2021-2023 budget includes \$18,800 for vans. 1 expected to be purchased 2023.
- It is estimated that two (2) vans will need replacement during the 2023-2025 biennium.

This funding along with funding from the DAV's Columbia Trust is used to purchase vans to transport veterans from across ND to the VAMC in Fargo. In working with the Columbia Trust NDDVA's has been able to purchase vans for \$14,000-\$21,000. When we submit applications to the Columbia-Trust we also request that the trust consider North Dakota for a free van, the trust provides a few free vans nationwide each year. North Dakota received a free van in 2014 and again in 2018.

Once purchased the DAV Vans are donated to the Federal VA in Fargo. The Federal VA maintains all expenses for van to include fuel, maintenance, and licensing. Once van reaches its useful life it is returned to NDDVA for disposal. Useful life has been at 150,000 miles.

Retirement Payment Annual and Sick Leave: \$19,066

1 staff member expected to retire after over 43 years of service.

Scanning Project *Estimate:* \$358,780

Preliminary estimate to scan 985,000 documents and 50,000 files from 1 location was received in June 2022 at the estimated cost of \$78,000.

Current estimate is 1.2 million documents in 40 counties. Pick up, scan, name (name and SSN), save in format requested (NDDVA, County, State Historical Society), upload into data base and return as per county instructions

- Discharges
 - Name and upload Discharges into Data base
 - Save as PDF on 2 hard drives for County and State Historical
- Claim Files
 - Scan documents
 - Name and upload estimated 50,000 files to data base
 - Save as PDF or requested format for 40 counties
- NDDVA & ITD Working on ability to conduct mass upload to save time and \$.

9. Discuss agency collections that are deposited in the general fund or a special fund, and any anticipated changes from 2021 legislative session estimates during the 2021-23 biennium and estimated changes for the 2023-25 biennium.

NDDVA does not collect fees for any services.

NDDVA provides **Commemorative Memorial Coins** (NDCC37-18-12) to families of at Veteran's funerals. These coins are also offered for sale with the proceeds used to purchase more coins. Donations are also requested and accepted for this program. These funds are deposited in the NDDVA fund 410 along with spendable income from the PWTF.

Commemorative Memorial Coins	2021 & 22	2023 & 24
Coin Sales (\$7.23 NET of coins sold @ \$10)	\$ 11,336.64	\$ 12,000.00
Donations	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
Estimated 3,200 Coins conferred @\$2.49 each	\$ 7,248.00	\$ 7,968.00
Net +/-	\$ 5,088.64	\$ 5,032.00

**2021 & 2022 coins sales: 1,568

10. Discuss the need for any other sections that are included or are requested/recommended to be included in the agency appropriation bill.

- Carry over funding.
 - PTSD Dogs: *House removed from base budget-kept carry over.*

11. Discuss any other bills being considered by the Legislative Assembly and their potential budgetary impact on the agency.

- **HB 1157 Fisher House** **\$500,000**
 - Provide one time match to Federal funds
 - No impact to NDDVA budget
- **HB 1182 Funeral Honor Stipend** **\$200,000**
 - Provide \$50 stipend for F.H. Guard team.
 - House **reduced** to \$135,000
 - Additional duty for NDDVA no impact to budget
- **HB 1426 Increase principal of Post War Trust Fund (PWTF)** **\$1,900,000**
 - 50% gaming tax paid by Veteran Org. to PWTF
 - House **DEFEATED** 45-46

12. Provide a one-page itemized listing of the changes your agency is requesting the committee to make to the executive recommendation.

Optional Request	2023-2025			House Action		Senate Request	
	NDDVA Request	Governor Recommends	Diff. of Request	House Action	Diff. of Request	Senate Request:	Diff. of Request
Total:	\$1,061,622.00	\$325,376.00	\$736,246.00	\$ 276,376.00	\$ (785,246.00)	\$ 1,111,622.00	\$ 50,000.00
1.Equity Funding	\$ 289,710.00	\$102,000.00	\$187,710.00	\$ 85,000.00	\$ (204,710.00)	\$ 289,710.00	\$ -
2.Deputy Commissioner	\$ 199,756.00	\$ -	\$199,756.00	\$ -	\$ (199,756.00)	\$ 199,756.00	\$ -
3.FTE Veteran Benefits Specialist	\$ 175,510.00	\$107,510.00	\$ 68,000.00	\$ 125,510.00	\$ (50,000.00)	\$ 175,510.00	\$ -
4.Additional DAV Van funding (2)	\$ 18,800.00	\$ 18,800.00	\$ -	\$ 18,800.00	\$ -	\$ 18,800.00	\$ -
5.Retirement Payment Annual and Sick Leave	\$ 19,066.00	\$ 19,066.00	\$ -	\$ 19,066.00	\$ -	\$ 19,066.00	\$ -
6.Scanning Project	\$ 358,780.00	\$ 78,000.00	\$280,780.00	\$ 78,000.00	\$ (280,780.00)	\$ 358,780.00	\$ -
7. PTSD dogs				\$ (50,000.00)	\$ (50,000.00)	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00
Total FTE	10	9	1	0	1	0	1

Equity Funding**\$289,710**

During the previous biennium ND Department of Veterans Affairs (NDDVA) experienced 30% staff turnover. All staff turn-over was attributed to their salary/compensation amounts.

- Civilian, County and Federal employers are paying higher compensation packages.
- Four of our top candidates refused employment due to the compensation package NDDVA could offer.
- It is unacceptable that NDDVA cannot afford to recruit the qualified staff needed to serve North Dakota's Veterans. We need to provide funding to move these employees closer to a compensation package which is more reflective of the work that they are doing and competitive with the civilian, County and Federal employment markets
- In comparison to the top 3 competitors for NDDVA Veterans Benefit Specialist (VBS) positions NDDVA salary is on average 34% below. See below;
 - **MNDVA (23%)** Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs poached one of NDDVA VBS at a starting annual salary of \$12,000 more than current salary of NDDVA VBS. That is a 23% higher wage. *Source: MN DVA. Update-MNDVA implementing large increases.*
 - **VARO (36%)**: Federal VA Regional Office Veterans Claims examiners grade 11 and 12 step 4 is 36% higher than NDDVA. *Source: VA online pay schedule*
 - **CVSO ND (44%)**: County Veteran Service Officers (CVSO) of the top 8 largest counties in ND are paid on average 44% more than the NDDVA VBS who train and support them. *Source 2022 Mill report.*
- NDDVA VBS are also below ND Salary Market Mid-Point (MMP)
 - **ND Salary MMP (17%)**: NDDVA VBS Grade 105 are on average 17% below MMP of the ND Salary Ranges for 2022-2023
- Total General Fund Salary Base for NDDVA 2021-2023 Biennium: \$852,087
 - **34% of Base** = \$289,709.58
- ** Federal VA expenditures brought into North Dakota exceeds **\$1 Billion** biennium. NDDVA is at the center of making that happen and increasing those dollar amounts.
 - 2021-2023 North Dakota General Fund dollars appropriated to NDDVA= \$1.5 million.
 - Return on Investment: **710%**

Deputy Commissioner**\$199,756**

NDDVA is requesting full time Deputy Commissioner as most states have several deputy commissioners. Currently the NDDVA commissioner is charged with and is sole participant in many important programs. It is not practical for 1 agency director to be the single contact for important programs and serve on committees which result in having to choose which to attend when they are all very important.

Committees: VARHAC, NASDVA, ACOVA, NDVLC, MAAC, WDC, VALOR, VA Fargo Leadership, Statewide Aging Collaborative, Committee to end Veteran Homelessness, TF MIND, ND Protection and Advocacy, Suicide Review Committee, ND Transit Grant Board, Veterans Court, ND Oral Health Coalition, ND America 250, SDFA, Fisher House, NDHOPES, NDCARES, Governor Challenge, VA Suicide Prevention, NDRBH, MHAND, SAMSHA, VA Prevents, American Warrior Partnership, ND Suicide Prevention Coalition, Together with Veterans, VA Veterans Care Coalition.

Programs and missed opportunities needing additional attention:

Financial: Federal Grants; Fox Grant (\$750,000 year),

Health/access to care: additional transportation, Toxic exposure: Fort McClellan (AL) Hickam (HI),

Behavior health: Clergy training, shared missions

Employment/Entrepreneur: Entrepreneur programs, Vet Corps & Vista, Tunnels to Towers,

Memorial: Lost 74, County memorials, State Heroes

Housing: Long Term Care, Veteran Adult Day Care, TMIR Housing Project, USDA Housing

Appreciation/coordination/other: Coordination/consolidation of discharges, Legal Services, Stakeholder engagement, shared events and calendar

13. Provide a comparison of your agency’s major requests to those recommended in the executive budget.

Optional Requests	2023-2025		
	NDDVA Request	Governor Recommends	Difference
Total:	\$ 1,061,622.00	\$ 325,376.00	\$ 736,246.00
1. Equity Funding	\$ 289,710.00	\$102,000.00	\$ 187,710.00
2. FTE Deputy Commissioner	\$ 199,756.00	\$ -	\$ 199,756.00
3. FTE Veteran Benefits Specialist	\$ 175,510.00	\$ 107,510.00	\$ 68,000.00
4. Additional DAV Van funding (2)	\$ 18,800.00	\$ 18,800.00	\$ -
5. Retirement Payment Annual and Sick Leave	\$ 19,066.00	\$ 19,066.00	\$ -
6. Scanning Project	\$ 358,780.00	\$ 78,000.00	\$ 280,780.00
Total FTE	10	9	1

14. Identify the purpose and amount of federal state fiscal recovery funding appropriated to your agency during the November 2021 special legislative session, amount of fund spent to date, the timeline for obligating and spending the remaining funds, and any amounts that will not be obligated by December 2024.

2021-2023 ARPA			
	NDDVA approved	Spent to date	Difference
Total:	\$ 500,000.00	\$ -	\$ 500,000.00
Transportation	\$ 147,000.00	\$ 10,186.84	\$ 136,813.16
Fisher House	\$ 500,000.00	\$ -	\$ 500,000.00

*Transportation program starting second year. We are expanding eligibility to entire state.

*Fisher House funding will be distributed once construction begins 2023-2024.

15. Identify the amount of federal funding available to your agency for the 2023-25 biennium, the purpose of the funding, federal deadlines for spending the funds, and your agency’s plan for spending the funds.

2023-25 Federal Funds				Deadline
	NDDVA	Estimated	Balance	
	approved	expenditures	by deadline	
Total:	\$ 2,069,169.00	\$ 2,069,169.00	\$ -	
HRTG Transportation	\$ 1,126,085.00	\$ 1,126,085.00	\$ -	9/14/2025
SAA	\$ 296,084.00	\$ 296,084.00	\$ -	9/30/2025
ARPA	647,000	647,000	\$ -	12/30/2024

16. Provide additional information as necessary.

NDDVA is an investment in North Dakota’s,

- **Veterans**
- **Their Dependents**
- **State economic health**

NDDVA staff bring Federal Dollars to ND. The additional Staff we request will bring more of those Federal Dollars to ND while decreasing use of state funded programs.

**Over \$1 Billion per biennium!!
Small Budget-Big Return**

NDDVA is asking the Senate Appropriations to...

- Support the Governors recommendations and add
 - \$187,710 in equity funding
 - 1-FTE: Deputy Commissioner-See FOX GRANT
 - Full Estimated Scanning Project 1-time funding
 - Replace PTSD dog funding in budget and remove 2019-2021 carry over.

Consider adding principal to Post War Trust Fund

VAU.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs**News Release**Office of Public Affairs
Media RelationsWashington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.gov**EMBARGOED UNTIL RELEASED BY VA****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 2, 2023

VA to award \$52.5 million in grants to local organizations working to prevent Veteran suicide

WASHINGTON — Today, VA announced the availability of \$52.5 million in grants to community-based organizations that provide or coordinate suicide prevention services for Veterans and their families – including conducting Veteran mental health screenings, providing case management and peer support services, delivering emergency clinical services, reaching out to Veterans at risk of suicide, and [more](#).

These grants will be awarded through VA's [Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program](#). The Notice of Funding Opportunity provides information about the program, eligibility, and award process. Applications are due by 11:59 pm ET on May 19, 2023 and awards will be granted to eligible entities by Sept. 30, 2023. The funds will be used by the selected organizations in Fiscal Year 2024.

Preventing Veteran suicide is VA's top clinical priority and – as President Biden outlined in his [State of the Union address](#) – a key part of the [Unity Agenda](#). In September, VA released the [2022 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report](#), which showed that Veteran suicides decreased in 2020 for the second year in a row, and that fewer Veterans died by suicide in 2020 than in any year since 2006.

“Veterans at risk of suicide deserve quick and easy access to mental health screenings, peer support, emergency services, and more – both from VA and community-based organizations,” said **VA Secretary Denis McDonough**. “There are countless great organizations across America that are providing Veterans with this type of local, on-the-ground support, and we at VA are proud to support their efforts.”

These grants are a core aspect of VA's 10-year [National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide](#) and the Biden-Harris Administration's plan for [Reducing Military and Veteran Suicide](#). This will be the second round of grants awarded as part of VA's [Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program](#). In September 2022, VA awarded grants for the program's first year, totaling \$52.5 million to [80 awardees](#) in 43 states, Washington, D.C., and American Samoa. The grant program is named after Parker Gordon Fox, a sniper instructor who died by suicide at the age of 25.

Grant funding will be divided into two priorities. Under Priority 1, VA will provide opportunities for funding to those entities with existing SSG Fox SPGP awards. Under Priority 2, new

organizations can apply for grants worth up to \$750,000. Following the selection of Priority 1 grantee applicants, any remaining funds will be awarded according to Priority 2. VA may prioritize the distribution of suicide prevention services grants under this Priority to: (i) Rural communities; (ii) Tribal lands; (iii) Territories of the United States; (iv) Medically underserved areas; (v) Areas with a high number or percentage of minority Veterans or women Veterans; and (vi) Areas with a high number or percentage of calls to the Veterans Crisis Line.

Over the past two years, VA has announced or continued several additional efforts to end Veteran suicide. In January, VA [announced](#) that Veterans in acute suicidal crisis can go to any VA or non-VA health care facility for emergency health care at no cost — including inpatient or crisis residential care for up to 30 days and outpatient care for up to 90 days. VA has also [established 988 \(then press 1\) as a way for Veterans to quickly connect with caring, qualified crisis support 24/7](#); [launched Mission Daybreak, a \\$20 million grand challenge aimed at developing innovations to reduce Veteran suicides](#); conducted an ongoing public outreach effort on [firearm suicide prevention and lethal means safety](#); and leveraged a [national Veteran suicide prevention awareness campaign, “Don’t Wait. Reach Out.”](#)

Reporters covering this issue can download [VA's Safe Messaging Best Practices](#) fact sheet or visit [ReportingOnSuicide.org](#) for important guidance on how to communicate about suicide.

If you're a Veteran in crisis or concerned about one, contact the Veterans Crisis Line to receive 24/7 confidential support. You don't have to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care to connect. To reach responders, dial 988 then Press 1, chat online at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](#), or text 838255.

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