



Women Veterans
SYMPOSIUM

NEBRASKA
Great Sacrifice.
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

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ANNUAL REPORT

FY 2024

July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024



NEBRASKA

Good Life. Great Sacrifice.

VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Cover photo collage (clockwise from top right): 2023 Nebraska Women Veterans Symposium, 2024 Vietnam War Veterans Day commemoration, 2023 Veterans Mission of Mercy Dental Clinic, and Nebraska Veterans Cemetery at Grand Island groundbreaking (Nov. 2023).

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Director's Message

Since our last annual report came out, NDVA has maintained its high operational tempo. We've continued work on the projects and programs we highlighted last year, developed some new programs and services, and continued to serve Nebraska's veterans and their families with excellent customer service.

Last year we highlighted the groundbreaking for the Nebraska Veterans Cemetery at Grand Island as well as the expansion of the Eastern Nebraska Veterans' Home. I'm excited to share that in 2024 we held a ribbon cutting at ENVH ahead of moving members into the new Honor neighborhood. The next phase of the project will include renovations of Dedication neighborhood and the launch of Adult Day Health Care. Construction of the cemetery in Grand Island continues, and as of writing this letter, about 45% of the concrete for the roads and pathways has been poured and the main buildings have all been erected and substantially framed. We are looking forward to a dedication ceremony at the cemetery in spring 2025.

As always, we are looking for exciting and innovative ways to serve our nation's heroes. One of our goals is to connect more veterans with the benefits and services they've earned through the federal government. We're excited to be adding three new state service officers who will be assigned to our veterans' homes in Bellevue, Kearney, and Norfolk. Not only will they be focused on ensuring our members are receiving all the benefits they've earned, but they will also be able to assist with outreach to veterans in the surrounding communities. In addition, we're opening the Nebraska Resource Center at the Offutt Air Force Base Exchange. It will be staffed by a state service officer to assist veterans with finding benefits, reviewing and filing claims, and more. They will also be focused on promoting everything Nebraska has to offer, from recreational activities to job opportunities to occupational licensure benefits for military spouses. Like our Welcome Home initiative, we want anyone stationed at Offutt to choose Nebraska when they discharge from service. This resource center will be the first of its kind in the nation, and we could not be more excited.

Of course, in addition to growing our mission and enhancing the services we offer, we have to ensure we are serving Nebraska's veterans and their families as best we can. We remain laser focused on our mission, and the information, statistics, and data collected in this report give a great snapshot of how we're doing.

Thank you for taking the time to read our FY 2024 annual report. I hope the information shared here helps demonstrate the importance of what NDVA does for Nebraska's veterans and their families and illustrates the successes we've seen. We look forward to continuing this work and growing our mission to serve even more Nebraskans.

Thank you,



John Hilgert
Director



FY 2024 At a Glance



NDVA hosted a ribbon cutting for the new Honor neighborhood expansion at the Eastern Nebraska Veterans' Home in June 2024.

The State of Nebraska continued its tradition of lighting the Capitol green on Veterans Day as part of the "Greenlight a Vet" initiative.



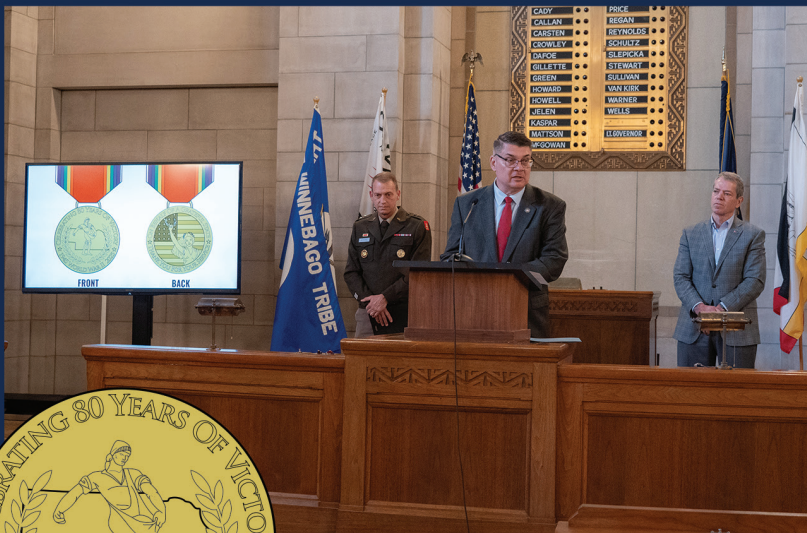
The groundbreaking for the Nebraska Veterans Cemetery at Grand Island drew a crowd of hundreds. Festivities included a Chinook flyover thanks to the Nebraska National Guard, music by the Northwest High School Band, a firing salute and "Taps" performed by the United Veterans' Color Guard, and a number of speakers including local, state, and federal officials. Construction is on track for a spring 2025 opening.

Funds distributed to veterans and dependents through Nebraska Veterans Aid (NVA) Fund

\$1,178,568

402,082

number of ratings received for veterans with NDVA-represented powers of attorney



On May 8, 2024, Governor Pilleen signed a proclamation to commemorate Victory in Europe Day. At the ceremony, NDVA and the Governor's Office unveiled a new initiative to recognize Nebraska's living World War II veterans in 2025 for the 80th anniversary of the end of the war. NDVA designed special medals that are being produced and will be presented to WWII veterans at in-person ceremonies for VE and VJ Day in 2025, through local ceremonies hosted by mayors across the state, or via mail for those who cannot attend an in-person ceremony. We look forward to honoring our WWII veterans!



In August 2023, NDVA signed a partnership agreement with the Nebraska Army National Guard as part of the U.S. Army Partnership for Your Success (PaYS) program to give soldiers guaranteed job interviews and valuable career resources.



A member at NVH recently became pen pals with a fellow 100-year-old WWII Navy veteran from Nebraska. Thanks to staff at the facility they were able to meet up in person.

Total amount paid to veterans and families through claims clinics

\$144,654

\$1.3 billion

amount paid to Nebraska veterans and their families in VA claims and benefits

Agency Overview

MISSION

Honor Nebraska veterans and their families by providing excellent service, assistance, and care through:

- ★ **Veterans Services** to help veterans identify and access federal and state benefits including disability compensation, pension, and healthcare available through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), as well as the Nebraska Veterans Aid fund, tuition waivers, and other state services;
- ★ **Nebraska State Veterans' Homes** to ensure eligible veterans and family receive the highest quality assisted living and skilled nursing care at one of four nursing homes across Nebraska; and
- ★ **Nebraska Veterans Cemeteries** to ensure eligible veterans and family receive an honorable final resting place maintained to the highest national standards.

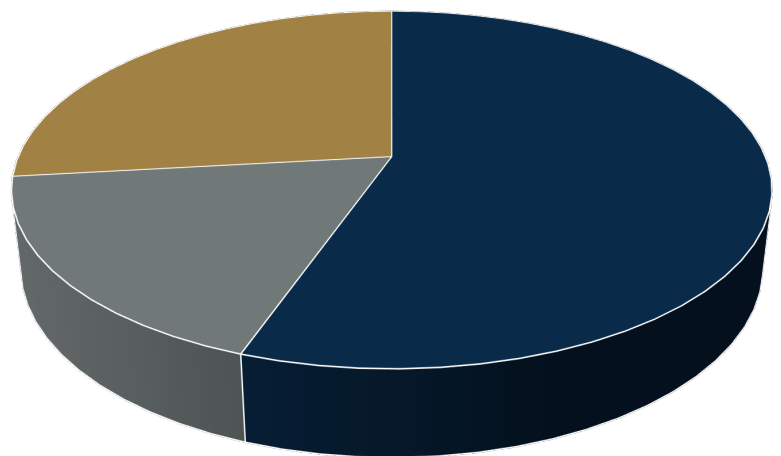
VISION

As the state's chief advocate for veterans, the Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs will serve as a trusted and reliable resource for Nebraska veterans and their families. NDVA will enhance operational efficiency by promoting consistent program delivery and fostering a culture of excellence, dignity, and respect.

BUDGET

NDVA's operating budget is a mix of state general funds, state cash funds, and federal funds from the VA. These funds support agency programs such as the four state veterans' homes, our State Service Office and their outreach activities, the Nebraska Veterans Cemetery System, and support staff such as human resources, finance, legal, and others.

Of note: these totals do not include construction grants or grants created by the Nebraska Legislature that are administered by NDVA and have been or will be awarded to other entities.



General Funds	\$48,726,936
Cash Funds	\$15,665,797
Federal Funds	\$23,551,836
Total	\$87,944,569

CENTRAL OFFICE LINCOLN

NDVA's Central Office is home to the agency's leadership and administrative teams including legal, accounting, human resources, communications, IT, and clinical support.

Located on the fourth floor of the Nebraska State Office Building, walk-ins are welcome to get help with benefits and services, get copies of DD-214s, and more. Our front desk team handles a number of programs including the Nebraska Veterans' Registry, Vets Get Pets, Waiver of Tuition, Reservist Tuition Credit, DD-214 filing and lookup, and filing grave registration cards.



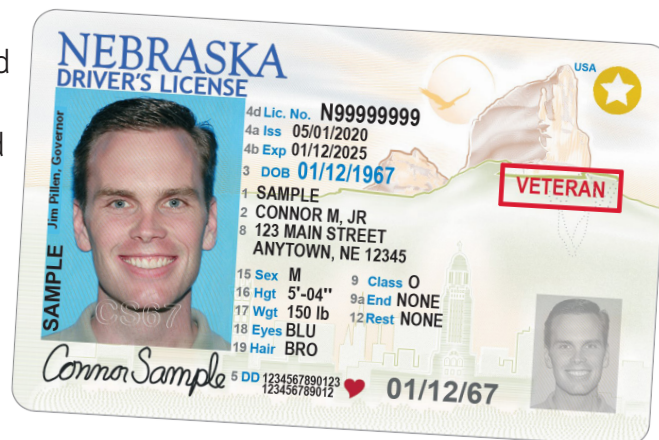
301 Centennial Mall South, Lincoln, NE 68509
(402) 471-2458 | ndva@nebraska.gov

NEBRASKA VETERANS' REGISTRY

Signing up to the Nebraska Veterans' Registry allows Nebraskans to get the "Veteran" designation on their driver's license. Not only does this make it easier to get veterans discounts at restaurants and retailers, but it allows veterans to order Military Honor Plates or campaign medal plates from the Nebraska DMV and helps verify eligibility for state benefits such as Vets Get Pets.

Signing up to the registry also allows veterans to receive NDVA's newsletter and other updates to learn about new programs and services, upcoming events, veteran-related legislation, and other news that impacts Nebraska's veterans and their families.

Veterans, including National Guard and Reserve veterans, are eligible to apply at veterans.nebraska.gov/registry.



FY 2024 Discharge Documents

Discharge Documents Received and Filed.....1,496
Total Discharge Documents on File.....750,440
Requests for Discharge Documents.....1,266

FY 2024 Veterans Registry

Applications Received and Filed.....3,375
Total Veterans in the Registry.....173,129

FY 2024 Grave Registration Cards

Grave Registrations Received.....340
Total Grave Registrations on File.....97,860



STATE SERVICE OFFICE

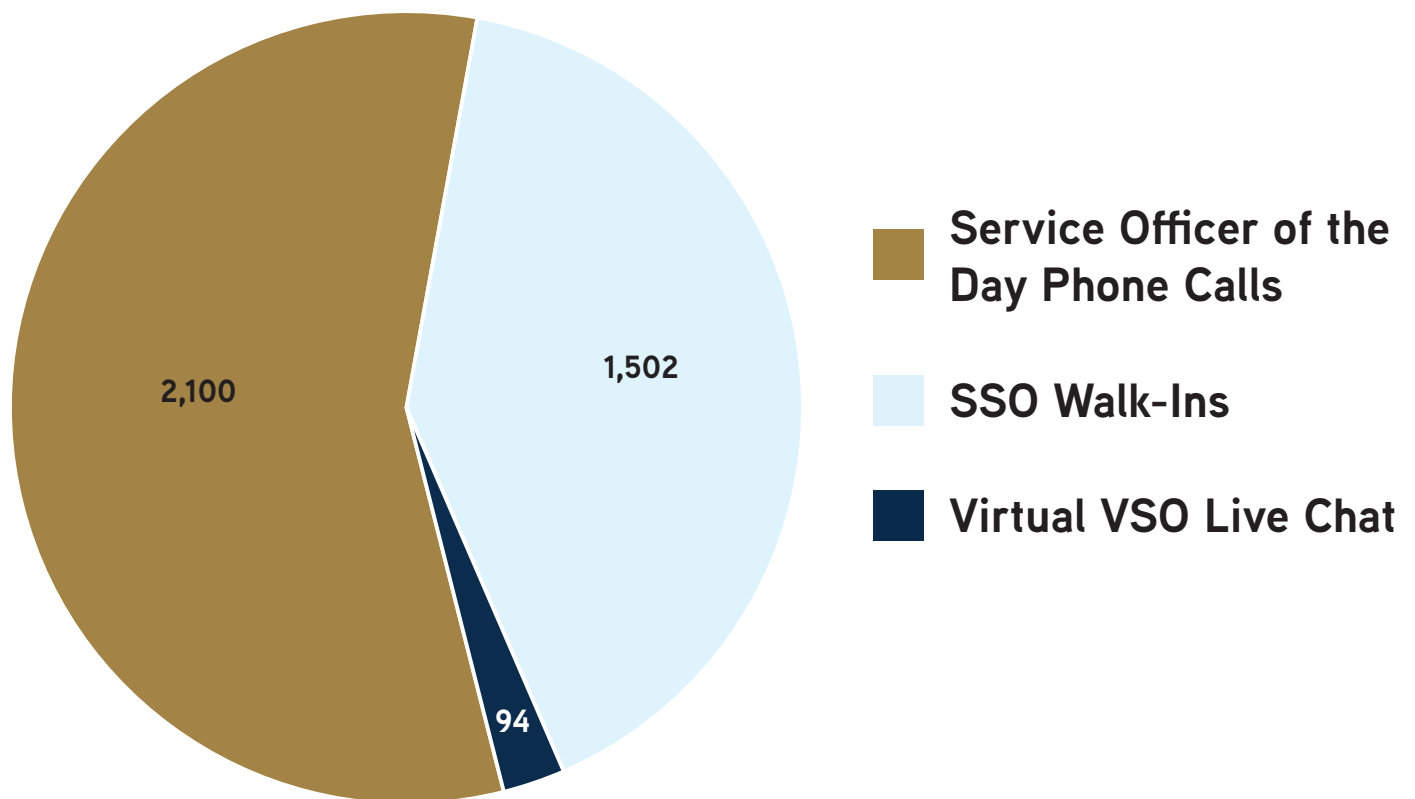
LINCOLN

Our State Service Office is dedicated to helping veterans and their family members apply for state, federal, and other benefits. They assist veterans and their families through the benefit process at no cost. These services include reviewing service records to determine benefit eligibility for veterans, spouses, and dependents; assisting with the accurate completion of forms; transmitting completed claims to the proper state or federal officials; assisting and managing both initial appeals and appeals to the Board of Veterans Affairs; and advising applicants with claims before the VA.



During FY 2024, the SSO had 3,696 unscheduled interactions with veterans. These were through phone calls, walk-ins, or messaging via our website’s live chat feature, called the “Virtual VSO”. Data on these veteran-initiated contacts is below. A “Service Officer of the Day” is assigned each day to handle all walk-ins and phone calls while other service officers handle pre-scheduled appointments.

Unscheduled, Veteran-Initiated Contacts



In addition to holding office hours, the SSO outreach team travels around Nebraska to attend various events and meet with veterans throughout the year. **In FY 2024, the outreach team attended 102 events around the state.** Starting in late 2024, there will also be service officers in three of our four veterans' homes as well as one at our upcoming Nebraska Resource Center at the Offutt Air Force Base Exchange.

FY 2024 CLAIMS, RATINGS, AND COMPENSATION

In FY 2024, almost 1.7 million claims were submitted by NDVA for Nebraska veterans and their families. Over the course of the fiscal year, over 400,000 ratings and nearly 1.3 million non-ratings were received. Ratings include claims submitted to the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) that require a rater decision (e.g. disability compensation, pension, etc.) while non-ratings are claims submitted to VBA resulting in status changes (apportionment, drill pay, dependency, etc.).

Claims paid in FY 2024 resulted in over \$1.3 billion in benefits dispersed to Nebraska veterans and their family members.

Nebraska currently ranks #1 in the nation for the percentage of veterans receiving service-connected benefits, per capita, and NDVA's goal is to reach more veterans to connect them with the benefits they've earned and continue to help grow Nebraska. The average service-connected veteran residing in Nebraska receives \$1,500 per month, tax free, from the federal government.



Deputy Director Levi Bennett met with a veteran who traveled to Nebraska all the way from South Carolina to attend a claims clinic after hearing about the great work done in Nebraska. These claims clinics, held in partnership with VA, NDVA, CVSOs, and other veterans service organizations, and expedite the process with claim filing, rating review, C&P exams, education, and more.

Claims Filed*	1,696,710
Ratings Received	402,082
Non-Ratings Received	1,294,628
Benefits Paid	\$1,335,123,764

**for those represented by NDVA-accredited POAs.*
Data provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

STATE VETERANS' HOMES

Veterans who served on active duty with an honorable or general discharge and members of the Nebraska National Guard with active duty for training who have lived in Nebraska for at least two years during their lifetime are eligible to become a member of a state veterans' home. Spouses, surviving spouses of veterans, and Gold Star spouses and parents are also eligible for membership under similar requirements.

Our homes—located in Bellevue, Kearney, Norfolk, and Scottsbluff—offer a variety of physical, occupational, speech, and restorative nursing therapy services as well as many recreational activities and religious services. Member contribution is determined by a sliding scale depending on a person's income and/or assets.

FY 2024 Home Application Data	
Applications Received.....	438
Carried Forward from Previous Year.....	11
Total Processed.....	435
Approved (does not include apps initially approved and canceled later)	380
Denied (includes 6 who were ineligible)	27
Canceled by Applicant.....	28
Applications to Carry Forward to Next Year.....	14
Applicants on Waiting List as of June 30, 2024.....	290
Total Admissions during FY 2024.....	155

CENTRAL NEBRASKA VETERANS' HOME, KEARNEY

CNVH is a 330,000 sq ft facility licensed for 225 beds. CNVH's campus amenities include private member rooms with their own bathrooms, chapel, clinic, crafts and wood shop areas, Fox Hole canteen, salon, library with computers and wi-fi access, outdoor paths, and a lake with handicapped accessible fishing piers for our members' enjoyment.

FY 2024 Expenses:
\$26,449,738



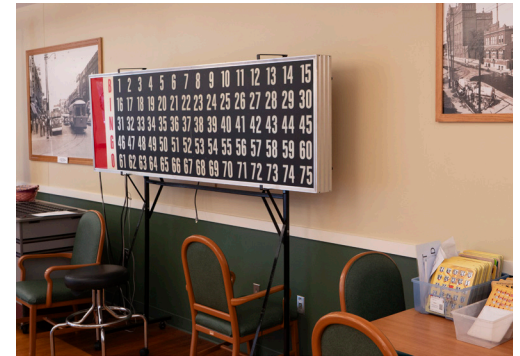
EASTERN NEBRASKA VETERANS' HOME, BELLEVUE



ENVH is a 145,000 sq ft facility licensed for 144 beds thanks to the expansion project that is nearing completion. ENVH is home to 15 acres of gardens, including rain gardens, a Purple Heart garden, and member gardens. There are also several walking paths and a gazebo for members and visitors to enjoy.



FY 2024 Expenses:
\$16,373,118



ENVH Ribbon Cutting: Honor Neighborhood Expansion

On June 6, 2024, Governor Pillen, NDVA Director Hilgert, and other officials and partners hosted a ribbon cutting and open house for the new Honor neighborhood at ENVH.

Honor adds nearly 25,000 sq ft to the facility and includes 24 single-occupancy rooms with assisted living beds as well as space for a new Adult Day Health Care medical model program. Once members from Dedication have moved into Honor, Dedication's 30 assisted living beds will be converted into skilled nursing beds.



NORFOLK VETERANS' HOME

NVH is a 138,000 sq ft facility licensed for 159 beds. It has a chapel, canteen, bank, beauty/barber shop, library, clinic, restorative room, and a large recreational area. Heroes Park, located behind the home, is an outdoor area with extensive walking paths, artistic benches depicting all branches of the military, a playground, a basketball court, a horseshoe pit, and a large pavilion.

FY 2024 Expenses:
\$18,730,524



Learn more about our facilities and take virtual tours at veterans.nebraska.gov/homes

WESTERN NEBRASKA VETERANS' HOME, SCOTTSBLUFF

WNVH is a 93,000 sq ft facility licensed for 109 beds. Inside, members can enjoy the craft room, library, TV lounge, barber shop, billiards room, and a canteen that's well-stocked with snacks. Outdoor features include a horseshoe pit, putting green, and fishing pond surrounded by a lighted walkway. The on-site All Faiths Chapel offers a variety of educational and non-denominational services.

FY 2024 Expenses:
\$12,071,280



NEBRASKA VETERANS CEMETERY SYSTEM



The Nebraska Veterans Cemetery System includes the veterans cemetery in Alliance, which was dedicated August 13,

2010, and the cemetery in Grand Island, which is under construction and slated to be dedicated in spring of 2025. These cemeteries exist to provide Nebraska veterans and their family members with a place to be memorialized with dignity and honor.

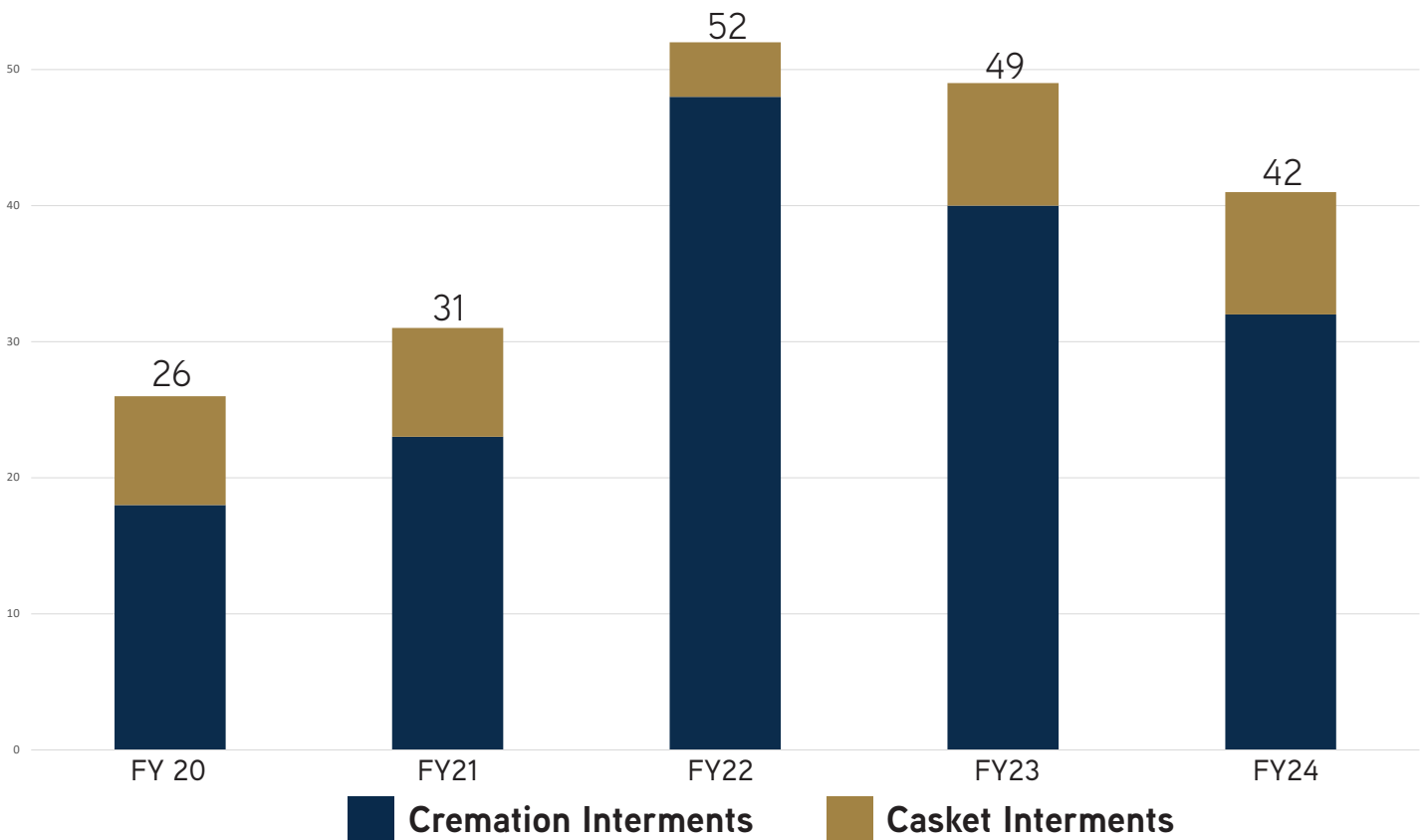
Services include pre-interment planning, cremation or casket burial, memorial services, military funeral honors, memorial graves, and civic and volunteer opportunities. Our cemeteries are held to national shrine standards and undergo surveys from the VA National Cemetery Administration every three years.



Nebraska Veterans Cemetery at Alliance

As of June 30, 2024, there have been 536 interments at NVCA and 415 families who have completed pre-interment planning.

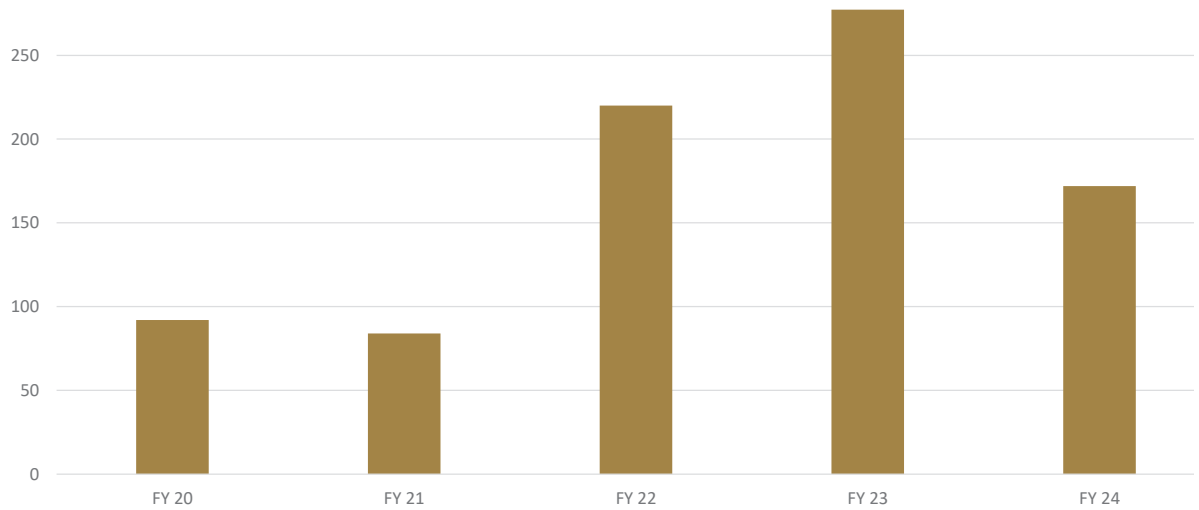
NVCA Interments



NVCA Attendance Captured with Cemetery Visitor Log

According to sign-ins on the visitor log in NVCA's lobby, there were 172 visitors in FY 2024 and 25% of those visitors came from out of state.

Please note, NVCA has visitors daily who do not sign into the visitor log.



COMING SOON!

Nebraska Veterans Cemetery at Grand Island

Progress continues on our second state veterans cemetery in Grand Island, which is conveniently located halfway between Fort McPherson National Cemetery at Maxwell and Omaha National Cemetery at Springfield. Below are photos from summer 2024 of construction progress since our groundbreaking.



Programs

NEBRASKA VETERANS AID FUND

Nebraska Veterans Aid can help veterans and their spouses or dependents with temporary financial relief in the event of a variety of emergencies. In FY 2024, NDVA encouraged veterans to utilize NVA after massive storms and tornadoes swept through the state, similar to how the fund was promoted to those impacted by flooding in 2019.

NVA funds can be used for food, fuel, shelter, transportation, daycare, funeral expenses, medical needs, and surgical items. In FY 2024, \$1,178,568 was distributed to veterans and their families. **Over \$61 million has been distributed to eligible Nebraskans since the fund was created in 1921.**

Per state statute, applications must be made through a County Veterans Service Officer or Post Service Officer of any recognized veterans service organization and then submitted to the Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs for review.

The principal investment for NVA is held by the Nebraska Investment Council and currently totals over \$56 million. Distributions to veterans come from interest earned from these investments, and in FY 2024 accumulated earnings and receipted funds available for distribution to eligible applicants totaled just over \$3 million.

Learn more about the program at veterans.nebraska.gov/nva.



Facing a financial emergency?
Nebraska Veterans Aid could help.

Use NVA for

- Food
- Rent/Mortgage
- Utilities
- Eye Glasses
- Hearing Aids
- Dental Bills
- Medical Bills
- Transportation
- Daycare
- Funeral Expenses

For more information, contact your County Veteran Service Officer or visit veterans.nebraska.gov/nva

 **VETERANS.NEBRASKA.GOV**
402-471-2458 NDVA@NEBRASKA.GOV @NEVETSAFFAIRS

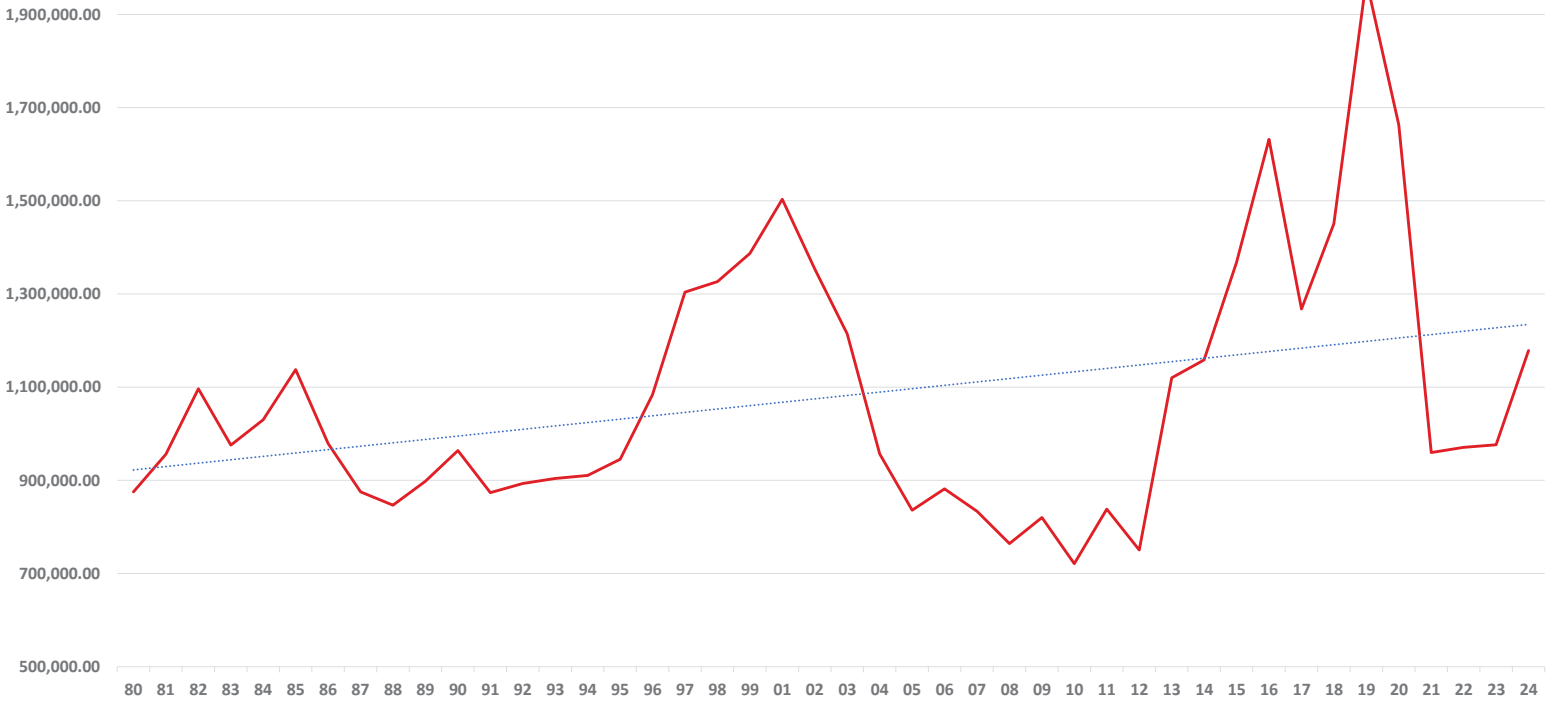
NEBRASKA
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VETERAN AFFAIRS

FY 2024 NVA Application Data

Applications Carried Forward from FY 2023.....	27
Applications Received in FY 2024.....	474
Total Applications.....	501
Applications Approved for Assistance.....	386
Applications Denied.....	73
Applications Canceled by Applicant.....	18
Reconsiderations Reversed (Approved).....	2
Reconsiderations Upheld (Denied).....	6
Pre-authorized Applications to Carry Forward to FY 2025.....	24

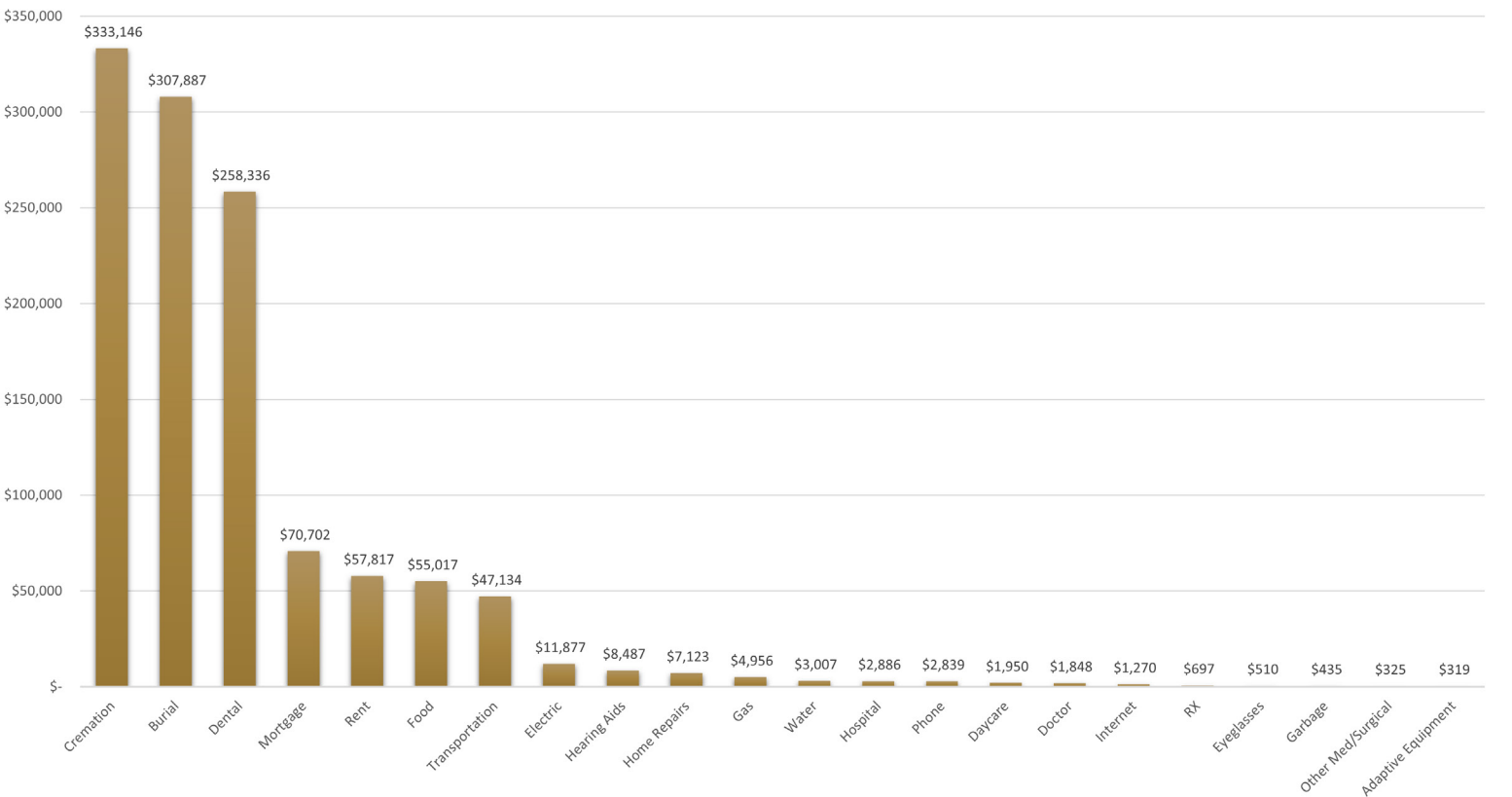
NVA Disbursements by Year

Below is NVA spending over the past several decades. Annual expenditures range from around \$750,000 to nearly \$2 million per fiscal year. The peak in FY 2019 was partly due to additional funding being available to veterans impacted by Nebraska’s historic flooding.



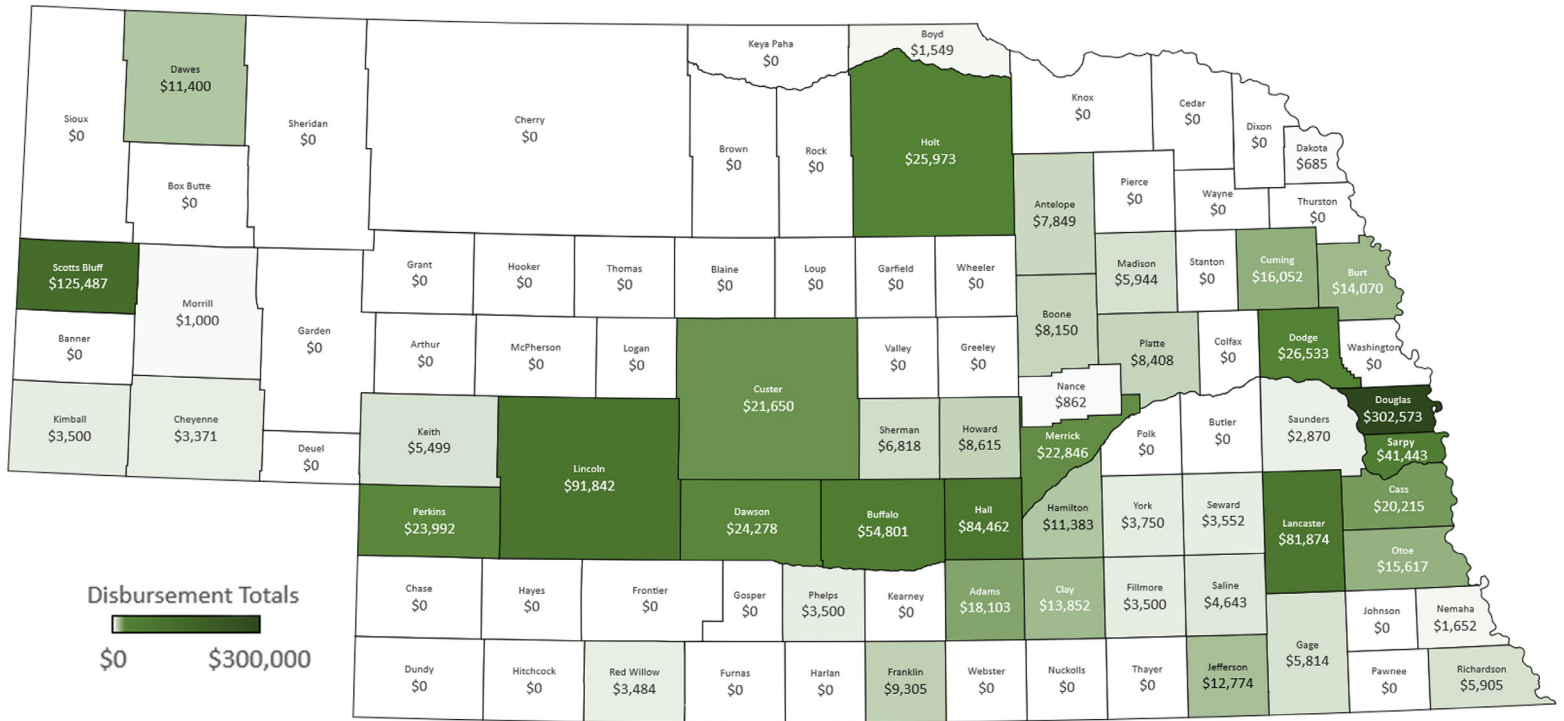
FY 2024 NVA Disbursements by Category

NVA funds can be used for a variety of expenses from rent and utilities to medical bills to burial expenses. Below, you can see what types of expenses NVA funds were used to cover throughout FY 2024.



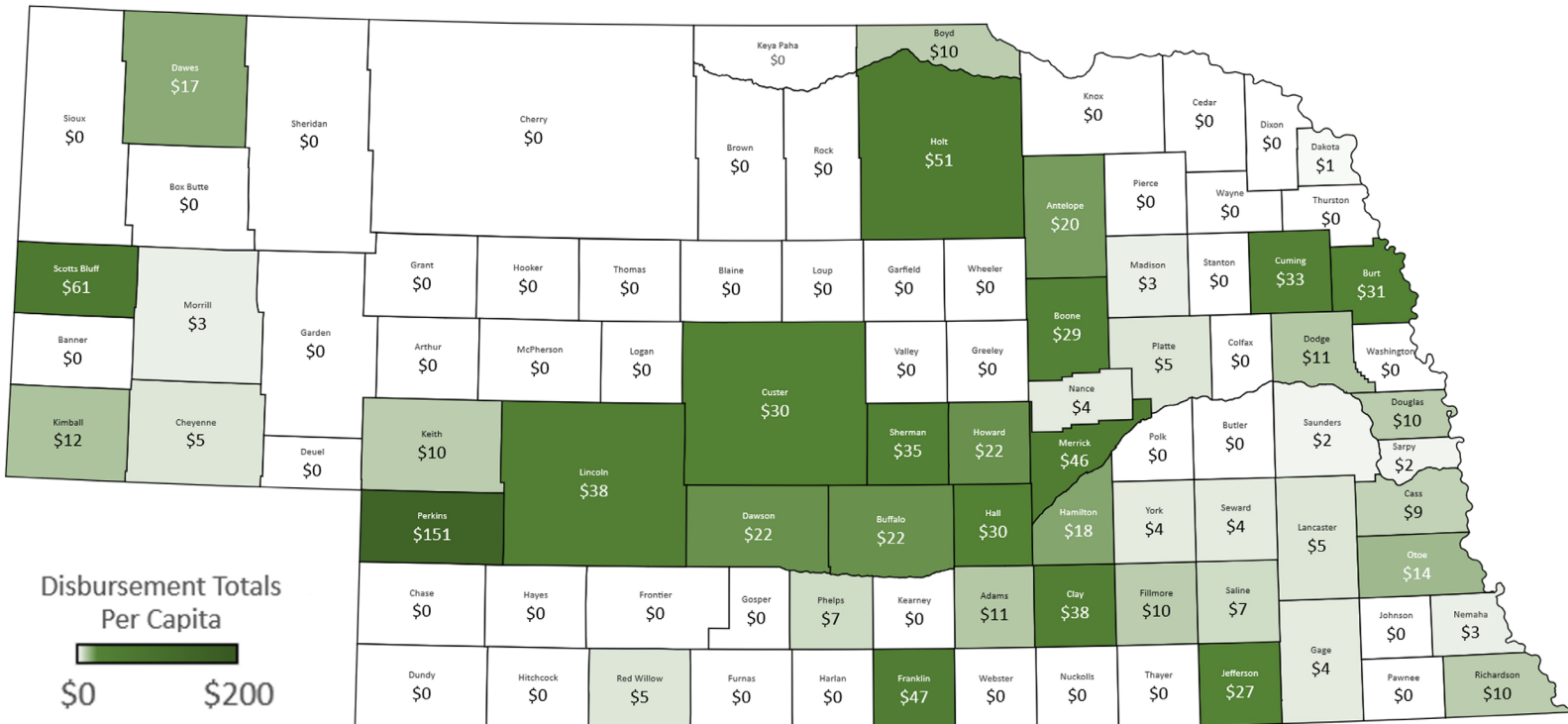
FY 2024 NVA Disbursements by County

This chart shows the amount of NVA funds received by veterans in each county for FY 2024. Applications for these funds must be completed by the CVSO or a veteran service organization post officer in the county nearest the applicant's place of residence.



FY 2024 NVA Disbursements Per Capita

This chart has been adjusted to show NVA funds distributed to each county based on the veteran population of the county to more accurately reflect the impact of the funds per capita.



WAIVER OF TUITION

The Waiver of Tuition is a state program available to dependents of an eligible veteran that may be used to waive 100% of a student’s tuition charges and tuition-related fees to University of Nebraska campuses, Nebraska state colleges, and Nebraska community colleges.

Eligible dependents include spouses, surviving spouses, biological or adopted children, and step-children. The veteran who the student will be applying for Waiver of Tuition under must be determined by VA to be rated permanently and totally disabled as a result of military service, or have died of a service connected disability, or have died subsequent to discharge as a result of injury or illness sustained while a member of the armed forces, or have been classified as missing in action or a prisoner of war during armed hostilities while a member of the armed forces.

Information on the program is available at veterans.nebraska.gov/waiver.



FY 2024 Waiver Application Data	
Applications Received.....	606
Carried Forward from Last Year.....	34
Total Applications.....	640
Total Processed.....	602
Approved.....	558
Denied.....	14
Canceled by Applicant.....	30
Carried Forward to Next Year.....	38

RESERVIST TUITION CREDIT

Nebraska residents who are members of a Nebraska-based unit of the Active Selected Reserve may be eligible for a 75% tuition credit (or 50% if pursuing a graduate or professional degree). Tuition credit may be granted to 200 applicants each calendar year who are attending University of Nebraska campuses, Nebraska state colleges, or Nebraska community colleges.

The University of Nebraska, the Nebraska State College System, and the Nebraska Community College System participate in a tuition credit program that will provide a credit for 75% of the tuition charges (or 50% if pursuing a graduate or professional degree) for members of Nebraska-based units of the Active Reserve of the armed forces of the United States.

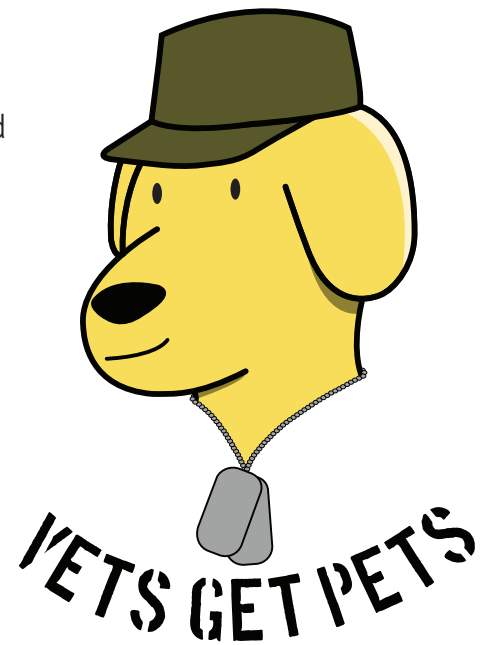
More information on the Reservist Tuition Credit program is available at veterans.nebraska.gov/reservist-tuition.



FY 2024 Tuition Credit Application Data	
Applications Received.....	25
Approved.....	22
Recertifications Approved.....	3
Denied.....	0

VETS GET PETS

Nebraska veterans can have up to \$350 in rescue pet adoption fees covered through Vets Get Pets when they adopt from an organization licensed by the Nebraska Department of Agriculture. In FY 2024, NDVA facilitated 43 adoptions and ended the fiscal year with \$14,702.50 in program funds for future adoptions. A statewide media campaign is running to let veterans know about the program and use those funds!



FY 2024 Vets Get Pets Applications

Received (includes 2 carried forward from FY 23)	72
Approved	64
Canceled	7
Denied	1
Pending/Carried Forward	0

WELCOME HOME PROGRAM

Our Welcome Home program includes two components: a Welcome Home packet sent to each Nebraska service member when they discharge from service and a Welcome Home Dinner hosted by the governor for these new veterans and their families.

Our Welcome Home packet contains a wealth of information on federal benefits and services, state benefits like Nebraska Veterans Aid and Vets Get Pets, resources for employment opportunities and career advancement, and much more. These go out monthly as we receive discharge information for Nebraska service members. **During FY 2024, we sent out 1,737 Welcome Home packets.**

For the Governor's Welcome Home Dinner, we invite each service member who has discharged over the past 12 months, as well as their family members, for an evening event with games, recognition, and plenty of food. We invite exhibitors from a host of veterans service organizations, state agencies, job recruiters, and other groups to share information and resources with our state's newest veterans. Finally, at the end of the event, the governor presents each veteran with a special Welcome Home challenge coin.



More than 130 people attended the annual Governor's Welcome Home Dinner in 2023, the first to be hosted by Governor Pillen. This event has been taking place since 2016 to welcome Nebraska's newest veterans and their families back to the state when they leave the service.

Dental Clinic Provides Over \$400k in Care, Wins VA Award

In February 2024, VA Secretary Denis McDonough presented NDVA with an Abraham Lincoln Pillars of Excellence Award in recognition of the Veterans Mission of Mercy Dental Clinic held in October 2023.

“It’s an honor to receive a Pillars of Excellence award two years in a row, and it speaks to the efforts NDVA is making to serve veterans and their families through innovative initiatives,” said NDVA Director John Hilgert. “The dental clinic is a great example of how we do things in Nebraska because it was a close collaboration between several organizations, all of which recognized an unmet need in our state and offered their specific resources and expertise to help meet that need.”

Hundreds of volunteers from dozens of organizations helped conduct the clinic which provided 309 individuals, including 225 veterans and 84 spouses and surviving spouses of veterans, with free dental care. Services included exams, cleanings, fillings, root canals, extractions, and more. Sixty individuals received dentures over the course of the clinic, thanks to technology that allowed for intraoral scanning and 3D printing of dentures that could be picked up the same day or the next.



The value of care provided at the clinic, based on equivalent Medicaid/Medicare reimbursements, totaled \$406,512. In total, 2,323 dental services were provided, with most participants receiving multiple services. One participant remarked the estimate he’d received for all the work he needed exceeded \$30,000, and thanks to the clinic, most of that work had been done at no cost.

“Veterans are one of the largest underserved dental populations in Nebraska,” said State Dental Health Director Dr. Charles F. Craft. “By pooling our professional resources together, with the assets of the NDVA and the NE National Guard, we were able to conduct a humanitarian mission that helped address the oral healthcare needs of many veterans. The success of this first-time event demonstrated the pride Nebraska has for its military members. It was an honor to serve those who served our country.”

The clinic was a partnership between NDVA, DHHS Office of Oral Health and Dentistry, Nebraska Dental Foundation (NDF), University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) College of Dentistry, Creighton University School of Dentistry, and the Nebraska National Guard (NENG).



“The Veterans Mission of Mercy dental clinic was a wonderful collaboration of organized dentistry, Nebraska Office of Oral Health, NDVA, and the Nebraska National Guard to provide much-needed oral health care to Nebraska veterans and their spouses,” said NDF President David O’Doherty.

program to rent or purchase most of the equipment and supplies. Local organizations provided specialty equipment, such as the intraoral scanners and 3D printers from Dental Design Lab in Lincoln and Fuhrman Dental Lab in Norfolk, X-ray equipment from Dexis Imaging and Ponca Health Services, and wi-fi through the Farm Bureau.



The clinic was staffed primarily by volunteers, including 274 dentists, dental students, dental hygienists, and dental hygiene students as well as numerous non-dental volunteers who helped with setup, check-in, and other non-clinical tasks. Most volunteers came from the UNMC College of Dentistry and Creighton University School of Dentistry, with others coming from private offices, dental companies, the Nebraska Dental Hygiene Association, Southeast Community College Dental Assistant program, and UNL Pre-Dental Club. NDVA public servants, county veteran service officers, VA employees, and others were also on-hand to provide non-clinical, veteran support.



The Nebraska National Guard allowed for the use of the Titan Readiness Center in Yutan, Neb., with its large gym serving as the main work area and smaller rooms providing space for intake and triage, X-rays, 3D scanning and printing for dentures, patient recovery, and a veterans claims filing area with accredited veteran service officers. Vet Center staff members were on hand to offer additional resources to attendees, and the “Remembering Our Fallen” memorial, a traveling exhibit that honors the Nebraskans who have been killed during the Global War on Terrorism since 9/11, was on display.



“This was a remarkable coalition of skilled and dedicated people coming together to help Nebraska veterans, and the Nebraska National Guard was proud to partner with Nebraska Department of Veterans’ Affairs in such an impactful effort,” said Maj. Scott Ingalsbe, Nebraska National Guard state public affairs officer. “On a rare weekend where the Titan Readiness Center was not being used for National Guard units’ training, we were glad to make it available to an all-volunteer army of dental care providers taking care of veterans in need.”

Participants traveled to the clinic from nearly 50 counties across the state, with over 15% of patients traveling over 100 miles to attend and 9% traveling over 250 miles. Individuals who were identified as needing additional dental services were provided with information for assistance through Nebraska Veterans Aid, their local County Veterans Service Officer, or alternative/low-cost dental services.

Based on the success of the event, NDVA and other partners will be hosting another Veterans Mission of Mercy Dental Clinic in November 2024, with plans to have more appointment slots and a goal of doing nearly double the number of dentures. NDVA has heard from several other states that have hosted or plan to host similar clinics after hearing NDVA’s Pillars of Excellence presentation.

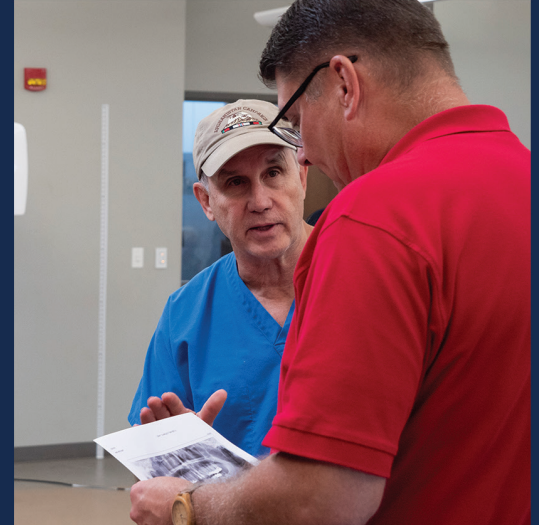
The Abraham Lincoln Pillars of Excellence Award is a recognition program developed by the VA Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA). The award allows VA and NASDVA to evaluate state and territory programs to establish best practices and provide models for programs that will benefit veterans and their families across the nation. Award categories include customer experience with VA benefits and services, eliminating veteran homelessness, suicide awareness and prevention, delivery of services to tribal governments serving Native American Veterans, innovative state programs, and eliminating the claims and appeals backlog. Nebraska was among seven states and territories to be recognized with a Pillars of Excellence award this year at the NASDVA Midwinter Training Conference in Washington, D.C.



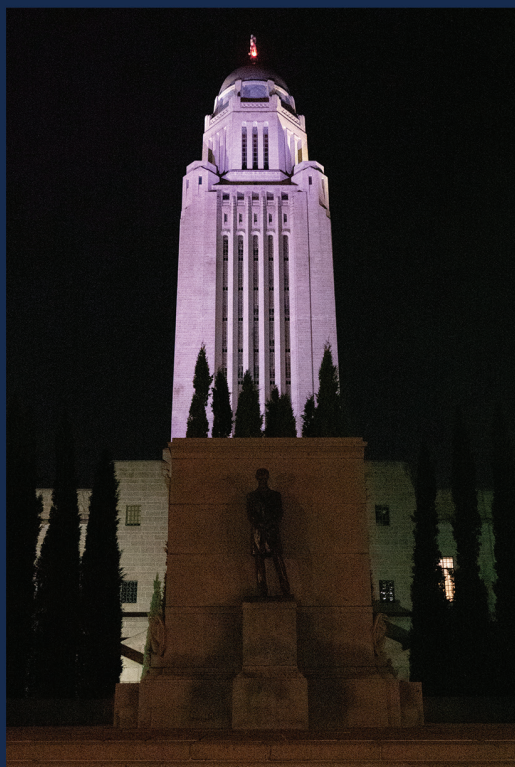
Special Events & Outreach



Nearly 200 people attended our Vietnam War Veterans Day ceremony in March 2024. In addition, the state of Nebraska was recognized as a top performer by the Department of Defense's United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration for the number of events we've held and veterans we've honored.



State Dental Health Officer Dr. Charles Craft shows Director Hilgert an x-ray at the Veterans Mission of Mercy Dental Clinic in October 2023.



The Nebraska State Capitol was lit purple in honor of Purple Heart Day on August 7, 2023. This has become an annual tradition alongside a proclamation signing ceremony.



Our second Nebraska Women Veterans Symposium brought even more women veterans together to network, learn about benefits, and share how we can better serve them.



Governor Pillen held a special Veterans Day Husker Tailgate in 2023, and NDVA joined to help recognize our service members, veterans, and their families.



Members of the Korean War Veterans Association of America and their families joined Governor Pillen, NDVA, and leadership from the Nebraska National Guard for a proclamation signing and challenge coin presentation ceremony on Korean War Veterans Armistice Day.



We went to the NETWAR 43 video gaming tournament to do outreach with younger veterans as part of the Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families.



The annual Veterans Legislative Day had a great turnout of veterans from across the state to discuss legislative priorities and hear about upcoming veteran-related legislation.



Governor Pillen met with current and past commanders of Nebraska's veterans service organizations at the annual Veterans Roundtable to brief them about initiatives and hear feedback on what the state can do to better serve veterans.



On Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, members of the Sons and Daughters of Pearl Harbor Survivors joined Governor Pillen and NDVA for a proclamation signing.

NEBRASKA

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VETERANS' AFFAIRS

