



Nevada Department of Veterans Services (NDVS)

NDVS Programs and Services Overview of Legislatively Required Veterans Reports

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Purpose

- To present information to the Legislative Committee on Senior Citizens, Veterans, and Adults With Special Needs concerning:
 - The Nevada Department of Veterans Services' (NDVS) Programs and Services
 - An overview of reports required to be submitted to the Legislative Counsel Bureau LCB:
 - Interagency Council on Veterans Affairs (ICVA) Biennial Report
 - Veterans Services Commission (VSC) Biennial Report
 - Women Veterans Advisory Committee (WVAC) Biennial Report
 - NDVS Report on Collaboration With Nonprofit Organizations and Referral of Certain Persons to Services

The Nevada Department of Veterans Services

"Serving Nevada's Heroes"

- **Vision:** Nevadans across the state honor our veterans' remarkable legacy of service and work together to ensure veterans and their families understand and connect to opportunities that enrich their lives.
- **Mission:** Advocate for and provide superior service to Nevada veterans and their families—and provide our communities / partners the opportunity to contribute to these endeavors. Through our four major programs we assist veterans prepare and submit claims for benefits, provide skilled nursing care, provide dignified burial support, and successfully reintegrate into Nevada communities.
- **Who We Serve:** Veterans, Active Duty, National Guard and Reserve, their families, and their survivors.

Nevada's Veterans (as of 20 Jan 2020)

- **Total Veterans:** 228,958 – 263,302*

- Cold War/Peacetime: 56,926 – 76,950
- Wartime Service: 64,991 – 223,050
- Retirees: 33,972 – 39,068
- Over age 65: 104,584 – 120,272



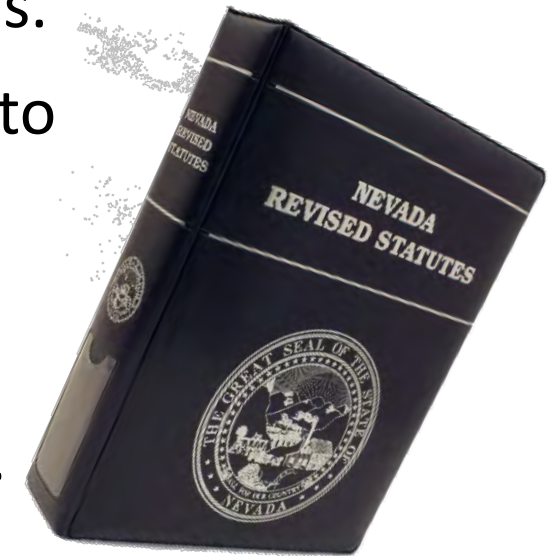
- **Other Demographics:**

- Active Duty in Nevada: 10,874~
- National Guard/Reserve: 5,000~
- Vets Currently Homeless: 723 (193 Unsheltered)
- Women Veterans: 23,796 – 27,365 (10.4%)

* The lower numbers are VA estimates based in part on older census reports. While the number of veterans are decreasing nationally, the nation's southwestern migration trends are resulting in a smaller reduction in Nevada's veteran's population than indicated in previous projections. The higher number reflects a 15% increase over projections based on conversations with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Chief Demographer.

NDVS Select Statutory Responsibilities

- As the primary public advocate for Nevada veterans: give aid, assistance and counsel to each and every problem, individual and collective, affecting any veteran, service member or their dependents.
- Assist veterans, service members and dependents submit benefit claims.
- Aid, encourage, and cooperate with every nationally recognized service organization and coordinate activities of veterans' organizations.
- Serve as a clearinghouse and disseminate information relating to veterans' benefits and conduct studies benefiting veterans.
- Create and maintain a statewide database relating to veterans to help connect veterans with benefits and opportunities
- Ensure that each generation of veterans is recognized annually.



Veterans Advocacy & Support Team (VAST)

- VAST assists veterans, service members, and their families access benefits and services.
- 15 state VSOs in Nevada; 10¹ other non-state VSOs
- Each VSO annually generates \$16M ~ on behalf of veterans and their families.
- VAST Offices:
 - Part-time: Sparks and Carson City.
 - Full-time: North Las Vegas, Reno, Boulder City, Elko, Fallon, and Pahrump
- Case load prior to March 12, 2020: 400 cases per VSO. Currently each VSO is working with an average of 14 customers a week.



** There is man-year equivalent of 10 VSOs in Nevada non-profit veterans service organizations.*

Veterans Memorial Cemeteries Program

- Locations: Fernley and Boulder City. Constructed in 1990 and expanded several times through U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs grants.
- Eligibility: Veterans who have served on active duty, their spouses, and Gold Star Parents.
- Cost: Veteran interments are offered at no charge. Spouses and Gold Star Parents: \$450
- Total interments as of 1 June 2020:
 - 11,264 at N. NV Veterans Memorial Cemetery
 - 45,289 at S. NV Veterans Memorial Cemetery



State Nursing Home Program

- Eligibility: Veterans who have served on active duty, their spouses, Gold Star Parents.
- S. NV State Veterans Home – Boulder City (180 beds)
 - Census (6/8/20): 154
 - “5-Star” facility constructed 2001
 - Long term, rehabilitation, and memory care
- N. NV State Veterans Home – Sparks (96 beds)
 - Census (6/8/20): 79
 - Award Winning design; constructed 2019; $\frac{3}{4}$ full
 - Long term, rehabilitation, and memory care
- COVID-19 restrictions on visitation are negatively impacting quality of life, but not quality of care. Measures adopted: in-room activities, universal workers, tele-visits, etc.



Community Outreach Programs

- Governor's and Mayors' Suicide Prevention Programs
- Nevada Veterans Advocate Program
- Patriot Employer Program
- Rural Outreach Program
- Nevada Women Veterans Program
- Support to Veterans Community Councils
- Health Care Champion Program
- Veterans in Care Program
- Operation Recognition
- Unique Veteran population outreach, to include Native American, LGBTQ, homeless veterans, veterans suffering from MST, etc.



NDVS Accomplishments—Operations

For a complete list, please review the [NDVS 2019 Annual Report](#).

- Conducted first-ever VSO training workshop; 39 VSO attendees.
- Conducted first-ever tele-benefits session between a VSO and a rural veteran.
- Opened satellite offices in Fallon, Sparks, Pahrump and Carson City.
- Care agency partnership to provide benefit info to homebound veterans.
- Scanned over 20,000 military discharge documents into the Veterans Information System (VIS).
- Virtual Memorial Day and monthly meetings with Veterans organizations.
- Leading the Governor's Suicide Prevention Challenge; providing key leadership on the Las Vegas and Truckee Meadows Mayors' challenges.
- Supported Gold Star Memorial Foundation placement of memorial at NNSVH.

NDVS Accomplishments—Support

For a complete list, please review the [NDVS 2019 Annual Report](#).

- Completed construction, licensing, staffing, and 86% fill of the NNSVH.
- Successfully applied for VA Rural Transportation Grants (\$100,000) and Adaptive Sports Program Grants (\$25,730).
- Procured eTablets through grants and donations for visits with family / friends.
- Aggressively sought and received early testing and sufficient PPE; SNSVH was the 1st nursing home in Nevada to test all residents for COVID-19.
- Submitted grants: SNSVH modernization, telehealth carts, cemetery expansion.
- Created system to review Medicare /Medicaid errors, \$3.4M reimbursed.
- Successfully applied for VA State Home Renovation Grant for SNSVH: (\$588,144).
- Submitted for / received \$1,467,467 under the CARES Act for Veterans Homes.

NDVS Accomplishments—Recognition

For a complete list, please review the [NDVS 2019 Annual Report](#).

- Received the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Pillars of Excellence Award for excellence and innovation for, “Ask a VSO” and the “Nevada Veterans Legislative Program.”
- NNSVH received Endeavor Award for Innovation in Dining.
- SNSVH earned the HealthInsight Quality Award, “Best in Class” Pinnacle Customer Experience Award, and the Eli Pick Facility Leadership Award for top-performing skilled nursing facilities nationwide.
- The SNSVH maintained its Five-Star quality rating; the NNSVH is not yet rated.
- Received special recognition and additional program funding from SAMHSA for military, veterans and family member suicide prevention programs.

NDVS —the Next Steps

For a complete list, please review the [NDVS 2019 Annual Report](#).

- Resume full operations at cemeteries and VSO offices
- Improve transition assistance for National Guard, Active Duty and Reserve.
- Request SAMHSA support for Mayors' Challenge Programs in Elko and Winnemucca.
- Complete Cemetery GPS Location Project.
- Resume Military Sexual Trauma Workshops.
- Improve veterans family support; 1st Survivor/Caregiver Brochure published by July.
- Increase involvement of health care providers in "Veterans Healthcare Champions."
- Improve outreach to northern and eastern Nevada veterans and their families.
- Fully integrate telehealth into our veterans' homes; 1st appointment: 24 June 2020.
- Improve veterans' homes quality of life programs (universal workers, streaming networks, increased visitation through eTablet and socially-distanced visiting).

An Overview of LCB Required Reports

- NRS 417.0195 Concerning the Activities of the Interagency Council on Veterans Affairs
- NRS 417.128 Concerning the Collaboration with Nonprofit Organizations and Referral of Certain Persons to Services
- NRS 417.190 Concerning the Activities of the Nevada Veterans Services Commission
- NRS 417.330 Concerning the Activities of the Women Veterans Advisory Committee



ICVA: NRS 417.0195 (1 of 3)

17 Unprioritized Recommendations; Complete Report [Here](#)

- 1: State agencies should submit information regarding veterans and service member programs, services, and events to NDVS to disseminate.
- 2: NNG and DPBH should establish a data sharing agreement to assist DPBH analyze suicide ideology among NNG members.
- 3: Create public service announcement re: mental health needs of veterans.
- 4: Increase awareness of VA medical /mental health services.
- 5: State licensing board should continue to inform health care providers of medical conditions and compensation related to military service.
- 6: Continue to support electronic verification of veteran status through the Veteran Information System.

ICVA: NRS 417.0195 (2 of 3)

- 7: Department of Corrections and County Sheriffs should create veteran units in correctional facilities, where possible.
- 8: Improve wrap around services and social opportunities for all student veterans, NSHE and non-NSHE, at NSHE veteran centers.
- 9: Explore options for creating veterans adult day health care facilities.
- 10: Create and publicize informational resources for caregivers of veterans.
- 11: Create / support military spouse employment & reciprocity programs.
- 12: Augment Federal transition programs with State transition information.

ICVA: NRS 417.0195 (3 of 3)

- 13: Participate in the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMHSA) Governor's Challenge to address veteran suicide.
- 14: Continue to implement the Office of Military Legal Assistance Program.
- 15: Create, expand, and support programs designed to connect isolated veterans and their families to benefits and services.
- 16: Create a sick leave category for veterans who are new State employees and have not accrued sufficient sick leave time to attend health care appointments associated with military service.
- 17: Provide funding to support the Veteran Peer Mentor Program to include training and travel.

Nonprofit Collaboration & Referral to Services (NRS 417.128)

- **Report requirement:** Describe and evaluate actions taken during the preceding year pursuant to NRS 417.127, and summarize referrals made under this statute.
- **Purpose of Report:** Raise public awareness concerning service-connected disabilities and diseases and survivor benefits available to family members of veterans so that affected veterans and their families will seek services.
- **Report Elements:** Public Outreach, Collaboration with Nonprofit Organizations, and Service Referrals.

NRS 417.128—Public Outreach

- Briefed six of the eight health care licensing boards; board directors indicated that they would help inform licensees.
- Posted information about service-connected disabilities /diseases, presumptive conditions, and benefits available to family members of veterans on website.
- Shared the [Exposure ED App](#) with Federal and State employees, VSOs, NVAs, military in Nevada, licensing boards, and veteran organizations.
- Included presumptive conditions information in VSO and NVA workshops.
- Met with northern and southern Nevada's VA Hospitals to plan joint outreach efforts.



NRS 417.128—Collaboration and Referral

- Collaboration:
 - Contacted the American Heart Association, the American Lung Association, and the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society seeking support for informing and referring clients.
 - Sent letters to other nonprofit organizations inviting them to support outreach efforts.
 - We are contacting the Nevada Diabetes Association, National Kidney Foundation, Alzheimer's Association, and the American Parkinson Disease Association this quarter to seek their support.
- Referral: No referrals were reported as NDVS was in an initial program coordination phase during the reporting period.

VSC: NRS 417.190

Top 10 of 24 Recommendations; Complete Report [Here](#)

- 1: Pursue activities that reduce suicide among veterans
- 2: Modernize the Southern Nevada State Veterans Home
- 3: Reduce or eliminate business license fees for veteran owned businesses
- 4: Construct and operate veterans adult day health care facilities
- 5: Allow non-NSHE students to use NSHE veterans services at NSHE Schools
- 6: Create an NDVS Veterans Outreach Officer position in northern Nevada
- 7: Pursue options to improve support to caregivers of veterans.
- 8: State agencies should support VIS data input.
- 9: Pursue water-wise options at state veterans cemeteries
- 10: Create a State Transition Assistance Program

WVAC: NRS 417.330 (1 of 2)

18 Unprioritized Recommendations; Complete Report [Here](#)

- 1: Make Women's Military History Month a permanent annual recognition.
- 2: Fill the vacant seat on the WVAC.
- 3: Fund travel for WVAC to have one in-person committee meeting and for one member to attend a national women veterans conference (annually).
- 4: Continue military sexual trauma training.
- 5: Support and promote veteran-owned businesses.
- 6: Support efforts to register Nevada's women veterans at the Women In Military Service for America Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery.
- 7: Support a state transition assistance program.
- 8: Continue to support VIS implementation.

WVAC: NRS 417.330 (2 of 2)

- 9: Continue funding the 2-1-1 Nevada line.
- 10: Continue supporting incarcerated veterans initiatives.
- 11: Continue supporting “Missing in Nevada” at state veterans cemeteries.
- 12: Expand outreach to rural veterans.
- 13: Make NDVS Northern Nevada Outreach Director a fulltime position.
- 14: Support the creation of a rural burial ground in Elko.
- 15: Create / support military spouse employment and reciprocity programs.
- 16: Consider offering a week-end burial option at state veteran’s cemeteries.
- 17: Create Scatter Gardens at state veterans cemeteries.
- 18: Eliminate cost for spousal burial in state veterans cemeteries.

2020 Veterans Legislative Symposium (VLS)

- Conducted biennially in advance of a legislative session in partnership with the United Veterans Legislative Council (complete report [here](#)).
- Conducted virtually in 2020 and included 48 recommendations. The overarching themes were:
 - **THEME 1:** Improve outreach and information programs to increase awareness of, and connection to, veterans benefits and services.
 - **THEME 2:** Honor and recognize Nevada's veterans' service by reducing certain state fees, tuition, and taxes.
 - **THEME 3:** Support and expand veteran mental and medical health care programs, especially those associated with suicide prevention.
 - **THEME 4:** Provide needed support to families and caregivers.

Top 11 Unprioritized VLS Recommendations

- 1: Pursue activities in support of reducing suicide among Nevada's veterans.
- 2: Pursue options to improve support to caregivers of Nevada's veterans.
- 3: Fund and modernize the Southern Nevada State Veterans Home
- 4: Reduce or eliminate business license fees for veteran owned businesses.
- 5: Continue to implement the Office of Military Legal Assistance Program.
- 6: Construct and operate veteran adult day health care facilities (tied)
- 6: Reduce or eliminate Nevada State Park fees for all veterans (tied)
- 7: Create an NDVS outreach officer position in northern Nevada.
- 8: Create and support military spouse employment and reciprocity programs.
- 9: Create a state transition assistance program.
- 10: Allow non-NSHE students to use veteran services at NSHE Schools.

Conclusion

NDVS is committed to three things:

- Ensuring every Nevada veteran and their family, no matter where they live, have information about and access to resources that enrich their lives.
- Ensuring every Nevada veteran understands they are extraordinary—and worthy of the best support and care we can give.
- Working with community partners to ensure that veterans and their families receive the support that their service to our country has earned them.

