

# 2016-18 Strategic Plan

## Department of Veterans Services [912]

### Mission

To serve Virginia's veterans, members of the Virginia National Guard, Virginia residents in the Armed Forces Reserves, and their family members, by ensuring they receive timely transition, employment and education assistance, benefits, health care and long-term care and recognition they have earned through service to our country and Commonwealth.

### Vision

To be the most veteran-friendly state in the nation by setting the national benchmark for the delivery of results-oriented and cost-effective veterans services.

### Values

**Excellence:** Provide exemplary service to Virginia's veterans and their families.

**Commitment:** An enduring commitment to helping Virginia's veterans and their families receive all earned federal and state benefits; and create an economic environment that promotes veteran-owned businesses and Virginia companies hiring veterans.

**Innovation:** Continually find new methods to reach and serve Virginia's veterans and their families.

### Finance

#### Financial Overview

The department's funding comes from a variety of general and nongeneral fund sources:

General Fund:

- Operations for the Veterans Benefit Services section, the Virginia War Memorial, the Virginia Values Veterans (V3) Program, the Virginia Transition Assistance Program (VTAP), and the Military Medics and Corpsmen (MMAC) program. Note: V3, VTAP, and MMAC are aligned under the Veterans Education, Training, and Employment (VETE) section of DVS;
- The majority of operations for the Virginia Veteran and Family Support program, the Veterans Cemetery Services section, and the Administrative Services section.

Non-general Fund Federal Trust:

- G.I. Bill program certification and audit operations of the VETE section;
- Part of the operations of the Veterans Care Center Services section, the Veterans Cemetery Services section, and the Administrative Services section.

Nongeneral Fund Special:

- Medicaid and Medicare (Part A and B) reimbursement covers a portion of the operating costs of the Veterans Care Center Services section;
- A portion of the Veterans Care Center Services and the Veterans Cemetery Services sections' operating budgets comes from private funds (fee for service).

Nongeneral Fund Dedicated Special Revenue:

- Donated funds supplement the funding for the Veterans Care Center Services, the Virginia Values Veterans (V3) Program, the Veterans Cemetery Services sections, and the Virginia Veteran and Family Support program.

#### Biennial Budget

	2017 General Fund	2017 Nongeneral Fund	2018 General Fund	2018 Nongeneral Fund
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	17,108,712	60,670,731	19,339,008	60,681,624
Changes to Initial Appropriation	-144,057	0	361,795	60,000

*(Changes to Initial Appropriation will be 0 when the plan is created. They will change when the plan is updated mid-biennium.)*

### Customers

#### Anticipated Changes to Customer Base

- The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) projects that the number of Virginia veterans will hold relatively steady for next 25

years, especially in the key demographic areas of women veterans and Post-9/11 veterans, as well with veterans 65 and older, who make most of the resident population at Virginia's veterans care centers (Population Data Source: USDVA, VetPop 2014, Table 6L).

- This is counter to national population trends. Specifically, USDVA projections show Virginia's veteran population will continue to grow for the next several years before leveling off, while several other states with large veterans will continue to experience a declining veterans population.
- Virginia is one of two states projected to see their veteran population grow through 2020. Declines are forecasted in: California (-314,630), New York (-190,238), Florida (-171,840), Pennsylvania (-149,281), and Ohio (-123,130).
- Virginia is one of the states with the fastest growing Post-9/11 veteran population, with the 2nd highest percentage of wartime veterans in the nation, and 14% of Virginia's veteran population are women veterans.
- Virginia's working age population is at about 513,000, and we rank #1 in:

Veteran Full-Time Employed Rate (87%)

Labor Force Growth Rate (19%);

Veteran Labor Force Participation Rate (65%); and

Veteran Owned Small Businesses (over 1,000).

- Two new veterans care centers in 2019 will greatly expand our ability to serve veterans in need of high-quality skilled nursing care or short-term rehabilitative care services. A 120-bed facility will be built in Fauquier County, in Northern Virginia; and a 120-bed facility will be built in the City of Virginia Beach to serve Hampton Roads.
- With Culpeper National Cemetery expected to reach full capacity within the next decade, we anticipate this will lead to the need for a fourth state veterans cemetery to meet the memorial needs of veterans in Central Virginia.

### Current Customer List

Predefined Group	User Defined Group	Number Served Annually	Potential Number of Annual Customers	Projected Customer Trend
Veteran	Veterans/family members using their G.I. Bill benefits at approved post-secondary educational and training institutions	60,230	61,000	Stable
Higher Education Institutions	Approved post-secondary educational and training institutions	1,067	1,100	Stable
Veteran	Behavioral health, rehabilitative, and supportive services provided to veterans, Guardsmen and Reservists not in federal service, and family members	6,763	7,000	Increase
Veteran	Patient Days of Assisted Living (Domiciliary) care provided to care center residents	14,929	21,900	Decrease
Veteran	Patient Days of Skilled Nursing care provided to care center residents	128,936	138,700	Increase
Veteran	Number of interments at state veterans cemeteries (veterans and family members)	1,778	2,000	Increase
Veteran	Veterans and family members for whom DVS has filed a disability or pension claim with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs	28,464	30,000	Increase
Resident	Visitors to the Virginia War Memorial (includes all visitors, some of whom are not Virginia residents)	64,693	100,000	Increase
Veteran	Veterans hired through the Virginia Values Veterans (V3) Program	7,649	8,000	Stable

### Partners

Name	Description
Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) and Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)	Program Partnership - Virginia Veteran and Family Support.
Department of General Services (DGS) and Virginia Capitol Police	Maintenance and security for the Virginia War Memorial.
DGS and DBHDS	Capital construction project procurement, contracting, real estate acquisition, and program management support.
Virginia Employment Commission and other state agencies	Program Partnership - Virginia Values Veterans (V3) Program.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers	Medical care, patient referral, and shared services.
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, State Cemetery Grants Program	Grant funding for construction of new state veterans cemeteries and expansion of existing cemeteries.
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Education Services	Funding for the Virginia State Approving Agency for Veterans Education and Training (SAA) - GI Bill program certification and audit functions.
Military Servicemembers and Veterans	Serve as a living reminder of the service and sacrifice of Virginia's men and women in uniform - past, present, and future.
Veterans Service Organizations	Program partnerships, volunteer and logistical support, financial donations, special events.
Citizens of the Commonwealth	The Virginia War Memorial exists because of the citizens of the Commonwealth and because of the service and sacrifice of her sons and daughters.
Virginia Department of Education	The Virginia War Memorial produces educational films to teach history to middle and high school students, then works with the Department of Education to distribute the films to middle and high schools across the Commonwealth.
Similar venues	The Virginia Historical Society, National Museum of the Marine Corps, National D-Day Museum, Virginia Holocaust Museum, and others serve as educational partners to the Virginia War Memorial.
Volunteers	Volunteers perform a variety of functions critical to the operation of the Virginia War Memorial and veterans care centers.
Boards and Councils: Board of Veterans Services, Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations, and Virginia War Memorial Board	Citizen, veteran, and legislative participation in setting strategic direction for the Agency. Input on defining DVS veterans programs and services.
Donors - through the Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) and the Virginia War Memorial Foundation (VWMF)	The VSF receives and raises donated funds to provide supplemental funding for DVS programs and services. The VWMF receives and raises donated funds to support the Virginia War Memorial's education programs and capital construction projects.

## Agency Goals

- **Augment the new Virginia economy with mission-ready, relevantly-skilled veterans by creating seamless transitions for veterans with high quality education and workforce services that accelerate career opportunities.**

### Summary and Alignment

The Virginia Department of Veterans Services, in partnership with federal, state, local, non-profit, and private agencies, will augment the new Virginia economy with mission-ready, relevantly-skilled veterans by creating seamless transitions for veterans with high quality education and workforce services that accelerate career opportunities.

### Associated State Goal

Economy: Be a national leader in the preservation and enhancement of our economy.

### Associated Societal Indicator

Employment Growth

### Objectives

- » **Create employment opportunities for veterans.**

#### Description

Through the Virginia Values Veterans (V3) Program, the Virginia Department of Veterans Services (DVS), in partnership with other state agencies, assists Virginia employers to recruit, hire, and retain veterans. The V3 Program increases employment opportunities and promotes economic development by training and certifying organizations in Veterans Workforce Best Practices.

#### Objective Strategies

- Promote V3 membership and certification through employer engagement, high-touch customer service, updated technology, collaboration with the Virginia Transition Assistance Program (VTAP) and strategic marketing.
- Recognize Virginia employers who complete V3 training and pledge to hire veterans.
- Continue to increase, monitor, and strategically market pledges and V3 certifications made by private and public sector employers.

#### Measures

- ◆ Number of veterans hired annually by Virginia Values Veterans (V3) program-certified companies.

» **Provide widest access to G.I. Bill-approved education and training opportunities for Virginia veterans and their dependents through the approval and ongoing supervision of post-secondary education and training programs.**

*Description*

Ensuring veterans have the widest access to education and training opportunities hinges on the timely, accurate, and consistent approval and supervision of G.I. Bill-approved programs/courses of instruction.

*Objective Strategies*

- Process all requests for GI Bill program approval within 30 days of receipt.

*Measures*

- ♦ Percentage of G.I. Bill program approval requests processed within 30 days of receipt.

» **Ensure access to Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program benefits for qualified applicants.**

*Description*

The Department of Veterans Services is responsible for certifying eligibility for benefits offered through the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP). Ensuring access to these benefits hinges on a timely review of the required documents and approval of eligible applications.

*Objective Strategies*

- Ensure VMSDEP applications are processed and an eligibility determination is made within 46 days of submission in the VMSDEP on-line application system.

*Measures*

- ♦ Percentage of Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP) eligibility determinations made by the Virginia Department of Veterans Services (DVS) within 46 days of the application-submission date.

• **Sustain the functional end to veteran homelessness achieved in 2015 by increasing affordable housing opportunities and veterans support programs and access to mainstream resources.**

**Summary and Alignment**

The Virginia Department of Veterans Services, in coordination with the Secretariats of Health and Human Resources and Commerce and Trade and other federal, state, local, nonprofit, and private agencies, will continue to coordinate efforts to ensure that systems are in place so that veteran homelessness remains rare, brief, and non-recurring and that Virginia continues to meet the federal criteria of functionally ending veteran homelessness.

**Associated State Goal**

Health & Family: Inspire and support Virginians toward healthy lives and strong and resilient families.

**Objectives**

» **Maintain a functional end to veteran homelessness.**

*Description*

On Veterans Day 2015, Virginia was certified as the first state to functionally end veteran homelessness based on the federal criteria of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. 2,913 veterans were housed statewide from October 2014 to February 2017. In coordination with the Secretariats of Health and Human Resources and Commerce and Trade and other federal, state, local, nonprofit, and private agencies, the Department of Veterans (DVS) Virginia Veteran and Family Support (VVFS) program works to ensure that homelessness among veterans is rare, brief, and non-recurring. This includes having systems in place that meet the following criteria: • Communities across the state have identified all veterans experiencing homelessness; • Communities can provide shelter to any veteran experiencing unsheltered homelessness who wants it; • Communities have the capacity to assist veterans to swiftly move into permanent housing (on average within 90 days of being identified); and • Communities have resources, plans, and system capacity in place should any veteran become homeless or be at risk of homelessness in the future. DVS/VVFS assists in coordinating federal, state, and community housing and support services for homeless veterans. DVS/VVFS also co-chairs the Governor's Homeless Coordinating Council's Veterans Subcommittee to assist in the coordination of state strategies to maintaining a functional end of veteran homelessness.

*Objective Strategies*

- Coordinate and target housing and supportive services for homeless veterans (in partnership with other agencies).
- Strengthen existing coalitions between federal, state, local, and community partners (USDVA, HUD, Continuums of Care, etc.).
- Provide technical assistance on best practices to federal, state, and communities programs serving homeless veterans.

*Measures*

◆ Number of homeless veterans in Virginia (point-in-time count).

• **Improve outcomes for veterans and their families in the areas of behavioral health, rehabilitative services, supportive services, health, and financial stability**

**Summary and Alignment**

The Virginia Department of Veterans Services, in partnership with federal, state, local, non-profit, and private agencies, will improve outcomes for veterans and their families in the areas of behavioral health, rehabilitative services, supportive services, health, and financial stability.

**Associated State Goal**

Health & Family: Inspire and support Virginians toward healthy lives and strong and resilient families.

**Objectives**

- » **Provide readily accessible, expert assistance to Virginia's veterans and family members in the development and submission of service-connected disability and pension claims to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and in accessing other federal, state, and local veterans programs and services.**

*Description*

The Virginia Department of Veterans Services (DVS) Benefits Services division develops and submits service-connected disability and pension claims to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) on behalf of Virginia veterans. The USDVA adjudicates (makes a rating decision) each claim. If a claim is approved, the veteran is awarded a disability rating (0% to 100% disabled, in increments of 10%). A veteran's disability rating, plus other factors such as the number of dependents, determines the veteran's monthly disability payment from the USDVA. The disability rating also determines priority access to USDVA medical care. DVS Benefits also assists with death and survivor benefits, represents veterans in the appeals process, and, in conjunction with partner agencies, connects veterans and family members to a wide variety of federal, state, and local veterans programs and services. Providing readily accessible and expert assistance is dependent on the following factors: • Location and professional working environment: DVS Benefits offices must be strategically located across the Commonwealth to ensure that they are readily accessible to veterans. The offices must be equipped and maintained to a high standard in order to create and project a professional working environment for both customers and staff; • Staffing levels: each office must be adequately staffed with a minimum of two Veterans Service Representatives (VSRs, with more in high population areas, in order to provide services during normal business hours, plus support outreach activities and services at itinerant locations; • Training: initial (accreditation) training for new VSRs takes 6-12 months before a VSR can assist veterans. Ongoing proficiency training and evaluation is also key to maintaining high service standards; • Recruitment and retention: initial VSR training and USDVA accreditation takes 6-12 months before DVS personnel can assist veterans. Recruitment and retention of qualified, motivated individuals is important to providing a high level of service to veterans and families; • Outreach and itinerant services: help make more veterans aware of the services available to them and increase the "reach" of the Benefits Services division.

*Objective Strategies*

- Focus on recruitment and retention by offering competitive salaries, a professional working environment, and recognition for quality work;
- Ensure employees have the right tools to do the job;
- Focus on initial and ongoing proficiency training;
- Set and maintain standardized policies related to office operations, outreach, etc. and;
- Create culture of continuous improvement.

*Measures*

- ◆ Number of disability compensation and pension claims submitted by the Virginia Department of Veterans Services (DVS) to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA).

- » **Increase the number of Virginia veterans, members of the Virginia National Guard and Armed Forces Reserves not in active federal service, and family members of those veterans and service members served by the Virginia Veteran and Family Support (VVFS) program.**

*Description*

The Virginia Veteran and Family Support (VVFS) program is operated by DVS in cooperation with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) and the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS). VVFS was established in 2008 in response to the growing need to improve and expand services to our nation's veterans and their family members coping with the impact of deployment, military service, posttraumatic stress, operational stress and/or traumatic brain injury (TBI). VVFS serves veterans of any era who are Virginia residents; members of the Virginia National Guard and Armed Forces Reserves not in active federal service; and family members of those veterans and service members. The VVFS Working Group, chaired by the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs, delivered its report to the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) in November 2016. The report recommended that the General Assembly approve changes to the Code of Virginia to clarify VVFS's purpose and that the program's service delivery structure be converted from a contract model to an all-state employee model. The Code changes were approved unanimously by the

2017 General Assembly and the legislation signed by the Governor. Additional funding and positions were appropriated to enable conversion of the VVFS service delivery model in FY18. As defined in the Code of Virginia (effective July 1, 2017), the purpose of the VVFS program is: "...in a cost-effective manner, refer veterans to mental health, physical rehabilitation, and other services as needed to help them achieve individually identified goals and to periodically monitor their progress toward achieving those goals." The program shall, subject to the availability of public and private funds appropriated for such purposes, (i) build awareness of veterans' service needs and the availability of the program through marketing, outreach, training for first responders, service providers, and others; (ii) collaborate with relevant agencies of the Commonwealth, localities, and service providers; (iii) develop and implement a consistent method of determining how many veterans in the Commonwealth are in need of mental health, physical rehabilitation, or other services currently or may be in need of such services in the future; (iv) work with veterans to develop a coordinated resources plan that identifies appropriate service providers to meet the veteran's service needs; (v) refer veterans to appropriate and available providers on the basis of needs identified in the coordinated resources plan; and (vi) monitor progress toward individually identified goals in accordance with the coordinated resource plan. Coordinated resources plans shall be developed and veterans shall be referred to necessary services in a timely manner. The program shall prioritize veterans served on the basis of the immediacy and severity of service needs and the likelihood that those needs are attributable to the veteran's military service or combat experience." Code of Virginia, §2.2-2001.1 (2017 Acts of Assembly, Chapter 497)

#### *Objective Strategies*

- Strengthen and extend the network of federal, state, and local partnerships

##### Measures

- ◆ Number of services delivered by the Virginia Veteran and Family Support (VVFS) program.

- » **Increase the number of military and veteran family members assisted by DVS in order to promote resiliency and recovery from the impact of deployment, military service, posttraumatic stress, operational stress, or traumatic brain injury.**

#### *Description*

Families are at the heart of Virginia Veteran and Family Support (VVFS) services. Many veterans and military service members are married and/or have children. The most effective pathway to resilience and recovery is to help not just the veteran or military service member, but also to actively engage family members in the process, and, indeed, to help the family as a unit. VVFS has two programs: Mission: Healthy Relationships and Mission: Healthy Families specifically focusing on veterans, spouses, and families coping with the impact of deployment, military service, posttraumatic stress, operational stress, and/or traumatic brain injury (TBI).

#### *Objective Strategies*

- Help an increased number of parents, children, and couples build communication, conflict resolution, and coping skills to foster resilience among military and veteran families.

##### Measures

- ◆ Number of family members served by Virginia Veteran and Family Support (VVFS) family programs (Mission: Healthy Relationships and Mission: Healthy Families).

- » **Serve the greatest possible number of veterans by maintaining the highest practical facility census at state veterans care centers.**

#### *Description*

Maintaining the highest possible facility census ensures that the greatest possible number of Virginia veterans receive nursing and domiciliary (assisted living) care at Virginia's veterans care centers, maximizing the potential capacity of the facilities. In addition, because the care centers do not receive a general fund appropriation and operate solely on nongeneral funds generated by the facilities, the Virginia Veterans Care Center (VVCC) and the Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center (SBVCC) must maintain a strong census to ensure an adequate revenue stream to 1) deliver quality services; 2) remain economically viable; and 3) not require General Fund support for current operations. The target occupancy percentage is 90 to 95% for the nursing care section and 85% for the domiciliary care section.

#### *Objective Strategies*

- Promote the services offered by Virginia's veterans care centers through marketing efforts targeted at Virginia veterans and their families, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) medical facilities, hospitals in the community, and other facilities.

##### Measures

- ◆ Rate of occupancy in the Domiciliary Care section.
- ◆ Rate of occupancy in the Nursing Care section.

- **Honor our veterans and military, and their families, for their service and sacrifice.**

#### **Summary and Alignment**

The Commonwealth of Virginia is home to almost 800,000 veterans who have served the cause of freedom in war and in peace. Our

veterans have gallantly protected our nation's principles and freedoms throughout our history. Their service and sacrifice underscores dramatically the fact that freedom is not free - dedicated men and women must step forward to defend it and to sustain it. By honoring our veterans in all we do, we will ensure that their service and sacrifice to the Nation and to the Commonwealth is not forgotten.

#### Associated State Goal

Public Interest: Engage and inform citizens to ensure we serve their interests.

#### Objectives

##### » Honor our Veterans, Preserve our History, Educate our Youth, and Inspire Patriotism in All.

###### Description

The Virginia War Memorial is the Commonwealth of Virginia's monument to honor the memory of Virginia's men and women who demonstrated a willingness to serve and fight to defend our way of life from World War II to the present, and through its Education Center, serves as the Center of Excellence for the Commonwealth in education of Virginians' experience of war from the birth of our nation to the present. In its educational mission, the Virginia War Memorial hosts a variety of internal and outreach programs, collects artifacts and research materials, and produces the "Virginians at War" documentary series in collaboration with the Virginia War Memorial Foundation. The Virginia War Memorial hosts numerous exhibitions, seminars, and ceremonies, including the Commonwealth's Memorial Day, Patriot Day, and Veterans Day ceremonies.

###### Objective Strategies

- Develop new programs and initiatives designed to attract more visitors to the Memorial and to reach more middle and high school students and teachers.
- Distribute "Virginians at War" documentary films and other educational programs through the Memorial's student seminars, teacher institutes, and other school programs. Virginia War Memorial teacher institutes are designed to familiarize teachers with the Virginia War Memorial and the "Virginians at War" film series and how the films align with the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOLs).

###### Measures

- ◆ Number of visitors to the Virginia War Memorial.

##### » Serve the burial, memorial, and perpetual care needs of Virginia's veterans and eligible dependents by meeting or exceeding service standards set by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

###### Description

The National Cemetery Administration (NCA) of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) sets service delivery standards for national and state veterans cemeteries. Meeting or exceeding these service delivery standards will help ensure that Virginia state veterans cemeteries serve the burial, memorial, and perpetual care needs of Virginia's veterans and eligible dependents.

###### Objective Strategies

- Order headstones within ten working days of the interment or inurnment. Headstones include markers for full casket ground burial, cremation ground burial, and columbarium placement.
- Install headstones/markers within six working days of receipt.
- Install headstones within 60 working days of the interment or inurnment.

###### Measures

- ◆ Percentage of headstones/markers placed within 60 working days of the interment or inurnment.

#### • Manage public resources efficiently and effectively

##### Summary and Alignment

By improving the efficiency, effectiveness, accuracy, and accountability of Administrative Services, the department will ensure full compliance with state internal control, accounting, and human resource requirements.

##### Associated State Goal

Government and Citizens: Be recognized as the best-managed state in the nation.

##### Associated Societal Indicator

Government Operations

#### Objectives

##### » Ensure that resources are used efficiently and programs are managed effectively, and in a manner consistent with applicable state and federal requirements.

###### Description

The Department of Veterans Services (DVS) is audited by the Auditor of Public Accounts (APA). To ensure that resources are used efficiently and programs are managed effectively, and in a manner consistent with applicable state and federal requirements, DVS will



take positive measures to prevent any audit points on the APA audit. If audit points are found, DVS will implement corrective measures to avoid any repeat audit points on future APA audits.

#### *Objective Strategies*

- Develop a biannual review/revision schedule for all agency financial management policies to ensure currency/compliance with state and federal requirements.
- Develop a correction plan for all audit points within 30 days of receiving an audit report from the Auditor of Public Accounts (APA). The plan will be submitted to the Department of Accounts.
- Initiate corrective action for all audit points within 60 days of receiving an APA audit report.
- Work to avoid repeat audit points.

#### Measures

- ◆ Number of repeat audit points.

## Major Products and Services

**Veterans Benefit Services:** Provides free assistance to Virginia veterans and eligible dependents in accessing federal and state veterans benefits. DVS operates 28 benefits field offices, and will have 30 offices by end of 2018.

**Veterans Care Center Services:** Delivers skilled nursing, domiciliary, and Alzheimer's care to Virginia's veterans, predominantly those 65 and older, at veterans care centers in Richmond (Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center, 200 beds) and Roanoke (Virginia Veterans Care Center, 240 beds). New care centers are planned for Virginia Beach in Hampton Roads and Fauquier County in Northern Virginia, with construction scheduled to begin in Fall 2017, and both VCCs opening in late 2019.

**Veterans Cemetery Services:** Serves the memorial needs of Virginia veterans and eligible dependents at state veterans cemeteries in Amelia (Virginia Veterans Cemetery), Dublin (Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery), and Suffolk (Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery).

**Veterans Education, Training, and Employment Services:** Ensures access to higher education opportunities for Virginia veterans and eligible dependents by certifying that programs of instruction at post-secondary education institutions in Virginia meet federal requirements, enabling Virginia veterans and eligible dependents to use their G.I. Bill education benefits. Audits education programs to ensure compliance with federal regulations. Supports the creation of employment opportunities through the Virginia Values Veterans (V3) Program. Assists veterans to transition from military service to employment, education/training, or entrepreneurship through the Virginia Transition Assistance Program (VTAP). Leads DVS activities in support of the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP). Oversees the Military Medic & Corpsmen (MMAC) pilot program which provides service members with specialized medical training an opportunity for employment at six Virginia health care systems, a pathway to licensure and long-term medical careers, and a solution to acute health care staffing shortages in Virginia's health care industry. Through VTAP, oversees the SkillBridge program, also referred to as JTEST-AI (Jobs Training Employment Skills Training-Apprenticeships & Internships).

**Virginia Veteran and Family Support program:** In cooperation with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) and the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), monitors and coordinates behavioral health, rehabilitative, and supportive services and support through an integrated, comprehensive and responsive system of public and private partnerships. VVFS provides these services to Virginia veterans, members of the Virginia National Guard and Armed Forces Reserves not in active federal service, and their families affected by stress related conditions or traumatic brain injuries resulting from military service. VVFS oversees the **Housing Development Team**, which continues to provide statewide coordination and leadership with our community housing and support services partners for the Governor's goal and Commonwealth's efforts to ensure veteran homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring. In 2015, VVFS became an **Operation Family Caregiver** (OFC) grantee, funded by the Rosalynn Carter Institute (RCI) for Caregiving and Johnson & Johnson. The three year grant provides the VVFS team with caregiver coaches, who teach problem solving skills, facilitate care coordination, and provide support to those family members and individuals who are assisting and providing daily care to Virginia's veterans.

**Virginia War Memorial:** The Virginia War Memorial is the Commonwealth of Virginia's monument to honor the memory of Virginia's men and women who demonstrated a willingness to serve and fight to defend our way of life from World War II to the present. Through its Education Center, the Memorial serves as the Center of Excellence for the Commonwealth in education of Virginian's experience of war from the birth of our nation to the present. Construction will begin in 2017 on a 25,000 square foot addition, which will include an expansion of the Shrine of Memory, new education and exhibit space, and an underground parking garage.

## Performance Highlights

### In FY16, the Department of Veterans Services:

- Filed **28,462** disability compensation claims on behalf of Virginia veterans and families, contributing to **\$2.77 Billion** in federal



compensation and disability payments to our veterans in FY16.

- Virginia Veterans & Family Services (VVFS) delivered **6,763** individual supportive services to veterans and their families, and served **126** veterans and family members at their weekend retreats.
- Virginia veterans received more than **\$890 Million** in G.I. Bill benefits in FY15.
- Announced the new **Puller Veterans Care Center** will be built in Vint Hill, Fauquier County and the new **Hampton Roads Veterans Care Center** will be built in the City of Virginia Beach.
- Performed 1,778 burials at Virginia's three state veterans cemeteries.
- Hosted 64,693 visitors at the Virginia War Memorial.
- Created a *Virginia Veterans Resource Guide* [www.dvs.virginia.gov/vetresourceguide](http://www.dvs.virginia.gov/vetresourceguide).

## Staffing

Authorized Maximum Employment Level (MEL)	761
Salaried Employees	691
Wage Employees	42
Contracted Employees	0

## Key Risk Factors

**Benefit Services funding and staffing (hiring/retention):** DVS operates 28 benefits offices, with two additional offices scheduled to open in FY18. In the past, staff turnover and funding constraints impacted the section's ability to keep all offices fully staffed and operational. This is especially significant because it takes approximately one to two years for a new Veterans Service Representative (claims agent) to become fully trained and proficient. While state human resource (HR) policies provide agencies with HR tools to help agencies recruit and retain qualified staff, funding constraints limited the section's ability to offer competitive salary/benefits packages to attract, train, and retain claims agents. Increased funding in fiscal years 2016, 2017, and 2018, coupled with the authorization to hire additional staff, new equipment, and myriad other changes,, have largely remedied turnover and training issues. The Agency will closely monitor resource levels to ensure that recent successes are sustained into the next decade.

**Virginia War Memorial (funding and staffing to support the increased number of visitors, expanded education mission, and new wing):** With the opening of the Paul & Phyllis Galanti Education Center in 2010, the number of annual visitors to the Virginia War Memorial has increased significantly to 64,693 in 2016. This has been accompanied by a significant expansion of the Memorial's education mission, with its broad focus on all Virginians and more specific focus on middle and high school students and their teachers. The Virginia War Memorial will break ground on a 25,000 square foot expansion in 2017, with the new wing and parking deck complete by 2019. With the increased staff and exhibition space, to the number of visitors could grow to 100,000 a year by 2024, and along with it our ability to reach even more Virginians with all our exceptional educational programs and events. With the opening of the expansion will come increased operating, maintenance, and security costs in FY20.

**Cemetery Services (staffing/resource levels, building/grounds maintenance, and equipment replacement):** funding and staffing levels at the state veterans cemeteries are sufficient to meet current burial and building/grounds maintenance requirements and to operate a phase replacement plan for cemetery equipment. Close attention must be paid to ensure continued alignment of cemetery resources with the increasing number of burials, and to ensure that critical maintenance reserve and equipment replacement requirements continue to be addressed. Cemetery staffing must also be closely monitored to ensure adequate manpower to perform an increasing number of interment services and to maintain the cemetery grounds to national shrine standards. The Agency must also continue to plan at least 3-5 years in the future to ensure federal grant funding is available to support phase expansion of in-ground and above-ground burial capacity at each cemetery.

**Department succession planning and continuity:** Like all state agencies, DVS faces challenges in the area of succession planning and continuity due to an aging workforce. DVS will continue to take such steps as resources permit to prepare for the retirement of key leaders, but additional resources will be necessary to ensure an effective transition.

## Management Discussion

### General Information About Ongoing Status of Agency

#### **Compact with Virginia's Veterans: Making Virginia America's most veteran friendly state.**

The Code of Virginia requires the Commissioner of Veterans Services to: *"Establish and implement a compact with Virginia's veterans, which shall have a goal of making Virginia America's most veteran friendly state. The compact shall be established in conjunction with the Board of Veterans Services and supported by the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations and shall: (i) include specific provisions for technology advances, workforce development, outreach, quality of life enhancement, and other services for veterans and (ii) provide service standards and goals to be attained for each specific provision in clause (i). The provisions of the compact shall be reviewed and updated annually. The Commissioner shall include in the annual report required by this section the progress of veterans services established in the compact."*

In support of the Compact, the Department of Veterans Services (DVS), in conjunction with the Board of Veterans Services (BVS) and the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (the JLC) established the following long-range goals:

1. Ensure Virginia veterans and eligible family members receive timely assistance in filing for federal and state disability benefits.

2. Deliver long-term skilled nursing and domiciliary care, assisted living (domiciliary) care, and short term rehabilitation services to Virginia veterans.
3. Connect veterans, Guardsmen and Reservists not in federal service, and their family members to a network of community-based services designed to help them overcome the challenges of stress related and traumatic brain injuries and rehabilitative needs that result from military service.
4. Provide Virginia's veterans and their spouses a final resting place at state veterans cemeteries that meet national shrine standards.
5. Ensure veterans and their dependents have approved educational programs through which they may receive their educational benefits.
6. Reduce the number of homeless veterans.
7. In conjunction with other state agencies, create employment opportunities for Virginia veterans in state government and the private sector.
8. Honor patriotic Virginians who rendered faithful service and sacrifice in the cause of freedom and liberty for the Commonwealth and the nation in time of war and honor all of Virginia's veterans by preserving their history, educating the public, and inspiring patriotism in all Virginians.
9. Coordinate with other state agencies to afford Virginia's veterans business, employment, transportation, and other appropriate opportunities through technology advances, workforce development, outreach, quality of life enhancement, and other services for veterans and their families.

***DVS established the following goals and objectives for the 2016-2018 biennium in conjunction with the Board of Veterans Services (BVS), the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (the JLC), and Virginia War Memorial Board (VWMB):***

**Goal #1:** Increase affordable housing opportunities and veterans support programs in order to eliminate veterans homelessness by the end of 2015. (QUALITY OF LIFE ENHANCEMENT)

- **Objective in support of Goal #1:** Continue to ensure that Virginia has the systems, capacity, and coordination to ensure veteran homelessness is rare, brief, and non-reoccurring.

**Goal #2:** Augment the New Virginia Economy with mission-ready, relevantly-skilled veterans, especially post-9/11 veterans, by creating seamless transitions for veterans with high-quality education and workforce services that accelerate career opportunities. (WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT)

- **Objectives in support of Goal #2:**

1. Help Post-9/11 veterans achieve success in the areas of employment, education, and entrepreneurship;
2. Create pathways to career success for transitioning medics and corpsmen;
3. Achieve even greater results in making Post-9/11 veterans a linchpin of the New Virginia Economy;
4. Incentivize more small- and medium-sized companies to hire and retain veterans;
5. Open doorways to higher education for the survivors/dependents of KIA and disabled veterans; and
6. Ensure G.I. Bill Program access for veterans/families.

**Goal #3:** Improve outcomes for veterans and their families in the areas of behavioral health, rehabilitative services, supportive services, health, and financial stability. (QUALITY OF LIFE ENHANCEMENT)

- **Objectives in support of Goal #3:**

1. Ensure that more of Virginia's veterans and families receive the federal disability and pension benefits they have earned through effective advocacy and representation in the development and filing of federal disability claims. In support of this objective, the Governor and General Assembly have approved increases in staffing and funding that have enabled DVS to open new offices, upgrade existing offices with new equipment and furniture to create a professional service environment for DVS customers and employees, revamp the training program and standards, and institute a career development plan for all Benefits section employees;
2. Strengthen service delivery capacity and achieve lasting outcomes for veterans/ families in the areas of behavioral health, rehabilitative, and supportive service through VVFS by amending and re-enacting the Code of Virginia related to the VVFS program and purpose and by converting the VVFS service-delivery model from a contract-based to a state-employee based model;
3. Work with the Virginia Supreme Court to develop and promulgate guidelines for courts to establish "problem-solving dockets" which will include veterans dockets; partner with law enforcement agencies, the Judicial system, and jails and prisons on multiple criminal justice issues related to veterans; and;
4. Expand and strengthen long-term care for Virginia veterans through our state system of veterans care centers by constructing new 120-bed veterans care centers in Hampton Roads (Virginia Beach) and Northern Virginia (Fauquier County).

**Goal #4:** Honor our veterans and military, and their families, for their service and sacrifice. (OUTREACH and OTHER SERVICES FOR

VETERANS)

● **Objectives in support of Goal #4:**

1. Construct a 25,000 square foot addition to the Virginia War Memorial that will feature an expansion to the Shrine of Memory, new education and exhibit space, and a new underground parking deck to handle the expected increase in visitation that will result from the expansion. Approve additional staff resources to plan for and open the new addition;
2. Ensure that the Agency has the resources (people and funding) to handle increasing burial numbers and expanding grounds maintenance requirements at state veterans cemeteries.
3. Expand the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery (Suffolk) to provide additional in-ground and above-ground burial spaces. Expand the Virginia Veterans Cemetery (Amelia) to provide additional in-ground burial spaces.

**Goal #5:** Inform veterans of the services provided by DVS; manage public resources efficiently and effectively. (OUTREACH and OTHER SERVICES FOR VETERANS)

● **Objectives in support of Goal #5:**

1. Inform Virginia veterans and family members of the services and programs provided by the Commonwealth; and
2. Provide 24/7 telephonic information and referrals to veterans and families through a partnership with 2-1-1 Virginia; and
3. Address shortfalls in agency infrastructure, management, and employee professional development.

### Information Technology

**Overview of the current state of IT in the agency:**

The current state of information technology for the Virginia Department of Veterans Services (DVS) is very good. The DVS IT Department continues to achieve full compliance/top score ratings for all COV and VITA/NG mandates (Continuity Plan Assessment, IT Security Program, Agency Preparedness Assessment, etc.).

Our IT Security Program continues to protect our agency data by:

1. Creating and enforcing DVS IT security policies to ensure compliance with all COV and VITA/NG security requirements;
2. Educating all DVS staff on IT security best practices for safe data management and communications;
3. Utilizing VITA/NG security services at our DVS locations in order to provide a secure computing environment for our agency networks and devices; and
4. Continuing to achieve full compliance/clean evaluations from the Auditor of Public Accounts (APA) and Department of Accounts (DOA) on our IT systems and security audits.

Although our IT staff is few in number, we continue to provide timely and effective IT services and excellent customer service to our agency employees and customers. All DVS employees are currently receiving the necessary technology tools (newer computers with current operating systems, updated office productivity software, new/upgraded business systems applications/ services, email/device encryption services, etc.) to conduct general business functions as required by our agency mission statement. Several of our business applications and functions, used for daily operations, have been upgraded to utilize web/cloud based technology and now have the ability to interface with other systems when they come online.

Within DVS there are three mission-critical business applications:

1. The Cardinal financial application system ;
2. The Point Click Care Clinical Accounts Receivable (AR) and Financial System (PCCS); and
3. The BeneVets claims development system.

The Cardinal financial application has been recently installed for use by COV agencies to replace the Mitchell Humphries Financial Management System II (FMSII). Cardinal is an enterprise and fully automated financial system created to reduce audit problems relating to internal controls and financial reporting and to minimize delays with producing financial information and management reports.

The PCCS AR and Financial applications are utilized at both DVS veterans care centers: Virginia Veterans Care Center (VVCC) in Roanoke and Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center (SBVCC) in Richmond. It is used to track medical and financial information for all veterans admitted into both care centers.

BeneVets is the web-based, hosted claims processing system in use since January 2013 at DVS to process claims for veterans. BeneVets is in use at all of our DVS Benefit Services offices located around the Commonwealth for performing veteran's claims development, tracking, and reporting.

DVS also works closely with the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) to serve Virginia's veterans. A primary IT modernization goal of DVS was to improve service to veterans by utilizing information technology to enhance the claims process and to be able to share data within all DVS offices, other Commonwealth agencies, and the VBA. This has been accomplished.

Other operational initiatives that the DVS IT Division must manage are: VITA/NG Partnership program requests and projects, DVS information security and data integrity, and DVS systems and applications support; all of which are critical to the agency being able to meet its mission and objectives.

#### ***Factors impacting agency IT:***

The DVS IT Department currently has four classified positions:

1. One Chief Information Officer (CIO), who serves as:
  - The DVS IT Director / Lead System Support Engineer;
  - The Agency Information Technology Resource (AITR) for COV and VITA/NG IT coordination and management; and
  - The Emergency Coordination Officer (ECO) for the Governor and Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) disaster recovery and continuity of operations coordination and management.
2. Two IT System Support Engineers; and
3. One IT Program Assistant (P14).

These four positions support all of DVS, which includes over 750 authorized FTEs spread across business units located around the Commonwealth. Due to this low support to staff ratio, DVS IT has limited ability to provide internal applications development or IT audit functions to meet DVS' growing business needs. As a result, these services must be handled and prioritized by the DVS CIO and either outsourced or utilize other COV agency services where needed and is possible.

Simultaneously, the management of VITA projects and IT activities, equipment procurements, and VITA/NG infrastructure and billing issues continue to impact the DVS IT staff's ability to always effectively serve internal and external customers due to the multiple requests for information and tasks these efforts require on a daily basis. Increasing VITA/NG charges continue to have a financial impact on DVS operations and the ability to obtain and afford all required/beneficial IT systems and services to keep DVS operations going smoothly and at low operating costs. Many VITA/NG solutions and technologies, such as the VITA/NG wireless network solutions, new voice/telephony systems, MPLS Internet/data transfer circuits and devices, etc. may be too costly for our agency to justify these expenditures and usually cannot afford to implement at all/any locations. We are in need of these technologies and have new expansions and projects that will require these capabilities, but really need VITA/NG to make them affordable in order for us to implement and utilize them in order to better serve our customers. DVS hopes to interact with more veterans/outside entities using web-based and other automated systems. Since these transactions would require DVS to purchase the necessary hardware and software to implement these solutions, this will cause an increase to agency expenditures and possibly necessitate the hiring of additional qualified DVS IT staff to support these solutions.

#### ***Anticipated or desired changes to agency IT:***

Due to only minor increases in financial capital for IT projects and possible increased VITA billing rates for the current and upcoming budget cycles, no major IT Projects are anticipated in the near future. IT recommends that one additional IT fulltime position be added to the IT section to serve as a system support engineer. This position will be especially critical when additional facilities (new care centers, cemeteries, etc.) are opened.

### **Estimate of Technology Funding Needs**

#### **Workforce Development**

As noted in the "Key Risk Factors" section, the Department of Veterans Services faces several challenges in the area of workforce development, including:

- Benefit Services section funding and staffing (hiring/training/retention);
- Virginia Veteran and Family Support funding and staffing (increased service demands/service delivery);
- Virginia War Memorial funding and staffing (increased number of visitors and expanded education mission, opening of new wing);
- Cemetery Services staffing (must keep pace with increased number of burials and workload);
- Department succession planning and continuity.

#### **Physical Plant**

The DVS Physical Plant (agency owned/operated) consists of two veterans care centers, three veterans cemeteries, and the Virginia War Memorial. The Benefit Services section, Education, Training, and Employment Services section, Virginia Veteran and Family Support, and Administrative Services section operate from state-owned or leased offices, or from space provided by community partners.

The veterans of the Commonwealth of Virginia, and, indeed, all of its citizens, hold DVS facilities to the highest standard. The Virginia War Memorial is the Commonwealth of Virginia's monument to honor the memory of Virginia's men and women who demonstrated a willingness to serve and fight to defend our way of life from World War II to the present. Virginia state veterans cemeteries are held to "national shrine" status. Virginia's veterans care centers are held as model facilities for the delivery of long-term, assisted living, Alzheimer's, and short-term rehabilitative care.

The Department's physical plant is excellent, due to the exceptional work and dedication of all DVS employees and to the continued support of the Governor and General Assembly. Operating, maintaining, and improving the DVS physical plant will continue to be a top priority of the Department.

**Supporting Documents**

<b>Title</b>	<b>File Type</b>
DVS Commissioner's 2016 Annual Report	Adobe PDF
Virginia Veterans Resource Guide	Adobe PDF
Virginia Department of Veterans Services website	Link

**Education Program Certification for Veterans [10814]****Description of this Program / Service Area**

This service area is responsible for:

- Approving education institutions and establishments operating in Virginia in order that eligible veterans and their dependents may enroll and receive financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) while pursuing an approved educational course or program through the G.I. Bill. Approved educational programs include state colleges/universities, private and for-profit colleges/universities, technical/trade schools, licensing/certification programs, and OJT/Apprenticeship programs.
- Conducting compliance surveys of approved educational facilities that have at least one veteran/dependent enrolled to verify enrollment data, awards actions, and previous payments for accuracy and to ensure that payments made to eligible veterans and their dependents are in keeping with USDVA regulations.
- Leading DVS activities (program administration and eligibility determination) in support of the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP).

**Mission Alignment**

The Virginia Department of Veterans Services (DVS) recognizes the importance of providing educational, training, and employment opportunities for veterans and their eligible dependents. The Veterans Education, Training, and Employment (VETE) section operates under a contract with the USDVA (GI Bill program certification and audit) and state authority (VMSDEP). VETE's mission aligns with the departmental philosophy to support the education, training, employment, and personal development of veterans and their families.

Authority: Title 2.2, Chapter 20, Code of Virginia.

**Products and Services****Description of Major Products and Services****G.I. Bill program certification and audit:**

- Approval of programs: Review, evaluate, and approve programs of education and training offered by educational institutions, businesses, and industries.
- Technical Assistance: Provide direct assistance to facilities requesting approval through visits and participation in regional certifying official training workshops.
- Compliance oversight of schools and training establishments: Visit facilities to review audit records to determine compliance with U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) regulations, conduct investigations, initiate corrective actions, submit reports, and follow up as necessary.
- Outreach: Provide information to veterans and educational programs through job fairs, pre- and post-mobilizations, retirement seminars, and the Transition Assistance Program (TAP), and through the development and distribution of promotional materials and publications.
- Liaison: Collaborate with other education and training professionals to promote and encourage exchanges of information to support and raise awareness of the veterans educational benefits programs.

**Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP):** Administer DVS activities related to applications, eligibility determination and other program activities surrounding approved applications.

**Anticipated Changes**

DVS has recently taken on the certification of aviation training programs in Virginia, which will potentially have a major workload impact on DVS. No other changes are anticipated to G.I. Bill program certification and audit responsibilities at this time.

**Factors Impacting**

G.I. Bill program certification and audit functions are funded through a contract with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA), which determines how much each state will receive per fiscal year. Federal contract amounts limit the number of employees who may be hired to support required program certification and audit functions. Resource levels must be carefully monitored to ensure that DVS has the resources necessary to meet all requests for program certification, and to perform the number of audits required annually by the USDVA.

**Financial Overview**

G.I. Bill program certification and audit activities are funded through a contract with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA). Operations related to the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP) are funded through the General Fund.

Biennial Budget



	2017 General Fund	2017 Nongeneral Fund	2018 General Fund	2018 Nongeneral Fund
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	147,561	876,574	162,940	876,574
Changes to Initial Appropriation	0	0	0	0

**Supporting Documents**

Title	File Type
DVS VMSDEP 2016 Annual Reportyyyy	Adobe PDF

## Veterans Care Center Operations [43013]

### Description of this Program / Service Area

The Veterans Care Center Services section operates two long-term care facilities for veterans: the Virginia Veterans Care Center (VVCC), a 240-bed facility adjacent to the Salem Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center in Roanoke, and the Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center (SBVCC), a 200-bed facility adjacent to the McGuire VA Medical Center in Richmond.

### Mission Alignment

This Service Area directly aligns with and supports the Department of Veterans Services mission of serving Virginia's veterans by providing health care and comfort to veterans in a clean and safe environment.

Authority: Title 2.2, Chapter 20, Code of Virginia.

### Products and Services

#### Description of Major Products and Services

Virginia's veterans care centers provide long-term skilled nursing care, Alzheimer's/memory care, and short-term rehabilitation to honorably discharged veterans in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Specific services include:

- **Nursing Care Services:** Provides care for residents needing assistance with multiple activities of daily living, administration of medication and treatments by a licensed nurse, and monitoring of behavior or changes in medical condition.
- **Skilled Care Services:** Provides care for residents requiring daily observation or treatment by a licensed nurse, physical therapist, occupational therapist, or speech language therapist. This level of care includes short-term rehabilitation, the goal of which is to strengthen the resident so they are able to return to their own home.
- **Alzheimer's/Memory Care Services:** Provides a safe supportive environment for residents with dementia who also require nursing care services. The care environment is designed to allow wandering within the unit and the outside Wander Garden but prevent elopement.
- **Assisted Living Services:** Provides care for residents needing assistance with a limited number of activities of daily living, medication administration, and/or monitoring of behavior patterns. Assisted living services are available only at the Virginia Veterans Care Center in Roanoke.

### Anticipated Changes

In 2017, DVS will break ground on two new Veterans Care Centers. One will be in the City of Virginia Beach, and one will be in Vint Hill, Fauquier County. Both facilities will be 120-bed facilities, will be built to current USDVA design standards, and will offer nursing care, skilled nursing care and Alzheimer's/memory care services.

### Factors Impacting

#### Resident Census

- Virginia's veterans care centers draw residents from across the Commonwealth. However, the majority of Virginia Veterans Care Center (VVCC) residents are admitted from the Salem VA Medical Center, adjacent to the VVCC, and from hospitals in the Roanoke area. Similarly, the Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center (SBVCC) admits primarily from the McGuire VA Medical Center and hospitals in the Richmond area. Both VVCC and SBVCC maintain strong ties with veterans service organizations and operate ongoing public awareness campaigns to ensure that veterans and their family members are aware of the services provided at Virginia's veterans care centers.
- Care center residents requiring hospitalization must be discharged, but care and consideration is made to try to promptly readmit these former residents following their hospital stay.
- Virginia's care centers do not receive a general fund appropriation. In order to remain viable and not to become a fiscal burden to the Commonwealth, the care centers must maintain a strong census to ensure adequate operating funds.

### Staffing

- The Virginia Veterans Care Center (VVCC) strives to maintain consistent staffing levels in order to provide continuity and proper care to residents. However, the care center faces challenges in recruiting nursing staff, due to competition from local hospitals.
- The VVCC must compete with local hospitals and long-term care facilities for the support staff and nursing staff needed to care for residents. Competition in the area of wages, benefits, and working conditions for all staff in health care is especially strong. Given that the VVCC is adjacent to Salem VA Medical Center and the close proximity of area hospitals and other long term care facilities, the problem of nursing recruitment and retention is exacerbated, especially as the nationwide pool of licensed nurses is dwindling.
- In order to maintain consistent staffing levels, the VVCC offers staff overtime work and utilizes temporary staffing agencies when needed.
- The Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center (SBVCC) monitors employment levels continuously to ensure that staffing is always adequate to meet regulatory requirements and also to provide high quality care to residents. Competition for healthcare workers in the Richmond area is intense. There are over 10 hospitals and over 30 nursing care facilities with which SBVCC competes.
- SBVCC at times faces challenges in recruiting and retaining the workforce needed, affecting nursing, dietary and housekeeping. In the

Richmond area, the competition in wages, benefits, and working conditions is fierce with so many businesses competing for qualified employees. SBVCC strives to minimally utilize temporary staffing agencies, finding it more beneficial and productive to recruit and maintain full-time or wage staff whenever possible.

### Financial Overview

Virginia's veterans care centers receive no regular operating support from the general fund; current operations rely on nongeneral fund revenue from Medicare, Medicaid, private insurance, and a per diem from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

#### Biennial Budget

	2017 General Fund	2017 Nongeneral Fund	2018 General Fund	2018 Nongeneral Fund
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	0	57,247,739	183,333	57,256,929
Changes to Initial Appropriation	0	0	-133,333	50,000

### Supporting Documents

**Title** **File Type**

**Case Management Services for Veterans Benefits [46701]**

**Description of this Program / Service Area**

This service area assists Virginia veterans and family members in the development and submission of service-connected disability and pension claims, as well as death and survivor benefits, to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. It represents veterans in the appeals process, assists with eligibility for state veterans benefits, and works in conjunction with partners to connect veterans to their federal and state veterans benefits.

**Mission Alignment**

This service area directly aligns with the department’s mission of ensuring that Virginia’s veterans and their families receive the federal and state veterans benefits they have earned through service and sacrifice.

Authority: Title 2.2, Chapter 20, Code of Virginia.

**Products and Services**

**Description of Major Products and Services**

- **Claims development and submission:** Assists veterans and family members in preparing and submitting disability compensation, pension, and other claims with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA). Assists claimants in gathering and developing the evidence (medical records, unit histories, etc.) necessary to support the claims application package.
- **Representation:** Represents veterans and family members in the appeals process. This includes assistance in the preparation of written arguments and personal representation during hearings at the USDVA Regional Office in Roanoke and before the Board of Veterans Appeals in Washington, DC.
- **Education and Connection:** Informs veterans and family members about federal and state benefits to which they may be entitled. Connects veterans and family members to services offered by DVS and other federal, state, and local partners.
- **Service Disabled, Veteran Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) Program:** Certifies that an applicant is a "service disabled veteran" in accordance with applicable section of the Code of Virginia, enabling the veteran to apply to have his/her business certified as a "service disabled veteran owned business."

**Anticipated Changes**

In 2017, DVS will open new Benefit Offices in Williamsburg (September) and at the Pentagon (TBD).

**Factors Impacting**

1. Training and experience levels of Veterans Service Representatives (VSRs): Training (initial, refresher, ongoing) is critical to agency success. It takes one to two years of training and on-the-job experience for new Veterans Service Representatives (VSRs) to become fully proficient. It is vital that the Benefits Services section has the resources (funding and staff) necessary to adequately support the intensive and sustained training program to deliver top-quality service to Virginia veterans and families.
2. Recruiting, retention, and turnover: In the past, staff turnover and funding constraints have impacted the section’s ability to keep all offices fully staffed and operational. This is especially significant because it takes approximately one to two years for a new Veterans Service Representative (claims agent) to become fully trained and proficient. While state human resource (HR) policies provide agencies with HR tools to help agencies recruit and retain qualified staff, funding constraints had severely limited the section's ability to offer competitive salary/benefits packages to attract, train, and retain claims agents. Increased FY16 funding began to remedy turnover and training issues and additional funds in FY17 and FY18 will continue recent progress in this area, but salaries in Northern Virginia continue to lag behind private business and the federal government.
3. Functionality and appearance of DVS field offices: DVS must continue to ensure that agency staff has the tools (IT and office equipment, supplies, etc.) necessary to serve our customers. DVS has focused extensively in the past two years on the functionality and appearance of DVS field offices to ensure that Virginia veterans and family members are served in a professional environment.

**Financial Overview**

The operations of the Benefit Services section are supported almost entirely by the General Fund (GF). A small (\$100,000) non-general fund appropriation will be used to launch a pilot program for diagnostic testing, provided that donated funds are received to support the pilot.

Biennial Budget

	2017 General Fund	2017 Nongeneral Fund	2018 General Fund	2018 Nongeneral Fund
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	6,732,648	100,000	7,509,744	100,000
Changes to Initial Appropriation	0	0	0	0

**Supporting Documents**

**Title** **File Type**

## Virginia Veteran and Family Support Services [46702]

### Description of this Program / Service Area

The Virginia Veteran and Family Support (VVFS) program is operated by the Virginia Department of Veterans Services (DVS), in cooperation with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) and the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS).

The VVFS was established in 2008 in response to the growing need to improve and expand services to our nation's veterans and their family members coping with the impact of deployment, military service, posttraumatic stress, operational stress and/or traumatic brain injury (TBI). VVFS monitors and coordinates the delivery of behavioral health, rehabilitative, and supportive services for Virginia veterans and their families.

The VVFS works to ensure Virginia veterans do not slip through the cracks with adequate and timely assessment, treatment, and support available to promote recovery and resilience. Through an extensive network of federal, state, and local partnerships, the VVFS serves veterans of any era who are Virginia residents, members of the Virginia National Guard and Armed Forces Reserves not in active federal service, and family members of those veterans and service members.

VVFS's purpose is to make it easier for our veterans and their families to find and get help by referring them to mental health, physical rehabilitation, and other services as needed to help them achieve individually identified goals and to periodically monitor their progress toward achieving those goals. VVFS core services include peer and family support, with hands on assistance navigating supportive services. VVFS serves our most vulnerable veterans, including justice-involved veterans, incarcerated veterans, and those at risk for, or experiencing homelessness. VVFS specializes in closing service gaps and enhancing response systems for all veterans in the Commonwealth.

### Mission Alignment

The mission of the VVFS aligns directly with the Department's mission of serving Virginia veterans and their families.

Authority: Title 2.2, Chapter 20, Code of Virginia.

### Products and Services

#### Description of Major Products and Services

- Needs assessment: For each person VVFS serves, a comprehensive assessment is conducted to identify treatment and supportive services needs and resources;
- Coordinated resources plan development: A customized plan is developed to guide each person to the right resources promoting recovery and on-going resiliency;
- Care coordination: Through an extensive network of federal, state, and local partnerships, VVFS team members provide hands-on assistance by navigating treatment and supportive services required by each person's service plan to promote the veteran/family member's recovery goals;
- Peer and family support: VVFS Resource Specialists provide individualized and/or group support to promote peer level engagement, networking/resource sharing, and ultimately increased resilience;
- Services for vulnerable veterans: VVFS closes service gaps and enhances response systems for vulnerable veterans:
  - Criminal Justice and Reentry Services: Provides specialized outreach and care coordination services to justice involved veterans and to incarcerated veterans;
  - Housing Development: Coordinates and assists statewide capacity building efforts to enhance overall access to affordable and accessible housing for veterans and to sustain the functional end to veteran homelessness in Virginia;
  - Homeless Services: Provides specialized outreach and care coordination to veterans and families experiencing housing instability or homelessness; and
  - Marketing, outreach, training: VVFS works to build awareness of veterans' service needs and the availability of the program through marketing, outreach, training for first responders, service providers, and others.

#### Anticipated Changes

The VVFS service-delivery model will change beginning in FY18 from a contract employee model to a state employee model. The change is a result of the recommendations of the VVFS Working Group, which were presented to the General Assembly's Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) in November 2016. The Working Group's recommendations were adopted through legislation and budget actions approved by the 2017 General Assembly and signed by the Governor. The change to a state-employee service-delivery model will better standardize VVFS services across the Commonwealth while still maintaining the partnerships with local, state, federal, and non-profit agencies that have been vital to VVFS's success.

A key part of the new service model will be the co-location of VVFS and Benefit Services staff in 17 locations, greatly increasing the synergy between the two DVS divisions and allowing for greater referrals from VVFS to Benefits and vice versa, all of which will help improve outcomes for Virginia veterans and families.

#### Factors Impacting

1. Building and maintaining successful partnerships with other agencies and entities: VVFS is built around an extensive network of federal,



state, and local partners. VVFS must work diligently to build and maintain these partnerships to ensure the best possible outcomes for VVFS clients.

2. Flexibility and adaptation: The needs of VVFS clients are both evolving and emerging. VVFS services have expanded since 2008 to address these new requirements. VVFS is now working with military families where both spouses are active-duty and facing deployments. VVFS must continue to be responsive to the changing needs of veterans and families.
3. Resources (funding and staffing): The Governor and General Assembly have provided the full funding and positions requested to convert VVFS to an all-state employee service-delivery model in FY18. As with other DVS programs, VVFS must have the funding and staffing resources to recruit, hire, and retain highly qualified professionals in order to deliver quality services to Virginia’s veterans and family members. VVFS will closely monitor funding and staffing levels to ensure that resources are sufficient to meet requirements in FY19/20 and beyond.

### Financial Overview

The Virginia Veteran and Family Support is supported primarily by the General Fund (GF), but Nongeneral Funds (NGF) also support VVFS operations. NGF monies come from grants and donations. Donated funds are held in the Veterans Services Fund and are allocated to DVS/VVFS to support VVFS services.

Program 46702 includes up to \$200,000 (GF) per year for the VHDA-operated Granting Freedom program.

#### Biennial Budget

	2017 General Fund	2017 Nongeneral Fund	2018 General Fund	2018 Nongeneral Fund
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	2,991,394	982,054	3,778,382	982,054
Changes to Initial Appropriation	0	0	610,128	0

### Supporting Documents

**Title** **File Type**

## Veterans Education, Transition, and Employment Services [46703]

### Description of this Program / Service Area

This service area is responsible for:

- Supporting the creation of employment opportunities for Virginia veterans through the Virginia Values Veterans (V3) Program.
- Assisting veterans transitioning from military service to achieve success through employment, education/training, or entrepreneurship through the Virginia Transition Assistance Program (VTAP).
- Providing transitioning military service members with specialized medical training an opportunity for employment at select Virginia health care system partners through the Military Medics and Corpsmen (MMAC) pilot program.

### Mission Alignment

The Virginia Department of Veterans Services (DVS) recognizes the importance of providing educational, training, and employment opportunities for veterans and their eligible dependents. The Veterans Education, Training, and Employment (VETE) section's mission aligns with the departmental philosophy to support the education, training, employment, and personal development of veterans and their families.

Authority: Title 2.2, Chapter 20, Code of Virginia.

### Products and Services

#### Description of Major Products and Services

DVS employment and transition services include:

- **Virginia Values Veterans (V3) Program:** Provides education, training, and connectivity resources to assist employers to recruit, hire, and retain a highly-skilled, well-educated, and easily-trained talent pool: Virginia's Veterans.
- **Virginia Transition Assistance Program (VTAP):** Assists military service members and veterans in their transition to post-military education, training, employment, and entrepreneurial opportunities.
- **Military Medics and Corpsmen Program (MMAC):** Provides service members with specialized medical training an opportunity for employment at select Virginia health care system partners, a pathway to licensure and long-term medical careers, and a solution to acute health care staffing shortages in Virginia's health care industry.
- **Job Training, Employment Skills Training, Apprenticeships and Internships (JTEST-AI) Initiative:** We are proud that Virginia is the first state in the nation to partner with DOD's SkillBridge program, also referred to as JTEST-AI (Jobs Training Employment Skills Training-Apprenticeships & Internships). SkillBridge is an innovative program allowing active duty service members to work for employers, gaining valuable skills and civilian employment experience. Tremendous opportunities exist for the Commonwealth of Virginia to leverage SkillBridge with our current existing programs.

### Anticipated Changes

In Executive Order 23, Governor McAuliffe set a goal, by the end of his administration, of doubling the number of veterans hired by V3 companies. DVS reached this goal 900 days early. The new goal was set at 20,000 veterans hired. DVS reached this goal 400 days early. The goal is now 25,000 veterans hired by the end of Governor McAuliffe's term.

Beginning July 1, 2015, DVS started awarding grants under the V3 Grant Program. A V3 company, with fewer than 300 employees, that hired a veteran within one year of his/her transition from the military and retains that veteran for a year, may apply for a \$1,000 grant from DVS. Grants are capped at \$10,000 per company per year.

Starting July 1, 2016, DVS began the Military Medics & Corpsmen (MMAC) pilot program. There are six Partner Health Systems (PHS), three of whom have signed the MOA and GSOP and have started hiring. MMAC staff have communicated with 1,947 potential candidates and responded to 316 inquiries. As of April 2017, 11 former medics and corpsmen have been hired, and 46 additional applicants are in the screening/hiring process.

### Factors Impacting

- Staffing: Expanding capacity for V3, MMAC, VTAP, JTEST-AI/SkillBridge is contingent on staff and available resources.
- Building and maintaining successful partnerships with Virginia businesses, Governor's Workforce Board, Local Planning Groups, key stakeholders and military installations.
- Flexibility and adaptability: continuing to expand online-based resources and tools for all TEP to create larger reach to companies and veterans in transition.
- Communications and outreach: utilizing social media campaigns, branding, and other avenues to expand participation by both veterans and companies to connect job-seeking veterans with high-quality, high-paying jobs in the Commonwealth at companies that appreciate their military service.
- Continuing to grow the grant program.
- Expanding V3 through the V3 Educators pilot initiative to increase the pipeline of student veterans finding employment in Virginia.
- Expanding the opportunity to create non-traditional pathways to employment; increasing the employer pipeline and interest in hiring veterans.

- Increase engagement with employers after veterans are hired to assist in retention efforts.

### Financial Overview

V3, VTAP, and MMAC are funded through the General Fund. The number of veterans these programs can serve is dependent on funding levels. As the number of veterans served by the programs grows in future fiscal years, additional resources may be required to meet demand for services. V3 also utilizes non-general (donor) funds to enhance employer outreach and training programs.

#### Biennial Budget

	<b>2017 General Fund</b>	<b>2017 Nongeneral Fund</b>	<b>2018 General Fund</b>	<b>2018 Nongeneral Fund</b>
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	2,664,999	200,000	2,744,000	200,000
Changes to Initial Appropriation	-144,057	0	0	0

### Supporting Documents

**Title** **File Type**

**General Management and Direction [49901]****Description of this Program / Service Area**

The Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner lead agency operations. They are supported by the Directors of Communications, Finance, Human Resources, and Policy & Planning; by the Chief Information Officer; and by the Administrative Services team. The Administrative Services section provides fiscal, payroll, procurement, information technology, human resources, development, legislative, and budget support for agency operations. Legal services are provided by the Office of the Attorney General.

**Mission Alignment**

The Administrative Services section supports the department's six service delivery sections in serving Virginia veterans and family members.

Authority: Title 2.2, Chapter 20, Code of Virginia.

**Products and Services****Description of Major Products and Services**

The Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner lead the agency.

The Directors of Communications, Finance, Human Resources, and Policy & Planning; the Chief Information Officer; and the Administrative Services team provides multiple services to the department's service-delivery sections, including:

- Communications, marketing, and outreach: Development of printed material, including DVS informational brochures and the Virginia Veterans Resource Guide, to support and promote department operations. Website development and management. Communication to veterans and families through multiple channels, of print, electronic, social media, etc. Event planning. Media coordination;
- Development: Coordination of activities related to the receipt and spending of donated funds with the Veterans Services Foundation;
- Fiscal management and financial reporting: budgeting, auditing, accounts payable and accounts receivable, payroll processing, procurement of goods and services, construction project tracking and cost reporting, Grants management and reporting, and recording of Capital assets and inventory control;
- Human Resources: Employee recruitment and selection, employee evaluations, position classification and compensation, grievance processing, and administration of benefits plans;
- Coordination with and support of the operations of the Board of Veterans Services (BVS), the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (JLC), the Virginia War Memorial Board (VWMB), and the Veterans Services Foundation (VSF), enabling these boards to fulfill their code-mandated powers and duties.
- Development of legislative and budget proposals for consideration by the Governor and General Assembly. Coordination of budget and legislative activities with multiple stakeholders, especially the above mentioned boards and the General Assembly Military and Veterans Caucus. Legislative tracking and disseminating information on veterans legislation to key stakeholders.
- Development and promulgation of agency operating and management policies.
- Strategic plan development, including reporting in the Virginia Performs/Performance Budgeting systems.
- Information Technology (IT) support for all agency operations, including:
  - DVS IT systems architecture and infrastructure planning, support, and project management;
  - DVS information security management and data integrity planning, support, and oversight; and
  - VITA/NG service delivery, program mandates, and project management.
- Continuity of Operations (COOP) and Disaster Recovery: Coordinate/lead all agency activities associated with the planning and preparation for, and recovery from, natural or man-made events that interrupt the delivery of agency services.
- Legal support for DVS operations is provided by the Office of the Attorney General.

**Anticipated Changes**

The Commonwealth of Virginia transitioned to a new accounting system (Cardinal), which replaced CARS (Commonwealth Accounting and Reporting System). DVS is scheduled to transition to Cardinal in 2016-2017 (18-month process with significant impact to agency financial operations).

The opening of two new veterans care centers in 2019 will require growth of the agency's administrative support structure.

**Factors Impacting**

Multiple factors impact the Administrative Services section:

- Resource levels (staffing and funding);
- Changes in state policies (HR, financial management);
- Coordination with state central agencies (VITA, Department of Accounts, Department of General Services, Auditor of Public Accounts).

**Financial Overview**

The majority of funding for the Administrative Services section comes from a General Fund appropriation, while a portion comes from Nongeneral Funds transferred from the Department's service sections.

Biennial Budget

	2017 General Fund	2017 Nongeneral Fund	2018 General Fund	2018 Nongeneral Fund
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	2,344,984	474,595	2,423,929	476,298
Changes to Initial Appropriation	0	0	-115,000	0

Supporting Documents

Title File Type

**State Veterans Cemetery Management and Operations [50206]****Description of this Program / Service Area**

Virginia's three state-operated veterans cemeteries provide honorable burial and memorial services to Virginia's veterans and eligible dependents. The Virginia Veterans Cemetery is located in Amelia, the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery in Suffolk, and the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery in Dublin.

**Mission Alignment**

This service area directly aligns with the department's mission of ensuring that Virginia's veterans and their eligible dependents receive the perpetual care they have earned through service and sacrifice.

Authority: Title 2.2, Chapter 20, Code of Virginia.

**Products and Services****Description of Major Products and Services**

Virginia's veterans cemeteries offer the following services at no charge to eligible veterans:

- Interment in a ground plot for casketed remains, or the above-ground or in-ground inurnment for cremated remains;
- The opening and closing of a gravesite;
- Through the USDVA, a grave marker, with inscription;
- Placement of the grave marker;
- Perpetual care of the gravesite; and
- Advanced planning for interment and inurnment services.

Spouses and eligible dependents are normally buried in the same grave as the veteran, with other burial benefits (opening and closing of the gravesite, perpetual care, etc.) being the same as for the veteran. Virginia's veterans cemeteries charge a small fee for the burial of a spouse or dependent. Since July 1, 2014, this has been set at \$300. The spouse/dependent fee is reviewed annually.

Each of Virginia's three state veterans cemeteries provide three burial options: in-ground burial (interment) of casketed remains, in-ground burial (inurnment) of cremated remains, and above-ground inurnment of cremated remains (columbarium).

Casketed gravesites are identified with authorized markers—marble or granite at the cemetery in Amelia, granite at the cemeteries in Suffolk and Dublin.

Cremated remains are inurned in the same manner and with the same honors as casketed remains. Ground inurnments are marked with flat gray granite markers at all three cemeteries, while above ground (columbarium) inurnments are marked by an inscribed niche cover—marble at the cemetery in Amelia, granite at the cemeteries in Suffolk and Dublin.

For casketed remains, outer burial containers are provided to veterans at no cost. However, a veteran and/or family member may elect to purchase their own outer burial container from the cemeteries or from a funeral home. For cremated remains, each veteran and family member must provide his or her own metal, plastic, or marbleized urn. Wooden urns may be used for above ground inurnments only. Urn arrangements are made with a funeral director at the time funeral services are arranged.

Upon being contacted concerning a death, cemetery representatives coordinate the collection of all appropriate paperwork and verification of eligibility.

All forms are assembled, verified, and entered in the Burial Operation Support System (BOSS) computer program for space assignment and in preparation for ordering of the requested grave marker.

Cemetery representatives schedule the funeral service time and date with the applicable funeral home and family representative(s). Family representative(s) are required to meet with the cemetery representatives(s) at the cemetery prior to finalizing the funeral service preparations.

On the day of the scheduled service, cemetery representatives meet the funeral procession as it enters the Committal Shelter area (Suffolk and Dublin) or the Chapel area (Amelia). Cemetery representatives guide the funeral party through the funeral service, which can be very emotional, often lasting 45 minutes to an hour. Continuous accountability of the remains is maintained during transfer to the cemetery from the funeral home by signatures of each handler on a document verifying assigned serial number, a serialized nylon strap is then attached to the casket/cremation urn. The original signed document will be placed in the family folder at the cemetery office and the copy is passed to the funeral home.

Grounds personnel work diligently to ensure the cemetery is maintained to the highest standards. Grave/cremation sites are laid out, verified, opened, and closed daily. Grass, trees, and mulch beds are continually maintained to ensure the best possible landscape appearance is presented.

Burial of unclaimed cremated remains: Occasionally, a veteran will pass away without having made prior arrangements for burial in a private or veterans cemetery. If this veteran was indigent, or no family member comes forward to arrange for a funeral, his or her body may become the responsibility of the local government. In some cases, the remains of the veteran are turned over to a local funeral home for cremation, with the cremated remains being stored at the funeral home, sometimes indefinitely. DVS has partnered with private organizations and other government



entities in an effort to identify unclaimed veterans cremated remains being stored at funeral homes, crematories and medical examiners facilities, and to facilitate the transfer of those unclaimed remains to a state veterans cemetery, where DVS provides a dignified final resting place.

### **Anticipated Changes**

No changes are anticipated to products and services. The number of interments is anticipated to increase.

### **Factors Impacting**

The interment or inurnment is the most important function carried out in the cemetery. The period of time between the arrival of a funeral procession at the cemetery gate until the time the last member of a funeral party has left the cemetery is viewed by cemetery employees as the most important time of the day. It is the time when cemetery employees must display the highest degree of compassion and concern, especially while in the presence of the family and friends. It is during this time that the physical and emotional strain of family members and friends is at its highest peak. To this end, it is imperative that cemetery employees ensure each service is conducted with maximum efficiency, without sacrificing the dignity and reverence accorded. A dignified and reverent service helps begin the healing process, and often forms a lasting impression in the minds of the deceased's family and friends.

Factors affecting the ability of cemeteries to provide the highest degree of products and services are:

### **STAFFING**

- Maintenance of appropriate staffing levels directly affects customer service and the overall appearance of the cemetery.
- Staffing levels are determined by numerous factors. The most important factor is the number of in-ground burials per year. Each one expands the size of the burial garden sections, which in turn increases the workload of the cemetery grounds staff to perform ongoing grounds maintenance and to keep the headstones aligned.
- Cemetery employees generally fill one of three roles:
  - Administrative: Manage cemetery operations, including making funeral arrangements, greeting arriving funeral parties, etc. Administrative employees include the Cemeteries Director, who is responsible for all facets of operations at all three cemeteries;
  - Grounds maintenance: Handling the physical activities associated with opening and closing gravesites and maintain the grounds and physical plant of the cemetery;
  - Vehicle and equipment mechanic: Handled by groundskeepers at smaller cemeteries, a dedicated vehicle and equipment mechanic is needed when the number of burials per year exceeds 300.
- Minimum staffing levels necessary to operate each of Virginia's veterans cemeteries, based on the number of burials (interments and inurnments) per year. (Note: staffing levels are derived from a combination of sources, including experience at Virginia's three state-operated veterans cemeteries, staffing levels at national cemeteries, and staffing levels at civilian cemeteries with workloads similar to Virginia's veterans cemeteries):
  - 0 – 100 burials per year: 1.5 administrative employees and 2.5 groundskeepers
  - 101 – 200 burials per year: 1.5 administrative employees and 3 groundskeepers
  - 201 – 300 burials per year: 1.5 administrative employees and 3.5 groundskeepers
  - 301 – 400 burials per year: 2 administrative employees and 4 groundskeepers
  - 401 – 500 burials per year: 2 administrative employees, 5 groundskeepers, and 1 mechanic
  - 501 – 600 burials per year: 2.5 administrative employees, 6 groundskeepers, and 1 mechanic
  - 601 – 700 burials per year: 2.5 administrative employees, 7 groundskeepers, and 1 mechanic
  - 701 – 800 burials per year: 3 administrative employees, 7.5 groundskeepers, and 1 mechanic
  - 801 – 900 burials per year: 3 administrative employees, 8 groundskeepers, and 1 mechanic
  - 901 – 1,000 burials per year: 3.5 administrative employees, 9 groundskeepers, and 1 mechanic
  - 1,001 – 1,100 burials per year: 4 administrative employees, 10 groundskeepers, and 1 mechanic
  - 1,101 – 1,200 burials per year: 4 administrative employees, 10.5 groundskeepers, and 1 mechanic

NOTE: The Cemeteries Director, Assistant Cemeteries Director and Cemeteries Administrations Manager, who provide leadership and management to all three cemeteries, are not included in the numbers above.

NOTE: A full-time employee is one who works 40 or more hours per week. A part-time employee (identified by a ".5" above) is one who works 22 to 26 hours per week.

NOTE: In addition to performing burials, the groundskeepers are responsible for the care of the cemetery grounds. This includes grass mowing/trimming and edging, headstone placement/periodic adjustment, grave site repairs, adjustments to the soil level around gravesites, and building/structure upkeep.

NOTE: For every 3,000 full casket markers in the cemetery, one additional groundskeeper must be added to the grounds staff to facilitate the extra care and maintenance required.

NOTE: State veterans cemeteries are built in phases. Amelia and Dublin cemeteries are in Phase One, utilizing approximately 26 developed acres, includes burial garden sections, the maintenance compound buildings, the committal shelter/chapel building, and the cemetery office building. The Suffolk cemetery, with the ongoing new construction, is in Phase Two, with approximately 40 developed acres. Subsequent phases usually add approximately 15 acres. The future opening of each additional phase will necessitate hiring one or two additional groundskeeper to maintain the additional acreage.

### **BUDGETING**

- Management of a phased replacement program for grounds maintenance equipment. Old and worn out equipment must be replaced in a timely fashion;
- Management of a phased replacement program for building furnishings and office equipment;
- Procurement of new and up-to-date maintenance equipment, building furnishings and office equipment;
- Maintenance of cemetery grounds through seeding, fertilization, and weed control;
- Provision of periodic pay raises for cemetery employees, helping the cemeteries to attract and retain a skilled and dedicated workforce; and
- Creation of an advertising campaign in order to reach a greater number of veterans. Such efforts would help to offset the efforts of private cemeteries to sell gravesite spaces to veterans who are unaware of their right to a free burial in a veterans cemetery. These veterans are generally aged 25 to 50 and do not belong to a veterans groups, which might have provided them with information about burial in a veterans cemetery.

## **OTHER RESOURCES**

- Volunteer assistance: Local veterans, citizens, and Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) give selflessly of their time to assist in many facets of cemetery operations, from manning information displays to organizing ceremonies on Memorial Day and Veterans Day. Veterans groups and individuals have also donated such items as benches, improving the overall appearance of the cemeteries;
- Local funeral homes: Cemetery personnel work with local funeral directors to help ensure that veterans and their families receive the information needed to contact any of our Virginia's veterans cemeteries in their time of need;
- Local veterans and VSO posts/chapters do a great deal to assist with communications and marketing the cemeteries at no cost to DVS; and
- Local newspapers/media: One of the best sources for getting cemetery information out to the public is through local newspapers and media outlets, which do stories on the cemeteries at Memorial Day and Veterans Day, as well as some coverage of unclaimed cremains burials.

## **WEATHER**

- Potential affect on the ability of cemetery staff to safely reach the cemetery;
- Potential affect on the ability of funeral parties to safely reach the cemetery;
- Potential loss of power or telephone service during a rain or snow storm; and
- Potential difficulties to conduct scheduled funeral services include winter ice and snow, which raises the risk of injuries caused by slips, falls, and in the summer there is the threat of sunstroke, with the attendant risk of liability.

## **PRE-PLANNING**

- At privately-owned/operated cemeteries, pre-planning for burial usually involves the purchase of a cemetery burial plot in advance of one's death (or in advance of the death of a family member). Many privately owned/operated cemeteries have a dedicated sales and marketing staff for this purpose;
- Because Virginia's state veterans cemeteries do not charge for burial plots, pre-planning efforts focus instead on eligibility determination through the "pre-application" process, in which veterans and/or family members may submit the necessary documents to the cemetery to determine eligibility; the documents are kept on file until needed. Submission of these documents does not commit the veteran to be buried at the cemetery.
- Some World War II and Korean War-era veterans may have already completed their pre-planned funeral arrangements with privately owned/operated cemeteries, meaning they will not choose a veterans cemetery as their final resting place;
- Virginia's veterans cemeteries will continue to focus marketing efforts on veterans of all ages, in order to make them aware of the benefits offered by Virginia's veterans cemeteries before they opt to pre-purchase a plot in a privately owned/operated cemetery.

## **LOCATION VERSUS POPULATION**

- Choosing a site on which to build a new veterans cemetery is dependent on many factors, including the identification of a suitable and affordable site, the current state budget climate, and the number of eligible veterans residing within 75 miles of the proposed location. Virginia's veterans cemeteries are well located to serve the concentrations of veterans living in central, southeast, and southwest Virginia. Many military members choose to retire near military bases in order to take advantage of health care, commissary, and base exchange facilities.
- The Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery, in Suffolk, is in close proximity to the Navy, Air Force, Army, and Coast Guard bases in the Tidewater region and thus has a large veteran and retire population on which to draw.
- The opening of the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery (Dublin) in 2011 ensured that the memorial needs of veterans living within a 75-mile radius of the Dublin area are met.
- The Virginia Veterans Cemetery in Amelia ensures the memorial needs of veterans living in the greater Richmond metro area and Piedmont region are met.
- Northern Virginia is served by national cemeteries in Quantico and Culpeper.

## **Financial Overview**

Funding for the Cemetery Services section comes from a mix of state, federal, and private funds.

Nongeneral fund revenue comes from two sources. DVS receives a plot allowance from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for each veteran buried (\$747 as of July 1, 2016). A \$300 fee is charged for each spouse or dependent buried. Nongeneral funds received are based on the number of burials performed.

Biennial Budget

	<b>2017 General Fund</b>	<b>2017 Nongeneral Fund</b>	<b>2018 General Fund</b>	<b>2018 Nongeneral Fund</b>
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	1,088,538	789,769	1,088,538	789,769
Changes to Initial Appropriation	0	0	0	10,000

**Supporting Documents**

<b>Title</b>	<b>File Type</b>
2013 Virginia State Veterans Cemetery Studyyyyy	Adobe PDF

## Virginia War Memorial Management and Operations [50209]

### Description of this Program / Service Area

The Virginia War Memorial is the Commonwealth's memorial to honor its war dead from World War II to the present, and all patriotic Virginians who rendered faithful service and sacrifice in the cause of freedom and liberty for the Commonwealth and the nation in time of war. The Memorial honors these Virginians by passing their story of sacrifice forward through various education programs, to include documentary films, lectures, seminars, institutes, conferences, exhibits, ceremonies, travel to learn series, and other programs. The Memorial, including the Shrine of Memory and the Galanti Education Center, is situated on 4.3 acres with the statues, reflecting pool, eternal flame, amphitheater, and memorial plantings.

### Mission Alignment

The mission of the Virginia War Memorial aligns with the Department of Veterans Services mission of serving Virginia's veterans and their eligible dependents.

Authority: Title 2.2, Chapter 20, Code of Virginia.

### Products and Services

#### Description of Major Products and Services

- The Memorial: The Commonwealth of Virginia's monument to honor the memory of Virginia's men and women who demonstrated a willingness to serve and fight to defend our way of life from World War II to the present;
- *Virginians at War* documentary film series and teacher lesson plans produced by the Virginia War Memorial;
- Educational Events: Student seminars, field trips, JROTC Appreciation Week, teacher institutes, and patriotic events;
- Salute to Virginia Veterans interactive online database;
- Research Library;
- Artifact Displays;
- *Into Battle* near-virtual reality film; and
- Over 30 special events annually (Memorial Day, Veterans Day, POW/MIA Day, Patriot Day, Pearl Harbor Day, etc.).

The Paul and Phyllis Galanti Education Center includes:

- A multi-purpose room and a training room to accommodate school field trips, veteran groups, active military, and general visitors and tourists;
- A dedicated theater to display the Memorial's award-winning educational film series, *Virginians at War*;
- A multi-purpose room/theater to display the "*Into Battle*" near-virtual reality film, which places the viewer in the middle of an active battlefield;
- Space for storage and access to the Memorial Research Library, which consists of books, posters, magazines, newspapers and films;
- Exhibit space to highlight the conflicts in which Virginians served and sacrificed; and
- The Heilman Amphitheatre, an outdoor venue for patriotic and veterans' events at the Memorial.

### Anticipated Changes

The opening of the new wing will expand the Shrine of Memory to hold the names of Virginia Heroes from the War on Terror; triple the Memorial's parking capacity, increase educational outreach through a Long Distance Learning Center and new classrooms; add additional artifact displays, including a new gallery; expand administrative space; and add additional rest rooms to assist with large indoor and outdoor events. These additional educational programs and events will precipitate the staff growing in size. The Memorial will hire a Facilities Manager for the first time ever, as well as a full-time Assistant Curator and additional support staff..

### Factors Impacting

Funding and staffing levels are the primary factors impacting the Virginia War Memorial to fulfill its mission of *Honoring our Veterans, Preserving our History, Educating our Youth, and Inspiring Patriotism in All*. Over the past 20 years, the Memorial has been transformed from no employees, two programs/ceremonies and fewer than 9,200 visitors a year, to the major tourist destination and education center that it is today. Currently, the Memorial's seven employees conduct over 50 programs annually and host 65,000 visitors a year. The demand for Memorial programs and facilities will grow with the planned 2019 opening of the 25,000 square foot addition.

### Financial Overview

Funding for Virginia War Memorial operations and maintenance comes entirely from General Funds. The number of visitors to the Memorial has steadily increased since the opening of the Paul and Phyllis Galanti Education Center, and as a result of the many patriotic events and educational programs offered at the Memorial.

The Virginia War Memorial Foundation, a 501(c)(3), supports the Virginia War Memorial's education programs and capital projects. Educational programs developed by the Memorial, such as the *Virginians at War* film series, are now being used in middle and high schools statewide with the

endorsement of the Governor and the Virginia Department of Education. Staff and facility support requirements have increased accordingly as the number of visitors has increased.

Biennial Budget

	2017 General Fund	2017 Nongeneral Fund	2018 General Fund	2018 Nongeneral Fund
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	1,138,588	0	1,448,142	0
Changes to Initial Appropriation	0	0	0	0

**Supporting Documents**

**Title** **File Type**