

DEVOTED AND DILIGENT

SERVING MORE VETERANS ACROSS MINNESOTA



**Minnesota
opens three new
Veterans Homes**

COVER, PAGE 10

MDVA Annual Report FY 2024

Honoring diverse perspectives and needs, while working together to give Veterans access to expanded opportunities and quality services.



Above: In FY 2024, MDVA commemorated the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War. See page 6.

Cover: Staff at Minnesota Veterans Homes - Bemidji welcome first Resident, James “Jim” Larson, Korean- and Vietnam-era Air Force Veteran.

FISCAL YEAR 2024: JULY 1, 2023 – JUNE 30, 2024

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“Our devoted and diligent group of individuals worked together to achieve amazing things for Veterans in FY 2024.”

BRAD LINDSAY, COMMISSIONER

FELLOW MINNESOTANS:

Supporting Minnesota’s almost 300,000 Veterans and their families is both our mandate and our passion. We are honored to serve those who have served.

As our state’s Veteran population evolves, so does the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA), striving to provide care and resources to maximize quality of life. For the 2024 fiscal year (FY 2024) that ran from July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024, our team expanded to 1,859 employees strong. This devoted and diligent group of individuals worked together to achieve some amazing things for Veterans in FY 2024, including:

Unprecedented expansion to serve more Veterans

Minnesota became the first state to build and open three Veterans Homes simultaneously. The MDVA team worked for several years to successfully open new Minnesota Veterans Homes in Preston and Montevideo (January 2024), Bemidji (February 2024), plus a new State Veterans Cemetery in Redwood Falls (August 2023).

Relentless action toward preventing Veterans from experiencing homelessness

MDVA is tenacious in its efforts to ensure every Veteran has a place to call home. As the number of Veterans at risk or experiencing homelessness decreases, Minnesota is in line to be the fourth state in the country to end Veteran homelessness.

Rigorous focus on achieving equity in the diverse communities we serve

From ensuring the MDVA team reflects the communities it serves to sourcing from diverse suppliers across the state, we remain committed to making Minnesota inclusive. Among Minnesota State agencies, MDVA was fourth in spending with diverse suppliers, investing more than double our goal spending with these targeted vendors.

Responsible stewardship of funding to benefit Veterans

For the third 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.

We are grateful to Governor Tim Walz, Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan and our State Legislators for their ongoing investment that allows MDVA to keep the promises made to Minnesota’s heroes.

When we work together, we can achieve amazing things.



Bradley S. Lindsay
Commissioner



MDVA Commissioner Brad Lindsay expressed gratitude, honor and respect for Vietnam Veterans during remarks at the 50th anniversary Vietnam War commemoration.

Veterans in Minnesota

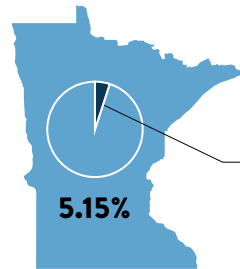
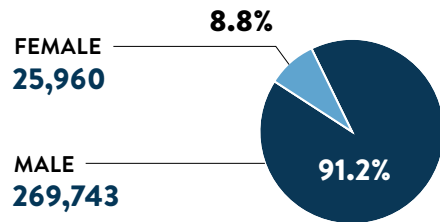
Every program, service and initiative from MDVA is dedicated to the service and sacrifice of our state's Veterans, dependents and survivors.



U.S. VETERANS
18,266,970



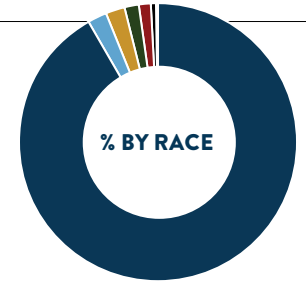
295,703
MINNESOTA VETERANS



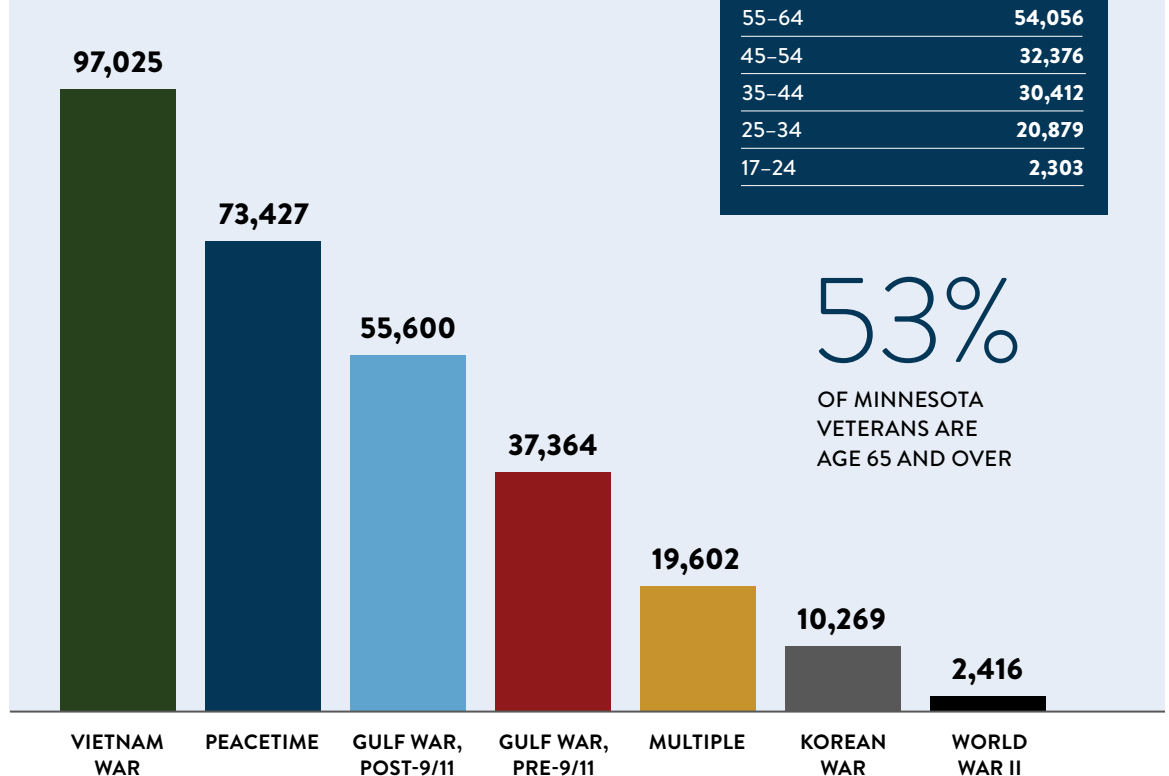
VETERANS MAKE UP
5.15% OF THE POPULATION
IN MINNESOTA

NUMBER OF VETERANS BY RACE

- White: **271,122 / 91.69%**
- African American: **7,036 / 2.38%**
- Hispanic / Latine: **6,380 / 2.16%**
- Other: **5,176 / 1.74%**
- Asian: **3,539 / 1.2%**
- American Indian: **2,343 / 0.79%**
- Pacific Islander: **109 / 0.04%**



NUMBER OF VETERANS BY SERVICE ERA



NUMBER OF VETERANS BY AGE

85+	25,399
75-84	70,114
65-74	60,164
55-64	54,056
45-54	32,376
35-44	30,412
25-34	20,879
17-24	2,303

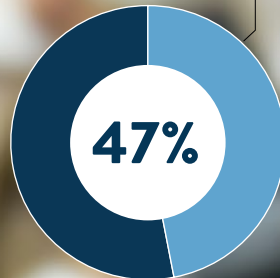
53%

OF MINNESOTA
VETERANS ARE
AGE 65 AND OVER

NUMBER OF VETERANS BY COUNTY

Aitkin	1,392	Martin	1,538
Anoka	19,509	McLeod	2,249
Becker	2,712	Meeker	1,457
Beltrami	2,849	Mille Lacs	2,083
Benton	2,296	Morrison	2,545
Big Stone	357	Mower	2,337
Blue Earth	3,277	Murray	522
Brown	1,477	Nicollet	1,680
Carlton	2,665	Nobles	870
Carver	3,825	Norman	413
Cass	2,683	Olmsted	8,088
Chippewa	776	Otter Tail	3,952
Chisago	3,539	Pennington	832
Clay	3,548	Pine	2,188
Clearwater	669	Pipestone	504
Cook	396	Polk	1,773
Cottonwood	613	Pope	853
Crow Wing	5,480	Ramsey	23,124
Dakota	22,160	Red Lake	237
Dodge	1,101	Redwood	928
Douglas	2,478	Renville	883
Faribault	943	Rice	3,681
Fillmore	1,237	Rock	511
Freeborn	2,040	Roseau	909
Goodhue	3,092	Scott	5,767
Grant	379	Sherburne	5,695
Hennepin	50,099	Sibley	838
Houston	1,162	St. Louis	13,481
Hubbard	1,933	Stearns	9,610
Isanti	2,612	Steele	2,074
Itasca	3,603	Stevens	425
Jackson	623	Swift	534
Kanabec	1,305	Todd	1,723
Kandiyohi	2,392	Traverse	239
Kittson	260	Wabasha	1,416
Koochiching	1,002	Wadena	1,015
Lac Qui Parle	442	Waseca	1,101
Lake	902	Washington	13,208
Lake of the Woods	283	Watonwan	609
Le Sueur	1,657	Wilkin	356
Lincoln	368	Winona	2,713
Lyon	1,294	Wright	7,972
Mahnomen	263	Yellow Medicine	538
Marshall	539		

NEARLY 47% OF MINNESOTA VETERANS LIVE IN THE SEVEN-COUNTY METRO AREA





Marking the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War

To commemorate the anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War, MDVA hosted events, exhibits and a Veterans resource fair at Mall of America June 13-15.



WHEN VETERANS RETURNED FROM VIETNAM, many didn't get the warm welcome that modern Veterans do. This commemorative event was an opportunity to give Vietnam War-era Veterans the respect, honor, healing and gratitude that they deserve.

The purpose of MDVA's three-day celebration was to:

- Highlight all who served in the Armed Forces during the Vietnam War era
- Ensure Vietnam Veterans are aware of and make use of the services and benefits available to them

The generous donation of event space from Mall of America® meant inviting the public to this important remembrance and ensuring that Veterans could have a more accessible experience including convenient parking, easy access for those with restricted mobility and a comfortable, indoor environment.

"I don't care what your position was, what your duty was, if you served in Vietnam, you were affected. If you know a Vietnam Vet, shake his hand, give him a hug."

LARRY MAHONEY, VIETNAM VETERAN, ARMY CAPTAIN AND SPEAKER AT COMMEMORATION PROGRAM

The Commemoration program included speakers, music and storytelling as well as a complimentary brunch for 700 Vietnam Veterans and families.

2,000

ATTENDED A RESOURCE FAIR FOR VIETNAM VETERANS AND FAMILIES

20K

20,000 attendees viewed historical displays from the Minnesota Military and Veterans Museum and the American Veterans Traveling Tribute Vietnam Memorial Wall.



PAM BARROWS, VIETNAM VETERAN, ARMY CAPTAIN AND SPEAKER AT COMMEMORATION PROGRAM

"We were a team of corpsmen, nurses and doctors, all with the sole focus of caring for the wounded. I especially credit our corpsmen and enlisted personnel for making sure we could carry out our mission. Besides the frequent rocket attacks, we also had blackouts and close ground fire. For me, those were the scariest times. But at the end of the year of so many varied exposures and emotions, like most everyone else, I went home and tucked all that away. No one wanted to hear, nor could most relate."



The event recognized the contribution and deep sacrifices made by our allies, especially those from Southeast Asia.

Making Veterans Feel at Home

Minnesota Veterans Homes provide quality healthcare in an environment of trust, dignity and respect.

The Minnesota Veterans 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 addition, MDVA provides services through the Adult Day Healthcare program.

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

- Social services, caregiver support, mental health, spiritual and end-of-life care

- Medical, nursing, dental, ancillary and rehabilitation services in state-of-the-art facilities with advanced equipment and technology support
- Culinary, fitness, wellness and pharmacy for Resident wellbeing
- Recreational programs to provide a variety of Resident experiences such as music, pet therapy and outdoor activities with a special focus on gardening and fishing and boating programs
- Volunteer programs, community engagement, outings and events
- Family gathering spaces, chapels, outdoor walking paths and more



703 TOTAL RESIDENTS as of June 30, 2024

640	38	25
MALE VETERANS	FEMALE VETERANS	NON-VETERAN SPOUSES

Left: Vietnam War Army Veteran Joe Diaz, with Human Services Technician Libargachew Binega, says the Minneapolis Veterans Home where he resides is “like the Hilton of Home”. Right: Vietnam War Army Veteran Chris Bremicker enjoys writing, Table Talks, concerts, bingo and talking with friends.

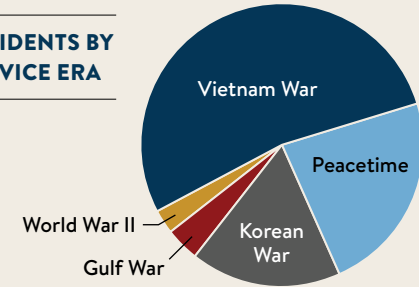
8 MINNESOTA VETERANS HOMES LOCATIONS



FACILITIES SNAPSHOT

Skilled nursing care bed capacity	
Bemidji	72
Fergus Falls	106
Luverne	64
Minneapolis	300
Montevideo	72
Preston	54
Silver Bay	54
Domiciliary care bed capacity	
Hastings	144
Minneapolis	50
Adult Day Center client capacity	
Minneapolis	35

RESIDENTS BY SERVICE ERA



EXCELLENCE IS ALWAYS OUR GOAL

For the sixth year in a row, Minnesota Veterans Homes in Fergus Falls, Luverne, Minneapolis and Silver Bay received **Pinnacle Quality Insight's Customer Experience Award** in the Skilled Nursing Facility category. Pinnacle Quality Insight conducts customer satisfaction surveys with Residents and their loved ones to collect information about their care experience. New Minnesota Veterans Homes will have data from Pinnacle beginning in fiscal year 2025.

Thane French, Korean War-era Army Veteran and Resident at Minnesota Veterans Homes - Montevideo enjoys sharing stories and cherished memories in a cozy space by the fire.



“We work together in order to help one another and achieve our mission to serve those who have served, their families and our communities.”

ERIC MEITUNEN, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER - VETERANS HEALTHCARE

Expanding Care to More Veterans

“I extend my gratitude to everyone who has worked around the clock to make Minnesota the first state in the nation to build and open three Veterans Homes simultaneously.”

TIM WALZ, MINNESOTA GOVERNOR



THREE NEW MINNESOTA VETERANS HOMES OPENED IN 2024 IN BEMIDJI, MONTEVIDEO AND PRESTON

Each of the new Homes experienced important milestones, including passing the federal Veterans Administration (VA) Recognition Survey that allows formal recognition and funding from the federal VA, plus admission of additional Residents beyond the initial opening number.

Dedication ceremonies at each of the new Homes included tours, refreshments, entertainment and remarks from:

- Federal, State and Local elected officials
- Business and civic leaders
- Veteran advocates and allies
- Volunteers and donors



Top: Residents and staff enjoy Minnesota Veterans Homes - Bemidji's courtyard. Above: New Home dedication ceremonies marked years of hard work to ensure the wellbeing of Veterans across Minnesota.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW RUGGE. COPYRIGHT PERKINS EASTMAN.

Minnesota Veterans Homes - Bemidji

SITUATED ON 15 ACRES, THE BEMIDJI CAMPUS SHOWCASES A CABIN FEEL APPROPRIATE FOR ITS NORTHWOODS LOCATION, PRIVATE ROOMS FOR RESIDENTS, PLUS AMENITIES INCLUDING A THEATER, CLUB ROOM, MEDITATION ROOM AND COMMUNITY SPACES.



PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW RUGGE. COPYRIGHT PERKINS EASTMAN.

EST. 2024

GROUNDBREAKING: AUGUST 26, 2021 | FIRST RESIDENT ADMITTED: FEBRUARY 13, 2024 | DEDICATION CEREMONY: JULY 1, 2024

OUTINGS AROUND

There are lots of activities and events Residents can choose to enjoy, from holiday parades to fishing excursions. During the summer months of 2024, several Residents of Minnesota Veterans Homes - Bemidji enjoyed weekly fishing trips on Lake Bemidji, in partnership with the Let's Go Fishing organization that makes it possible for Veterans to enjoy time on the water. Following afternoons on a pontoon with an area guide, Residents returned with big smiles and often a catch of the day that the dietary team prepared and served.

A WELCOMING COMMUNITY

Located in an area rich with Ojibwe heritage, the Bemidji Veterans Home is focusing on connecting with Veterans' area tribes. For example,



the Chair of the Red Lake Nation Tribal Council attended the Home's dedication event, and the Home admitted a new Resident from the White Earth Nation.

Additionally, the Home opens its doors to a Veterans writing group from the community for regular meetings. If a local group ties to the mission of serving Minnesota Veterans and their families, they are welcome to use the Home's community spaces.



PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW RUGGE. COPYRIGHT PERKINS EASTMAN.

"My favorite place is the therapy gym. I love to go down and exercise. We listen to music in the gym and visit with other Veterans. It is just a wonderful place to live."

JAMES "JIM" LARSON, FIRST RESIDENT AND KOREAN- AND VIETNAM-ERA AIR FORCE VETERAN



Residents enjoy participating in a variety of fun activities both on and off campus.

Minnesota Veterans Homes - Montevideo

THE MONTEVIDEO CAMPUS DESIGN REFLECTS ITS SURROUNDING PRAIRIE ENVIRONMENT, WITH PRIVATE ROOMS FOR RESIDENTS. COMMUNAL AMENITIES INCLUDE A THEATER, ART STUDIO, MEDITATION ROOM AND COMMUNITY SPACES.



PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW RUGGE. COPYRIGHT PERKINS EASTMAN.

EST. 2024

GROUNDBREAKING: AUGUST 23, 2021

FIRST RESIDENT ADMITTED: JANUARY 23, 2024

DEDICATION CEREMONY: MAY 31, 2024



Above: First Resident Bill Homan with his wife Barb.



The main entrance greets Residents and visitors with flags from all branches of military service.

“Living here has been a great experience. I’ve made some wonderful friends and built strong relationships with good buddies. The staff is top-notch, and their support has made a big difference.”

BILL HOMAN, FIRST RESIDENT AND WWII-ERA ARMY VETERAN

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW RUGGE. COPYRIGHT PERKINS EASTMAN.

ENJOYMENT ON AND OFF CAMPUS

At the Home, favorite activities for Residents include spending time in the outdoor courtyards and walking path or exercising in the gym. In addition to lake fishing opportunities with the Let’s Go Fishing organization, Residents enjoyed outings to the Chippewa County Fair and the Ray Fagen Memorial Airshow.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

A large community room funded by the Steven J. Williams estate hosts regular events for community members to join Residents including coffee on Tuesdays and card playing on Thursdays. Because the Home is located near the local schools, young people who are part of student service organizations engage with seniors and military members in a variety of fun activities.

The Residents enjoy visits with local law enforcement, fire departments, Veteran Service Organizations and several musical entertainers.



Minnesota Veterans Homes - Preston

THE PRESTON CAMPUS IS BUILT FROM SURROUNDING NATIVE LIMESTONE ON A BLUFFTOP, WITH PRIVATE ROOMS FOR RESIDENTS. COMMUNAL AMENITIES INCLUDE A LIBRARY, DENTAL CLINIC, MEDITATION ROOM/CHAPEL AND MORE.



EST. 2024 | **GROUNDBREAKING: AUGUST 9, 2021** | **FIRST RESIDENT ADMITTED: JANUARY 3, 2024** | **DEDICATION CEREMONY: JUNE 27, 2024**



PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW RUGGE. COPYRIGHT PERKINS EASTMAN.

DAILY ENGAGEMENT AND ENTERTAINMENT

Every day, Residents have choices for fun, whether it's games — bingo and cards are favorites — movies or walking the outdoor paths. A collaborative project between Residents and staff included building natural bird feeders made with pine cones, peanut butter and seeds to bring birds back to the area following the completion of the Home's construction. In addition, events are a regular part of the schedule from a traveling petting zoo to enjoying and participating in the local Trout Days Parade.

INTERGENERATIONAL APPRECIATION

One Preston Resident's daughter is an art teacher at nearby Fillmore Central. In anticipation of the Home opening in 2024, fourth-, fifth- and sixth-grade students — some children of the Home's employees — crafted ceramic tiles and an accompanying story to thank Veterans and military members for their service to our country. Today, nearly 100 of these student-crafted tiles are on display in the halls of the Preston campus.



REUSED WITH PERMISSION OF THE POST BULLETIN

"I moved here because I knew I would have something in common with everyone who lives here. I enjoy meeting new Veterans and playing 500 (Rummy) with my friends here."

WALTER "WALT" HANSON,
FIRST RESIDENT AND
KOREAN-ERA VETERAN



Shared spaces throughout the Home encourage relaxing, socializing, connecting and more.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW RUGGE. COPYRIGHT PERKINS EASTMAN.

Minnesota Veterans Homes - Minneapolis

THE MINNEAPOLIS CAMPUS OVERLOOKS THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER AND IS ADJACENT TO MINNEHAHA FALLS.

SERVICES OFFERED INCLUDE SKILLED NURSING CARE, THE DOMICILIARY PROGRAM (PAGE 19) AND THE ADULT DAY CENTER (PAGE 15).



(Left to right) Jacqueline Garbacz, RN Senior RAC-CT, Marquita Anderson, RN, and Dhuguma Tola, RN Supervisor, RN, BSN, PHN, deliver compassionate, skilled, high-quality care with a passion for serving those who have served.



MINNEAPOLIS HOME AT A GLANCE

Established: 1887

FY 2024 average census: 260

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Overall Quality Rating: **3 out of 5**

Awards and Recognition: Pinnacle Quality Insight's 2024 Customer Experience Award for Skilled Nursing Facility

CARE EVOLVES WITH RESIDENT NEEDS

Parkinson's Disease (PD) is a complex and progressive neurological condition that affects nearly all facets of life. As the number of Veterans with PD increases, so do the programs at the Minneapolis campus that are designed to both support unique needs as well as help address the associated risks of those with PD.

In FY 2024, the American Legion Department of Minnesota Pheasant Dinner Foundation donated a gait trainer and an active and passive cardio trainer to the rehabilitation therapy program. Both pieces of equipment benefit Residents with PD.

A variety of activities allow Residents to have fun and connect to their passions.



"MDVA is unique because it is dedicated to a mission that goes beyond typical healthcare; it is about honoring and serving Veterans who have sacrificed for our country. Working for MDVA means being part of a large, diverse team of people all coming together with a shared commitment to providing the best possible care to Veterans and their families."

MARQUITA ANDERSON, RN



COMPASSION IN ACTION

What began as the Supply Shelf in 1967 by the American Legion Auxiliary has evolved into the Distribution Shop, a vital service for Residents. Now operated by the American Legion Auxiliary Dept of MN, led by Sandy Gibson, and the VFW Auxiliary, Dept of MN, headed by Doris Anderson (pictured above), the shop is open every Wednesday morning. Residents can shop at no cost for personal care items, hand-sewn essentials like walker and wheelchair bags, puzzles, games, clothing and other necessities.

When the holidays roll around, Residents can pick out gifts for themselves and a loved one. Volunteers are onsite to provide gift-wrapping services, making the experience festive and convenient.

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.

As one of only three programs of its kind in the country, Minnesota Veterans can come for the day to participate in fun and engaging activities while their caregivers can rest and recharge.

FAVORITE FOODS UNITE VETERANS

A recent highlight at the Vets Club was a journey through culturally diverse cuisine. Named “Memories of Mom,” the program had Veterans share fond memories of their mothers and a favorite dish she used to make. Then, each week Veterans enjoyed different recipes from around the world. It was an opportunity to share cultural pride, understand one another and try new foods. The program culminated in a cookbook that features all the submitted recipes.

Additionally, participative meals like “Make Your Own Pizza,” barbeques and the baked potato bar are popular. The Vets Club team hosts monthly meetings to ask Veterans about the meals and activities they are most interested in enjoying.

When asked to rate Vets Club on a scale of one to five and likelihood to recommend it to others, “It’s a 20! I would tell them it’s the best thing since sliced bread and they should try and get their Vet there. It’s a really wonderful environment.”

M.E. FROELICH, SPOUSE OF VETS CLUB PARTICIPANT



Clockwise: Chef Nate Herzog, Vietnam War-era Navy Veteran Mark Peterson, Vietnam War-era Army Veterans Kevin Eastman and Fred Reynolds participate in breakfast and morning exercise.



The Adult Day Center team was recognized with LeadingAge Minnesota’s 2024 Excellence in Practice award for “Memories of Mom” initiative. This award celebrates programs and initiatives that help advance and transform the care of Minnesota’s older adults.

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.



COMPETITION BROUGHT WINTER CHEER

With a goal of focusing on Resident movement, teamwork and fun, the Silver Bay Veterans Home hosted an inaugural Winter Olympics-themed event in February. This month-long event that engaged Residents and team members alike included:

- A Memory Care household making a torch for the lighting ceremony
- Opening ceremonies on each household that included decorations and food
- Games that Residents of all abilities could enjoy
- A closing ceremony with awards and trophies



NEW RECREATION KITCHEN WINS IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE

The Valor Café is a space families and Residents can reserve to make a Resident's favorite recipe or gather for a celebration. When it's not reserved for families, Valor Café is a place where Residents can enjoy coffee breaks and staff can collaborate with Residents to cook. This year, the kitchen collaborations included canning pickled vegetables from the Home's garden that won a blue ribbon from the Lake County Fair.

The annual Lake Superior Charter Fishing Trip in June provides Residents with a memorable day on the water.



2024
EXCELLENCE
IN PRACTICE
LeadingAge
Minnesota

SILVER BAY VETERANS HOME AT A GLANCE

Established: 1991

FY 2024 average census: 54

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

Awards and Recognition: Pinnacle Quality Insight's 2024 Customer Experience Award for Skilled Nursing Facility; LeadingAge Minnesota's 2024 Excellence in Practice Award for Stars and Stripes Mentor Program



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.

CHEERS FOR 30 YEARS

Officially marking 30 years in January 2024, the Luverne Veterans Home held a celebration event in June. A crowd of nearly 200 current and former Luverne Veterans Home staff, volunteers, Residents and their loved ones, MDVA leaders, elected officials, Veterans Service Organizations and community friends gathered for tours, photo displays, a commemorative video and live music.

Long-term team members were recognized for their service, too. More than 30 staff members have been with the Home for at least 20 years and 13 have been with the Home since the first year of operation.

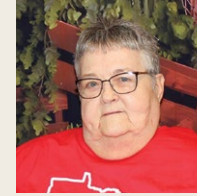
CONNECTING WITH KIDS

Each year, the Adopt-A-Grandparent program is a Resident favorite. During the 2023-2024 school year, fifth-grade students from the Luverne School District visited weekly to spend time with Residents.

CELEBRATING VIETNAM VETERANS DAY

In March, the Home focused on recognizing those who served during the Vietnam War and created a special day for Residents. All three meals that day were extra fancy and chosen by Residents. The celebration included special music and an evening of bingo and casino games.

Long-term team members were recognized for their service during the 30th anniversary celebration.



“Living here has been great! Everyone is like family. I like the different trips we get to go on, being in the recreation room, doing different crafts and doing activities to be helpful.”

CAROL RUTZEN, RESIDENT AND VETERAN SPOUSE



BEST NURSING HOME U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT

SANDY KELM, HUMAN RESOURCES BUSINESS PARTNER, MINNESOTA VETERANS HOMES – LUVERNE

“It’s been 30 years since I helped open this facility. It’s really been a privilege to witness firsthand the special care the Residents receive and deserve. I appreciate working with a great team of passionate professionals who support the mission of serving Minnesota Veterans.”

LUVERNE VETERANS HOME AT A GLANCE

Established: 1994

FY 2024 average census: 59

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

Awards and Recognition: U.S. News & World Report Best Nursing Homes for 2024 — the second year in a row; Pinnacle Quality Insight’s 2024 Customer Experience Award for Skilled Nursing Facility



Minnesota Veterans Homes - Fergus Falls

SET AMONG ROLLING HILLS AND CLEAR LAKES, THE FERGUS FALLS CAMPUS FEELS LIKE A SMALL TOWN WITH AN INN, SPECIALIZED SHOPS AND AN INTERIOR OPEN-AIR RECREATIONAL AREA.



A YEAR OF GROWING

Completed and dedicated in 2022, the Fergus Falls Home's Resident greenhouse enjoyed its first full planting year. Residents, with the help of volunteers and staff, grow a variety of fruits, vegetables and herbs. Flowers that beautify outdoor spaces start growing in the greenhouse before being transplanted to planters around the campus.

CHOIR SHOWCASES TALENT AND CREATIVITY

A Resident choir led by volunteers and members of the recreation team put on three plays this year, including *Mary Poppins*, *Oklahoma!* and *The Sound of Music*. Each performance included costumes, props and performances of hit songs. The choir traveled to other Minnesota Veterans Homes and local nursing homes to perform the plays.



FERGUS FALLS VETERANS HOME AT A GLANCE

Established: 1998
 FY 2024 average census: 80
 Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Overall Quality Rating: 5 out of 5
 Awards and Recognition: U.S. News & World Report Best Nursing Homes for 2024 — the second year in a row; Pinnacle Quality Insight's 2024 Customer Experience Award for Skilled Nursing Facility



FUN FOR THE FOURTH OF JULY

Each year, the Fergus Falls Veterans Home hosts a Stars and Stripes parade the weekend before the Independence Day holiday. In 2024, the parade featured more than 40 floats and vehicles including a Minnesota Army National Guard Joint Light Tactical Vehicle, classic cars, people with pets and much more. More than 125 people came out to enjoy the event that circled the exterior of the building and kicked off with a Warbird flyover.

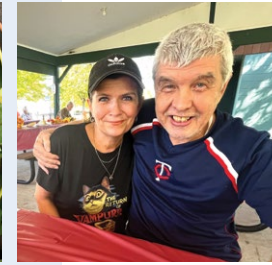


"It's a very clean home with good healthcare and food, full schedules, an outstanding Administrator and staff members, and wonderful friends. I'm thankful for everything, every day."

JOEL JOHNSON, RESIDENT AND KOREAN WAR-ERA ARMY VETERAN

Domiciliary Program in Hastings and Minneapolis

THE ONLY PROGRAM OF ITS KIND, THE MDVA DOMICILIARY PROGRAM (DOMS) PROVIDES VETERANS WITH ACCESS TO MEDICAL, MENTAL HEALTH, FINANCIAL AND SOCIAL WELLBEING SUPPORT SERVICES.



Serving as a bridge between living independently in the community and skilled nursing care, DOMS supports Veterans in transition by helping them to find stable housing, work toward vocational goals and better manage medical and mental health.

DOMS is one program operating at two locations: at the entire Hastings Veterans Home and at one building on the Minneapolis Veterans Home campus. At both locations, Veterans experience independent living and choose to follow a path that best meets their needs and goals for aging, returning to community living and focusing on mental health or sobriety.

FINDING SUCCESS WITH WORK

One way DOMS helps Resident Veterans work toward vocational goals is voluntary work therapy. The Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) program supports Veterans with mental health or physical disabilities by addressing job barriers they might face. Members of the DOMS care teams provide the necessary dietary, budgetary and administrative support for Veteran workers to have an efficient, effective and collaborative work environment.

Upper right: DOMS Residents at the Hastings Veterans Home enjoy growing farm-to-table produce and working in the Veterans Woodshop producing items including flag and memorabilia cases, plaques and more.



“The Compensated Work Therapy program got me back into mainstream interactions with people, relearning patience and people skills.”

GORDY BOTCHER,
DOMS RESIDENT AND
VIETNAM VETERAN

Gordy Botcher, Marine Corps Vietnam Veteran (left) and Marcus Johnson, Army Veteran, participate in the DOMS Compensated Work Therapy program.

DOMICILIARY PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

Established: 1978

FY 2024 average census—
Hastings: 110
Minneapolis: 40

The Veteran Community Based Services team, pictured left to right: Krysta Stanenas, Rachel Johnson and Kristi Stites. Together they work with Veteran organizations, partners and communities to end Veteran suicide.

Working to End Veteran Suicide

An expansion of MDVA's Healthcare division, the Veteran Community Based Services team includes suicide prevention and awareness initiatives, plus the Veteran Health Navigator program.

Connection to care when it is needed most

The Veteran Community Based Services team focuses on ending Veteran suicide in Minnesota. This work includes:

- Connecting Veterans in crisis to helpful organizations, partners and communities
- Providing training and education on topics like mental health first aid and suicide intervention skills
- Organizing and participating in outreach events like Minnesota Suicide Prevention and Awareness Day on the first Saturday in October each year
- Fostering partnership efforts with the Minnesota Department of Health State Suicide Prevention Taskforce to ensure State Suicide Prevention Plan goals are being met and achieve objectives through the Minnesota Veteran Suicide Prevention Collaborative (formerly known as “Governor’s Challenge”).

New in 2025, the Veteran Health Navigator program will connect service members, Veterans and their families to federal and state benefits, plus community-based healthcare systems and mental health services outside of the federal VA. The program has been developed with guidance from Regions Hospital and the Lee & Penny Anderson HeroCare for Veterans program.

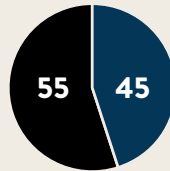
IN THE 2023 FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR, ONLY 40.6% OF VETERANS USED THEIR VA BENEFITS.

In 2020 and 2021, Veterans who received care directly through VA Healthcare benefits had lower suicide rates.

EACH YEAR ABOUT 100 VETERANS DIE BY SUICIDE IN MINNESOTA

101

MINNESOTA VETERANS DIED BY SUICIDE IN 2023



Deaths included 55 Veterans from outstate Minnesota and 45 from the metro area (1 residency unknown).

70 DIED BY FIREARM



22,800

MDVA and its collaborative partners distributed 22,800 gunlocks to those who requested them in FY 2024.

Collaborative partnerships make success possible

Veterans can experience crises related to mental or physical illness, substance abuse, painful loss, exposure to violence and more. To best support Veterans where they are, MDVA partners with a variety of state, federal and community organizations including, but not limited to:

- Minnesota Commanders’ Task Force
- Minnesota Department of Health Suicide Prevention Unit
- Minnesota County Veterans Service Officers: Suicide Prevention Task Force
- Minnesota Army National Guard: Resilience, Risk Reduction and Suicide Prevention (R3SP)
- VA: Community Engagement and Partnership Coordinators
- VISN-23 Community-Based Intervention, Mental Health-Suicide Prevention Program
- Veteran Community-Based Grassroot Organizations



Minnesota Suicide Prevention and Awareness Day in 2023 was on Saturday, October 7 at Paul Bunyan Park in Bemidji.



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 and details on requesting a free gun lock can be found at MinnesotaVeteran.org/EndVetSuicide.

Ending Homelessness Among Veterans

As of June 30, eight of 10 defined regions in Minnesota had achieved functional zero.

This means that a community has measurably solved Veteran homelessness and when it does occur, it is rare, brief and non-recurring. MDVA continues to work to bring all regions to functional zero.



Award-winning work to end homelessness

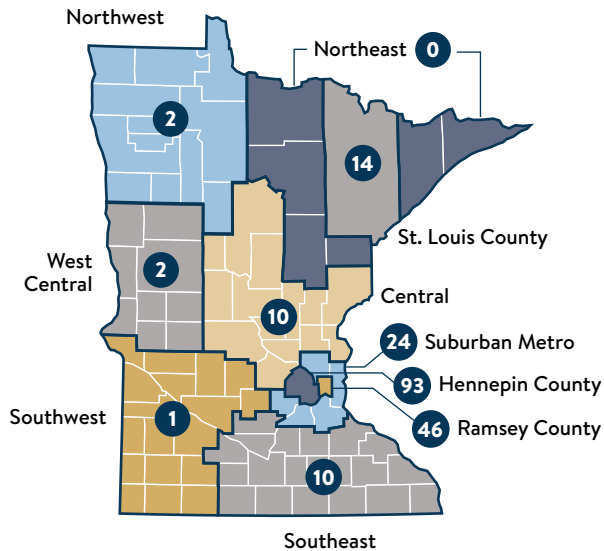
MDVA's SOAR program collaborates with key organizations and community groups to provide Minnesota's at-risk Veterans and those experiencing homelessness with expanded access to Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits. SOAR stands for SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery.

"The SOAR program has established itself to be one of the most important homelessness prevention strategies in Minnesota's drive to be the fourth state in the nation to effectively eliminate Veteran homelessness."

BRAD LINDSAY, COMMISSIONER

In March 2024, the MDVA Veterans Homelessness Prevention and Awareness team (pictured above) was again recognized with the prestigious Abraham Lincoln Pillars of Excellence Award from the federal VA.

VETERANS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS BY REGION as of June 30, 2024



\$303,241

Veterans received \$303,241 in SSI/SSDI back payments, a 2% increase over last year.

+25%

Newly awarded SSI/SSDI beneficiaries received \$41,065 in ongoing monthly federal benefits through SOAR, a 25% increase over last year.

Assistance to prevent or resolve a housing crisis

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 2024, assistance was provided for:

Permanent housing	\$ 6.35 million
Minnesota Veterans Entering Stable Tenancy (MNVEST)	\$ 2.3 million
Rent	\$ 377,887
Operation: Opening Veterans to Every Resource (OVER) Funds	\$ 100,000
Security deposit	\$ 79,891
Utility expenses	\$ 76,915
Mortgage	\$ 28,717
Structured Independent Living (SIL) houses	\$ 7,798
Transportation costs	\$ 7,175
Food costs	\$ 5,049



In collaboration with MACV, renovations were made to the 29-unit LaSalle Building in Minneapolis with a focus to accommodate the needs of Veterans aged 55 and older by offering residences that allow each person to age in place comfortably and safely.

PHOTOS ON THIS PAGE: KIM NORTH- MACV



Ongoing programs actively reducing the number of Veterans who experience homelessness

The Homes for Veterans Property Management Incentive Program

offers property managers the support, financial incentive and risk protection for providing a home to a Veteran. FY 2024 funding included:

Higher Barrier Incentive Fund	\$ 110,000
Incentive Fund	\$ 10,000
Vacancy Relief Fund	\$ 3,596
Diversion Fund	\$ 2,000

The Veteran Temporary Emergency Housing Assistance Program (VTEMP)

focuses on areas in Minnesota with little or no access to temporary, emergency housing for Veterans and their households experiencing homelessness. The program provides

community service providers with reimbursement for covering the cost of temporary hotel rooms or non-congregate temporary units for Veterans and members of their households who are actively experiencing homelessness. The success rate for VTEMP in FY 2024 was 65%.

The Minnesota Homeless Veteran Registry

connects Veterans who are experiencing homelessness with housing and services in their community. In FY 2024, 652 Minnesota Veterans were included in the Homeless Veteran Registry. Of these Veterans, 474 were housed and 94 experienced recurring homelessness.



MDVA participated in the Home for the Holidays Winter Salute at Target Field to raise awareness and connect Veterans to housing and other community resources.

IN FY 2024

652

Minnesota Veterans were registered with the Homeless Veteran Registry.

VETERANS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS BY RACE

- White **59%**
- African American **27%**
- American Indian **2%**
- Asian **2.5%**
- Native Hawaiian **0.5%**
- Unknown **2%**
- Two or more races **7%**

Supporting Veteran Goals for School and Work

The Veterans Education and Occupational Resources team focuses on helping Veterans navigate higher education benefits and find success through approved education and training programs.

Minnesota GI Bill

Separate from the Federal GI Bill®, the Minnesota GI Bill aids eligible Minnesota Veterans, currently serving military, National Guard and Reserve members, plus eligible spouses and children. It can reimburse out-of-pocket costs for professional exams, licenses and certifications and provide financial assistance while training for a career or trade through on-the-job training or an apprenticeship program.



Veteran and instructor Richard J. Kasulis (left) with Veteran and student Brian Lewis of the Lake Superior College aviation program.

MINNESOTA GI BILL PARTICIPANTS IN FY 2024	
Higher Education	
Veterans	1,411
Spouses	67
Dependents	280
Apprenticeship	
On-the-job training	75



Top: Veteran and student Wesley Holbeck is pursuing an associate degree in videography and film production. Above: Veteran dependent Maureen Dwyer (right) meets with David Ronoh, MDVA Northeast Regional Coordinator.



“Serving in the U.S. Armed Forces gave me the skills, strong work ethic and confidence which shaped who I am as a person, tradesman and instructor. The same exact qualities are recognized in Jake, Nathen and all the Veterans I have taught through the years.”

JERRY ERICKSON, VETERAN AND INSTRUCTOR

Veterans and students Jake Roen (left) and Nathen Kleive (right) with Veteran and instructor Jerry Erickson (center) in a Commercial/Residential wiring class at Lake Superior College.

Higher Education Veterans Program

Unique to Minnesota, 44 on-campus Veterans Resource Centers (VRCs) provide an environment where Veterans, military members and their families feel welcome, interact, connect and learn.

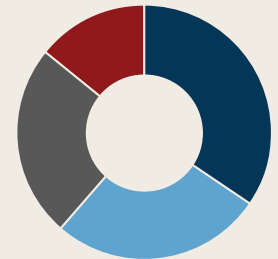
“The VRC has made my educational journey easier and more manageable, providing a quiet space to study, a place to connect with fellow Veterans, and invaluable assistance navigating education benefits and other resources to help me succeed.”
 –Wesley Holbeck, Minnesota Army National Guard

State Approving Agencies

With guidance from the National Association of State Approving Agencies (NASAA), the Minnesota State Approving Agency (SAA) ensures the quality and integrity of programs of education and training for the use of GI Bill benefits. The SAA initiates approval for GI Bill benefits for new facilities in Minnesota and conducts compliance surveys.

SAA CERTIFIED FACILITIES IN MINNESOTA

- Apprenticeships / On-the-job training **62**
- Private schools **48**
- Public schools **44**
- Non-college degree schools **25**



Making the Process of Applying for Earned Benefits as Easy as Possible

Medical Center Services Team:
Left to right (standing):
Anthony Darby, Stephen Perry,
James Ransdell and (seated):
Robert VonEnde, Brian Taylor.

Medical Center Services team collaborates for positive Veteran benefits

MDVA ensures Veterans Claims Representatives are onsite at Minnesota's two Veterans Affairs Medical Centers and visit the eight Minnesota Veterans Homes a few times a month. These Claims Representatives interact directly with Veterans and medical staff to assist Veterans with benefits, services and programming as their needs progress. Having strong partnerships with medical staff members allows rapid response with updated benefits to improve wellbeing for Veterans and their families.

Here's just one example of how an onsite Claims Representative can make a difference:

A Veteran at the VA Minneapolis Medical Center needed help with a disability claim for Parkinson's disease that had been denied multiple times. Claims Representative Anthony Darby met with the Veteran and quickly made the connection between exposure to toxic chemicals and specific military job classification. As a result, the Veteran's claim was awarded at the 100% service-connected rate and received back payment of nearly \$50,000.

Field Operations representatives work one-on-one with Veterans to understand their needs and connect them with the appropriate benefits. Claims team members review, submit and monitor claims for federal benefits.

\$4.1 BILLION

Supported by MDVA, Minnesota Veterans and their survivors received \$4.1 billion in overall compensation during the federal VA FY 2023.

21,706

MDVA worked on 21,706 claims actions in FY 2024 on behalf of Veterans and their families.

7,720

MDVA's County Veterans Service Officers (CVSO) Education team provided 7,720 hours of direct training to CVSOs and MDVA staff in FY 2024.



At left: Tribal Veterans Service Officers (TVSOs) Todd Dionne (left) and Galyn Minkel provide community outreach and advocacy to ensure Native American Veterans and their dependents receive the benefits they have earned.



MDVA CLAIMS AND FIELD OPERATIONS

Eric Meline (left), Deputy Director of Field Operations & Medical Center Services, with Judd Citrowske, Department of Corrections Senior Claims Representative. As the mobile unit of the MDVA Veteran Services Division, Field Operations includes outreach to a variety of populations and communities.

Women Veterans Program ensures equitable access

Since the 1948 Women's Armed Services Integration Act, women have served in regular and ongoing roles in the military. Today, women make up 11% of the Armed Forces and this number continues to grow. Yet members of this population aren't always recognized for their service. One example of disparity is Veteran healthcare and research for women. MDVA Women Veterans Claims Representative Jennifer Shumaker responds to the gender-specific care needs of women and does outreach to expand awareness of the benefits and services designed for women Veterans.



KERRY ALLISON,
SENIOR VETERANS
CLAIMS REPRESENTATIVE

“Ending discrimination and breaking the invisible barriers women face in achieving equality and inclusion ensures that women are receiving the same treatment, rights and benefits. The one thing I believe is that every woman wants to be seen and treated equally. We served and we’re continuing to serve.”

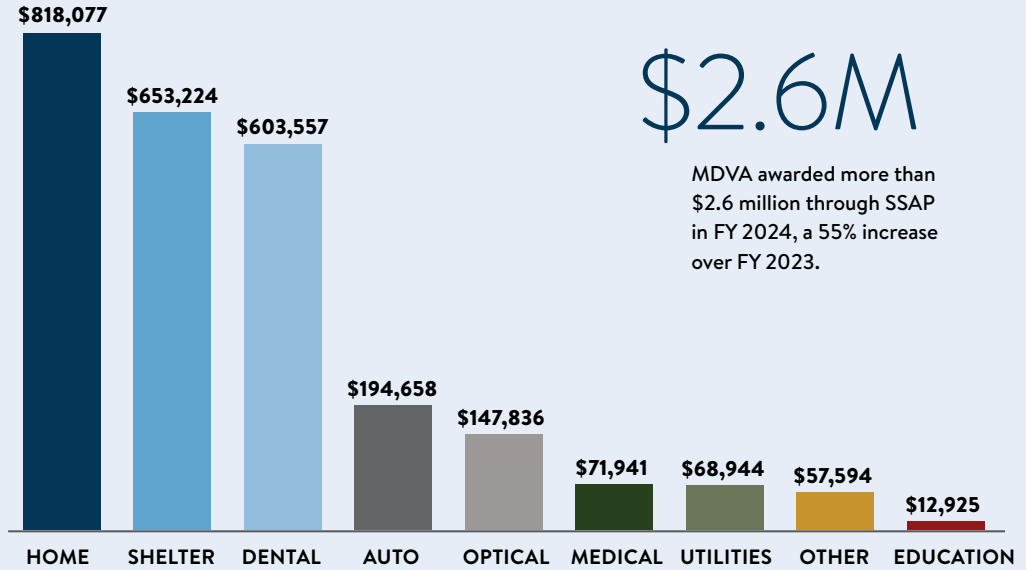
Connecting Veterans With the Benefits They Have Earned

In addition to federal benefits, eligible Minnesota Veterans can access many state benefits.

State benefits include dental, optical, Veterans Relief Grant, specialty programs, plus financial assistance for housing, utilities, health insurance premiums and personal needs.

State Soldiers Assistance Program

During their time of need, the Minnesota State Soldiers Assistance Program (SSAP) provides financial assistance to eligible Veterans and their dependents.



MDVA awarded more than \$2.6 million through SSAP in FY 2024, a 55% increase over FY 2023.

STATE SOLDIERS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM BY COUNTY

Aitkin	\$ 29,476	Crow Wing	\$ 64,139	Kittson	\$ —	Nobles	\$ —	Sibley	\$ 1,357
Anoka	\$ 57,353	Dakota	\$ 87,862	Koochiching	\$ 7,435	Norman	\$ 2,738	St. Louis	\$ 116,817
Becker	\$ 21,469	Dodge	\$ —	Lac Qui Parle	\$ 13,521	Olmsted	\$ 35,287	Stearns	\$ 280,317
Beltrami	\$ 5,811	Douglas	\$ 24,386	Lake	\$ 1,305	Otter Tail	\$ 65,255	Steele	\$ 17,571
Benton	\$ 26,476	Faribault	\$ 15,252	Lake of the Woods	\$ —	Pennington	\$ 2,426	Stevens	\$ 2,519
Big Stone	\$ 6,901	Fillmore	\$ —	Le Sueur	\$ 12,805	Pine	\$ 49,855	Swift	\$ 6,832
Blue Earth	\$ 4,472	Freeborn	\$ 26,870	Lincoln	\$ —	Pipestone	\$ 7,965	Todd	\$ 3,755
Brown	\$ 45,985	Goodhue	\$ 10,199	Lyon	\$ 9,020	Polk	\$ 46,313	Traverse	\$ 17,270
Carlton	\$ 30,295	Grant	\$ —	Mahnomen	\$ 8,330	Pope	\$ 18,257	Wabasha	\$ 14,170
Carver	\$ 14,610	Hennepin	\$ 157,172	Marshall	\$ —	Ramsey	\$ 138,848	Wadena	\$ 13,277
Cass	\$ 64,620	Houston	\$ 11,017	Martin	\$ 548	Red Lake	\$ —	Waseca	\$ 12,332
Chippewa	\$ 3,864	Hubbard	\$ 34,781	McLeod	\$ 12,698	Redwood	\$ 6,000	Washington	\$ 65,884
Chisago	\$ 24,861	Isanti	\$ 58,762	Meeker	\$ 26,722	Renville	\$ —	Watonwan	\$ 11,700
Clay	\$ 74,890	Itasca	\$ 156,404	Mille Lacs	\$ 19,839	Rice	\$ 8,781	Wilkin	\$ —
Clearwater	\$ 30,591	Jackson	\$ 4,041	Morrison	\$ 76,882	Rock	\$ —	Winona	\$ 13,030
Cook	\$ —	Kanabec	\$ 35,575	Mower	\$ 16,709	Roseau	\$ —	Wright	\$ 86,095
Cottonwood	\$ 5,522	Kandiyohi	\$ 15,439	Murray	\$ 367	Scott	\$ 18,758	Yellow Medicine	\$ 3,264
				Nicollet	\$ 4,722	Sherburne	\$ 49,878		

1,256

Veterans and dependents received SSAP benefits in FY 2024

Veterans	999
Spouses/Dependents	257
Total	1,256

Post-9/11 Veteran Service Bonus

9.11 This service bonus was payable to eligible Veterans who served between September 11, 2001 and August 30, 2021. During FY 2024, MDVA finished processing bonus payments that totaled \$6.33 million.

Since the program began applications in July 2022, MDVA has processed more than 30,000 applications and paid out \$27.3 million.

Wellbeing Counseling

MDVA partners with Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota for the Counseling and Case Management, Outreach, Referral and Education (CORE) program to support military members, Veterans and their families in maintaining their wellbeing.

In FY 2024, CORE provided 11,829 hours of free, confidential counseling services for eligible Veterans, military members and their families.

COUNSELING CLIENTS

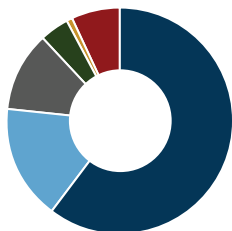
Veterans	573
Spouses	183
Dependents	60
Total	816

COUNSELING CLIENT AGES

0-19	6%
20-39	21%
40-49	18%
50-59	15%
60-69	15%
70-79	17%
80+	8%

TYPES OF COUNSELING PROVIDED

- Behavior **60%**
- Individual **17%**
- Financial **11%**
- Family **4%**
- Housing **1%**
- Other **7%**



Going out and about to raise awareness

To help share information about all the benefits available to Minnesota Veterans, the Benefits team collaborated closely with the Claims and Field Operations teams on 26 outreach events in FY 2024, including county fairs, the Minnesota State Fair, local sporting events and more.



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.

“I processed the application for dental benefits last year for a Veteran’s surviving spouse. When the spouse passed away, the family invited me to the funeral. The spouse had asked specifically for me to attend this beautiful life event, because of one small thing I did as a part of my day-to-day job. I was moved beyond anything I have felt in a long time to think that this small thing could have such a big impact on someone’s life.”

FRANK STEVER, VETERANS PROGRAMS SPECIALIST

MDVA Benefits Team members Ernie Steel (left) and Anthony Lebda attended the Grandma’s Marathon Expo in Duluth in June to connect with Veterans and families.

LinkVet

The Veterans Linkage Line (1-888-LinkVet) is a toll-free customer service line for all Minnesota Veterans and their families. LinkVet (linkvet.org) provides seven-day-a-week resource and referral services through phone, chat and email.

LINKVET INQUIRIES IN FY 2024

Inbound Calls	4,064
Outbound Calls	1,194
Emails	1,094
Online Chats	2,148
Total	8,500

TOPICS OF INQUIRY IN FY 2024

Assistance and Families	2,837
Health and Disability	1,347
Education	1,014
Post-9/11 Service Bonus	957
Veterans Homes	607
Homelessness Prevention	451
Memorial Affairs	427
SOAR	232
Employment	176
Crisis	129
Suicide Prevention	3
Other	276



Pictured: Preston State Veterans Cemetery on Memorial Day 2024.

Inset: Memorial Day Ceremony at Duluth State Veterans Cemetery.



Recognizing Veteran Service in Perpetuity

MDVA is committed to providing dignified and compassionate burial options for Veterans, often one of the only benefits they request.



The team at Duluth State Veterans Cemetery received the Operational Excellence Award from the National Cemetery Administration in August 2023.



Nationally known for excellence

The National Cemetery Administration, a division of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, sponsored a survey about Minnesota State Veterans Cemeteries.

99.45% of respondents were satisfied with their overall experience.

99.17% of respondents were satisfied with the appearance of the grounds.

99.17% of respondents recognized staff as professional.

98.62% of respondents recommended the Cemeteries.

98.62% of respondents cited staff as courteous.

98.34% of respondents were satisfied with the quality of service.

Laurie Sabin, spouse of Air Force Veteran Jack Sabin, visiting Preston State Veterans Cemetery on Memorial Day.

Laurie shared that her husband Jack, a Gulf War-era Air Force Veteran, was “Just the perfect husband. He was all about family and loved spending time with his children and grandchildren.” Laurie and Jack were on a bus tour and drove by the Cemetery, which prompted them to later visit. “We knew right away that it was the right place for us. It is so peaceful and beautiful. And I’m glad to know he’s with his fellow Veterans — he loved active duty.”



Four State Veterans Cemeteries

Operated by the State of Minnesota through MDVA

- Little Falls - Est. 1994
- Preston - Est. 2015
- Duluth - Est. 2018
- Redwood Falls - Est. 2023

LAID TO REST IN FY 2024

	Little Falls	Preston	Duluth	Redwood Falls
Veterans	339	149	163	36
Dependents	209	43	44	8
TOTAL	548	192	207	44

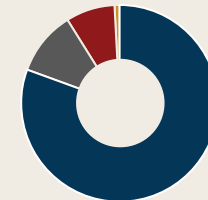
SERVICES PERFORMED IN FY 2024

	Little Falls	Preston	Duluth	Redwood Falls
Casket Burials	118	30	25	9
Columbarium	169	59	68	15
In-Ground Cremation	261	103	114	20

VETERANS AND DEPENDENTS LAID TO REST

Since establishment

- Little Falls **10,374**
- Preston **1,333**
- Duluth **1,027**
- Redwood Falls **44**



MORE INFORMATION:
Visit MinnesotaVeteran.org/Cemeteries

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.

2023



08.29

Military Appreciation Day at the Minnesota State Fair honored Vietnam War-era Veterans with a program, Blackhawk helicopter flyover, parade and concert.



10.07

Minnesota Veteran Suicide Prevention and Awareness Day in Bemidji gathered the community to share stories and show support.



10.19

Minnesota Military Radio visited Camp Ripley with the Minnesota Broadcasters Association and Minnesota Labor Leaders.



11.11

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



11.12

Veteran outreach at a Minnesota Vikings football game to connect with Veterans and families to encourage them to seek out their benefits.



12.16

Holiday wreaths placed on all headstones at the State Veterans Cemeteries to offer Veterans' loved ones a sense of comfort.

2024



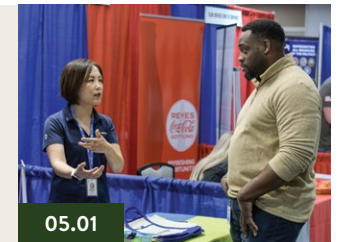
03.01

A visiting delegation from Kosovo learned about the many ways in which Minnesota cares for Veterans.



04.17

Veterans Day on the Hill, where Veterans, families and advocates gathered to rally legislation in support of Minnesota Veterans.



05.01

Veterans Career Fair connected employers and job seekers.



05.12

Minnesota Veterans Homes Week honored staff who care for Residents and their families.



05.26

Memorial Day programs honored and remembered service members who made the ultimate sacrifice.



06.12

Women Veterans Day honored the women who have served in the U.S. military since the Revolutionary War.



06.30

Twin Cities Pride Festival MDVA had a booth at the Twin Cities Pride Festival and participated in the Twin Cities Pride Parade.



Minnesota Military Radio

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

With a team of producers from the Minnesota National Guard, MDVA, Beyond the Yellow Ribbon and the Minneapolis VA Health Care System, Minnesota Military Radio informs and entertains listeners in this weekly syndicated radio show and podcast.



Founder, host and Vietnam Veteran Tom Lyons stepped back to Executive Producer and backup host in FY 2024,

transferring primary hosting duties to retired Army Command Sgt. Maj. Doug Wortham.

LISTEN ONLINE:
Visit MinnesotaMilitaryRadioHour.com.



Environmental Sustainability

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

Programs and initiatives at Minnesota Veterans Homes

The three new Minnesota Veterans Homes were designed to meet B3 Guidelines, which set sustainability goals for energy, water and waste. For example, systems like geothermal heat pumps save energy use and costs in Bemidji, Montevideo and Preston.

Ongoing sustainability efforts at established Minnesota Veterans Homes include:

- More efficient LED light bulbs improve lighting quality, reduce energy use and save about \$5,000 annually on electricity costs in Luverne
- Onsite solar array generates renewable energy in Montevideo
- Organics recycling programs contribute to MDVA's 75% diversion goal in Fergus Falls, Hastings and Minneapolis
- Food-growing programs provide fresh produce for Residents to enjoy and help cultivate in Fergus Falls, Hastings and Silver Bay
- A fully electric Chevrolet Bolt is used to transport Veterans in Hastings, part of an agency-wide initiative to reduce fossil fuel use by adding more electric vehicles to the fleet. In 2023, 32% of MDVA's light fleet included electric or hybrid electric vehicles, compared to 0% in 2017

2024 Earth Day events and activities included:

- An avid bike commuter and employee at the Minneapolis Veterans Home explained the environmental and health benefits of this transportation choice
- The MDVA sustainability team led a recycling workshop in Minneapolis for Domiciliary Program Residents
- Silver Bay team members hosted a lecture about microgreens
- Bemidji Veterans Home Residents made wildflower seed pods and set up bird feeders
- Residents across MDVA learned about the science and art of beekeeping, its benefits, and taste-tested local honey



Places to remember and honor Veterans and natural resources

Minnesota State Veterans Cemeteries are highly rated for the beautifully maintained grounds where loved ones can visit to pay their respects. In addition, each Cemetery integrates sustainable efforts to ensure harmony with the natural environment.

In addition, solar panels at Redwood Falls State Veterans Cemetery produce enough energy to cover half of the Cemetery's electricity demand. Each of the four Cemeteries:

- Feature native plants that provide water-quality benefits, wildlife habitats and a peaceful aesthetic
- Use electric snowblowers and lawn equipment that are lighter for maintenance crews to use, help to reduce pollution and are quieter and less disruptive to those visiting the grounds



Employee resource groups help team members to network, grow in their career and share experiences. Members of the Black, Indigenous and Women of Color (BIWOC) group include (left to right): Natalie Pham, Sharonda Hayslett, Jean Kim Maierhofer and Anjali Bajracharya.

Working Together for Veterans

The team at MDVA collaborates internally and externally to improve the lives of Minnesota Veterans and their families.

Highlighting the value of MDVA employment

MDVA is a place where every team member can contribute to the culture, serve Veterans and be empowered to make a real difference. Following a substantial increase in new team members to staff three new Minnesota Veterans Homes, FY 2024 was focused on engaging employees to grow their careers with MDVA through development plans and nurturing the culture to encourage employees to stay with the agency. Just some of the perks included with MDVA employment:

- Benefits package that evolves to remain current and competitive
- Employee incentive programs for Healthcare division roles
- Opportunities for career advancement, ongoing training and individual development
- Robust and responsive management team engaged in regular review of employees' goals and career objectives
- Opportunities to share ideas and feedback

Evolving for equity

MDVA is committed to equitable actions toward applicants, employees and in services for Veterans and their families. To achieve this, the MDVA Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) is focused on building and retaining a team that's reflective of the communities it serves and helping employees to understand equity and integrate equity practices in daily work.

57 Diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility (DEIA) trainings offered in FY 2024

Standout staff



LeadingAge Minnesota honored Silver Bay Veterans Home **Physical Therapy Assistant Jake Ojala** with the District B Caregiver of the Year

Award. The Award honors individuals who demonstrate exceptional commitment to older adults, plus enhance and enrich the quality of life of those in their care. Ojala was one of seven caregivers selected for the regional award out of a field of 60,000 professional caregivers throughout the state.



Peter Hansen, MDVA Quality Assurance - Veteran Services Liaison, received the Outstanding Service Award from the

Minnesota Association of County Veterans Service Officers. “This prestigious award recognizes individuals who have provided premium service outside normal expectations which Pete most certainly has in his new position.” –*Ron Quade, MDVA Director of Veteran Services*



Top, left to right: Campus Administrator Doug Britain, Assistant Administrator Brittney Voll and Director of Nursing Razaq Adedayo provide leadership to 600 employees at the Minneapolis Veterans Home. Above: Houa Vue, physical therapy assistant at the Home, is particularly drawn to the supportive atmosphere where he says colleagues are eager to mentor and assist one another.

JENIFER RODRIGUEZ, HUMAN RESOURCES SPECIALIST

“One of the things I enjoy the most about working at MDVA is the people. The Veterans we serve, and the employees are what keeps me coming to work every day. The employees at MDVA are smart, inclusive, compassionate and genuine.”

1,859 **TOTAL STAFF**
as of June 30, 2024

FY 2024 LEADERSHIP

- Brad Lindsay, *Commissioner*
- Eric Meittunen, *Deputy Commissioner - Veterans Healthcare*
- Ben Johnson, *Deputy Commissioner - Programs & Services*
- Dave Bellefeuille, *Chief Administrative Officer*

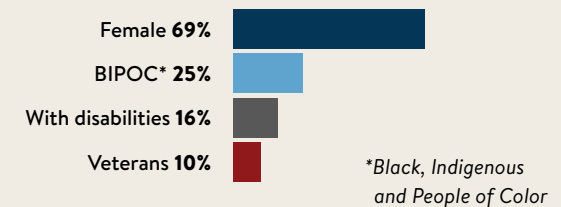
STAFF BY DIVISION

Central Office	90
Programs & Services Division	134
Healthcare Division	1,635

STAFF BY LOCATION *Full-time and part-time*

Bemidji Veterans Home	88
Fergus Falls Veterans Home	206
Hastings Veterans Home	97
Luverne Veterans Home	203
Minneapolis Veterans Home	654
Montevideo Veterans Home	88
Preston Veterans Home	88
Silver Bay Veterans Home	154

MDVA TEAM DEMOGRAPHICS



90% 90% of employee accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) were approved

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE YEAR

318 Processed 318 “Achievement Awards”

- CREATED **346** NEW POSITIONS
- ATTENDED **64** JOB FAIRS
- WROTE **1,078** SALARY APPROVALS

Legislative Activity

The 93rd Minnesota State Legislative Session (2023-2024) saw record investment in benefits, programs and services for Veterans and their families. Each budget session, the largest portion of MDVA's request to the State Legislature is to maintain current levels of services.

For a third consecutive year, a stand-alone Veterans and Military Affairs Omnibus Bill was passed by the Minnesota Legislature. Honoring service and sacrifice, this law provides critical funding to ensure that Minnesota takes care of a variety of Veteran needs.

New laws passed in 2024 – the second half of the biennium – focused on streamlining and clarifying existing services and responsibilities for MDVA and other Veteran services.

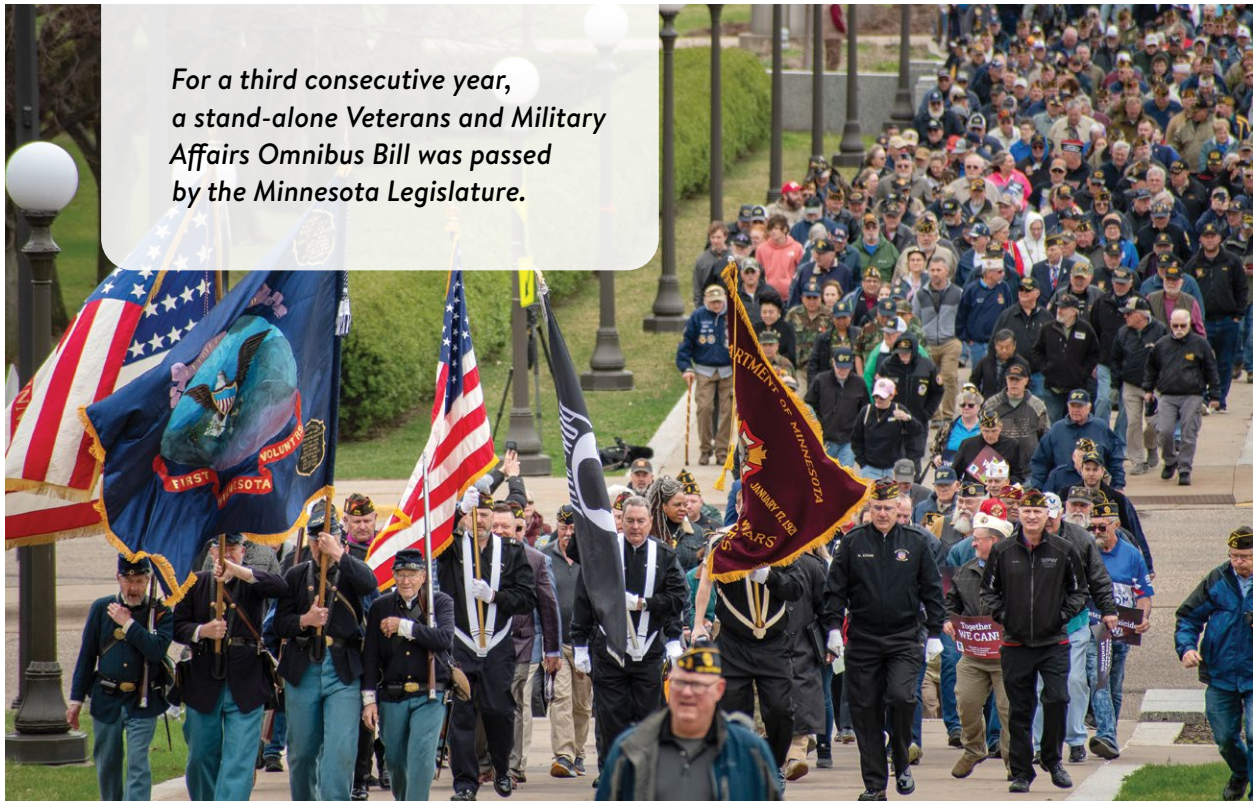
Noteworthy accomplishments from the legislative session include:

- Provision to lay the groundwork for a future State Veterans Cemetery in Northern Minnesota near Bemidji. When completed, this fifth State Veterans Cemetery would ensure 95% of Minnesota Veterans have a burial option within 75 miles of their home.
- New benefit for disabled Veterans in Minnesota to enjoy unlimited free access to the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum in Chaska.



KIM NORTH - MACV

For a third consecutive year, a stand-alone Veterans and Military Affairs Omnibus Bill was passed by the Minnesota Legislature.



A record turnout for Veterans Day on the Hill

The annual event hosted by the Commanders' Task Force (CTF) and Minnesota Association of County Veterans Service Officers (MACVSO) drew nearly a thousand Veterans, their families and supporters to the State Capitol on April 17 for meetings with legislators, a lunch at the Cedar Street Armory and a rally in the Capitol rotunda.

Following Veterans Day on the Hill, the Minnesota Senate voted overwhelmingly to support the Veterans and Military Affairs Omnibus Bill. Nearly two weeks later, the House of Representatives affirmed their support with an unanimous vote. Governor Walz signed it into law on May 8.

Grants

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	\$ 185,162
Disabled American Veterans	\$ 119,284
Paralyzed Veterans of America	\$ 45,982
Veterans of Foreign Wars	\$ 149,572

COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER (CVSO) GRANTS

The Legislature awarded and MDVA distributed grants to 87 CVSOs. FY 2024 expenditures included **\$831,381** to CVSOs and **\$100,000** to MACVSO.

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	\$ 775,000
MNVEST	\$ 910,440
Operation: OVER Division Funds	\$ 100,000
Supportive Housing Grants	\$ 6,675,000

OTHER LEGISLATIVE GRANTS DISTRIBUTED BY MDVA

- **\$540,000 to Meals on Wheels**, a program that delivers nutritious meals and social connection to Veterans, with a goal of helping them to continue living independently at home.
- **\$300,000 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.
- **\$150,000 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.
- **\$100,000 to Every Third Saturday**, which provides Veterans with emergency relief assistance, plus an internship for the Warrior's Path Peer Recovery Program.
- **\$50,000 to Veterans on the Lake**, which provides vacations for Veterans and their families in the Superior National Forest.

SOT 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.

SOT GRANTS AWARDED

Believet Canine Service Partners	\$ 25,000
Disabled American Veterans	\$ 11,000
Paralyzed Veterans of America	\$ 47,000
Support the Troops, MN	\$ 50,000
The Landing	\$ 52,000
Veterans of Foreign Wars	\$ 12,405

Additionally, MDVA is still administering prior SOT grants to:

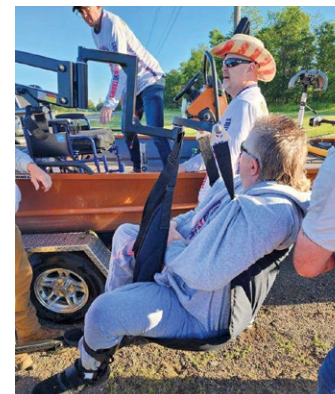
- American Heroes Outdoors
- American Veterans (AMVETS)
- Conservation Corps Minnesota
- Jewish War Veterans
- Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe
- Legal Corp
- Magnus Foundation
- Recovery Community Network
- Patriot Assistance Dogs



Grants in action

Support the Troops, MN (STTMN) was awarded a \$50,000 grant to provide rapid response for the Veteran community with emergency financial hardships. Working in conjunction with CVSOs and Family Readiness Leads, STTMN helped prevent evictions, avoid utility shutoffs, provide car repairs to commute to jobs and relieve financial stresses.

“I have coordinated car repairs, housing repairs, eviction notices from lack of payment, shutoff notices, employment opportunities as well as numerous other needs for Veterans in Pine County. I have many other stories like these and am grateful to Support the Troops MN.” – *Mindy Sandell, Pine County CVSO*



“I am so thankful for this event and how it is going to allow my husband the opportunity to go fishing in a boat. For the past five years, my husband has only fished from a dock and hasn't enjoyed fishing like he used to.”

EVENT PARTICIPANT, DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS SOT GRANT FOR BOAT LIFT

Stewarding Financial Resources to Improve the Lives of Veterans

MDVA's strategic cornerstone is a commitment to be exemplary stewards of our financial resources to improve the lives of Minnesota Veterans and their families.

With eight State Veterans Homes and four State Veterans Cemeteries, we are confident we can continue to provide the highest quality of care and services to Veterans while maintaining sound financial practices.

\$146M

MDVA received over \$146 million in General Fund appropriations in FY 2024 to serve Veterans.

CAPITAL BONDING EXPENDITURES

New Construction (Cemeteries & Homes)	\$ 17,789,322
Asset Preservation Improvements	\$ 2,265,991
Total Capital Bonding	\$ 20,055,313

REVENUES

GENERAL FUND APPROPRIATIONS

Healthcare	\$ 90,025,000
Programs & Services	\$ 56,523,000
Total	\$ 146,548,000

REVENUES

Federal VA Per Diem	\$ 43,391,499
Resident Maintenance Charges	\$ 16,547,830
Medicare Reimbursements	\$ 3,340,462
Cemetery Reimbursements	\$ 775,762
Other Healthcare Receipts	\$ 758,219
License Plate Receipts (SOT-WWII)	\$ 648,222
Other Revenue & Reimbursements	\$ 443,164
Total	\$ 65,905,158

TOTAL REVENUES \$ 212,453,158

DONATIONS

Healthcare	\$ 1,223,673
Programs & Services	\$ 135,840
Total Donations	\$ 1,359,513

EXPENDITURES

HEALTHCARE

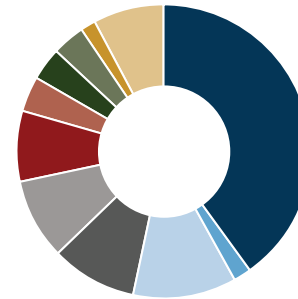
Minneapolis Veterans Home	
Skilled Nursing	\$ 64,656,840
Adult Day Center & Domiciliary	\$ 3,197,436
Fergus Falls Veterans Home	\$ 18,207,071
Silver Bay Veterans Home	\$ 15,098,904
Luverne Veterans Home	\$ 14,548,023
Hastings Veterans Home	\$ 12,377,376
Preston Veterans Home	\$ 6,129,544
Montevideo Veterans Home	\$ 6,063,949
Bemidji Veterans Home	\$ 5,544,497
Pharmacy & Dental	\$ 2,750,288
Administration	\$ 12,339,049
Total	\$ 160,912,977

PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Homelessness Prevention	\$ 13,986,076
Veterans Service Bonus	\$ 6,068,000
Claims & Outreach	\$ 5,434,590
State Soldiers Assistance Program	\$ 5,409,685
State Veterans Cemeteries	\$ 4,623,731
Minnesota GI Bill	\$ 3,940,479
Legislative Initiatives	\$ 2,564,146
Education	\$ 2,326,835
Administration	\$ 3,884,775
Total	\$ 48,238,317

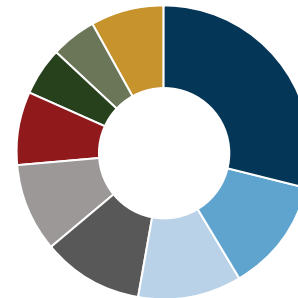
TOTAL EXPENDITURES \$ 209,151,294

HEALTHCARE EXPENDITURES



- Minneapolis – Skilled Nursing **40%**
- Minneapolis – ADC & DOMS **2%**
- Fergus Falls Veterans Home **11%**
- Silver Bay Veterans Home **9%**
- Luverne Veterans Home **9%**
- Hastings Veterans Home **8%**
- Preston Veterans Home **4%**
- Montevideo Veterans Home **4%**
- Bemidji Veterans Home **3%**
- Pharmacy & Dental **2%**
- Administration **8%**

PROGRAMS & SERVICES EXPENDITURES



- Homelessness Prevention **29%**
- Veteran Service Bonus **13%**
- Claims & Outreach **11%**
- State Soldiers Assistance Program **11%**
- State Veterans Cemeteries **10%**
- Minnesota GI Bill **8%**
- Legislative Initiatives **5%**
- Education **5%**
- Administration **8%**

Veterans and students (left to right) Jacob Weiser, James Roquemore, Hayden Mayeux, Veteran and instructor Geovanny Muñoz, and Veteran and student Aldo Escobar-Bovadilla attend helicopter training at Lake Superior College in Duluth.



MISSION

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



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

SCAN



MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

20 West 12th Street, St. Paul, MN 55155
651-296-2562 | MinnesotaVeteran.org



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