

UNITED BY OUR STRENGTH

INCREASING SUPPORT. ACHIEVING SUCCESS. FY 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



Welcome to the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Annual Report

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

FISCAL YEAR 2023

July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

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“Our mission to provide Minnesota’s Veterans with quality care has been our focus for 80 years and will continue to guide our efforts in the years to come.”

FELLOW MINNESOTANS:

On behalf of the more than 1,600 Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) employees, we are proud to continue supporting Minnesota’s 294,232 Veterans and their families with the various programs and benefits they have earned.

Our 2023 fiscal year (FY 2023) ran from July 2022 through June 2023. This annual report provides a comprehensive look at our activities, accomplishments and finances during that time.

As you’ll see throughout this report, the MDVA team worked to secure significant wins in the last year. I’d like to highlight several exceptional accomplishments by the MDVA team and our partners:

- **Closing in on our goal of “functional zero” for Veterans experiencing homelessness.**

Minnesota is a nationally recognized leader in homelessness prevention and awareness.

We hope that our progress will reinvigorate fellow states and show them that it can be done.

- **Preparing to open four new facilities.**

During FY 2023, MDVA team members stepped up and took on extra responsibilities to open Minnesota State Veterans Cemeteries - Redwood Falls in August 2023, and to move us closer to opening three new Minnesota State Veterans Homes in Bemidji, Montevideo and Preston.

- **Continuing stewardship of unprecedented funding for Veterans.**

For the second year in a row, the Minnesota Legislature passed a stand-alone Veterans and Military Affairs Omnibus Bill. More than ever, we are committed to responsible stewardship of these difference-making funds set aside to honor Veterans.

It has been my honor to serve in an interim Commissioner role during the last year. Throughout this time of growth and transition, I’ve encouraged the MDVA team to remember that our mission to provide Minnesota’s Veterans with quality care has been our focus for 80 years and will continue to guide our efforts in the years to come.

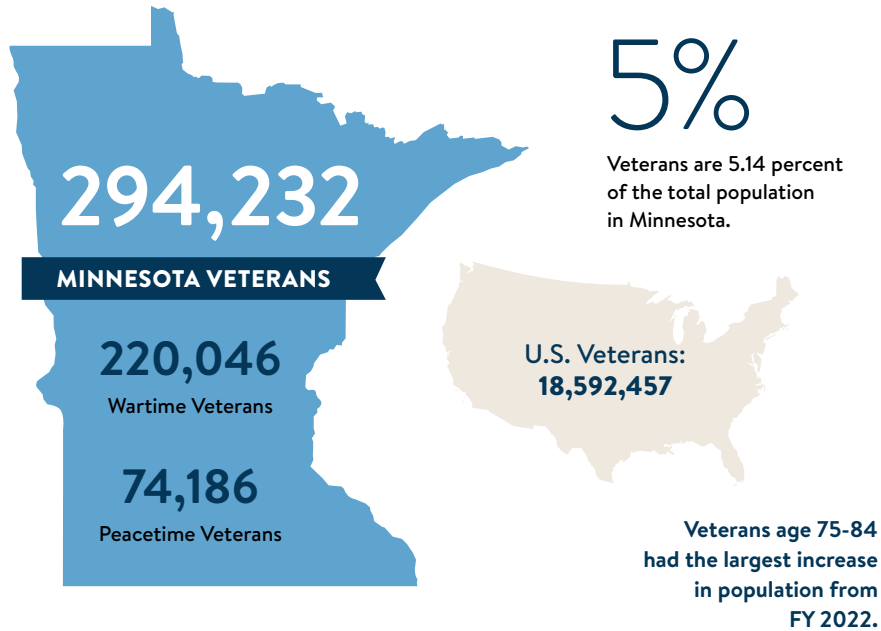
As our state’s population of Veterans continues to age and their needs evolve, MDVA remains committed to providing ongoing care and resources to maximize quality of life. We are grateful to Governor Tim Walz and our State Legislators for their ongoing investment that allows MDVA to keep the promises made to Minnesota’s heroes.

We are stronger together,

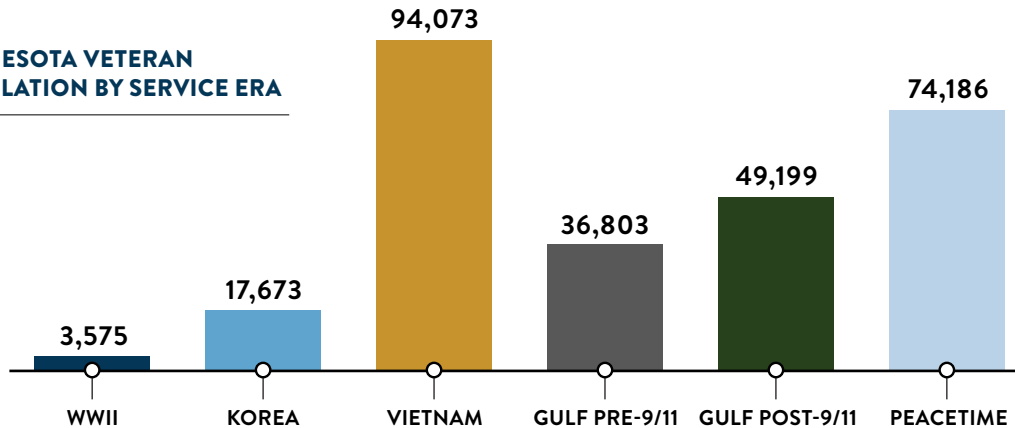
Bradley Lindsay
Commissioner

About Minnesota Veterans

MDVA exists to serve our state’s Veterans, plus their dependents and survivors. Every program, service and initiative we undertake is dedicated to the service and sacrifice of this population.



MINNESOTA VETERAN POPULATION BY SERVICE ERA



Nearly 48 percent of Minnesota Veterans live in the seven-county metro area.

MN VETERANS BY RACE

White	92.10%
African American	2.69%
Hispanic/Latino	2.17%
Asian	1.04%
American Indian	0.94%
Other	0.94%

MN VETERANS BY AGE

17-24	3,235
25-34	22,088
35-44	29,815
45-54	34,184
55-64	53,208
65-74	63,519
75-84	60,550
85+	27,633

NUMBER OF VETERANS BY COUNTY

Aitkin	1,407	Martin	1,523
Anoka	19,314	McLeod	2,269
Becker	2,685	Meeker	1,456
Beltrami	2,824	Mille Lacs	2,057
Benton	2,313	Morrison	2,521
Big Stone	359	Mower	2,339
Blue Earth	3,273	Murray	528
Brown	1,503	Nicollet	1,668
Carlton	2,628	Nobles	877
Carver	3,735	Norman	420
Cass	2,691	Olmsted	8,021
Chippewa	773	Otter Tail	3,985
Chisago	3,464	Pennington	839
Clay	3,478	Pine	2,191
Clearwater	671	Pipestone	508
Cook	399	Polk	1,783
Cottonwood	628	Pope	846
Crow Wing	5,452	Ramsey	23,191
Dakota	21,950	Red Lake	239
Dodge	1,104	Redwood	938
Douglas	2,501	Renville	890
Faribault	943	Rice	3,652
Fillmore	1,240	Rock	512
Freeborn	2,058	Roseau	906
Goodhue	3,059	Scott	5,695
Grant	386	Sherburne	5,516
Hennepin	49,974	Sibley	839
Houston	1,164	St. Louis	13,492
Hubbard	1,914	Stearns	9,528
Isanti	2,575	Steele	2,087
Itasca	3,590	Stevens	430
Jackson	625	Swift	541
Kanabec	1,293	Todd	1,740
Kandiyohi	2,371	Traverse	240
Kittson	263	Wabasha	1,424
Koochiching	1,014	Wadena	1,023
Lac Qui Parle	453	Waseca	1,102
Lake	912	Washington	12,967
Lake of the Woods	291	Watonwan	620
Le Sueur	1,660	Wilkin	361
Lincoln	373	Winona	2,693
Lyon	1,301	Wright	7,805
Mahnomen	267	Yellow Medicine	553
Marshall	539		



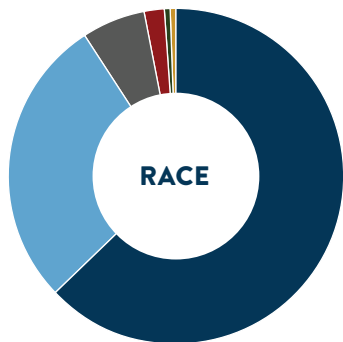
91%
OF MN VETERANS
ARE MALE

51.5%
OF MN VETERANS
ARE OVER AGE 65

Homelessness Prevention and Awareness

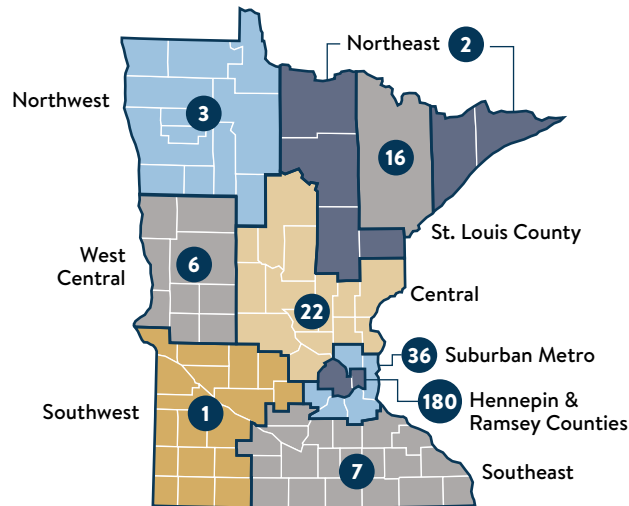
MDVA and its partners are committed to end homelessness among Veterans. This goal is measured by making Minnesota the next state to achieve “functional zero.” This means that a community has measurably solved Veterans homelessness and when it does occur, it is rare, brief and non-recurring.

Eight of 10 defined regions in Minnesota have already achieved functional zero. MDVA continues to work with Hennepin County and Ramsey County to bring these last two regions to functional zero, too.



- White **63%**
- African American **28%**
- American Indian **6%**
- Asian **2%**
- Native Hawaiian **0.5%**
- Unknown **0.5%**

VETERANS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN MINNESOTA During FY 2023 (by region)



IN FY 2023

752

Minnesota Veterans were registered with the Homeless Veteran Registry.

566

of Minnesota Veterans on the Homeless Veteran Registry were housed.

146

of those on the Homeless Veteran Registry experienced recurring homelessness.



MDVA and MACV purchased five properties together in FY 2023, including this Minneapolis building. Collectively, these purchases have given 64 Veterans in Minneapolis, Duluth and St. Cloud secure and stable housing.

Direct Financial Assistance for Stable Housing

MDVA partners with the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV) to provide one-time or short-term financial assistance to Veterans to prevent or resolve a housing crisis. In FY 2023, assistance was provided for:

Security Deposit	\$ 82,312
Mortgage	\$ 42,269
Rent	\$ 283,824
Utility Expenses	\$ 76,509
Transportation Costs	\$ 8,695
Food Costs	\$ 7,593
Structured Independent Living (SIL) Houses:	\$ 54,353
Permanent Housing	\$ 5.4 million

More People Means More Help for Veterans

In partnership with the Minnesota Department of Human Services and the U.S. Social Security Administration, MDVA provides Veterans experiencing homelessness, and those who are at risk of homelessness, with expanded access to Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits.

Over the last year, MDVA has increased outreach efforts to promote the Veteran SSI/SSDI, Outreach, Access and Recovery (SOAR) program. The goal is to reach all eligible Veterans and their families and then connect them with life-stabilizing benefits.

VETERANS RECEIVED

\$296,560

in SSI/SSDI back payments, a 160% increase over last year.

NEWLY AWARDED SSI/SSDI BENEFICIARIES RECEIVED

\$32,888

in ongoing monthly federal benefits through SOAR, a 35.5% increase over last year.

“This is the highest honor our department can receive. It is a credit to the fine staff on our Veteran Homelessness team who have worked tirelessly on new initiatives to eliminate Veteran homelessness in Minnesota.”

—Brad Lindsay, Commissioner



AWARD-WINNING NEW INITIATIVES

In February 2023, the MDVA Veterans Homelessness Prevention and Awareness team was recognized with the prestigious Abraham Lincoln Pillars of Excellence Award from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

MDVA was the sole winner in the category of “Eliminating Veteran Homelessness” in recognition of three new homeless Veteran initiatives:

- **Minnesota Veterans Entering Stable Tenancy (MNVEST)** – provides a rental subsidy and clinical case management services to Veteran households experiencing homelessness.
- **Veteran Supportive Housing Opportunities (VSHO)** – a State-funded program administered by the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV) for the creation of permanent supportive housing for Veterans with significant barriers to obtaining housing in the existing housing market.
- **Operation OVER (Opening Veterans to Every Resource)** – collection of holistic services to assist Veterans transition to permanent housing.

Suicide Prevention and Awareness

MDVA raises awareness of suicide and educates how we can all support Veterans in crisis and avoid this tragic outcome.

Each year about 100 Veterans die by suicide in Minnesota.

105

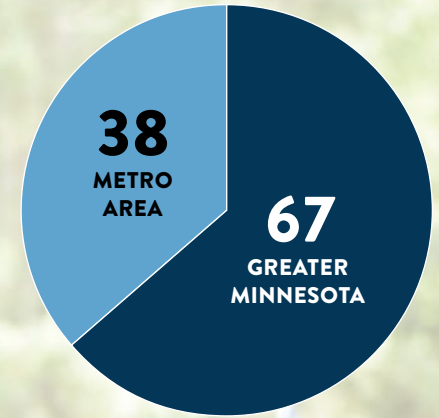
MINNESOTA VETERANS DIED BY SUICIDE IN 2022

82

DIED BY FIREARM

72

WERE AGE 55 OR OLDER



The Suicide Prevention and Awareness team works to end Veteran suicide by providing Veterans with a sense of purpose, feeling and being connected to others and moving Minnesota Veteran suicides toward zero. This team facilitates:

- Training including Mental Health First Aid
- Minnesota Veteran Suicide Prevention and Awareness Day on the first Saturday in October
- Connecting Veterans in crisis to helpful resources



Left to right: Mindy Broden, Veteran, and Mike Monfrooe, Veteran, both speakers at the 2023 State Veteran Suicide Prevention and Awareness Day. Governor Tim Walz connected with fellow Veterans at the event.

PRIORITIES AND PROGRESS

Suicide Prevention and Awareness

Distributing Free Gun Locks

According to the VA, a locked gun can mean the difference between a tragic outcome and a life saved for someone in crisis.



MDVA and its collaborative partners distributed more than 20,000 gunlocks to those who requested them in FY 2023. This is a 25% increase over FY 2022.

In a survey of Veterans who requested gun locks, 72.92% encouraged others to request and use a free gun lock.

Minnesota Veteran Suicide Prevention and Awareness Day

This fifth annual event on the first Saturday in October brings attention to Veterans who die by suicide. The 2023 event featured a variety of speakers, including Governor Tim Walz and Veterans.

“We now honor our Veterans who died from the wounds of war. The scourge of Veteran suicide touches families across this nation. We are grateful for each of you who spend your days working on this issue. It is a noble cause that we will win.”

—Tim Walz, Minnesota Governor and Veteran



Prevention Requires Whole Communities

Veteran suicide is often the result of a combination of factors, including mental or physical illness, alcohol or drug abuse, painful loss, exposure to violence, social isolation and access to lethal weapons. This combination of factors requires collaboration among the MDVA team and other federal and state organizations.

As a national leader in Veteran suicide prevention and awareness, MDVA believes success is possible through collaborative partnerships, including:

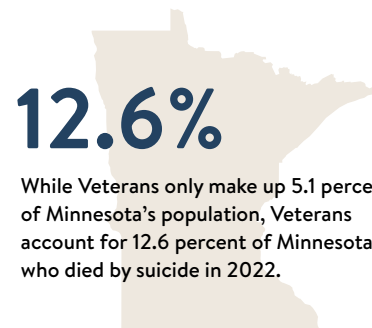
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
- Veterans Health Administration
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- Minnesota Department of Health
- Veterans Service Organizations such as the American Legion

“Look for the ones who are struggling. They often won’t cry out for help, but you’ll see them lagging. Look deep into their eyes and see what they won’t say.”

—Mindy Broden, Veteran

“I searched for information on how to kill myself and then I thought of my wife and children. I knew I needed help. I reached out to a friend, and he came right over and brought me to the hospital. That was 30 years ago.”

—Mike Monfrooe, Veteran



If you or someone you know is in crisis, please text or call the Veterans Crisis Line at 988. If calling, press 1 for Veteran-specific support.



ONLINE RESOURCES
Additional resources for Veterans can be found at MinnesotaVeteran.org/EndVetSuicide.

Legislative Activity and Grants

Minnesota’s nearly 300,000 Veterans’ voices have been heard.

Each budget session, the largest portion of MDVA’s request to the State Legislature is to maintain current levels of services. This includes:

- Skilled nursing care for the elderly
- Housing support for those experiencing homelessness
- Educational support to those who are starting their careers
- A dignified final resting place for those who pass

For a second consecutive year, a stand-alone Veterans and Military Affairs Omnibus Bill was passed by the Minnesota Legislature with nearly unanimous support.

Honoring service and sacrifice, this law provides critical funding to ensure that Minnesota takes care of a variety of Veteran needs.



Governor Walz signing the Veterans and Military Affairs Omnibus Bill into law.



Commanders’ Task Force February 2023 meeting

Other noteworthy accomplishments from the 2023 legislative session include:

- **Changes to the Post-9/11 Service Bonus.** A \$15 million increase in funding for the bonus program ensures more Veterans can receive the bonus. Veterans who were previously denied the bonus or are now eligible for a larger bonus can reapply based on the changes that were made this session. The Legislature also committed to provide more funds if the current allotment runs out before May 2024.
- **Changes to the Minnesota GI Bill.** There is no longer a distinction between part- and full-time students—so any eligible Veteran has access to the same level of benefit. The annual amount was increased from \$3,000 per Veteran to \$5,000 per Veteran. The lifetime cap was also increased from \$10,000 to \$15,000.
- **Funding for Veterans experiencing homelessness.** The funding was extended from the previous year for the Veteran Homelessness Initiative, which is a housing-voucher program jointly facilitated by MDVA and MACV. The legislature awarded \$4.3 million in the first year and \$1.3 million in the second year.
- **Funding for connecting Veterans with life-stabilizing benefits.** The SOAR program was specifically called out to receive \$1.035 million in each of the next two years.
- **Funding for a new community-based outreach program for suicide prevention.** With \$400,000 in annual funding, the goal of this new program is to connect Veterans and their families with needed services that foster a healthier statewide population, reduce mortality and morbidity and play a role in reducing Veteran suicide.
- **Funding to revitalize the Hastings Veterans Home.** The Hastings Veterans Home is on a property that is more than 120 years old. Six buildings are reaching the end of their useful life and there is over \$20 million worth of deferred maintenance.

Annually, MDVA distributes funds from Legislative Grants and Support Our Troops (SOT) Grants.

Nonprofit organizations that serve Veterans—especially those that serve diverse and underserved Veteran populations including Native Americans, seniors and those experiencing homelessness—can learn more about applying for available grants at MinnesotaVeteran.org/Grants.



LEGISLATIVE GRANTS *Funded by an allocation by the Minnesota State Legislature.*

VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATION (VSO) GRANTS	Funds based on membership were distributed to legislatively selected VSOs in Minnesota.
	American Legion \$ 184,100
	Disabled American Veterans \$ 117,968
	Paralyzed Veterans of America \$ 45,917
	Veterans of Foreign Wars \$ 151,734
COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER (CVSO) GRANTS	The Legislature awarded and MDVA distributed grants to 87 CVSOs. FY 2023 expenditures: \$815,680 to CVSOs and \$100,000 to the Minnesota Association of County Veterans Service Officers.
MINNESOTA ASSISTANCE COUNCIL FOR VETERANS (MACV) GRANTS	MDVA works closely with MACV to help positively motivated Veterans and their families who are homeless or experiencing other life crises.
	Direct Veterans Assistance \$ 750,000
	Supportive Housing Grants \$ 5,412,000

OTHER LEGISLATIVE GRANTS DISTRIBUTED BY MDVA

- **\$774,000 to Veterans Campground**, which offers opportunities for recreation and relaxation to all honorably discharged and serving Veterans and their families.
- **\$400,000 to Veterans Resilience Project** to give eye-movement desensitization and reprocessing therapy, which helps with the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder to Veterans, current military service members and spouses.
- **\$75,000 to Camp Bliss**, which provides retreats to eligible Veterans and their families. The grant may be used for therapy, activities at the camp and for transportation to the camp.
- **Military and Veterans Museum:** FY 2022 grant has closed and FY 2025 grant has not opened yet.
- **Veterans on the Lake:** FY 2022 grant has closed and new FY 2024 grant has now been executed.

SOT COMPETITIVE GRANTS

The annual minimum contribution of \$30 for an SOT license plate is used for the betterment of underserved Veterans and military families. Minnesota organizations with programs designed to support and improve the lives of Veterans and their families may apply.



TOTAL SOT COMPETITIVE GRANTS AWARDED

Patriot Assistance Dogs	\$ 45,000
Magnus Foundation	\$ 72,000
Recovery Community Network	\$ 11,640
American Legion	\$ 90,000

Additionally, MDVA is still administering prior SOT competitive grants to:

- American Heroes Outdoors
- American Veterans (AMVETS)
- Conservation Corps Minnesota
- Jewish War Veterans
- Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe
- Legal Corp
- Mandatory Fun Outdoors
- Prairie Five Community Action

\$219K

total SOT grants awarded in FY 2023.

Grants in Action

The Veterans Corps, a new program of Conservation Corps Minnesota and Iowa that supports Minnesota Veterans and their spouses, was awarded a \$75,000 grant to provide a service-learning experience that supports Veterans and their spouses as they transition out of the military. Veterans Corps members develop transferable workforce skills while completing challenging and impactful conservation projects such as invasive species management, trail construction and prescribed burning that can lead to careers in the natural resources field.

“(Veterans Corps) adds crucial volunteer experience in a civilian setting ... while simultaneously offering incredible experiences for the kind of service we crave, such as wildland firefighting and disaster response.”

—Grace Anne, Veterans Corps alum

Serving Those Who Have Served

Minnesota Veterans Homes provide quality healthcare in an environment of trust, dignity and sharing. Homes provide Residents with skilled nursing care, domiciliary care and specialty care for conditions like Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, dementia, mental health disorders, Parkinson's disease and more.



In memory of Wilbert "Buzz" Olson, pictured with Emily Palmer, Health Unit Coordinator at Minnesota Veterans Homes - Minneapolis.



COMING SOON:
Minnesota Veterans Homes in Bemidji, Montevideo and Preston

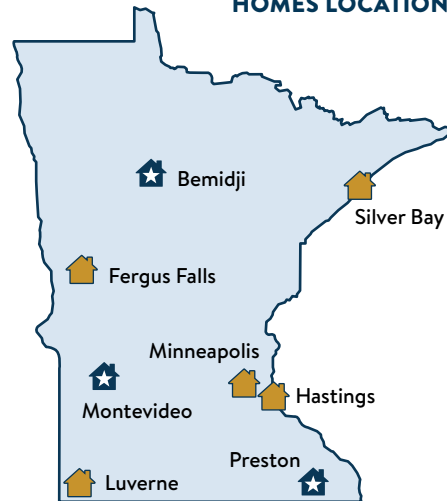
To achieve this milestone, several MDVA team members have gone above and beyond their “regular” job to help support the new Veterans Homes throughout construction.

Each of the new Veterans Homes boasts impressive community spaces for Residents and guests alike to enjoy.

All Minnesota Veterans Homes offer Residents person-centered care and amenities to help enhance quality of life, including:

- Medical, dental, optometry, mental health, spiritual and end-of-life care
- Occupational, physical, speech and recreational therapies
- Fitness, nutrition, pharmaceutical and social services
- Barber / beauty shop, transportation and cashier services
- Volunteer programs, outings and events

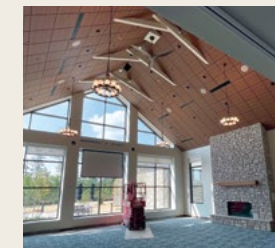
MINNESOTA VETERANS HOMES LOCATIONS



8

Striving to offer access to the most Veterans, three new Minnesota Veterans Homes will open in 2024, in addition to the five existing Homes across the state.

- Established Home
- New Home (opening 2024)



TOTAL BEDS

Skilled nursing care

Fergus Falls	106
Luverne	85
Minneapolis	300
Silver Bay	83

Domiciliary care

Hastings	145
Minneapolis	50

RESIDENT SNAPSHOT

541

MALE VETERANS

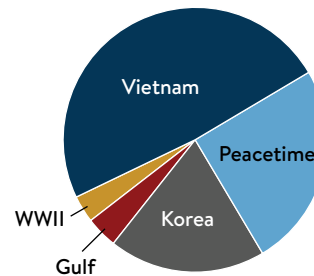
18

FEMALE VETERANS

34

NON-VETERAN SPOUSES

RESIDENTS BY SERVICE ERA



Minnesota Veterans Homes - Minneapolis

The Minneapolis campus overlooks the Mississippi River and is adjacent to Minnehaha Falls. It includes space for skilled nursing care, the Domiciliary Program (page 21) and the Adult Day Center (page 15).

In addition to being a comprehensive and vibrant campus, the Minneapolis Veterans Home hosts a variety of events throughout the year to help honor Residents with fun activities. For example, the team brings beloved annual events like the Fishing Opener and State Fair to Residents. At the Fishing Opener event, Residents “fished” from tanks in the parking lot, and then enjoyed a fresh shore lunch after the day’s catch. During the Minnesota State Fair, Residents sampled food booths, enjoyed live bands and played games.

To best support Residents with Parkinson’s disease (PD), the Minneapolis Veterans Home has launched two new group programs. The Loud Crowd is facilitated by speech language pathologists and focuses on speaking with intent. PD Power strives to reduce falls by focusing on exercises for range of motion, coordination and cardiovascular conditioning. In addition to supporting condition-specific goals, the groups offer Residents camaraderie and a chance to share experiences—struggles and triumphs alike.

“While this disease is chronic and progressive in nature, there is evidence that through exercise, education and support, we are able to potentially slow down the progress and enhance the quality of life.”

—Derek Johnson, Rehab Therapies Director, Minneapolis Veterans Home

MINNEAPOLIS VETERANS HOME AT A GLANCE

Monthly Average Number of Residents
250

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Overall Quality Rating
4 out of 5

Year Established
1887



Above right: As recreation therapists, Christa Tremewan and Kate Nickerson strive to bring meaning and joy to Veterans by helping them stay active in what they enjoy.



Adult Day Center

Located on the Minneapolis Veterans Home campus, the Adult Day Center—known affectionately as “Vets Club”—helps Veterans live at home for as long as possible. With only a few programs like this across the country, Minnesota Veterans can come for one to three days a week to participate in therapeutic healthcare services and fun activities while their caregivers can rest and recharge.

A few recent highlights at the Vets Club include furry friends. Five new therapy dogs, including a Belgian Malinois, Basset Hound, Staffordshire Terrier and Golden Retrievers, visit with Veterans a couple times a week. Veterans also have the opportunity to hold bunny buddies and check out llamas in the courtyard.



“Shortly after my husband (William Woods) and I became part of the (Vets Club) group, it was closed due to COVID. During those dangerous days ... the staff made many home visits but outdoors and masked. They brought little gifts and occasionally even brought dinner prepared by the chef. I am still amazed when I recall the elaborate themes and costumed outdoor parties!”

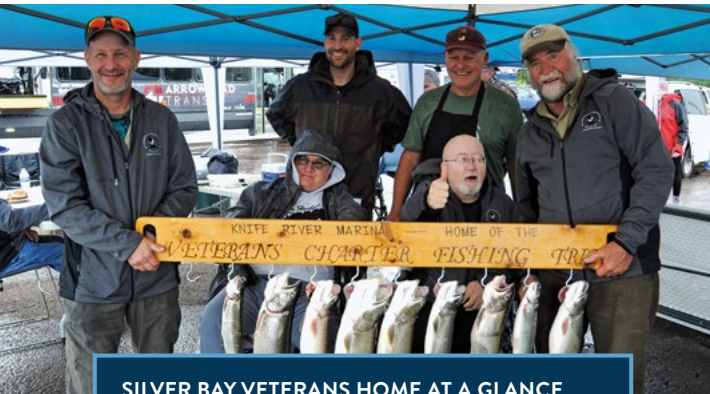
—Gail Woods, Vets Club participant spouse

Vets Club participants engage in their community and enjoy social activities like playing pool, attending movie events and more.



Minnesota Veterans Homes - Silver Bay

The lodge-like style of the Silver Bay campus on Minnesota's North Shore offers stunning views and abundant activities that foster appreciation of the great outdoors.



SILVER BAY VETERANS HOME AT A GLANCE

Monthly Average Number of Residents	51
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Overall Quality Rating	5 out of 5
Year Established	1991

A favorite way to enjoy the North Shore is a charter fishing trip on Lake Superior. There is an accessible lift at the lake so that Residents of varying mobility can fish, fuel up on a food-truck lunch after, and then savor the fruits of their labor during a fish fry the following day. The most recent fishing trip included 13 charter boats that caught nearly 60 fish.

Although northern Minnesota has a short growing season, that didn't stop the garden program at the Silver Bay Veterans Home from expanding to include a crop of sweet corn. A Resident did some research on a variety that could succeed in Silver Bay. The staff prepared new raised beds for corn and helped the Resident plant and care for corn. The harvest included more than 30 ears of corn that Residents enjoyed for dinner one evening.

"It was a huge success, and the corn grew so well, even in northern Minnesota, in a container garden, planted in mid-June!"

"An art program allows Residents and local school kids to exchange

letters and craft projects. It gives Residents a way to be creative and purposeful while connecting with kids. Now that COVID restrictions have been lifted, we are seeing some kids in person as Junior Volunteers."

—Nexus Trueself,
Recreation Program Assistant,
Silver Bay Veterans Home

Local kids (often children of staff members) in the Junior Volunteers program come to read with Residents and assist with fun activities.

The gardens are a way for Residents to enjoy the outdoors, pursue a favorite hobby and savor the flavors of locally grown produce.



Minnesota Veterans Homes - Luverne

Overlooking a small lake, the Luverne campus has a strong connection with the surrounding community that actively engages with and supports Veterans.

Volunteers paired with dedicated staff create all kinds of engaging experiences for Residents. The Adopt-A-Grandparent Program, where local fifth grade students visit with Residents and then create corresponding biographies, is just one example of the strong volunteer base that helps deliver special activities. Additionally, a local car club brings vehicles to campus for Residents to enjoy an annual car show.

The Luverne Veterans Home was recognized as one of the “Best Nursing Homes” for 2022–2023 according to U.S. News and World Report magazine. Only 16% of U.S. skilled nursing facilities earned the “Best Nursing Home” designation this year.



“Our staff make the difference. Many have worked here for over 20 years and love what they do. That results in excellent care for our Residents.”

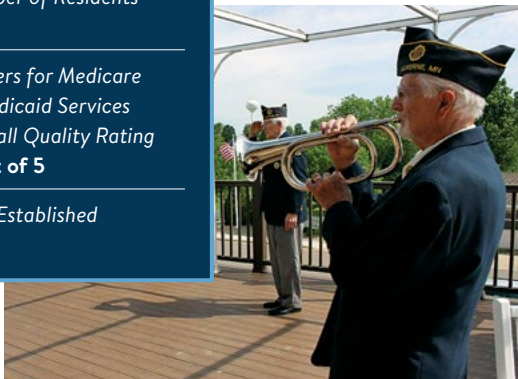
—Scott Buchanan, Administrator
Luverne Veterans Home

LUVERNE VETERANS HOME AT A GLANCE

Monthly Average
Number of Residents
61

Centers for Medicare
& Medicaid Services
Overall Quality Rating
5 out of 5

Year Established
1994



A variety of activities, entertainment and social events offer Residents opportunities for enjoyment and engagement.



“I have worked at the Luverne Veterans Home for 29 years. I love my job. We are like one big family here.”

—Carolyn Norman, Certified Nursing Assistant
Luverne Veterans Home



Teambuilding among staff members includes fun events, plus ongoing training and education.

Minnesota Veterans Homes - Fergus Falls

Set among rolling hills and blue lakes, the Fergus Falls campus feels like a small town with an inn, specialized shops and a VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic.



In the spirit of a small town, the Fergus Falls Veterans Home hosted a 25th anniversary celebration in June 2023 for Residents and the community featuring music, entertainment and refreshments. The celebration also honored the 14 team members who have been caring for Residents since the Home opened its doors in 1998.



The Fergus Falls Veterans Home was recognized as one of the “Best Nursing Homes” for 2022–2023 according to U.S. News and World Report magazine. U.S. News evaluated over 15,000 nursing homes while completing their research.

FERGUS FALLS VETERANS HOME AT A GLANCE

Monthly Average Number of Residents	81
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Overall Quality Rating	5 out of 5
Year Established	1998

“This (Best Nursing Homes) recognition is the result of our caring and committed staff who are honored to serve those who have served. They treat our Residents like family and are dedicated to ensuring they all have the best possible experience at the Fergus Falls Veterans Home.”

—Jonathan Stone, Administrator
Fergus Falls Veterans Home

The 2023 growing season was the first for the Home’s seasonal greenhouse. With guidance from a volunteer Master Gardener, Residents enjoy planting farm-to-table fruits and vegetables. Additionally, flowers can get a start in the greenhouse before adding beauty around the campus.

The 25th anniversary celebration in June 2023 included remarks from leadership, and live music and refreshments for Residents and community members.



25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



“The staff is so kind and knowledgeable of what is best for Todd. Their attitude is fun and engaging! We truly appreciate the fitness and exercise Todd receives and the recreation choices offered to all Residents in music and other enjoyable offerings.”

—Leslie Erickson, Resident spouse



Todd and Leslie Erickson at the Minneapolis Veterans Home.

Excellence is Expected

Pinnacle Quality Insight conducts customer satisfaction surveys with Residents and their loved ones. These phone surveys collect information about their care experience with the Minnesota Veterans Homes.



In FY 2023, the overall satisfaction score average for all locations was 4.73 out of 5. According to the survey, every element of customer satisfaction with the Minnesota Veterans Homes—including nursing care, cleanliness, food quality, safety and security—is above the national average and above what is considered “best in class.” The Veterans Homes in Fergus Falls, Luverne, Minneapolis and Silver Bay each earned Pinnacle Customer Experience Awards.

Becoming a Resident of a Minnesota Veterans Home

To qualify for residence at a Minnesota Veterans Home, you must:

- Be an honorably discharged Veteran who entered service from Minnesota or is a current Minnesota resident who served 181 consecutive days on active duty, unless discharged earlier because you were injured in the line of duty.
- Or be the spouse of an eligible Veteran and at least 55 years old.
- And can demonstrate a medical or clinical need.

Your local County Veterans Service Officer (CVSO) can help with the application process. Find your CVSO at macvso.org or by calling 1-888-LinkVet (546-5838), MDVA’s one-stop customer service line for all Minnesota Veterans and their families.

Minnesota Veterans Homes - Hastings

The Hastings campus features wooded nature trails, a bike path, an outdoor pavilion and heated porch. This Veterans Home location is dedicated to the Domiciliary Program, which provides Veterans with access to medical, mental health, financial and social wellbeing support services.

The Hastings Veterans Home strives to remove barriers to care and bridge the gap between domiciliary and skilled nursing care. A complete campus reconstruction is planned to replace many aging buildings. Meanwhile, the staff is always working to improve the experience Veterans have by leveraging holistic services.



For example, the Home Grown Program is one of many opportunities to connect with nature on the Hastings campus. Several raised garden boxes allow Veterans to grow farm-to-table produce, which offers benefits beyond delicious meals.

“Digging in the garden and, actually in the dirt, and seeing some tangible result of something—the fruits of your labor can be extremely rewarding and therapeutic mentally.”

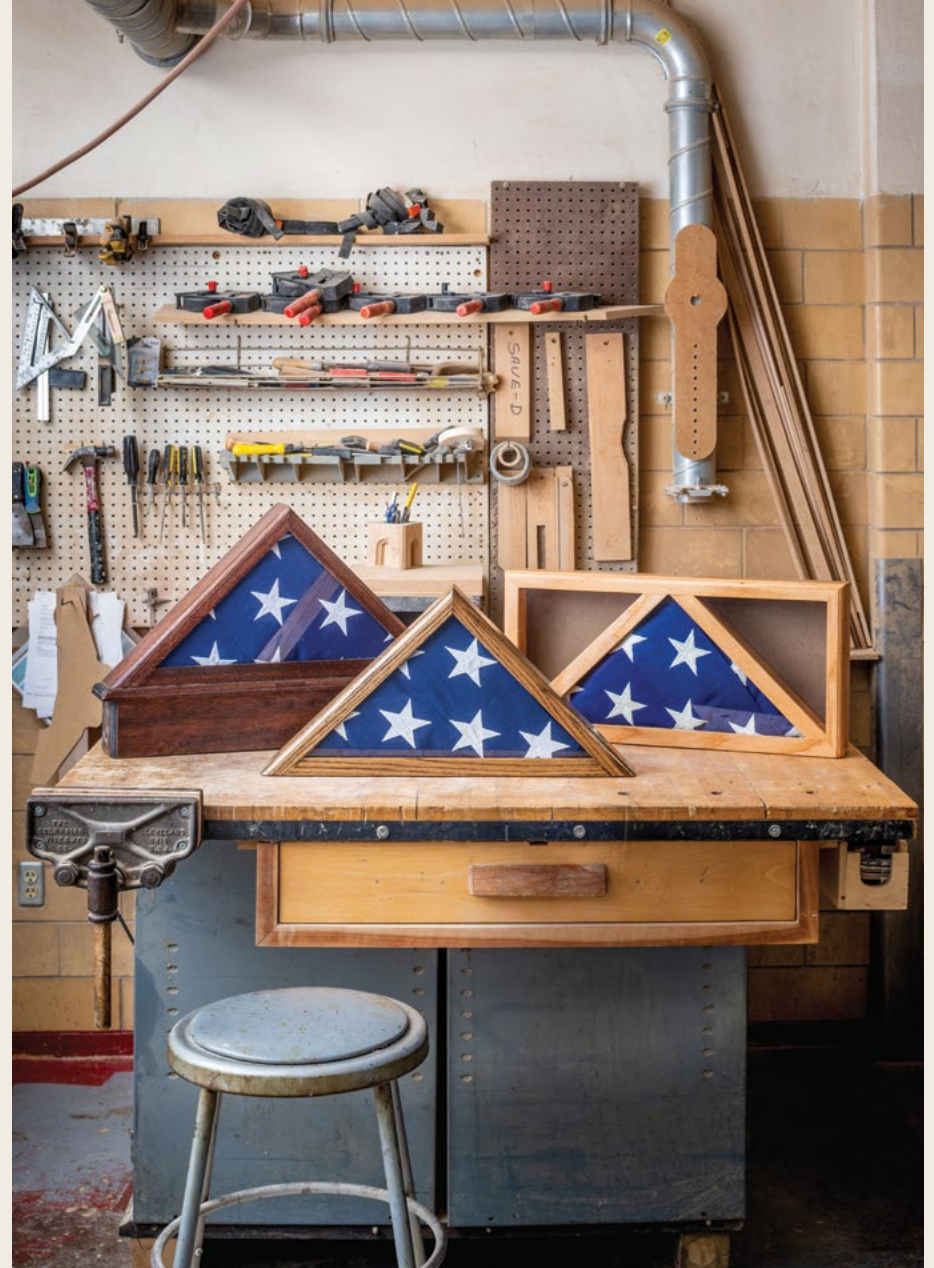
—Ryan Schwartz, Dietary Director, Hastings Veterans Home

Staff members strive to create a variety of memorable and enjoyable experiences for Residents, from onsite ice-cream socials (above) to offsite events like the City of Hastings 4th of July Parade (left).

HASTINGS VETERANS HOME AT A GLANCE

Monthly Average Number of Residents (Domiciliary Program—Hastings and Minneapolis) **148**

Year Established **1978**



The Veterans Woodshop

The Veterans Woodshop at the Hastings campus provides a therapeutic working environment that allows Veterans to learn and excel in this hands-on trade. In the Woodshop, Veterans produce high-quality, handcrafted specialty items, including flag and memorabilia cases, plaques, signs, picture frames and more.

“As the only domiciliary program in the state, we have an opportunity to provide the best care and services for our Veterans and assist with housing services.

The development of a new physical campus is underway and will support new models of care with technology, innovation and a living setting that will allow for more independence and increase privacy with single bedrooms and bathrooms. It’s an exciting time to be a part of the MDVA!”

—Leah Killian-Smith, Domiciliary Program Administrator

The grounds and walking trail that surround the Hastings campus provide a bird-filled sanctuary for staff and Residents to access the wellbeing effects of nature.



Domiciliary Program— Hastings and Minneapolis

As the only program of its kind in Minnesota, the MDVA Domiciliary Program (DOMS) is offered in Hastings and Minneapolis. Veterans experience independent living and choose to follow the path that best meets their needs:

- The **Earth Path** is designed for Veterans who choose to live at the Minnesota Veterans Home. It helps Veterans who are aging in place to get the most out of life by focusing on health, socialization, supportive groups, volunteer work and financial wellness.
- The **Fire Path** helps Veterans return to living successfully in the community by focusing on monthly income, transportation needs, employment goals, housing needs, financial planning, holistic health and community support.
- The **Water Path** is designed for Veterans who need mental health or chemical dependency support. It focuses on supportive services, medication management, coordination of care and crisis management.



MEET RUSS JORGENSON, a Minneapolis DOMS Resident and WWII Veteran (middle), pictured with Lori Ruble, Recreation Therapist and Eric Meittunen, MDVA Deputy Commissioner - Veterans Healthcare.



Memorial Affairs

Many Veterans are drawn to have their service recognized in perpetuity. More than 10,000 Veterans and their dependents are buried in Minnesota State Veterans Cemeteries. MDVA is committed to providing dignified and compassionate burial options for Veterans, often one of the only benefits they request.



The first Veteran was interred in August 2023 at the newly opened Minnesota State Veterans Cemeteries - Redwood Falls.



“Historically, VA cemeteries have focused on metro areas. The new cemetery in Redwood Falls is significant for Veterans living in greater Minnesota and helps us catch up to the needs of more Minnesota Veterans. It required partnership between local, state and federal governments. This degree of partnership speaks to the importance and need.”

–David Swantek, Deputy Director of Memorial Affairs

Nationally Known for Quality

Minnesota State Veterans Cemeteries strive to be—and succeed in achieving—the nationwide model of excellence for burial and memorials for Veterans and their families. The National Cemetery Administration:

- Found Minnesota State Veterans Cemeteries earned very high marks in overall satisfaction for the FY 2023 survey.
- Conducted a mandated compliance review in August 2022 with Minnesota State Veterans Cemeteries - Duluth, which met all 81 standards that were reviewed and measured and was recognized for operational excellence.

FY 2023 SURVEY RESPONDENTS:

- Cite the staff as courteous 99.14 percent of the time
- Score their overall experience at 98.89 percent
- Score Cemetery appearance at 98.88 percent
- Cite the staff as professional 98.86 percent of the time
- Score the quality of service at 98.3 percent

99%

Survey respondents recommended Minnesota State Veterans Cemeteries 99.16 percent of the time.



Minnesota State Veterans Cemeteries - Redwood Falls

The Redwood Falls Cemetery was dedicated on August 19, 2023. Both Governor Tim Walz and Senator Amy Klobuchar gave speeches honoring the dedication.

The first Veteran laid to rest at the new cemetery was Dick LeSage, which was fitting as the LeSage family sold and donated most of the now-cemetery land to Redwood County for this exact purpose.

FOUR STATE VETERANS CEMETERIES

Operated by the State of Minnesota through MDVA

- Minnesota State Veterans Cemeteries - Little Falls
- Minnesota State Veterans Cemeteries - Preston
- Minnesota State Veterans Cemeteries - Duluth
- Minnesota State Veterans Cemeteries - Redwood Falls

LAID TO REST IN FY 2023

	Little Falls	Preston	Duluth
Veterans	353	136	136
Dependents	207	64	39
TOTAL	560	200	175

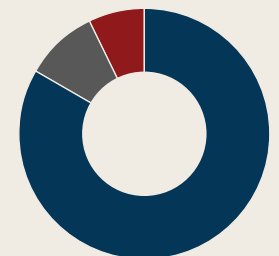
FY 2023 SERVICES PERFORMED

	Little Falls	Preston	Duluth
Casket Burials	139	24	28
In-Ground Cremation	257	114	78
Columbarium	164	62	69

VETERANS AND DEPENDENTS LAID TO REST

Since establishment

- Little Falls **9,826**
- Preston **1,141**
- Duluth **820**



MORE INFORMATION:
Visit MinnesotaVeteran.org/Cemeteries

Veteran Education and Occupational Resources

The MDVA Veteran Education and Occupational Resources team focuses on supporting Veterans with a seamless transition from the military to the civilian arena through approved education and training programs. The ultimate goal of these efforts is for Veterans to secure a career with permanent, full-time employment that provides a living wage.

Supporting Veteran Education and Training

Benefits for education can be complex, and the Veteran Education and Occupational Resources staff helps by:

- Answering questions about education benefits
- Transferring military credits
- Assisting with FAFSA applications
- Referring to scholarships and career resources

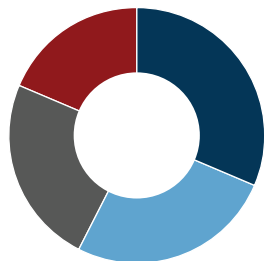
This team also works with Minnesota institutions of higher learning to ensure they comply with Federal U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Education Standards.

FY 2023 PROGRAMS

Total Programs Monitored	5,587
New Programs Added	94
Programs Eliminated	599

“Without the Veterans Resource Center, I would’ve been confused about how my benefits work and discouraged about coming back to school. They helped me with tutoring and mentoring, as well as a support network.”

—Isaac Reich, President of the Student Veterans Organization at St. Cloud State University (SCSU)



CERTIFIED FACILITIES IN FY 2023

- Apprenticeships / On-The-Job Training **58**
- Private Schools **48**
- Public Schools **44**
- Non-College Degree Schools **34**



Veteran and student Zach Rahn (right) with Veteran and instructor Anthony Wolbersen in the Computer Numerical Control (CNC) and Advanced Machining space at St. Cloud Technical & Community College.

Alec Bathgate (left), U.S. Navy Reserve and Vice President of the Student Veterans Organization at St. Cloud State University chats with Christopher Alade, Army Reserve at the SCSU Veterans Resource Center.



Minnesota GI Bill

The Minnesota GI Bill provides assistance to eligible Minnesota Veterans, currently serving military, National Guard and Reserve members, plus eligible spouses and children. It is separate and differs from the Federal GI Bill and can be used for more than only tuition. It can reimburse out-of-pocket costs for professional exams, licenses and certifications and provides financial assistance while training for a career or trade through on-the-job training or an apprenticeship program.

FY 2023 MINNESOTA GI BILL PARTICIPANTS

Higher Education

Veterans	1,412
Spouses	51
Dependents	211

Apprenticeship 154

On-The-Job Training 53

\$2.1M

TOTAL FUNDS FOR GI BILL IN FY 2023

Including over \$1.4 million for education and nearly \$700,000 for employer/employee training.



Professor and Veteran Brian Volkmoth (right) instructs student and Veteran Michael Tomlinson, in a Cybersecurity class at SCSU.



Jason Wehry, MDVA (left) and Kristin Hughes, Office Manager connect Veteran students to resources and benefits at SCSU's Veterans Resource Center.

“The Veterans Resource Center at St. Cloud State University was instrumental in my success as a student. The support I received from my fellow student Veterans carried me through my time at SCSU.”

—Nicholas Lengyel, MBA, Assistant Professor
Herberger Business School, SCSU

State Benefits

Working closely with federal, state and community partners, the Veterans Benefits Division administers the State Soldiers Assistance Program to supplement existing programs, as well as address the needs specific to Minnesota Veterans.



State Soldiers Assistance Program (SSAP)

On April 21, 1923, the Minnesota SSAP was established to provide basic assistance with medical treatment and for the general maintenance of disabled Veterans. One hundred years later, Minnesota Veterans still count on SSAP in times of need for support with housing, financial assistance, education financial assistance, short-term disability, dental and optical assistance and disaster relief.

As Veteran needs increase, it's more important than ever to have a streamlined process for SSAP. With planned improvements in the coming years, MDVA aims to reduce processing time and increase efficiency.

For its 100th anniversary, SSAP paid nearly \$500,000 more benefits in FY 2023 than in FY 2022, translating to more assistance for more family members.

CLIENTS SERVED

Veterans	1,437
Dependents	363
Total	1,800

1,800

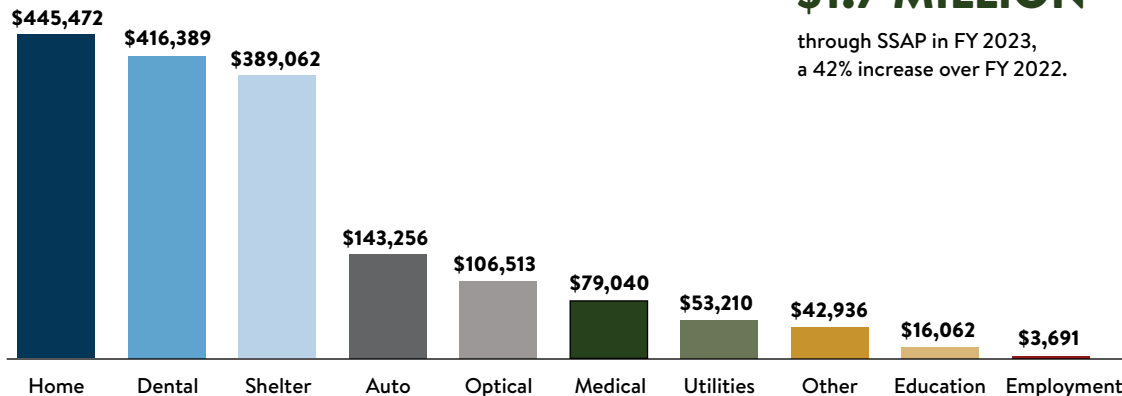
Veterans and dependents received SSAP benefits in FY 2023.

MDVA AWARDED NEARLY

\$1.7 MILLION

through SSAP in FY 2023, a 42% increase over FY 2022.

STATE SOLDERS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM EXPENDITURES



STATE SOLDIERS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM BY COUNTY

Aitkin	\$ 17,331	Martin	\$ 5,053
Anoka	\$ 40,277	McLeod	\$ 26,073
Becker	\$ 7,766	Meeker	\$ 8,690
Beltrami	\$ 1,387	Mille Lacs	\$ 34,683
Benton	\$ 32,869	Morrison	\$ 13,910
Big Stone	\$ 11,581	Mower	\$ 18,340
Blue Earth	\$ 660	Murray	\$ 248
Brown	\$ 5,154	Nicollet	\$ 553
Carlton	\$ 24,043	Nobles	\$ -
Carver	\$ 2,686	Norman	\$ 984
Cass	\$ 61,753	Olmsted	\$ 17,707
Chippewa	\$ 9,753	Otter Tail	\$ 21,556
Chisago	\$ 26,611	Pennington	\$ -
Clay	\$ 74,335	Pine	\$ 14,053
Clearwater	\$ 18,035	Pipestone	\$ -
Cook	\$ -	Polk	\$ 26,986
Cottonwood	\$ 5,256	Pope	\$ 7,372
Crow Wing	\$ 51,590	Ramsey	\$ 100,378
Dakota	\$ 82,922	Red Lake	\$ 5,148
Dodge	\$ -	Redwood	\$ 1,805
Douglas	\$ 29,396	Renville	\$ 9,013
Faribault	\$ 7,918	Rice	\$ 11,413
Fillmore	\$ -	Rock	\$ -
Freeborn	\$ 3,743	Roseau	\$ 5,973
Goodhue	\$ 15,972	Scott	\$ 11,719
Grant	\$ -	Sherburne	\$ 4,599
Hennepin	\$ 86,059	Sibley	\$ -
Houston	\$ 1,000	St. Louis	\$ 127,542
Hubbard	\$ 17,202	Stearns	\$ 106,199
Isanti	\$ 22,949	Steele	\$ 23,056
Itasca	\$ 71,797	Stevens	\$ 3,895
Jackson	\$ 2,882	Swift	\$ 12,848
Kanabec	\$ 28,203	Todd	\$ 23,074
Kandiyohi	\$ 11,757	Traverse	\$ 1,478
Kittson	\$ 5,000	Wabasha	\$ 4,800
Koochiching	\$ 1,795	Wadena	\$ 12,896
Lac Qui Parle	\$ 2,569	Waseca	\$ 162
Lake	\$ -	Washington	\$ 38,716
Lake of the Woods	\$ -	Watonwan	\$ 1,726
Le Sueur	\$ -	Wilkin	\$ -
Lincoln	\$ -	Winona	\$ 5,375
Lyon	\$ 7,706	Wright	\$ 74,830
Mahnomen	\$ 9,362	Yellow Medicine	\$ 5,479
Marshall	\$ -		

Minnesota Service CORE

MDVA partners with Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota (LSS) to support military members, Veterans and their families in maintaining their well-being through the CORE program (Counseling and Case Management, Outreach, Referral and Education). Services include individual and family counseling, financial counseling, debt management, addiction counseling, disability services and in-home counseling.

COUNSELING CLIENTS

Veterans	487
Spouses	160
Dependents	49
Total	696

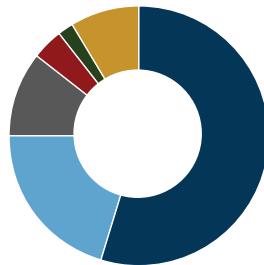
CORE PROVIDED

8,854

hours of free, confidential services for eligible Veterans, military members and their families in FY 2023.

COUNSELING CLIENT AGES

0-19	6%
20-39	22%
40-49	16%
50-59	14%
60-69	16%
70-79	17%
80+	9%



TYPES OF COUNSELING PROVIDED

Behavior	56%
Individual	20%
Financial	10%
Family	4%
Housing	2%
Other	8%



Post-9/11 Veteran Service Bonus



The start of FY 2023—July 2022—marked the beginning of the application period for the Post-9/11 Service Bonus, included in the first-ever Veterans Omnibus Bill passed by the Minnesota Legislature. This funding provides a service bonus payable to eligible Veterans who served from September 11, 2001, to August 30, 2021. MDVA began processing bonus payments in late July 2022, and during FY 2023 paid out almost \$20.7 million.

LinkVet

The Veterans Linkage Line (LinkVet) is a toll-free customer service line for all Minnesota Veterans and their families. During FY 2023, LinkVet served 12,461 Minnesotans.

LINKVET INQUIRIES

Inbound Calls	6,181
Outbound Calls	1,439
Emails	2,224
Online Chats	2,617
Total	12,461

59%

increase in LinkVet inquiries over FY 2022.

TOPICS OF INQUIRY

Post-9/11 Service Bonus	4,341
Assistance/Families	2,653
Health/Disability	1,830
Education	1,120
Homelessness/Prevention	676
Veterans Homes	554
Memorial Affairs	455
Crisis	330
Employment	202
SOAR	168
Suicide Prevention	12
Other	217

99%

of service calls were resolved.



Benefits in Action

The Veteran's Relief Grant (VRG) provides a once-per-lifetime financial grant to help Veterans and dependents stabilize their lives in a time of hardship.

The VRG was critical to Air Force Veteran and single dad Caleb W. When his furnace failed in February 2023 during one of the state's snowiest winters on record, Caleb knew he needed to act quickly. He called several repair companies and learned the repair cost would top \$14,000. Caleb was eligible for the VRG which covered the cost of his new furnace. The repair was made, and he and his son had a warm house again.

"They came through for me and I got the boiler. I am so grateful. It was a huge thing for me."

—Caleb W.
VRG recipient



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Learn more about available benefits from your County Veterans Service Officer, by calling 1-888-LinkVet (546-5838) or visiting MinnesotaVeteran.org/Benefits.

Claims and Field Operations

Minnesota Veterans are entitled to benefits they have earned. MDVA wants to make the process of applying for those benefits as easy as possible.

MDVA SECURED

\$1.4 BILLION

in compensation and payments for Minnesota Veterans and their survivors in FY 2023.

MDVA WORKED ON

20,237

claims actions in FY 2023 on behalf of Veterans and their families.

MDVA Field Operations representatives advocate for Veterans by providing personal, one-on-one service in case development and tracking state and federal claims. The Claims team supports CVSOs in reviewing, submitting and monitoring federal claims, as well as providing them with ongoing training.

In December 2022, the Claims phase of the Veterans Application Tracking System software project was recognized for its delivery of digital information and transactional services at the Fusion Learning Partners Government IT Symposium.



“For a year, he (Doug Borgeson, Senior Claims Representative) diligently and competently worked alongside me to elevate my claim to 100 percent. In light of my war-related disabilities, which collectively had a rating of 240 percent, this achievement was significant, especially when these disabilities prevented me from working.”

—Corey Bjertness, Retired Pastor and Chaplain

CVSO Education Team members John Ecker, Todd Kubinski and Kathy Marshik provide critical training and orientation to new CVSOs, as well as continuing education to all CVSOs to best support Minnesota’s Veterans.



Environmental Sustainability

Reducing environmental impacts helps to reduce costs and enhance the care and services MDVA provides to Minnesota Veterans and their families.

In addition to maximizing green space throughout MDVA properties with native vegetation and gardens, here's a look at a few of the sustainability highlights MDVA achieved in FY 2023.



MDVA's Recycling Efforts

- Organics recycling programs at Minnesota Veterans Homes in Fergus Falls and Silver Bay.
- All facilities meet best practices for recycling diversion.

Energy Use

By using the State's B3 Guidelines, the three soon-to-open Minnesota Veterans Homes were constructed following the Sustainable Building 2030 Energy Standard, which is an energy conservation program designed to significantly reduce the energy and carbon in Minnesota buildings.

MDVA purchased renewable energy credits for Minnesota Veterans Homes - Silver Bay, and the Minnesota State Veterans Cemeteries in Little Falls and Duluth.

Additionally, MDVA received an Energy Conservation Award from the Minnesota Office of Enterprise Sustainability and Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan for an HVAC-improvement project at the Silver Bay Veterans Home.

SILVER BAY HVAC PROJECT IMPACTS:

70%

reduction in natural gas use and costs.

33%

reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

19%

reduction in water use and costs.



Food and Solid Waste

Working to address the balance of providing ample and nutritious meals for Residents and preventing food waste, MDVA implemented a new meal-ordering system at Minnesota Veterans Homes in Fergus Falls, Hastings, Minneapolis, Luverne and Silver Bay. iPads are now utilized within the ordering process to promote meal choice and reduce food waste.

IMPACTS INCLUDE:

14,526

pounds of food waste prevented.

\$29,053

in cost savings.



WATCH THE VIDEO:

MDVA revamped the way it serves food to Residents.

MDVA's Solar Efforts

- Community solar garden subscription for energy consumption at Minnesota Veterans Homes - Hastings to save costs and help green the grid.
- Onsite solar projects at the new Minnesota Veterans Homes in Montevideo and Preston and at Minnesota State Veterans Cemeteries - Redwood Falls.



Honoring Veterans Throughout the Year

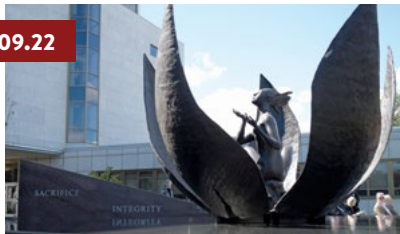
Minnesota Veterans and their families deserve appreciation and recognition every day. MDVA celebrates their service with a variety of special events and happenings.

2022-2023



08.30

Military Appreciation Day takes place at the Minnesota State Fair.



09.22

The **Minnesota Medal of Honor Memorial** is dedicated at the State Capitol.



10.01

Minnesota Veteran Suicide Prevention and Awareness Day draws attention to Veterans who die by suicide each year.



10.14

Open house at a new multi-unit **Powderhorn apartment building** for Veterans, in partnership with MACV.



11.11



State of Minnesota Veterans Day Program, celebrated at the Inver Grove Heights Veterans Memorial Community Center.

KIM NORTH - MACV

12.17



Holiday wreaths are placed on headstones at the State Veterans Cemeteries.

12.21



Governor Tim Walz visits the Minneapolis Veterans Home to wish Residents **happy holidays**.

03.30



Veterans Day on the Hill, where Veterans, families and advocates come together to rally legislative support for Minnesota Veterans.

04.01



Month of the Military Child, which recognized military children with a letter of gratitude from Governor Tim Walz.

05.03



Veterans connect with prospective employers at the **Veterans Career Fair**.

05.29



Memorial Day programs to honor and remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice to our nation at State Veterans Cemeteries in Little Falls, Preston and Duluth.

06.24



Fergus Falls Veterans Home celebrates its 25th anniversary with remarks, entertainment and refreshments.

08.19

Minnesota State Veterans Cemeteries - Redwood Falls, Minnesota's fourth State Veterans Cemetery, is dedicated in August 2023.



Minnesota Military Radio



Minnesota Military Radio focuses on telling the stories of those currently serving, those who've served and the families and communities who have supported them.

With a team of producers from the Minnesota National Guard, MDVA and Minneapolis VA Health Care System, volunteer host and Vietnam Veteran Tom Lyons informs and entertains listeners in this weekly syndicated radio show and podcast.



LISTEN ONLINE:
Visit MinnesotaMilitaryRadioHour.com.

The People of MDVA

Whether working in healthcare, skilled trades or administration, the people of MDVA are focused on making a real difference serving Minnesota Veterans and their families.



“My grandfather served in the Army during World War II. I was always very proud of his service and keep him in mind when I come to work on behalf of our Veterans.”

—Sharonda P. Hayslett
Office Administrative Specialist-Intermediate



Standout Staff Members

The dedicated staff throughout MDVA shares a passion for caring for Veterans and their dependents. The MDVA continually invests in developing leadership to complement this drive to serve. Join us in acknowledging the accomplishments of just a few standout staff members.

Two team members earned notable honors from the Minnesota Director of Nursing Association, including:

- **Pat Smedstad** (1), former Director of Nursing for the Silver Bay Veterans Home won the Minnesota Director of Nursing of the Year Award in fall 2022.
- **Heather Nelson** (2), Director of Nursing for the Fergus Falls Veterans Home was named president elect of the Minnesota Directors of Nursing Administration for 2022–2023.

Three team members graduated from the Emerging Leaders Institute (ELI), which is a cohort-based leadership development program that prepares future leaders to better serve Minnesota in their work through government. 2023 graduates include:

- **Anjali Bajracharya** (3), Human Resources Generalist
- **Erik Sogge** (4), Administrator, Minnesota State Veterans Cemeteries - Little Falls
- **Rob Gross** (5), Administrator, Minnesota State Veterans Cemeteries - Preston

FY 2023 Leadership

Larry Herke, <i>Commissioner</i>	Began serving January 7, 2019
Brad Lindsay, <i>Deputy Commissioner – Programs & Services</i>	Began serving September 24, 2014
Eric Meittunen, <i>Deputy Commissioner – Veterans Healthcare</i>	Began serving May 24, 2023
David Bellefeuille, <i>Senior Administrative Officer</i>	Began serving February 6, 2023



In September 2023, former Commissioner Larry Herke announced his retirement due to a diagnosis of ALS. Herke shared, “It was an honor to serve Veterans and their family members in my role as Commissioner. I will continue to serve Veterans in retirement as I partner with Veterans organizations to advocate for advances in medical research toward a cure for ALS, a disease Veterans receive a diagnosis of twice as much as the general population.”



“The ability to assist those who are helping to take care of the Veterans who have endured and sacrificed so much to protect all of us provides me a rewarding feeling that puts a smile on my face each day at the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs.”

—Megan Erickson, Human Resources Technician 2

1,637

**TOTAL STAFF JULY 2022
THROUGH JUNE 2023**

STAFF BY DIVISION

Central Office	84
Programs & Services Division	125
Healthcare Division	1,428

STAFF BY LOCATION

Full-time and part-time

Adult Day Center	9
Bemidji Veterans Home	20
Fergus Falls Veterans Home	208
Hastings Veterans Home	90
Luverne Veterans Home	178
Minneapolis Veterans Home	645
Montevideo Veterans Home	20
Preston Veterans Home	63
Silver Bay Veterans Home	150

STAFF BY ROLE (Veterans Homes Only)

Accounting and Finance / Healthcare	48
Administrative Support and Customer Service	83
Building, Grounds and Maintenance	145
Chaplains	5
Dietary	198
Human Resources, Safety and Training / Healthcare	36
Licensed Practical Nurses	111
Management and Leadership / Healthcare	39
Nurse Management	40
Nursing Assistants and Aides	416
Pharmacy	14
Physicians	3
Public Relations and Marketing / Healthcare	5
Registered Nurses	77
Resident Therapists	70
Skilled Craft	63
Social Work	19



FY 2023 Staffing

With three new Minnesota Veterans Homes and one new State Veterans Cemetery beginning operations, several teams experienced growth from FY 2022. MDVA put a priority on recruiting and ensuring a complete and smooth onboarding experience for new employees. A new online module for new employee orientation makes strides toward more equal access.

Financial Statement

FISCAL YEAR 2023

\$42M

MDVA received \$42 million more in General Funds in FY 2023 than FY 2022 to serve Veterans.

CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION

HEALTHCARE	\$ 69,065,139
PROGRAMS AND SERVICES	\$ 9,035,508
TOTAL CAPITAL BONDING	\$ 78,100,647

RECEIPTS

GENERAL FUND APPROPRIATION

Healthcare	\$ 71,033,000
Programs and Services	\$ 56,288,000
Total	\$ 127,321,000

FEDERAL VA PER DIEM	\$ 36,475,668
RESIDENT MAINTENANCE CHARGES	\$ 16,021,248
MEDICARE REIMBURSEMENTS	\$ 3,329,246

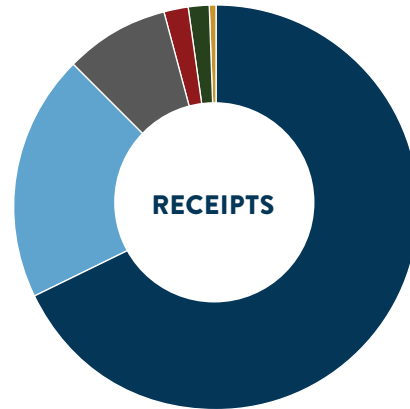
OTHER RECEIPTS

Healthcare	\$ 2,010,914
Programs and Services	\$ 1,560,347
Total	\$ 3,571,261

DONATIONS

Healthcare	\$ 966,373
Programs and Services	\$ 42,938
Total	\$ 1,009,311

TOTAL RECEIPTS \$ 187,727,734



- General Fund Appropriation **67.8%**
- Federal VA Per Diem **19.4%**
- Resident Maintenance Charges **8.6%**
- Medicare Reimbursements **1.8%**
- Other Receipts **1.9%**
- Donations **0.5%**

\$20.7M

Distributed as a part of the Veteran Service Bonus in FY 2023.

EXPENDITURES

VETERANS HOMES

Minneapolis	\$ 61,488,184
Fergus Falls	\$ 17,055,757
Silver Bay	\$ 14,222,994
Luverne	\$ 13,516,646
Hastings	\$ 10,964,737
New Homes	\$ 3,129,399
Total	\$ 120,377,717

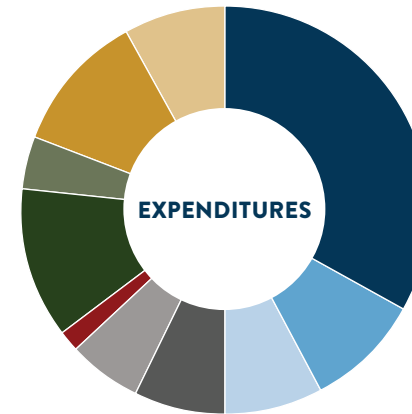
PROGRAMS

Programs and Services	\$ 22,006,718
Claims, Education & Outreach	\$ 7,623,430
Veteran Service Bonus	\$ 20,657,850
Total	\$ 50,287,998

ADMINISTRATION

\$ 14,964,033

TOTAL EXPENDITURES \$ 185,629,748



- Minneapolis Veterans Home **33.1%**
- Fergus Falls Veterans Home **9.2%**
- Silver Bay Veterans Home **7.7%**
- Luverne Veterans Home **7.3%**
- Hastings Veterans Home **5.9%**
- New Homes **1.7%**
- Programs and Services **11.9%**
- Claims, Education & Outreach **4.1%**
- Veteran Service Bonus **11.1%**
- Administration **8.0%**

MDVA is committed to be exemplary stewards of our financial resources to improve the lives of Minnesota Veterans and their families.



MISSION *Our mission is serving Minnesota Veterans, their dependents and survivors by connecting them with the federal and state care and benefits they have earned.*

VISION Our vision is to continue working toward fulfilling the needs of Minnesota Veterans and their families by providing innovative programs and services to maximize quality of life.

- VALUES**
- V** Veterans first in our hearts, minds and actions
 - E** Excellence is our standard
 - T** Trust through results
 - E** Ethics is our cornerstone
 - R** Respect for service (past and present)
 - A** Advocacy for care and services
 - N** Nation-leading services
 - S** Stewardship of resources

Veterans and service members parade as part of the Memorial Day remembrance at the Little Falls State Veterans Cemetery on May 29, 2023.



Have a question? Need support?

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

CALL

1-888-LinkVet (546-5838)

CHAT & EMAIL

[LinkVet.org](https://linkvet.org)

SCAN



SERVING MINNESOTA VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs

20 West 12th Street, St. Paul, MN 55155

651-296-2562 | MinnesotaVeteran.org

