

2024 ECONOMIC IMPACT OF NEBRASKA MILITARY ASSETS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The “Economic Impact of Nebraska Military Assets: Update for Fiscal Year 2023” report was commissioned by the Nebraska Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs and conducted by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Bureau of Business Research (BBR). It provides detailed information about the status of military assets located in Nebraska, including spending on payroll and operations, as well as spending on military retirement benefits and veterans’ affairs.

The FY 2023 report updates similar studies conducted annually since 2017. It demonstrates that military, veteran, and retirement spending have a considerable impact on the state economy. The full report can be found on the Commission’s website at veterans.nebraska.gov/cmva.

The information provided in this abridged executive summary can prepare the State of Nebraska to maximize the economic value of its military assets.

It offers key strategic insights to (1) preserve and protect military installations across the state, (2) attract new missions to the state’s military installations, and (3) retain Nebraska veterans and attract retired DoD personnel into the state.

Military/Veterans’ Affairs Impact in NE: FY2023



Defense Spending:
\$2.5 billion (1.4% of state GDP)



Economic Output:
\$5.85 billion



Employee Compensation:
\$2.8 billion



Employment:
44,483

Table 1 below displays the economic impact of military and veterans’ affairs spending in Nebraska during FY 2023.

Table 1. Economic Impact of Military & Veterans’ Affairs Spending in Nebraska, FY 2023

Source of Impact	Output (Millions \$)	Employee Comensation (Millions \$)	Employment (Jobs)
Military Bases	\$2,574.1	\$1,502.9	23,661
Military Retirement System Payments	\$498.4	\$152.4	2,815
Veterans Affairs Spending	\$2,604.6	\$1,028.6	16,428
Army Corps of Engineers	\$144.2	\$103.4	1,242
GI Bill Benefits	\$32.6	\$14.5	337
Total	\$5,853.9	\$2,801.8	44,483

2025 Commission Recommendations

1 Support local subdivisions in their efforts to improve military installations.

The commission strongly suggests continued state and federal funding for infrastructure initiatives through:

- (1) The State's Critical Infrastructure Facilities Cash Fund
- (2) The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)
- (3) The DoD's Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation (OLDCC) [grant programs](#)

The 2025 NDAA Authorized \$170+ million for Projects in Nebraska

\$158m - Survivable Airborne Operations Center at Offutt

\$6m - Training & professional development facility at Offutt

\$3m - NC3 Rapid Engineering Architecture Collaboration Hub in Bellevue

\$5m - R&D funding for 557th Weather Wing at Offutt

2 Recommend land use planning legislation to ensure governmental entities and developers coordinate when building near military bases, including a requirement that local subdivisions conduct a feasibility study to address encroachment issues.

- Urban development near military bases can lead to encroachment problems, such as noise pollution, safety concerns, and operational restrictions. These issues can compromise military readiness and affect the well-being of the surrounding community.
- It is essential to limit foreign investments in land near military facilities to safeguard national security.

3 Recommend colleges and universities offer courses aligned with military missions.

Offering courses that align with military needs could increase the value of military installations and missions that depend on personnel with specific educational training. The University of Nebraska System is actively expanding the following programs that support the DoD and U.S. national security interests:

- [National Deterrence Lab](#) (NDL): Based at the University of Nebraska Omaha (UNO), the NDL develops and evaluates integrated deterrence options that support U.S. policy and combatant command operations.
- [National Strategic Research Institute](#) (NSRI): NSRI conducts research valued at approximately \$293 million across 188 awards to ensure U.S. safety and preparedness against national security threats.
- [National Counterterrorism Innovation, Technology, and Education Center](#) (NCITE): This academic center of excellence at UNO is affiliated with the Department of Homeland Security. It conducts \$50 million in federally funded research to prevent terrorism.
- [Project NExT](#): The University of Nebraska Medicine (UNMC) Project NExT aims to improve the readiness of the nation's civilian and military health systems in response to pandemics and other disasters.
- [Global Center for Health Security](#) (GCHS): The GCHS at UNMC has secured \$122.6 million in extramural funding over the past five years. It includes the National Quarantine Unit and training centers such as C-STARS, a collaboration with the Air Force Research Laboratory.
- [Space, Cyber, and National Security Law Program](#): For nearly two decades, this program at the University of Nebraska College of Law has bridged the gap between law, technology, and global security.

4 Review and recommend legislation or regulatory reform to support military personnel and families, including employment and educational opportunities.

When determining base/mission locations, the DoD considers the community support available to military personnel and their families. The [Defense State Liaison Office](#) (DSLO) provides state policymakers with recommendations to enhance this support. As of 2025, DSLO priorities that are incomplete in Nebraska include:

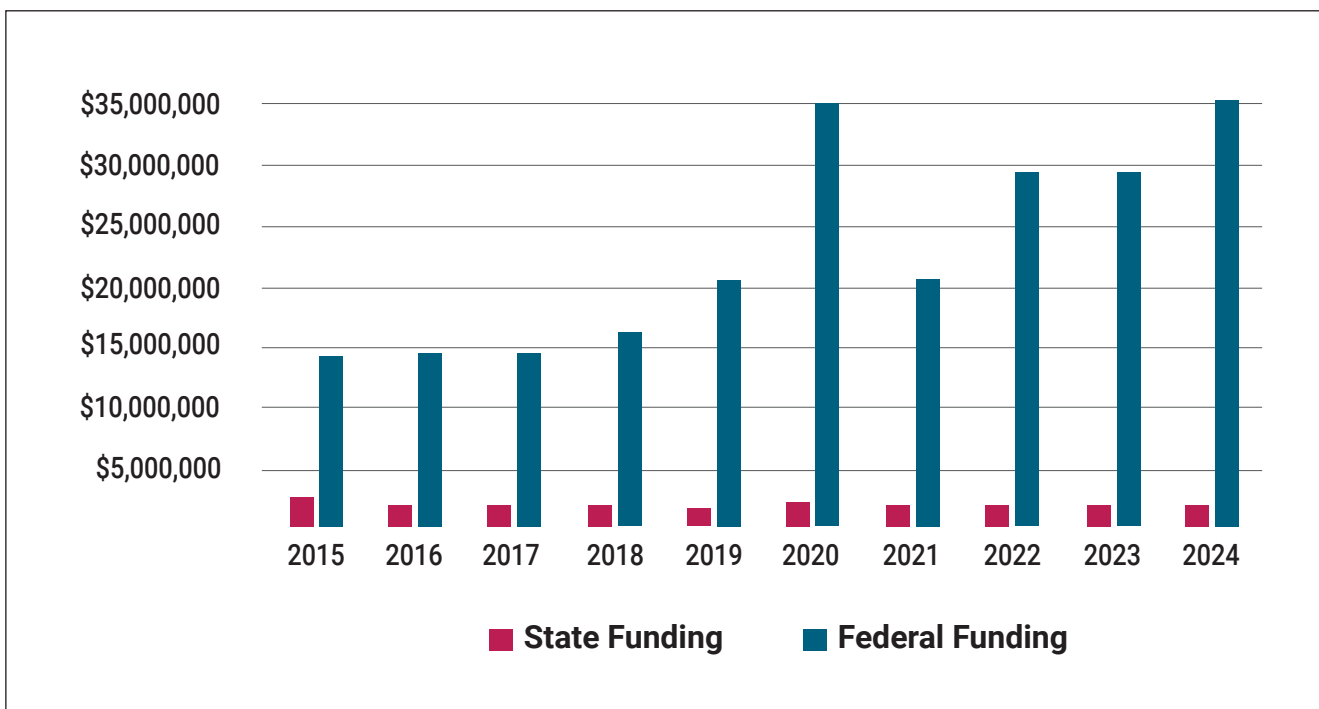
- Military Family Access to Quality Child Care
- State Support for Military Families with Special Education Needs
- Child Abuse Identification and Reporting
- Spouse Employment and Economic Opportunities
- Family Anti-Discrimination Status
- Response to Military Interpersonal Violence

5 Recommend the state acknowledge the role of inflation in operations and maintenance funding.

While the DoD provides federal funds to support Nebraska National Guard (NENG) facilities, the state is responsible for providing matching funds based on cooperative agreements. In 2022, the NENG recommended that the State adjust funding for operations and maintenance, at minimum, to account for the annual inflation rate.

Graph 1 below depicts the trends of state and federal funding for the NENG over the past decade. The NENG's **state funding decreased more than 20%** from 2015 to 2024. Meanwhile, **prices increased 32%** from July 2015 to July 2024, as measured by the Consumer Price Index.

Graph 1: State and Federal Funding of the Nebraska National Guard: 2015 to 2024



Nebraska Defense Spending

#39 \$2.5 B Spent in State	#31 1.4% of State GDP	0.4% of Total U.S. Defense Spending	\$1,264 Per Resident	#40 \$1.4 B Contract Spending	#43 \$61.1 M Grant Spending	#34 \$1.0 B Personnel Spending	#36 16,514 Number of Personnel
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Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs: Summary of Selected Powers and Duties

The aim of the Commission is to help the State of Nebraska preserve and protect military installations across the state, attract new missions to the state's military installations, and serve Nebraska's military and veteran families. Its powers and duties include:

- Maintaining a cooperative relationship between state agencies and the military and veteran entities in Nebraska to ensure coordination of statewide strategies
- Promoting initiatives to improve the military value of the Nebraska National Guard, active and reserve military force structure and installations, and the quality of life for military personnel residing in Nebraska
- Recommending economic development projects to promote, foster, and support economic progress through a military presence in Nebraska;
- Assisting the private sector in developing derivative investments, employment, and educational opportunities associated with high-tech programs and activities at Nebraska's military installations
- Partnering with local communities to enhance employment opportunities for former members of the military and their families
- Identifying and supporting the provision of adequate housing, education, and career transition services for military members and their families, retired military personnel, and veterans

Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs: Leadership

Commissioners

Chair:

John Hilgert, Director, NE Dept of Veterans' Affairs

Vice-Chair:

Dave Bloomfield, 3rd Congressional District

Secretary:

Tami Thompson, 1st Congressional District

K.C. Belitz, Director, NE Dept of Economic Development
Major General Craig Strong, TAG, NE National Guard
Dan Donovan, 2nd Congressional District

Ex Officio Members

Commander, United States Strategic Command
Commander, 55th Wing
Commander, 557th Weather Wing
Veterans' Program Coordinator, Nebraska Department of Labor
State Committee Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve
Robert Ford, State Military Affairs Liaison

Nebraska Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs

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