



# ADVANCING VETERAN & COMMUNITY WELLBEING

# FY 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

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SCAN WITH YOUR PHONE CAMERA

# VISIT MDVA

“The staff here is wonderful. They are so good. I enjoy being here. This is a beautiful facility. I couldn’t do the things I do here anywhere else.”

LARRY RODDY, **ARMY VETERAN AND RESIDENT OF MINNESOTA VETERANS HOME - MINNEAPOLIS**

# LETTER FROM THE COMMISSIONER



Fellow Minnesotans:

Welcome to the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Annual Report. Our more than 1,500 employees are proud to support Minnesota's 303,000 Veterans and their families.

During Fiscal Year 2022 (July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022), we continued to remain "open for business" as the COVID-19 pandemic challenged how and where we worked. But like the Veterans we serve, we persevered. We kept up our guard against the virus, but also remained steadfast in our desire to provide the support and resources that contribute toward holistic wellness for Minnesota Veterans.

We believe wellness is rooted in a safe and secure place to live. The last year saw progress toward ending Veteran homelessness in our state, with two more Continuums of Care declaring "functional zero" in their communities. And with the support of the Minnesota Legislature, we have expanded efforts in Hennepin County to provide no-barrier housing. The goal is in sight.

Wellness encompasses body, mind and spirit. We recognize the mental health issues experienced by some Minnesota Veterans and vow to end the tragedy of Veteran suicide in our state. We have focused on "lethal means" such as guns and encouraged gun owners to use free gunlocks that provide life-saving time between impulse

and action. While offering training throughout the state, we reinforce that we can all play a role in suicide prevention.

Bright spots during the last fiscal year included groundbreaking for three new State Veterans Homes, one new State Veterans Cemetery, and the passing of the first ever Veterans Omnibus Bill. This accomplishment created a new precedent that we hope will be followed for years to come. Veterans program funding and policy items were finally separated from more partisan bills and received almost unanimous support.

We are fortunate to attract dedicated employees who share our passion for serving Minnesota Veterans, finding fulfillment in such noble work. As we expand our facilities, we are hiring and welcome anyone interested in supporting our mission to learn more at [MinnesotaVeteran.org/Careers](https://MinnesotaVeteran.org/Careers).

In wellness,

Larry Herke  
Commissioner  
Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs

“It is indeed an honor to recognize the passing of the first Veterans and Military Affairs Omnibus Bill passed by the Minnesota Legislature in recent history. Our 303,000 Minnesota Veterans deserve to be supported and receive the benefits they have earned when their service is complete.”

LARRY HERKE, **COMMISSIONER,**  
**MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

# WHO WE ARE

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) is a cabinet-level state agency dedicated to serving Veterans and their families by assisting them in securing state and federal benefits, and by providing programs and services relating to higher education, benefits, burial, claims, outreach and Veterans preference.

MDVA also operates five Veterans Homes throughout the state, providing skilled nursing care and domiciliary care for its Residents, with a strong emphasis on remembering and recognizing the service and sacrifices of all Veterans.

Key partnerships for the Department include Veterans organizations, County Veterans Service Offices and a number of public and private service providers.

## MISSION

Serving Minnesota Veterans, their dependents and survivors by connecting them with the federal and state care and benefits they have earned.

## VISION

Fulfilling the needs of Minnesota Veterans and their families by providing innovative programs and services to maximize quality of life.

## CORE VALUES

**V**eterans first in our hearts, minds & actions  
**E**xcellence is our standard  
**T**rust through results  
**E**thics is our cornerstone  
**R**espect for service (past & present)  
**A**dvocacy for care & services  
**N**ation-leading services  
**S**tewardship of resources

## WELLNESS HIGHLIGHTS

- Awarded service bonuses for Post-9/11 Veterans
- Increased housing options for Veterans experiencing homelessness
- Continued construction on three new State Veterans Homes
- Produced suicide prevention video that addresses firearm safety
- Enhanced MDVA staff recognition through more than 170 Achievement Awards
- Recognized two more Continuums of Care for declaring “functional zero” for Veteran homelessness
- Encouraged MDVA employee wellness through both a Healthcare Division and Statewide Wellbeing Program
- Strengthened County Veteran Service Officers and Veteran Service Organization through MDVA grants



SPC. JONATHAN GETCHELL,  
34TH INFANTRY DIVISION RED BULL BAND

# MINNESOTA VETERANS

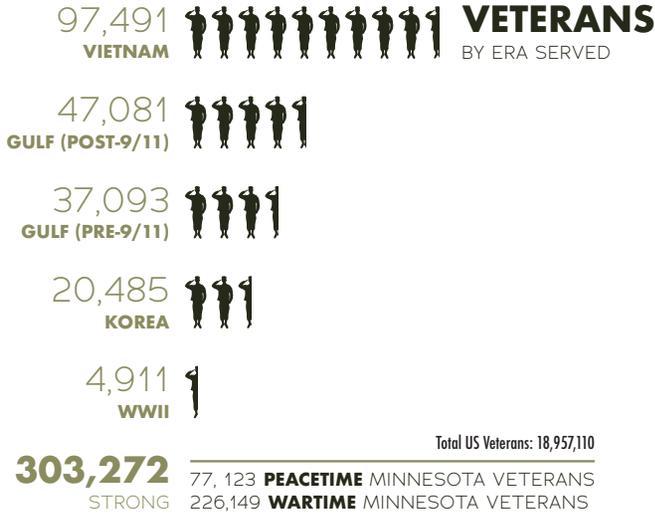
## VETERANS BY COUNTY

The Minnesota Department of Veteran Affairs partners with federal, state and local agencies as well as non-profits, corporations and Veterans Service Organizations to ensure the needs of Minnesota's Veterans and their families are met. In FY 2022, Minnesota had 303,272 Veterans.

Vietnam-era Veterans have become the largest group of Minnesota Veterans, a distinction previously held by WWII-era Veterans. More than 51% of Minnesota's Veterans are now over the age of 65. MDVA continues to plan for the future needs of the state's Veterans and their families with an emphasis on expanding the State Veterans Homes and aging services remaining a priority.

County Veterans Service Officers are located in each of Minnesota's 87 counties. CVSOs work directly with Veterans to assist them and their families in obtaining the benefits they have earned through their military service.

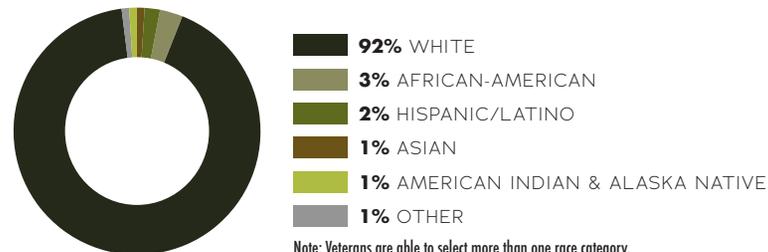
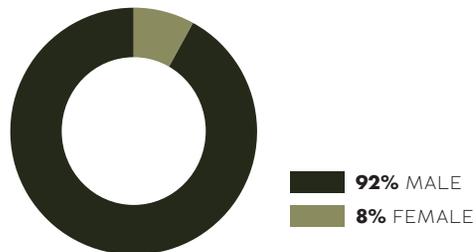
Minnesota Veterans are almost equally split geographically. Approximately 47% reside in the seven-county Metro area, and the remainder are in Greater Minnesota.



AITKIN	1,472	MARSHALL	554
ANOKA	19,764	MARTIN	1,565
BECKER	2,754	MEEKER	1,507
BELTRAMI	2,903	MILLE LACS	2,111
BENTON	2,412	MORRISON	2,586
BIG STONE	376	MOWER	2,425
BLUE EARTH	3,390	MURRAY	555
BROWN	1,587	NICOLLET	1,710
CARLTON	2,705	NOBLES	917
CARVER	3,799	NORMAN	436
CASS	2,808	OLMSTEAD	8,231
CHIPPEWA	801	OTTER TAIL	4,160
CHISAGO	3,509	PENNINGTON	878
CLAY	3,549	PINE	2,272
CLEARWATER	702	PIPESTONE	532
COOK	423	POLK	1,857
COTTONWOOD	663	POPE	871
CROW WING	5,639	RAMSEY	24,122
DAKOTA	22,532	RED LAKE	247
DODGE	1,146	REDWOOD	974
DOUGLAS	2,610	RENVILLE	925
FARIBAULT	979	RICE	3,751
FILLMORE	1,283	ROCK	534
FREEBORN	2,152	ROSEAU	934
GOODHUE	3,129	ST. LOUIS	13,972
GRANT	410	SCOTT	5,843
HENNEPIN	51,597	SHERBURNE	5,533
HOUSTON	1,208	SIBLEY	869
HUBBARD	1,969	STEARNS	9,795
ISANTI	2,636	STEELE	2,176
ITASCA	3,704	STEVENS	447
JACKSON	644	SWIFT	566
KANABEC	1,327	TODD	1,816
KANDIYOHI	2,429	TRAVERSE	245
KITTSOON	275	WABASHA	1,486
KOOCHICHING	1,055	WADENA	1,073
LAC QUI PARLE	479	WASECA	1,144
LAKE	955	WASHINGTON	13,162
LAKE OF WOODS	307	WATONWAN	656
LESUEUR	1,721	WILKIN	381
LINCOLN	397	WINONA	2,752
LYON	1,364	WRIGHT	7,893
MCLEOD	2,371	YELLOW MEDICINE	585
MAHNOMEN	283		

## VETERANS DEMOGRAPHICS

AGE	FY 2021	FY 2022	AGE	FY 2021	FY 2022
17-24	4,762	3,547	55-64	57,127	55,124
25-34	21,681	22,690	65-74	75,029	69,578
35-44	28,589	29,366	75-84	54,706	57,798
45-54	39,308	35,564	85+	31,639	28,605



Note: Veterans are able to select more than one race category.

# ENDING VETERAN HOMELESSNESS

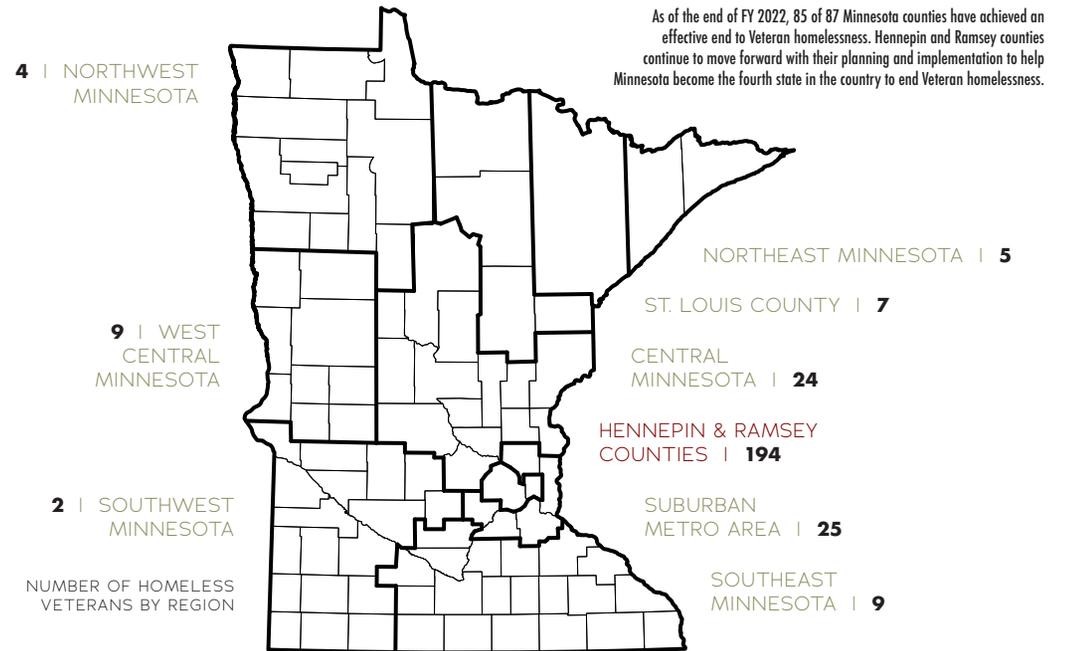
## “THE RACE TO THE FINISH”

To achieve overall health and wellness, Veterans must have a home before other services, benefits and special programs will be most effective. MDVA’s leadership in ending Veteran homelessness is moving Minnesota toward the goal of becoming the fourth state in the nation to declare an end to Veteran homelessness.

With the Central Minnesota Continuum of Care declaring the effective end to Veteran homelessness in November 2021, and St. Louis County following suit in June 2022, Minnesota now has eight out of 10 regions that have effectively ended Veteran homelessness. Only the two largest metro counties – Hennepin and Ramsey – have yet to accomplish this goal.

The “effective end” to Veteran homelessness doesn’t mean that a county, or Continuum of Care that makes up several counties, will never again have a homeless Veteran. It means that every community will have a comprehensive response system in place that ensures homelessness is prevented whenever possible. If it can’t be prevented, it will be a rare, brief and one-time experience, according to the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH).

## HOMELESS VETERANS: WHERE THEY ARE MINNESOTA’S CONTINUUM OF CARE REGIONS



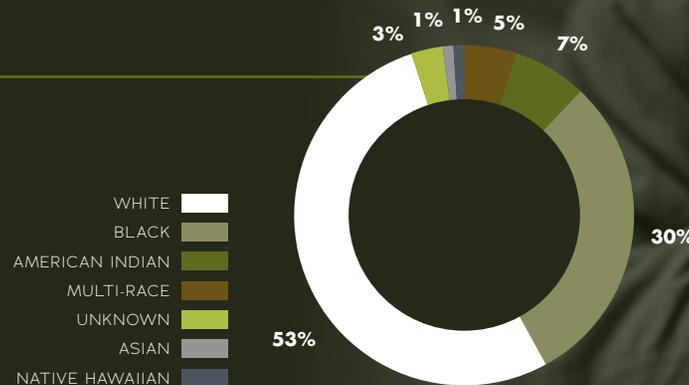
## HOMELESS VETERANS: WHO THEY ARE

**277**  
2021 HOMELESS VETERANS

**279**  
2022 HOMELESS VETERANS

**71**  
VETERANS WITH REOCCURRING HOMELESSNESS

**57.3**  
AVERAGE AGE OF HOMELESS VETERANS ON REGISTRY





## PARTNERSHIPS

During FY 2022, MDVA continued a notable partnership with the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) and the United States Social Security Administration (SSA). Through its SOAR (SSI/SSDI, Outreach, Access and Recovery) Program, MDVA provided Minnesota’s homeless and at-risk Veterans with expanded access to Social Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits.

Through 55 partners statewide, MDVA collaborated to find housing solutions and address the core issues of Veteran homelessness. Innovative homeless prevention efforts have blossomed from dedicated funding from the Minnesota Legislature, enabling MDVA to strengthen the systems, processes and practices that support Veterans journeying toward permanent housing. One such program, Operation OVER (Opening Veterans to Every Resource), funds outreach staff who help Veterans in shelters gain access to MDVA programs. Other resources, like the St. Paul-based Union Gospel Mission, have enthusiastically joined forces with MDVA to ensure beds are available for housing unsheltered Veterans.

State legislative support and funding was essential in FY 2022 and led to securing low-barrier, affordable housing where Veterans desire to be housed. We accomplish this through our partnership with the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV). Since this work began in 2014, we have housed nearly 3,000 formerly homeless Veterans.

“Having a place to call home is great. It makes me feel human again.

My advice to other Veterans who need help or are homeless is to reach out and ask for help and follow the resources.”

PETE, **HOUSED NAVY VETERAN**

## INVESTING TO END VETERAN HOMELESSNESS

**\$31,655**

MORTGAGE ASSISTANCE

**\$272,814**

RENT ASSISTANCE

**\$53,353**

PERMANENT & TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

**1**

STAND DOWN EVENTS

**\$18,300**

UTILITY EXPENSES

**\$176**

TRANSPORTATION COSTS

**\$15,866**

FOOD COSTS

**230**

STAND DOWN ATTENDEES



# VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION & AWARENESS

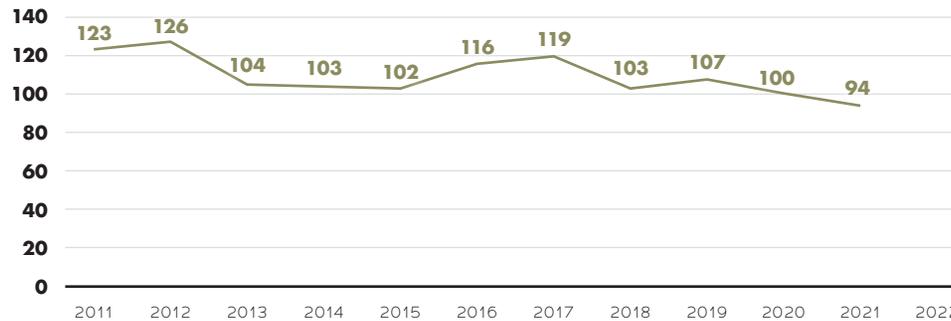
The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs is committed to ending the preventable tragedy of Veteran suicide. While the Minnesota Department of Health leads the state's efforts in addressing this societal issue, MDVA has embraced the overarching wellness goals of providing Veterans with a sense of purpose and ensuring meaningful Veteran connections with other people.

Minnesota loses more than 100 Veterans per year to suicide. To draw attention to this issue, MDVA hosts the annual State Veteran Suicide Prevention and Awareness Day the first Saturday in October. This observation was enacted by the

Minnesota Legislature in 2019. The 2021 event was held in St. Cloud and featured numerous suicide prevention experts and those whose lives have been impacted by Veteran suicide.

The MDVA Suicide Prevention team has observed a slight decrease in Veteran suicides based on data collected since 2011. Statistically, there is an increase in older adults dying by suicide, and Greater Minnesota has a higher suicide rate than the Twin Cities metro area. Veterans tend to have several risk factors that increase their chance of suicide: access to firearms; living in rural areas; predominantly male; history of trauma; and diagnosis of chronic pain.

VETERAN SUICIDE DEATHS, MINNESOTA



Veteran suicide deaths have decreased slightly since 2011.

ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT SUICIDE? **PLEASE CALL.**



“988” is the three-digit, nationwide phone number to connect directly to the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. There is hope. The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline – previously known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – is a national network of more than 200 crisis centers that helps thousands of people overcome crisis situations every day. After calling 988, Veterans can press “1” to connect with a Veteran-specific expert.

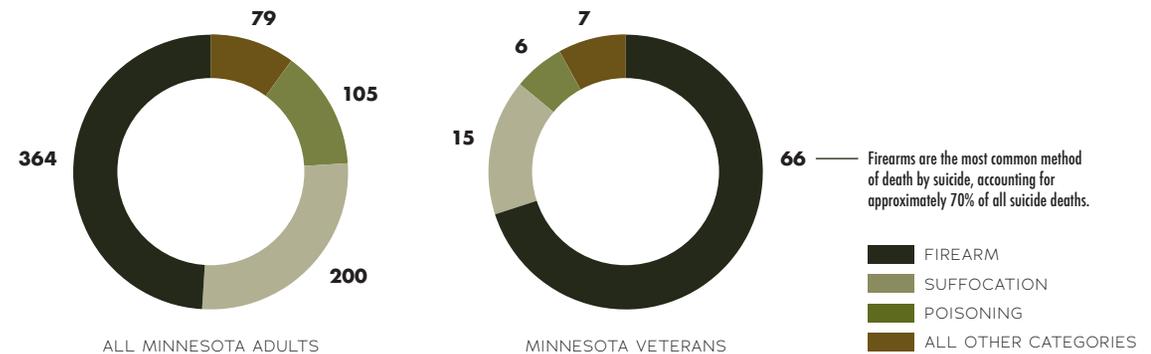


“When people say that someone cannot be saved, I say ‘That’s not true – I’ve been there.’ By intervening, you might save a life. You might be the right person to ask the important question: ‘Are you thinking about suicide?’”

DAN HANSON, **MARINE VETERAN**



## METHODS OF SUICIDE, MINNESOTA (2021)



In collaboration with the Minnesota Department of Health, MDVA is working toward zero Veteran deaths in Minnesota. This goal can only be reached by the continued collaboration among multiple partners and leveraging current state and nationwide efforts. Partners include:

- Minnesota Department of Health
- Minnesota Department of Human Services
- Minnesota Department of Agriculture
- Minnesota Office of Higher Education
- Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
- Minnesota National Guard and Other Reserve Components
- County Veterans Service Officers
- Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 23 Veteran

Administration locations (Minneapolis, St. Cloud, Fargo, Sioux Falls)

- City of St. Cloud
- CentraCare Healthcare
- Building Healthy Military Communities
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Minnesota
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
- Minnesota Ambulance Association
- Regions Hospital
- Veterans Centers
- Lutheran Social Services
- St. Paul Police Department
- M Health Fairview
- Nystrom & Associates
- Methodist Hospital

## BUDDY CHECKS

MDVA partner The American Legion Department of Minnesota provides an exceptional example of wellness outreach to Minnesota Veterans. The Veteran Service Organization is passionate about its commitment to “buddy checks,” or systematically calling Veterans to check on their wellbeing. Minnesota Legionnaires have distinguished themselves in reaching out to fellow Veterans and being able to link them with resources large and small.

MDVA ON YouTube

MDVA SUICIDE PREVENTION VIDEO

Suicide is preventable, and no Veteran should feel that they are alone. View the MDVA Suicide Prevention Video to learn about specific firearm safety measures: <https://bit.ly/MNVetSuicide>

# LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS



## POST-9/11 VETERAN **SERVICE BONUSES**

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs has a long history of awarding service bonuses to Minnesota Veterans who served in America's conflicts. Starting in 1919 after World War I, through World War II, the Korean Conflict, Vietnam War, Gulf War, and now the Global War on Terrorism, the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs recognizes the sacrifices and courage Minnesotans demonstrated to defend our country.

### Qualifications:

- Must have had federal active-duty military service between September 11, 2001, and August 30, 2021
- Minnesota must be listed as home of record at time of entry into service
- Veteran must be a Minnesota resident at time of this application

More information: [MinnesotaVeteran.org/ServiceBonus](https://MinnesotaVeteran.org/ServiceBonus)

**On April 20, 2022, large contingencies of Veterans and their supporters gathered at the St. Paul Armory, participated in a luncheon with lawmakers to discuss this year's legislative funding decisions, and then marched over to the State Capitol to participate in a rally hosted by the Commanders' Task Force (CTF), the United Veterans Legislative Council (UVLC) and the Minnesota Association of County Veterans Service Officers (MACVSO). The rally's goal was to demonstrate that voters are paying attention to the Legislative decision-making process and are tracking actions that ensure Veterans needs are being addressed.**

Demonstrating a commitment to Minnesota's Veterans and an ability to put aside partisan differences, the 2022 Minnesota Legislature passed and Governor Walz signed into law a first-in-recent-history Veterans and Military Affairs appropriations omnibus bill. This funding will ensure a focus on Veteran wellness – Veteran Homelessness and suicide prevention in particular – for years to come.

The bill appropriated \$52.35 million in supplemental funding to the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs in FY 2023 for a variety of programs, many which directly enhance Veteran wellness. The base appropriation is increased \$4.09 million in FY 2024 and following years.

The MDVA appropriations included:

- \$24.88 million for service bonuses to post-9/11 Veterans and Gold Star families;
- \$10.33 million to complete the construction and open three new State Veterans Homes in Bemidji, Montevideo and Preston, and a one-time appropriation of \$16.54 million in FY 2023 for the projects;
- \$5.41 million for the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans to establish permanent housing for Veterans;
- \$1.71 million for engagement, outreach and support of temporary housing options for Veterans;
- \$1.1 million for tenancy support and landlord engagement;
- \$830,000 to complete the construction and open the new Redwood Falls State Veterans Cemetery;
- \$774,000 to upgrade the wastewater system for the Veterans Campground on Big Marine Lake;
- \$500,000 for a Fisher House in Fargo for those receiving care at the Fargo VA Medical Center;
- \$450,000 for County Veterans Service Officer grants; and
- \$147,000 for Veterans Service Organization grants.



“The Minnesota Legislature’s nearly unanimous approval of a Veterans Omnibus Bill has set a precedent and standard that will benefit our Veterans, service members and military families for years to come. When Minnesota Veterans speak with one voice, our elected leaders hear us loud and clear.”

RON HAUGEN  
**CHAIRMAN, 2021-2022 COMMANDERS’ TASK FORCE**

# NEW STATE VETERANS HOMES



See renderings of Veterans  
Homes and learn more:  
[MinnesotaVeteran.org/FutureHomes](https://MinnesotaVeteran.org/FutureHomes)



GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY,  
MONTEVIDEO VETERANS HOME



## BEMIDJI VETERANS HOME

Projected opening: Summer 2023.

The Bemidji Veterans Home will include 72 private residential units with private bathrooms. The units are split into smaller “households” of 18 Residents each, avoiding long institutional-feeling hallways. The design will reflect a north woods cabin feel across public spaces.



## MONTEVIDEO VETERANS HOME

Projected opening: Summer 2023.

The Montevideo Veterans Home reflects a prairie-style inspired design that integrates natural materials such as wood and stone into the spaces. The 72 residential units all have private baths and will be split into two sections and four “neighborhoods” of 18 residents each.



## PRESTON VETERANS HOME

Projected opening: Summer 2023.

Located on a 15-acre bluff top site surrounded by a 200-year-old native white oak forest, the Preston Veterans Home was designed to become a warm, friendly and aesthetically pleasing environment, including 54 private residential units with private baths split into three, 18-Resident “households.”

The public spaces in each of the new Veterans Homes will include a “town center” featuring a small coffee shop, cafe, theater, meeting room, family dining room, meditation room, chapel and club room. In addition, a generous donation from the estate of Vietnam Veteran Steve Williams has made it possible to include a separate community room that can be used for community events and celebrations at the Montevideo Veterans Home.

## MINNESOTA STATE VETERANS HOMES: 2022 PINNACLE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AWARD WINNERS

The Minnesota Veterans Homes received Pinnacle Quality Insight's 2022 Customer Experience Award in the Skilled Nursing Facility category. The skilled facilities are in Fergus Falls, Luverne, Minneapolis and Silver Bay.

Pinnacle Quality Insight is a customer satisfaction measurement firm with 26 years of experience in post-acute healthcare. Pinnacle conducts over 150,000 phone surveys each year and works with more than 2,500 care providers in all 50 U.S. states, Canada and Puerto Rico.

This achievement is especially notable, as post-coronavirus practices challenged MDVA's professional staff to ensure the highest safety measures with the return of visitors into the Homes.

Over the past year, Pinnacle interviewed both Minnesota Veterans Home Residents and their families on several areas including:

- Cleanliness
- Activities
- Therapy

- Personalized care
- Dignity and Respect
- Communication
- Responding to Resident concerns

The results are compared to others in the industry and the Minnesota Veterans Homes have been identified as "best in class." By qualifying for the Pinnacle Customer Experience Award, the Minnesota Veterans Homes staff have satisfied the rigorous demand of scoring in the top 15% of the nation across a 12-month average.

MDVA strives to provide facilities and services that contribute to all elements of Veteran and community wellbeing.



An imperative to aging Veterans' health and wellness is the availability of State Veterans Homes. MDVA is building three new State Veterans Homes in the communities of Bemidji, Montevideo and Preston. Additional facilities in greater Minnesota will help meet the growing need for long-term skilled nursing care while keeping Veterans closer to loved ones.

Construction began in fall 2021, and completion is on track for summer 2023 openings. The projects were funded from federal (65%), state and local sources (35%). The three new Homes are receiving more than \$80 million in U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs State Home Construction Grants. In 2018, the Minnesota Legislature allocated \$33 million toward the cost of the projects.

The Homes will be able to accommodate Minnesota-eligible Veterans who meet the clinical need for skilled nursing care per Minnesota Statute 197.447 or be the spouses of eligible Veterans with specific medical requirements. Depending on the Residents admitted, each home will accommodate Residents with dementia or Alzheimer's disease with a Memory Care Unit.

### APPLICATIONS FOR NEW VETERANS HOME RESIDENCY:

To be eligible for admission, Residents must be:

- Discharged under honorable conditions from any branch of the U.S. armed forces and is a current resident of Minnesota, who served 181 consecutive days on active duty, unless discharged earlier because of disability incurred in the line of duty.
- The spouse of an eligible Veteran who is at least 55 years old and meets residency requirements.
- Able to demonstrate a medical or clinical need for admission.

Interested Veterans can work with their local County Veterans Service Officer on the application process. For admissions inquiries, email [NewHomesAdmissions@state.mn.us](mailto:NewHomesAdmissions@state.mn.us).

### HEALTHCARE HEROES

In recognition of healthcare workers who have gone above and beyond in their efforts to fight the coronavirus pandemic, the *Minneapolis St. Paul Business Journal* named three MDVA Veteran Homes leaders as "2022 Healthcare Heroes."



SIMONE HOGAN  
SENIOR DIRECTOR



PAULA NEWINSKI  
QUALITY DIRECTOR



CAROLINE SCHAUER  
CLINICAL DIRECTOR

The *Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal* "launched the Healthcare Heroes awards in 2021 to recognize Twin Cities individuals for putting innovation, care, dedication and compassion to work to improve the human condition."

# MINNESOTA VETERANS HOME FERGUS FALLS

The Minnesota Veterans Home - Fergus Falls is a 106-bed skilled care facility located in Minnesota's picturesque lake country. One area of the facility is fashioned as a Veterans Village that features an Old Town Main Street, and Resident rooms are stylized like individual homes. The Home is co-located with a VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic. In FY 2022, the Home partnered with both Knute Nelson Hospice and Red River Valley Hospice to provide comfort and support for Residents with life-limiting illnesses and their families by attending to their physical, emotional and spiritual needs.

The dedicated staff of 184 people share a commitment to Resident wellness through a deep passion for Veterans' spouses and caregivers. Over the last year, 65 staff members were selected to receive MDVA Achievement Awards for their exceptional service. The staff showcased their devotion

to Resident wellness by participating in a comprehensive safety fair.

The Minnesota Veterans Home - Fergus Falls once again was rated a "Four Star Facility," earning 15 out of 15 in all Pinnacle Customer Service categories. In FY 2022, after six years of coordination, the facility celebrated the opening of a greenhouse that will provide a joyful outlet for Residents and will become a "farm to table" experience.

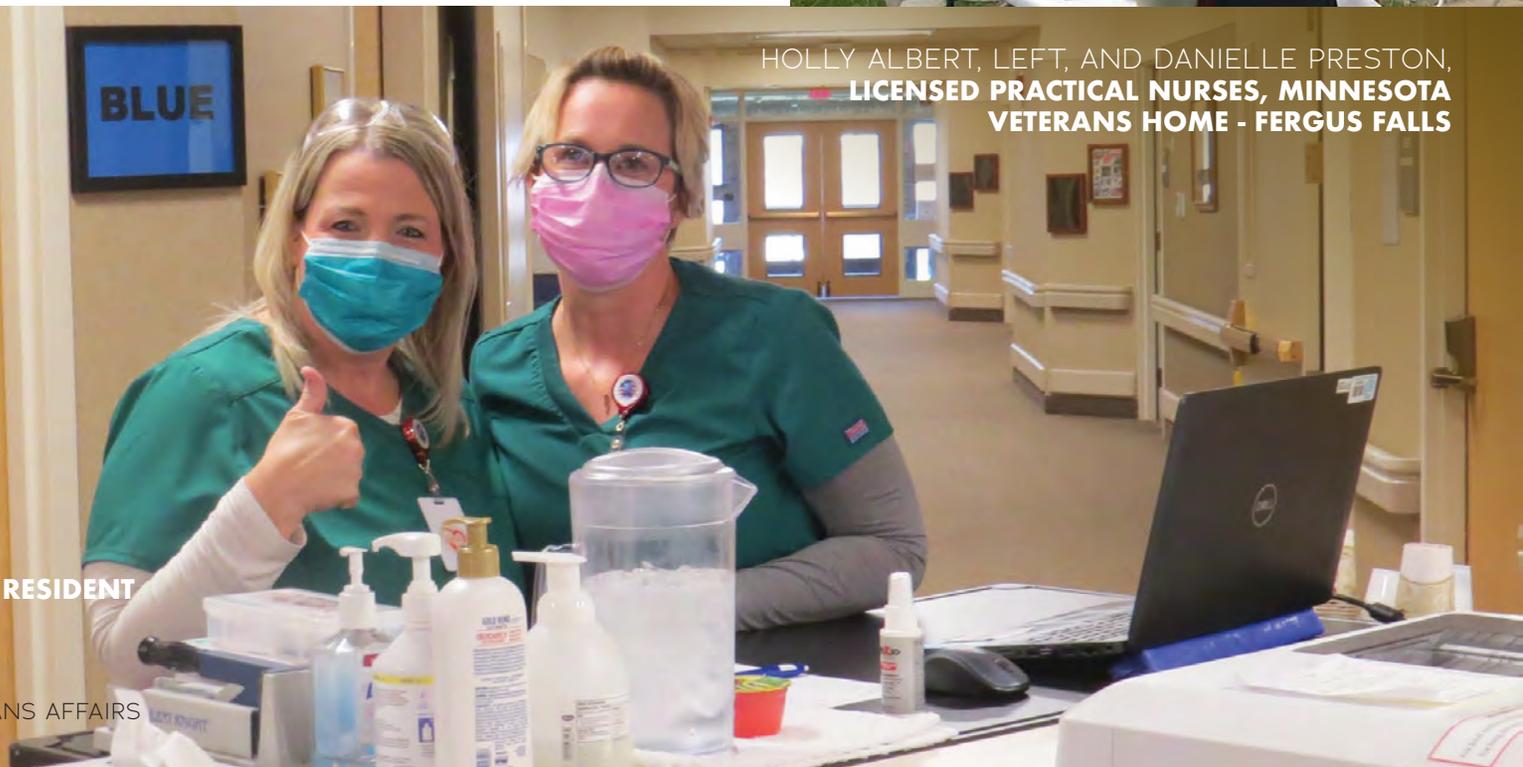
While maintaining vigilant protocols regarding COVID-19 safety, the Home was able to enhance community engagement through both a Memorial Day program and a July "Stars & Stripes Parade," where more than 50 community partners, school bands, fire departments and other supportive groups paraded around the grounds to the delight of Residents and their families.

## GREENHOUSE DEDICATION, MINNESOTA VETERANS HOME - FERGUS FALLS



"It's difficult to find words that adequately express our appreciation for the quality and compassionate care we have experienced at the Fergus Falls Veterans Home."

LYNDA CONVERSE, **MOTHER OF RESIDENT**



HOLLY ALBERT, LEFT, AND DANIELLE PRESTON,  
**LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSES, MINNESOTA  
VETERANS HOME - FERGUS FALLS**

# MINNESOTA VETERANS HOME MINNEAPOLIS

Named one of the “Best Nursing Homes in America” by Newsweek Magazine, the 135-year-old Minnesota Veterans Home - Minneapolis continues to provide exceptional care for its Residents. Nestled on 53 acres overlooking the Mississippi River, three skilled nursing buildings have 300 beds, all with private rooms and bathrooms.

More than 600 professionals at the Home are committed to their Residents’ wellness and have implemented a unique “Select Dining” program, where Residents select menu choices electronically in advance, adding efficiency in both nutrition management and food costs. Minnesota Veterans Home - Minneapolis has also introduced a mass communication tool to ensure that employees, caregivers and families are aware of activities and issues that affect the facility.

In addition to the team receiving “Best in Class Awards” from Pinnacle, retiring Administrator Tom Paul was recognized individually by LeadingAge Minnesota for more than 57 years of service as a Nursing Home Administrator, and his inspirational leadership at Minnesota Veterans Home - Minneapolis.

Through thoughtful and deliberate management of COVID-19 procedures, the Home was able to resume the annual Spam Breakfast in person, a festive tradition where leaders from Spam manufacturer Hormel, Veteran Service Organizations and civic leaders come together for a hosted morning meal for Residents.

“We were identified as one of the best nursing homes in the nation for a reason: our incredible staff. They treat our Residents like family and are dedicated to ensuring they all have the best possible experience.”

TROY BARRICK, **ADMINISTRATOR,**  
**MINNESOTA VETERANS HOME - MINNEAPOLIS**

VICTORIA DIAYEN,  
**HUMAN SERVICE  
TECHNICIAN**



# MINNESOTA VETERANS HOME SILVER BAY

Celebrating 30 years of quality care, the Minnesota Veterans Home - Silver Bay offers a home-like environment with a welcoming view of Lake Superior. Four households in a lodge-like setting focus on the individual needs of each Resident. The Home has 83 beds, including two Memory Care households. The Memory Care units focus on life-enrichment programs and engagement techniques and offer an encouraging environment that includes a Resident workshop, gazebo, sun porch, private dining room and family rooms.

Nine of the facility's staff members have worked at Minnesota Veterans Home - Silver Bay since it opened in 1991, a testament to the dedication, training and cohesiveness of those who choose a career at one of MDVA's Skilled Nursing

Facilities. In FY 2022, the Home received a "Five Star" rating from Pinnacle, was declared the "Best Nursing Home in Minnesota" by Medicare.gov and was citation-free in all surveys conducted by the VA and the State of Minnesota.

Looking forward, the Minnesota Veterans Home - Silver Bay will continue programs such as storytelling, therapeutic small groups and virtual dementia facilitation to meet the individual needs of each Resident. Elements that improve quality of life and create a home-like environment, such as rising at will, nutritious meal selection and immersive local outings, will continue, and physical improvements such as new therapeutic spa tubs will ensure Resident care and wellness.

"Our on-site gardens have enhanced wellness and created special moments for our Residents. They can nurture vegetables and plants all year; in fact, one of our Residents cultivated a flower garden and picked a beautiful bouquet for his wife to celebrate their 51st wedding anniversary."

JULIE LUCHSINGER, **RECREATION DIRECTOR,**  
**MINNESOTA VETERANS HOME - SILVER BAY**



MINNESOTA VETERANS HOME

# SILVER BAY

*30th Anniversary*

# MINNESOTA VETERANS HOME LIVERNE

The Minnesota Veterans Home - Luverne is an 85-bed skilled nursing facility that includes a 17-bed Memory Care Unit. The long-tenured staff of 160 is made up of full-time, part-time, and intermittent employees who all share a passion for caring for Veterans, 32 of whom have been on the team for 20 or more years.

Once again in FY 2022, the Minnesota Veterans Home - Luverne continued to bolster their stellar commitment to Resident wellness by being recognized with a 5-star overall staffing rating and 5-star registered nurse staffing rating by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), and scoring “Best in Class” in customer ratings from the Pinnacle Customer Experience Surveys in all 16 categories.

Through annual in-person staff education events, executive senior leadership certification, and numerous training day options, the Minnesota Veterans Home - Luverne team continues to perform at a high level.

The Home’s implementation of last year’s Resident fall reduction plan exemplifies the facility’s commitment to Resident wellness. The well-executed plan led to a substantial monthly reduction of incidents throughout the year. The additional safety measure of assuring a 1:1 staff ratio for transportation to off-property medical appointments provided an extra level of assurance against falls and other incidents.

Physical improvements during FY 2022 included Resident room remodeling, dining room window replacement, and cabinetry improvements. Post-COVID visits from the Luverne area’s active community of supporters, volunteers and donors were essential in ensuring a healthy, active and quality living environment for Residents.

“There is a calm personality of the facility. That kind of staff is hard to find. They are very caring. They seem to view the job as a vocation, not just a paycheck. I am very impressed with the level of education and knowledge of the staff.”

FAMILY MEMBER

# MINNESOTA VETERANS ADULT DAY CENTER

Located in a historic building constructed originally for Civil War Veterans in 1897, the Minnesota Veterans Adult Day Center — known to participants as the “Vet’s Club” — has been providing professional care for Veterans, spouses and Gold Star parents needing memory care, dementia or Alzheimer’s assistance for 10 years. Since 2012, more than 260 Veterans have received this “person-centered care.”

The Minnesota Veterans Adult Day Center is one of only two such centers for Veterans in the nation. In addition to caring for Veterans, the staff is strengthening efforts that focus on the Veterans’ caregivers. Through monthly support groups, social worker availability and volunteer resources, the Adult Day Center ensures that caregivers have tools to keep their loved one at home. This effort keeps Veterans out of nursing homes and contributes to reduced costs for taxpayers.

When the pandemic necessitated the closure of the service, the staff developed a unique program called “Vet’s Club on the Road,” where staff developed a program that included drive-through events, socially distant home visits, meal distribution and activity packs for caregivers to use to help prevent cognitive decline in the Veterans. In recognition of this effort, the team was awarded the LeadingAge award for “Excellence in Practice.” The Adult Day Center was also recognized by Pinnacle Customer Experience Surveys with a 4.87 rating out of 5.



“The Adult Day Center allows participants to connect with other Veterans in a safe environment to achieve the highest attainable level of physical, mental and social wellbeing. In addition, we are supporting the families with the resources to keep their Veterans at home.”

ANN ROSTRATTER  
DIRECTOR  
ADULT DAY CENTER

## MINNESOTA VETERANS ADULT DAY CENTER *10th Anniversary* 2012 - 2022



Adult Day Center staff took the Vets Club on the road during the pandemic.

# DOMICILIARY PROGRAM



Learn more about Minnesota Veterans Home - Hastings Domiciliary and the Domiciliary Program: [MinnesotaVeteran.org/Homes](https://MinnesotaVeteran.org/Homes).

The Domiciliary Program is a supportive option that helps foster a meaningful life for Veterans in a stable, healthy environment. Surrounded by natural beauty at their locations on both the Hastings and Minneapolis Veterans Homes' campuses, the program offers a full continuum of high-quality care and service focusing on medical care, mental health care, chemical health care, social services, recreation, vocational support and benefit assistance for Residents.

The Hastings Veterans Home is the main location for MDVA's Domiciliary Program with 115 Residents; another 34 Veterans reside at a second location on the campus of the Minneapolis Veterans Home. A renewed focus on caring for Veterans' sobriety needs has greatly reduced the number of alcohol-related relapses.

## MINNESOTA VETERANS HOME HASTINGS DOMICILIARY

Adjacent to expansive parkland and the scenic Vermillion River, the Hastings Domiciliary Program is a 145-bed independent living environment available to eligible Veterans and/or spouses who need assistance managing clinical, mental health, financial

or social wellbeing. The Domiciliary Program is licensed as a boarding care facility and is operated and managed by MDVA; however, it is not a nursing home. All Residents must be independently mobile and able to manage their own daily living activities.

### Challenges:

The state-operated facility in Hastings has served Veterans since 1978, but many of the buildings date back to the early 1900s when the campus served as a state mental hospital.

The Domiciliary program space is spread among three separate buildings with a public road separating more than 30 Veterans' living quarters from their dining, nursing, support services and recreational activities. Rooms are double occupancy with communal bathrooms down the hall. Physical security is difficult to establish and maintain.

### The Way Ahead:

To provide for the wellness of Minnesota Veterans of today and tomorrow, MDVA has reimagined a campus that provides a high

level of staff collaboration and holistic healthcare for Veterans and supports a new master plan.

The state's 35% share of this project — \$59.66 million — would contribute to predesign, design, demolition and construction of replacement administrative and residential infrastructure at the Minnesota Veterans Home - Hastings campus. The state would seek \$111 million, or 65 percent, from the Federal VA as a share of the modernization project costs.

The new facility's design is first-of-its-kind and poised to transform domiciliary Veteran care in Minnesota and the country for years to come. Through innovative design and a reconfiguration of current systems, several key elements will help accomplish MDVA's goal of helping Veterans lead healthy, meaningful lives:

- Living spaces will be optimized to support emotional and physical development;
- Veterans Services Center will create added convenience;
- Wellness Support Center design will be aimed at reducing the stigma of care; and
- Dining and fitness areas will strengthen the connection between diet and health.



“In addition to optimizing interior building spaces to meet Veterans’ living and mental wellness needs, new entrances, parking lots, building systems, layout, staff spaces and security are also part of the enhanced campus experience for staff. These features are designed to help make the facility a great place to work and allow staff to work more efficiently and effectively.”

SARA MALIN, **WOLD ARCHITECTS**

# GRANTS

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs administers grants that assist with mutual goals of serving Veterans and their families.

## LEGISLATIVE GRANTS

### Veteran Service Organization Grants

The Minnesota Legislature appropriates funds to MDVA to assist the Congressionally chartered Veteran Service Organizations that are often the first point of contact for Veterans. The funds are disbursed based on membership, and in FY 2022, \$353,000 was distributed to Minnesota Veteran Service Organization Departments, the largest being the American Legion (\$116,994); Veterans of Foreign Wars (\$109,699); Disabled American Veterans (\$86,249); Paralyzed Veterans of America (\$38,529) and AMVETS (\$1,529).

### County Veterans Service Officer Grants

Located in all of Minnesota's 87 counties, County Veterans Service Officers (CVSOs) provide invaluable service to their county's respective Veteran community. In FY 2022, MDVA distributed \$980,000 on behalf of the legislature for CVSO training and funding to assist Veterans throughout the state.

### Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans Grant

Each biennium, MDVA disperses \$750,000 in legislative-approved funds as a grant to the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV). MACV

coordinates programs that contribute to the goal of ending Veteran homelessness in Minnesota.

### Other Legislative Grants

In FY 2022, MDVA was charged with distributing four other grants totaling \$825,000:

- \$75,000 annually to conduct the Congressionally Chartered grant for *Independent Lifestyles - Camp Bliss* at its retreat center in Walker, MN by providing up to 86 Minnesota Veterans, free of charge, with programming for health support;
- \$300,000 one-time grant to conduct the Congressionally Chartered grant for *Minnesota Military & Veterans Museum* to continue to create a publication of the definitive history of Minnesotans' service in the Global War on Terrorism and establish a plan to promote and distribute the publication to schools and libraries throughout the state of Minnesota;
- \$50,000 one-time grant to conduct the Congressionally Chartered *Veterans on the Lake* project by providing up to 57 Minnesota Veterans, free of charge, with programming to support Veteran's health, nature and wellness at no cost to the Veteran at its retreat center in Ely, MN; and
- \$400,000 annually (The base for this appropriation in fiscal year 2024 and each year thereafter is \$200,000) to conduct the Congressionally Chartered grant for the *Veterans Resilience Project* to provide Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) treatment to eligible participants and advanced training to EMDR International Association certified clinicians.

## PURCHASE A SUPPORT OUR TROOPS LICENSE PLATE

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs, together with the Minnesota Department of Military Affairs, reinvests individual contributions of \$30 for the betterment of Veterans, service members and military families when motorists buy a Support Our Troops license plate.

MDVA offers a competitive grant process which allows nonprofit organizations to apply for Support Our Troops funding. These grants, ranging from \$1,000 to \$100,000, are focused on supporting and improving the lives of Veterans and their families. MDVA announced grants in FY 2022: Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe (\$93,767); LegalCorps (\$70,000); American Heroes Outdoors (\$60,000); Prairie Five Community Action Council, Inc. (\$80,000); Mandatory Fun Outdoors (\$30,000) and Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa (\$75,000).

The Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America Veteran Service Organization was awarded a \$81,760 Support Our Troops grant to establish a new JWV-MN Office Headquarters in St. Paul, Minnesota.

“The MDVA grant was essential in advancing the Jewish War Veterans Minnesota Chapter. We will finally be able to modernize our office technology, enhance outreach and develop a social media presence.”

LOU MICHAELS  
MINNESOTA CHAPTER PRESIDENT,  
JEWISH WAR VETERANS

## LOOKING AHEAD: GRANTS FOR FY 2023

Legislative grants and other opportunities for nonprofit organizations that serve Veterans may be available in FY 2023. Be sure to visit [MinnesotaVeteran.org/Grants](https://MinnesotaVeteran.org/Grants) to stay informed.



“The most important dynamic is building a relationship with our Veteran clients. Building trust is one of the most important things we can do. For me, it’s watching our Veterans leave after talking to a claims rep. The smile on their face, knowing that they have been heard and someone is looking out for their best interest – it’s what helps me come to work every day.”

ROLANDO SOTOLONGO, **SUPERVISOR, MDVA CLAIMS DIVISION**



“I met Doug Borgeson about five years ago. I had been battling cancer since 2004. In 2017-2018, I had a total laryngectomy. During my recovery from that battle, I met Doug to see if the connection with my service experience was related to my constant battle with it. Doug is a sterling example of what our country needs. He listened to my story and asked for some substantiating paperwork to verify it and then began to go to work. He was compassionate, tenacious and thorough. I had been relieved of my job due to my newly acquired handicap and the ability to swallow, talk, smell were gone. It took some time but eventually, due to Doug’s persistent follow up, the VA granted me support funding. It had made a substantial change to my life and Doug is responsible for orchestrating this. My deepest thanks forever.”

JOHN DUFFY, **NAVY VETERAN**

# MEMORIAL AFFAIRS & CEMETERIES

“Leaving no Veteran behind leads to societal wellness. It is an honor for the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs to provide this invaluable service to our Veterans with dignity and respect.”

ERIK SOGGE, **ADMINISTRATOR, MINNESOTA STATE VETERANS CEMETERY - LITTLE FALLS**

The State Veterans Cemeteries strive to be a nationwide model for burial and memorials for our Veterans and their families. MDVA Memorial Affairs and Cemeteries professionals ensure they live up to that standard and, in FY 2022, surpassed a total of 10,000 interments for Veterans and their eligible dependents since operations began in 1994.

MDVA currently offers three State Veteran Cemeteries for Veterans, spouses and eligible family members. In FY 2022, 600 were laid to rest in Little Falls, 173 in Preston and 206 in Duluth.

The National Cemetery Administration (NCA), a division of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, reported the following during their annual survey of next of kin and funeral directors:

- 98.3 percent of all respondents from Minnesota agreed or strongly agreed the quality of service they received from Minnesota State Veterans Cemeteries was excellent

- 99.1 percent of all respondents from Minnesota agreed or strongly agreed the overall appearance of Minnesota State Veterans Cemeteries was excellent
- 99.6 percent of all respondents from Minnesota indicated they would recommend Minnesota State Veterans Cemeteries to Veteran families during their time of need

## LITTLE FALLS VETERANS CEMETERY OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

NCA awarded the Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery - Little Falls the prestigious “Operational Excellence Award,” the only State Veterans Cemetery in the country to receive this recognition in FY 2022. The Cemetery achieved an overall score of 95% for 83 performance indicators reviewed.



More information about burials, memorials and Minnesota's State Veteran Cemeteries:  
[MinnesotaVeteran.org/Cemeteries](https://MinnesotaVeteran.org/Cemeteries)

MDVA was awarded a \$11.2 million construction grant and a one-time \$4.5 million appropriation from the Minnesota Legislature to establish Minnesota's fourth State Veterans Cemetery near Redwood Falls. Construction started in October 2021 and has a planned completion and dedication event in late summer 2023.

In addition, construction is underway to expand the maintenance building at the State Veterans Cemetery in Duluth by the end of 2022 and improve the administration building at Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery - Little Falls by spring 2023.

In FY 2023, MDVA Memorial Affairs and Cemeteries will seek funding sources to construct an outdoor committal service shelter in Little Falls, as well as a connecting walking path to the planned new Military & Veterans Museum adjacent to Camp Ripley. Other state funding requests will include irrigation system improvements at all three cemetery locations to enhance water quality and reduce annual usage.

In the coming year, MDVA will embrace our partnership with the nonprofit organization Free Urns for Veterans to provide cremation urns at no cost for Veterans and dependents who plan to be interred at one of Minnesota's State Veterans Cemeteries.



Rendering of the entrance at the new Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery - Redwood Falls

## VETERANS LAID TO REST

	LITTLE FALLS	PRESTON	DULUTH
<b>LAID TO REST</b>			
VETERANS	386	127	164
DEPENDENTS	214	46	42
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>206</b>
<b>BURIAL CHOICE</b>			
CASKET BURIAL	158	33	24
IN-GROUND CREMATION	264	94	83
COLUMBARIUM	178	46	99
<b>TOTAL LAID TO REST SINCE ESTABLISHED</b>	<b>9,266</b>	<b>941</b>	<b>645</b>

# VETERAN EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

Individual Veteran wellness is often rooted in personal education and job satisfaction, and MDVA is committed to providing Veterans with a seamless transition from military service to sustainable civilian employment.

MDVA's Veteran Employment and Education Team guides Veterans, service members and their families through approved education and training programs that result in permanent, full-time careers with competitive salaries. The agency is a valued partner with private and public employers who value the skills, ethics and discipline of Veteran job candidates.

Recognized as a national model, MDVA's Higher Education Program establishes on-campus Veteran Resource Centers to ensure that student Veterans and their families have a

welcoming environment and staff who help them navigate the complexities of college as well as provide opportunities for networking and interaction with Veteran peers. In FY 2022, 65 Veteran Resource Centers engaged 5,105 Veteran students and were able to make impactful referrals to support agencies such as County Veterans Service Officers, VA Vet Centers, MACV, Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Networks or Veteran Service Organizations.

The MDVA Veteran Education Team has proven to be a resourceful liaison for student Veterans, and assisted 2,057 students in executing their Federal GI Bill, resulting in \$194,700,000 of funding to Minnesota institutions. In addition to the Federal GI Bill, the Minnesota GI Bill enabled 1,280 participants to use \$1,776,122 for education in FY 2022.

“MDVA’s Higher Education Program and wellness go hand-in-hand. Our on-campus Veterans Center provides a welcoming environment and helps student Veterans navigate the educational and financial systems that lead to networking and ultimately fulfilling employment.”

DEE DEE PEASLEE, **PRESIDENT OF ST. PAUL COLLEGE, WHICH WAS DESIGNATED A YELLOW RIBBON ORGANIZATION IN 2022, ALONGSIDE MAJ. GEN. SHAWN MANKE, MINNESOTA ADJUTANT GENERAL**

## MINNESOTA GI BILL

### BENEFITS

#### PARTICIPANTS

HIGHER EDUCATION	1,280
OJT/APPRENTICESHIPS	183
LICENSE & CERTIFICATION	242
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,715</b>

#### FUNDS

HIGHER EDUCATION	\$1,776,122
EMPLOYER/EMPLOYEE TRAINING	\$460,523
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,237,345</b>

### STATE APPROVING AGENCY

#### FACILITIES

Institutions of higher learning, non-college degree programs, flight instruction, OJT/apprenticeship, licensing/certification

PUBLIC FACILITIES	271
PRIVATE FACILITIES	90
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>361</b>
NEW FACILITIES THIS YEAR	5
COMPLIANCE SURVEYS PERFORMED	24

#### PROGRAMS

Individual programs within institutions of higher learning that are approved for Minnesota GI Bill

NEW PROGRAMS ADDED	751
PROGRAMS ELIMINATED	624
<b>TOTAL PROGRAM ACTIONS TAKEN</b>	<b>1,375</b>
<b>TOTAL PROGRAMS MONITORED</b>	<b>7,135</b>

With a goal of maintaining a Veteran unemployment rate below 4 percent, MDVA leverages Veterans' education to ensure they obtain meaningful employment. In FY 2022, 475 job seekers attended 18 MDVA-sponsored job fairs attended by more than 100 employers. The MDVA Employment Team also worked closely with Minnesota labor and trade organizations and were able to coordinate 752 individual apprenticeships in FY 2022. The agency remains agile in the changing employment landscape, and stays current with

emerging developments, new opportunities such as "green jobs," and post-COVID employment trends.

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) partners closely with MDVA to ensure that all Veterans have access to education and employment. The Veterans Preference Act (VPA) provides Veterans a limited preference in seeking Minnesota state and local government employment and protection against unfair termination or layoff. It also allows for Veteran-owned and service-disabled Veteran-owned small businesses to receive up to a 6% preference for state and local government contracts.

MDVA's role is to educate County Veterans Service Officers, as well as to provide Veterans and public employers information regarding the implementation of VPA. In FY 2022, MDVA helped 63 Veterans, 20 employers and verified 110 Veteran-owned small businesses.

Looking forward to FY 2023, MDVA will continue to forge strategic partnerships with employers, labor and trades, small businesses, DEED and other agencies to ensure that Veterans are contributing to Minnesota's workforce, and that all racial, ethnic and gender categories are represented.

"It gives me great comfort to know that Minnesota has such a comprehensive network of education and employment support for our service members."

PEGGY SKON,  
MINNESOTA NAVY MOM  
PICTURED WITH DAUGHTER,  
PETTY OFFICER FIRST CLASS  
ALISON SKON



# CLAIMS AND FIELD OPERATIONS

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Claims and Field Operations Team identifies and serves Veterans and their dependents from all social and economic backgrounds who seek federal Veterans benefits with regards to compensation, non-service-connected pension, vocational rehabilitation or educational benefits. The team works closely with the County Veterans Service Officers (CVSOs) in each of Minnesota's 87 counties to provide seamless continuity of service to claimants.

The Claims Division supports the Veteran Applicant Tracking System (VATS), a virtual program that monitors all actions on a Veteran's claim. MDVA coordinates training, education, certification and accreditation for CVSOs, and in FY 2022 provided more than 3,000 hours of essential instruction.

After teleworking during much of the pandemic, the Claims and Field Operations team has returned to their offices at the St. Paul Whipple Federal Building assisting Veterans and their families. In FY 2022, MDVA coordinated \$1.4 billion of compensation and pension payments for Minnesota Veterans and their survivors and processed more than 8,800 state and federal claims actions.

MDVA has specific staff dedicated to providing resources to women Veterans, Gold Star Families and Tribal Nations. Minnesota's Tribal Veteran Service Officer program has been recognized nationally as an innovative program, and the MDVA Field Operations Supervisor serves as the agency's liaison to the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council.

“We served together and reconnected through Facebook. Alan encouraged me to start the claims process and get help. I'm very thankful for his team. I've been taken more seriously and I feel heard, and it's been a long time since I've felt that.”

CHRISTOPHER ECKLUND,  
MARINE VETERAN

**\$1,443,855,000**

TOTAL COMPENSATION

Amount in compensation and pension payments for Minnesota Veterans and their survivors in FY 2022.

**8,647**

**FEDERAL CLAIMS**

**147**

**STATE CLAIMS**

CLAIMS ACTIONS

Total MDVA Claims Actions on behalf of Veterans and their families in FY 2022

# VETERANS SERVING VETERANS

## VIRTUAL VETERANS DAY

The coronavirus necessitated that the 2021 Official State of Minnesota Veterans Day event be held virtually. Longtime WCCO television anchor Bill Hudson hosted the video program that featured remarks from Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, MDVA Commissioner Larry Herke, and Minnesota's Congressional Delegation. Veterans, military leaders and musical performances honored those who have served in America's armed forces.



Watch the 2021 State of Minnesota Virtual Veterans Day Program on YouTube: <https://bit.ly/2021VirtualVets>



## 9/11 20TH ANNIVERSARY DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

The 9/11 and Global War on Terrorism Remembrance Task Force was formed to honor and remember Minnesotans, Minnesota Veterans and their families whose lives were forever changed by the events of 9/11/2001 and the Global War on Terrorism. The task force strived to educate current and future generations of Minnesotans about the sacrifice and high cost of maintaining freedom. MDVA coordinated the official 20th Anniversary at the State Capitol, where surviving family members of those who died on 9/11 or subsequently died as a result of military service, were recognized.

## MILITARY AND VETERAN APPRECIATION DAY AT THE FAIR

The Minnesota State Fair honored service members, Veterans and military families at the 2021 "Great Minnesota Get-Together."

## MINNESOTA MILITARY RADIO

For 12 years, Air Force Veteran and radio program host Tom Lyons has been sharing the stories of Minnesota Veterans on a one-hour public affairs radio program co-produced by the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs. Now heard on 65 stations each week, the program features "The Commissioner's Corner," a weekly update by MDVA Commissioner Larry Herke. Listen weekly over the air and at [MinnesotaMilitaryRadioHour.com](http://MinnesotaMilitaryRadioHour.com).



Listen weekly to hear MDVA on Minnesota Military Radio.



# STATE BENEFITS

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs recognizes that the financial and emotional stability provided by state benefits are essential to Veteran wellness. MDVA's State Benefits Division works to ensure that casework, outreach, referral, and education (CORE) services are available to Veterans, and that funds available through the State Soldier Assistance Program (SSAP) are dispersed properly.

In FY 2022, the team ensured that all Veterans on the Veterans Homeless Registry were entitled to CORE services regardless of the character or length of service,

and that caregivers received additional resources when their Veteran was placed on the waiting list for admission to a Minnesota State Veterans Home. A total of 772 clients received CORE services in FY 2022, and the SSAP program provided \$1,197,296 in assistance funds.

The LinkVet call center provides information and referrals via telephone, email, online chat or website. The staff completed a training and safety program regarding suicide prevention, and updated response and review procedures to ensure that Veterans' needs were met.

## CORE FUNDING

CATEGORY	FUNDING	% OF TOTAL
INDIVIDUAL/FAMILY COUNSELING	\$753,123	84%
CAREGIVER SERVICES	\$89,238	10%
HOUSING NEEDS	\$15,124	2%
HOMELESS VETERANS	\$9,458	1%
FINANCIAL COUNSELING	\$31,265	3%

## MINNESOTA SERVICE CORE (CASEWORK, OUTREACH, REFERRAL AND EDUCATION)

### COUNSELING

**722**

TOTAL CLIENTS

**9,873**

TOTAL HOURS OF SERVICE



61%	BEHAVIOR
21%	INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING
2%	FINANCIAL COUNSELING
1%	FAMILY COUNSELING
3%	HOUSING NEEDS

### CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS

AGE	CLIENTS	% OF CLIENTS
0-19	53	8%
20-39	171	24%
40-49	111	15%
50-59	111	15%
60-69	111	15%
70-79	118	16%
80+	47	7%

	CLIENTS	% OF CLIENTS
VETERANS	503	70%
SPOUSES	161	22%
CHILDREN	57	8%
OTHER	1	>1%

VETERANS	CLIENTS	% OF CLIENTS
WWII	1	>1%
KOSOVO	4	1%
KOREAN	12	2%
GULF	43	8%
OEF/OIF	207	41%
VIETNAM	106	21%
PEACETIME	130	26%

### SATISFACTION

**100%**

FOUND SERVICES HELPFUL

**100%**

TREATED WITH RESPECT

**100%**

WOULD USE AGAIN

**100%**

WOULD RECOMMEND

## CORE CLIENTS SERVED BY COUNTY

AITKIN	4	ISANTI	4	PIPESTONE	0
ANOKA	18	ITASCA	13	POLK	1
BECKER	22	JACKSON	0	POPE	5
BELTRAMI	0	KANABEC	0	RAMSEY	40
BENTON	17	KANDIYOHI	9	RED LAKE	0
BIG STONE	3	KITTSOON	0	REDWOOD	2
BLUE EARTH	28	KOOCHICHING	1	RENVILLE	3
BROWN	7	LAC QUI PARLE	3	RICE	4
CARLTON	5	LAKE	4	ROCK	1
CARVER	0	LAKE OF WOODS	2	ROSEAU	2
CASS	4	LESUEUR	14	ST. LOUIS	38
CHIPPEWA	5	LINCOLN	1	SCOTT	4
CHISAGO	1	LYON	2	SHERBURNE	15
CLAY	14	MCLEOD	12	SIBLEY	3
CLEARWATER	2	MAHNOMEN	5	STEARNS	51
COOK	2	MARSHALL	4	STEELE	3
COTTONWOOD	4	MARTIN	0	STEVENS	2
CROW WING	33	MEEKER	9	SWIFT	3
DAKOTA	28	MILLE LACS	11	TODD	10
DODGE	3	MORRISON	9	TRAVERSE	2
DOUGLAS	20	MOWER	2	WABASHA	4
FARIBAULT	14	MURRAY	0	WADENA	6
FILLMORE	0	NICOLLET	19	WASECA	2
FREEBORN	3	NOBLES	0	WASHINGTON	9
GOODHUE	2	NORMAN	1	WATONWAN	4
GRANT	2	OLMSTEAD	24	WILKIN	0
HENNEPIN	67	OTTER TAIL	19	WINONA	5
HOUSTON	1	PENNINGTON	0	WRIGHT	13
HUBBARD	1	PINE	5	YELLOW MEDICINE	3

## STATE SOLDIER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

BENEFIT CATEGORY	EXPENDITURE
DENTAL	\$469,492
HOME REPAIRS	\$259,753
SHELTER	\$165,210
OPTICAL	\$101,776
AUTO	\$73,353
MEDICAL	\$70,799
UTILITIES	\$29,227
EDUCATION	\$19,343
OTHER	\$8,344

# \$1,197,296

TOTAL SSAP EXPENDITURES

### CLIENTS SERVED

VETERANS	887
DEPENDENTS	241
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,128</b>



## STATE SOLDIER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM BY COUNTY

AITKIN	\$15,169	ISANTI	\$4,106	PIPESTONE	\$0
ANOKA	\$22,529	ITASCA	\$58,210	POLK	\$11,024
BECKER	\$5,300	JACKSON	\$204	POPE	\$10,343
BELTRAMI	\$10,496	KANABEC	\$29,710	RAMSEY	\$47,484
BENTON	\$35,757	KANDIYOHI	\$8,148	RED LAKE	\$50
BIG STONE	\$7,836	KITSON	\$0	REDWOOD	\$6,729
BLUE EARTH	\$1,354	KOOCHICHING	\$7,349	RENVILLE	\$5,325
BROWN	\$11,034	LAC QUI PARLE	\$4,087	RICE	\$2,027
CARLTON	\$2,905	LAKE	\$725	ROCK	\$0
CARVER	\$12,507	LAKE OF WOODS	\$0	ROSEAU	\$0
CASS	\$20,835	LESUEUR	\$0	SCOTT	\$5,109
CHIPPEWA	\$3,400	LINCOLN	\$0	SHERBURNE	\$15,781
CHISAGO	\$3,926	LYON	\$8,463	SIBLEY	\$8,681
CLAY	\$45,015	MAHNOMEN	\$5,781	ST. LOUIS	\$74,028
CLEARWATER	\$15,773	MARSHALL	\$10,729	STEARNS	\$63,808
COOK	\$0	MARTIN	\$2,714	STEELE	\$3,956
COTTONWOOD	\$15,172	MCLEOD	\$19,012	STEVENS	\$1,000
CROW WING	\$52,481	MEEKER	\$3,949	SWIFT	\$31,914
DAKOTA	\$24,118	MILLE LACS	\$43,631	TODD	\$16,011
DODGE	\$0	MORRISON	\$6,877	TRAVERSE	\$1,566
DOUGLAS	\$14,819	MOWER	\$16,611	WABASHA	\$7,179
FARIBAUT	\$10,229	MURRAY	\$6,231	WADENA	\$10,612
FILLMORE	\$1,426	NICOLLET	\$11,698	WASECA	\$433
FREEBORN	\$15,795	NOBLES	\$328	WASHINGTON	\$7,246
GOODHUE	\$5,354	NORMAN	\$732	WATONWAN	\$11,589
GRANT	\$753	OLMSTEAD	\$9,427	WILKIN	\$0
HENNEPIN	\$73,134	OTTER TAIL	\$28,658	WINONA	\$11,966
HOUSTON	\$693	PENNINGTON	\$1,722	WRIGHT	\$19,822
HUBBARD	\$2,615	PINE	\$6,956	YELLOW MEDICINE	\$750

## LINKVET

### LINKVET INQUIRIES

# 3,038

PHONE CALLS RECEIVED

# 1,001

OUTBOUND CALLS

# 99%

SERVICE CALLS RESOLVED

# 206

CALLS WITHOUT MERIT

# 2,125

WEB ONLINE CHATS

# 1,668

EMAIL INQUIRIES

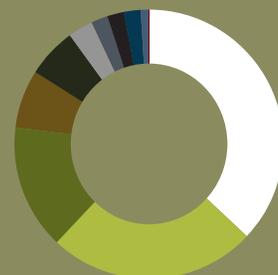
# 7,832

TOTAL SERVED

# 573

INCREASE OVER FY2021

### TOPICS OF INQUIRY



37%	ASSISTANCE/FAMILIES	2%	EMPLOYMENT
25%	HEALTH/DISABILITY	2%	HOMELESS
15%	EDUCATION	2%	CRISIS
7%	MEMORIAL AFFAIRS	1%	OTHER
6%	VETERANS HOMES	>1%	SUICIDE PREVENTION
3%	SOAR (SSI/SSDI, OUTREACH, ACCESS, & RECOVERY)		



“MDVA’s sustainability commitment encompasses our Veterans, our communities and our environment. By focusing on sustainability, we enhance care and services to Minnesota’s Veterans and their families while reducing environmental impacts and costs to our taxpayers.”

MARK RIEGEL, **MDVA SUSTAINABILITY COORDINATOR**

# ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs sustainability commitment enhances care and services to Minnesota's Veterans and their families while reducing environmental impacts and costs. The agency continues to be dedicated to increasing awareness and encouraging action that supports lowering our environmental footprint.

As Minnesota's climate continues to change, we are seeing warmer temperatures, shorter winters and more frequent and extreme precipitation events. MDVA's commitment to societal and social wellness is included as a key part of the agency's strategic plan. Being an exemplary steward of natural resources helps improve the quality of life for both Veterans and MDVA staff, and simultaneously promotes fiscal responsibility.

In compliance with Governor Walz's Executive Order 19-27, MDVA's sustainability initiatives focus on reducing water and energy use, fossil fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions while increasing waste diversion and sustainable procurement.

## KEY SUSTAINABILITY GOALS:

### Reduce water use by 15% by 2025:

- MDVA is installing low-flow fixtures at the Domiciliary Program in Hastings.
- Decreased lawn watering frequency at the Minnesota Veterans Home - Minneapolis.
- Minnesota State Veterans Cemeteries planted native grasses and perennials because they require less water and create habitats for pollinators.

### Reduce energy use by 30% by 2027:

- MDVA is upgrading to efficient LED light bulbs and replacing heating and cooling systems with a less energy intensive system at the Minnesota Veterans Home - Silver Bay.

- The Domiciliary Program in Hastings is participating in an energy conservation pilot project through the U.S. Department of Energy that identifies ways for continual energy savings.

### Reduce fleet fossil fuel consumption by 30% by 2027:

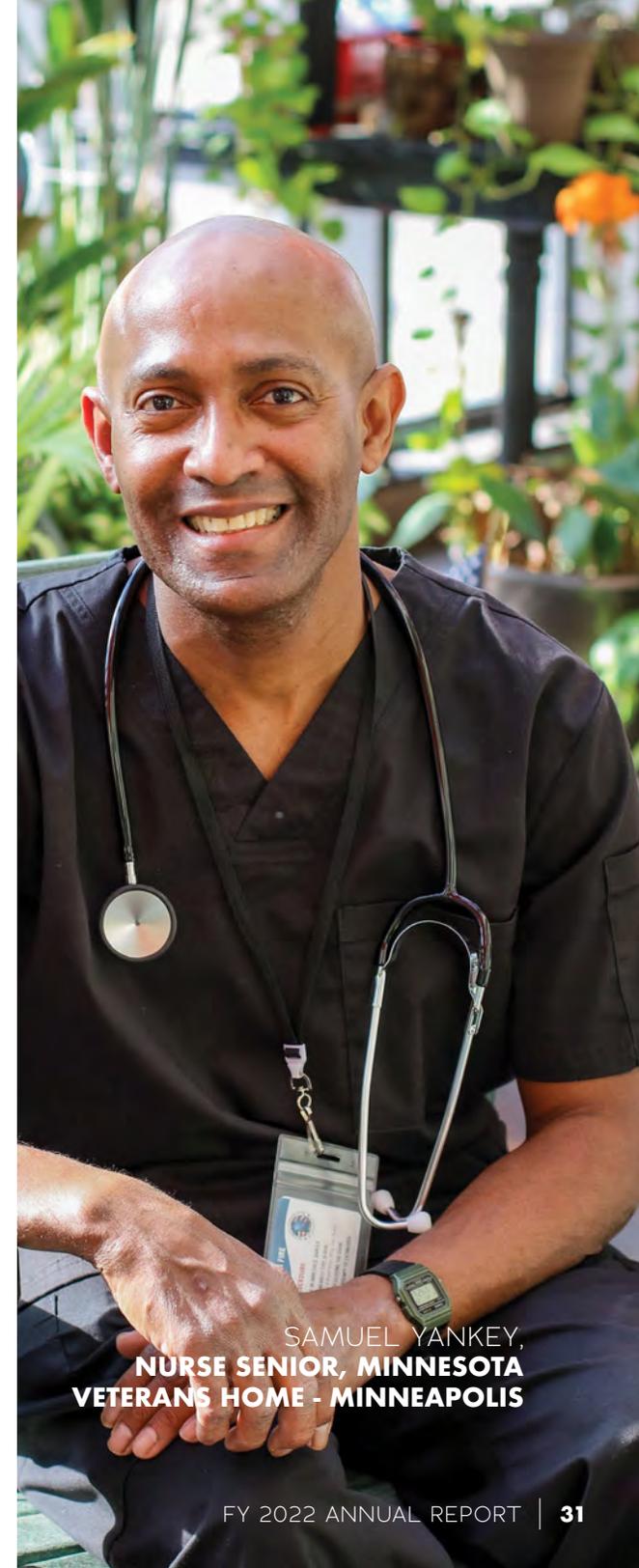
- MDVA continues to replace vehicles with fully electric or plug-in or traditional hybrids vehicles, including utility vehicles.
- The Little Falls and Duluth State Veterans Cemeteries and Minnesota State Veterans Home - Minneapolis and Hastings Domiciliary Program recently added fully electric vehicles to their fleet.
- MDVA transitioned to virtual training opportunities, which saves staff time and miles on the road.

### Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30% by 2025:

- Both the future Redwood Falls State Veterans Cemetery and the future Minnesota Veterans Home - Montevideo are being constructed with on-site solar to offset electric use.
- The power at Minnesota State Veterans Cemeteries in Duluth and Little Falls and the Minnesota Veterans Home - Silver Bay is sourced solely from 100% renewable wind energy.

### Increase solid waste diversion to 75% by 2030:

- The Minnesota Veterans Homes are completing a study for implementing best management practices to increase recycling and organics diversion rates.
- The Minnesota Veterans Home - Fergus Falls initiated a composting program.
- The Minnesota Veterans Home - Minneapolis reduced paper and ink requirements by installing digital display monitors.



SAMUEL YANKEY,  
NURSE SENIOR, MINNESOTA  
VETERANS HOME - MINNEAPOLIS

# EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

Employees throughout the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs are committed to the wellbeing of our Veterans and their families. The cohesive team weathered unprecedented challenges over the last year, as the coronavirus brought new business practices into the workplace.

In response to the trials of the pandemic, a new focus on employee wellness has emerged. Over the last year, MDVA embraced an employee-centered wellness program through the Statewide Wellbeing Program and the involvement of a consultant to guide the unique wellness programming in a healthcare setting. COVID-19 also resulted in some MDVA staff opting to telecommute or work a hybrid schedule, and the agency has

embraced this whenever appropriate to support work-life balance.

MDVA places a premium on individual growth and identifies, trains and challenges leaders to be prepared for positions of greater responsibility in Minnesota government. In FY 2022, four staff completed the selective Emerging Leaders Institute program, and two leaders graduated from the advanced Senior Leadership Institute. More than 170 employees were publicly recognized with MDVA Achievement Awards for their notable performance.

MDVA staff are a diverse blend of professionals who perform as a unified team to provide the best possible care for Minnesota's Veterans.

## MDVA RECRUITMENT & RETENTION EFFORTS

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs offers meaningful, rewarding careers in skilled trades and crafts, healthcare, professional and administration fields and much more, all with competitive salaries and great State of Minnesota benefits.

The MDVA *Jobs Bulletin* e-newsletter is published monthly and includes up-to-date information on current job openings, upcoming job fairs and an MDVA leader message that highlights the positive work culture at the agency. Subscribe to the newsletter at [MinnesotaVeteran.org/Careers](https://MinnesotaVeteran.org/Careers).

To remain competitive in a challenging hiring market, MDVA Healthcare Division has introduced several recruiting and retention incentives.

- \$6,000 New Hire Bonus for five full-time or part-time job classifications represented by the Minnesota Nurses Association (MNA).
- \$5,000 New Hire Bonus for 11 full-time or part-time job classifications represented by the Middle Management Association (MMA) and for eight full-time or part-time job classifications represented Minnesota Association of Professional Employees (MAPE).
- \$2,500 New Hire Bonus for 16 full-time or part-time job classifications represented by the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME).
- \$1,000 Employee Referral Bonus to AFSCME, MAPE, MMA and MNA Employees Bonus.
- \$5,000 per calendar year Student Loan Payment Reimbursement for MDVA Healthcare Division employees represented by AFSCME, MAPE, MMA and MNA that meet specific criteria.
- \$3.00/Hour Unfilled AFSCME Shift Incentive and increase in Weekend Bonus Incentive to eligible staff in certain job classifications.
- \$2,500 or \$1,000 Retention Incentive for MDVA Healthcare Division AFSCME employees who met certain length of service and performance criteria.



LAJWANTI STELBERG, **FOOD SERVICE WORKER,**  
**MINNESOTA VETERANS HOME - MINNEAPOLIS**



“My career at MDVA not only allows me to see to the wellbeing of Minnesota’s Veterans, but also affords me to be part of a team that is focused on my own wellness and life balance. MDVA is a great place to work.”

JONATHAN ALBERT, **SENIOR VETERANS CLAIMS REPRESENTATIVE**



## EMPLOYEES

BY DIVISION	FY21	FY22
PROGRAMS AND SERVICES	108	111
CENTRAL OFFICE/SUPPORT	67	70
HEALTHCARE	1,434	1,354
<b>TOTAL STAFF</b>	<b>1,609</b>	<b>1,535</b>

BY LOCATION	FY21	FY22
ADULT DAY CENTER	10	9
FERGUS FALLS (FULL-TIME)	84	81
FERGUS FALLS (PART-TIME/TEMP.)	129	133
HASTINGS (FULL-TIME)	71	72
HASTINGS (PART-TIME/TEMP.)	20	18
LUVERNE (FULL-TIME)	19	23
LUVERNE (PART-TIME/TEMP.)	188	167
MINNEAPOLIS (FULL-TIME)	395	390
MINNEAPOLIS (PART-TIME/TEMP.)	252	271
SILVER BAY (FULL-TIME)	76	73
SILVER BAY (PART-TIME/TEMP.)	87	74

BY FUNCTION (VETERANS HOMES ONLY)	FY21	FY22
ACCOUNTING & FINANCE	29	32
ADMIN. SUPPORT/CUSTOMER SERVICE	69	76
BUILDING, GROUNDS & MAINTENANCE	139	141
CHAPLAINS	5	5
DIETARY	173	175
HR, SAFETY & TRAINING	24	27
LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSES	134	121
MANAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP	30	33
NURSE MANAGEMENT	29	26
NURSING ASSISTANTS/AIDES	444	435
PHARMACY	14	14
PHYSICIANS	3	3
PUBLIC RELATIONS & MARKETING	5	5
REGISTERED NURSES	144	155
RESIDENT THERAPISTS	60	64
SKILLED CRAFT	48	48
SOCIAL WORK	17	17

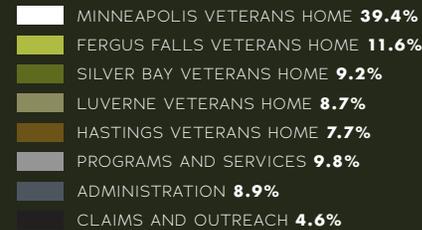
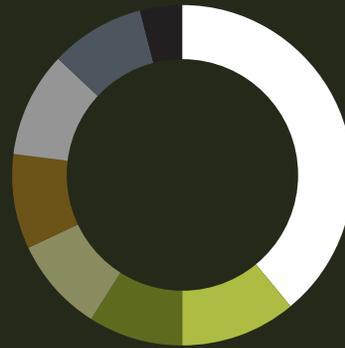
## EXPENDITURES

### VETERANS HOMES

MINNEAPOLIS	\$57,983,649
FERGUS FALLS	\$17,021,169
SILVER BAY	\$13,584,544
LUVERNE	\$12,850,654
HASTINGS	\$11,309,602

<b>PROGRAMS AND SERVICES</b>	<b>\$14,454,004</b>
<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>\$13,133,442</b>
<b>CLAIMS AND OUTREACH</b>	<b>\$6,840,646</b>

<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$147,177,710</b>
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## RECEIPTS

### GENERAL FUND APPROPRIATION

HEALTHCARE	\$62,457,000
PROGRAMS AND SERVICES	\$22,573,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$85,030,000</b>

<b>VA PER DIEM</b>	<b>\$34,875,214</b>
<b>RESIDENT MAINTENANCE CHARGES</b>	<b>\$14,968,877</b>
<b>FEDERAL MEDICARE REIMBURSEMENTS</b>	<b>\$3,421,132</b>

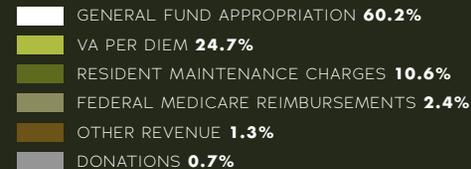
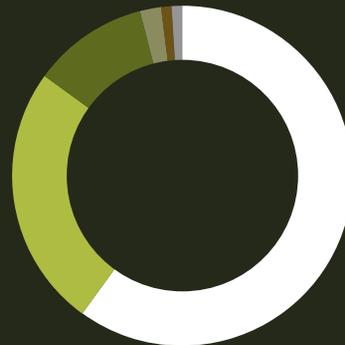
### OTHER REVENUE

HEALTHCARE	\$863,127
PROGRAMS AND SERVICES	\$1,035,682
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,898,809</b>

### DONATIONS

HEALTHCARE	\$861,236
PROGRAMS AND SERVICES	\$111,383
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$972,619</b>

<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>\$141,166,651</b>
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## HISTORICAL SPENDING

### FY 2014-2015

GENERAL FUND	\$126,261,000
FEDERAL FUNDS	\$62,341,401
OTHER FUNDS	\$36,873,689

### FY 2016-2017

GENERAL FUND	\$142,785,000
FEDERAL FUNDS	\$65,327,093
OTHER FUNDS	\$37,509,237

### FY 2018-2019

GENERAL FUND	\$150,507,000
FEDERAL FUNDS	\$73,965,905
OTHER FUNDS	\$38,393,194

### FY 2020-2021

GENERAL FUND	\$151,855,000
FEDERAL FUNDS	\$79,687,668
OTHER FUNDS	\$38,852,779

## CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION

HEALTHCARE	\$54,054,563
PROGRAMS AND SERVICES	\$5,784,988

<b>TOTAL CAPITAL BONDING</b>	<b>\$59,839,551</b>
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JULY 1, 2021-JUNE 30, 2022

# FISCAL YEAR 2022 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

“Even through the pandemic, we were able to serve Veterans and their dependents statewide. Our dedicated staff is back in person and ready to assist obtaining benefits earned through federal and state claims.”

**BRAD LINDSAY, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER - PROGRAMS AND SERVICES, MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**



# LINKVET

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The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs offers support seven days a week for Minnesota Veterans and their families.

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## CALL

1-888-LINKVET  
(1-888-546-5838)

## SCAN



SCAN WITH YOUR  
PHONE CAMERA

## CHAT

[LINKVET.ORG](http://LINKVET.ORG)



## MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

20 West 12th Street | St. Paul, MN 55155 | 651-296-2562 | [MinnesotaVeteran.org](http://MinnesotaVeteran.org) |



## POST 9/11 **SERVICE BONUS**

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GWOT Veterans may be eligible for the Post-9/11 Service Bonus.  
Learn more and apply at [MinnesotaVeteran.org/ServiceBonus](http://MinnesotaVeteran.org/ServiceBonus)