



# DRIVEN BY PASSION & PURPOSE

2025 ANNUAL REPORT



★★★★★  
ELEVATING OUR COMMITMENT  
TO SERVING MINNESOTA  
VETERANS & THEIR FAMILIES





#### 10.15.24

Minnesota celebrates a milestone in ending Veteran homelessness with the Hennepin County Continuum of Care reaching “functional zero.”

#### 10.22.24

Commissioner Lindsay with artist Jendayi Berry at the unveiling of a new mural at the Minneapolis Veterans Home.

#### 04.09.25

Southeast Asian allies attend Veterans Day on the Hill to advocate for Veteran-friendly policies.



#### Fellow Minnesotans:

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) makes a positive difference and maximizes quality of life for the more than 286,000 Veterans who call our state home.

With the tremendous progress we are making on our mission — serving Minnesota Veterans, their dependents and survivors — we have some exciting successes to report for the 2025 fiscal year (FY 2025).

#### A STEP CLOSER TO ENDING VETERAN HOMELESSNESS

In October 2024, Hennepin County Continuum of Care (CoC) leaders announced an effective end to Veteran homelessness. This milestone leaves only the Ramsey County CoC to reach the same goal for Minnesota to effectively end Veteran homelessness.

This does not mean that one of our Veterans may never experience homelessness. Rather, improvements to our response system means that we can immediately address the need so that when a Veteran is experiencing homelessness, it is a rare, brief and singular event.

#### STATE FUNDING CEMENTS ONGOING COMMITMENT TO VETERANS

In 2025, the Minnesota Legislature passed an Omnibus Veterans Bill for the fourth consecutive session. This win positions MDVA to not only sustain the programs and services that benefit Veterans, but to elevate them.

MDVA is exceptionally grateful for the ongoing investment in Minnesota’s heroes.

Thank you to Governor Tim Walz, Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan and our State Legislators.

#### INCREASING EXCELLENCE IN VETERAN AFFAIRS

While these successes are worthy of celebration, MDVA is committed to doing even more for Minnesota Veterans. Here are MDVA priorities to provide the best service to those who have served:

- Expanding care to accommodate more Residents in our Veterans Homes across the state.
- Continuing support of our Veterans and families in crisis with the launch of a comprehensive suicide prevention awareness program.
- Facilitating the work of the Secret War in Laos Special Guerilla Unit Taskforce as they identify benefits to award our Southeast Asian allies who are also Minnesota residents and who supported the United States during the Vietnam War.

Together, let us continue raising the bar in service of Minnesota Veterans.

**BRADLEY S. LINDSAY**  
Commissioner



## 05.23.25

The Omnibus Veterans Bill is signed into law, cementing Minnesota's ongoing commitment to Veterans.



**“After a historic year of growth and expansion in 2024, MDVA began 2025 with a renewed commitment to ensure Minnesota Veterans and their families receive the services and support they have earned.”**

— Brad Lindsay, Commissioner

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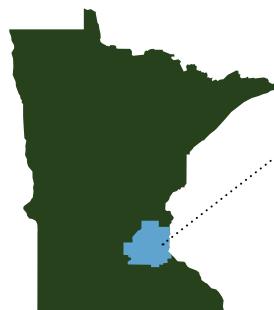
MDVA is dedicated to the service and sacrifice of our state's Veterans, dependents and survivors.



**17,921,241**  
U.S. Veterans

**286,593**  
MINNESOTA VETERANS

VETERANS MAKE UP 4.9% OF THE POPULATION IN MINNESOTA



★ 47% ★

Nearly 47 percent of Minnesota Veterans live in the seven-county metro area.

## Demographics:

### RACE:

White	<b>262,437</b>
Black or African American	<b>6,918</b>
Hispanic or Latino	<b>6,134</b>
Other	<b>5,337</b>
Asian	<b>3,408</b>
American Indian	<b>2,253</b>
Pacific Islander	<b>106</b>

### Service era:



## NUMBER OF VETERANS BY COUNTY

Aitkin	<b>1,358</b>	Martin	<b>1,342</b>
Anoka	<b>19,024</b>	McLeod	<b>2,103</b>
Becker	<b>2,534</b>	Meeker	<b>1,327</b>
Beltrami	<b>2,650</b>	Mille Lacs	<b>1,920</b>
Benton	<b>2,320</b>	Morrison	<b>2,659</b>
Big Stone	<b>323</b>	Mower	<b>2,155</b>
Blue Earth	<b>3,062</b>	Murray	<b>515</b>
Brown	<b>1,381</b>	Nicollet	<b>1,668</b>
Carlton	<b>2,547</b>	Nobles	<b>924</b>
Carver	<b>4,146</b>	Norman	<b>393</b>
Cass	<b>2,467</b>	Olmsted	<b>8,365</b>
Chippewa	<b>834</b>	Otter Tail	<b>3,962</b>
Chisago	<b>3,613</b>	Pennington	<b>748</b>
Clay	<b>3,419</b>	Pine	<b>2,250</b>
Clearwater	<b>643</b>	Pipestone	<b>460</b>
Cook	<b>318</b>	Polk	<b>1,725</b>
Cottonwood	<b>543</b>	Pope	<b>862</b>
Crow Wing	<b>4,811</b>	Ramsey	<b>21,478</b>
Dakota	<b>21,927</b>	Red Lake	<b>258</b>
Dodge	<b>1,046</b>	Redwood	<b>780</b>
Douglas	<b>2,453</b>	Renville	<b>840</b>
Faribault	<b>930</b>	Rice	<b>3,541</b>
Fillmore	<b>1,175</b>	Rock	<b>525</b>
Freeborn	<b>1,935</b>	Roseau	<b>850</b>
Goodhue	<b>2,889</b>	Scott	<b>6,182</b>
Grant	<b>376</b>	Sherburne	<b>5,457</b>
Hennepin	<b>48,555</b>	Sibley	<b>850</b>
Houston	<b>1,102</b>	St. Louis	<b>13,916</b>
Hubbard	<b>1,854</b>	Stearns	<b>9,261</b>
Isanti	<b>2,572</b>	Steele	<b>2,047</b>
Itasca	<b>3,433</b>	Stevens	<b>367</b>
Jackson	<b>616</b>	Swift	<b>571</b>
Kanabec	<b>1,240</b>	Todd	<b>1,722</b>
Kandiyohi	<b>2,172</b>	Traverse	<b>233</b>
Kittson	<b>213</b>	Wabasha	<b>1,303</b>
Koochiching	<b>956</b>	Wadena	<b>902</b>
Lac Qui Parle	<b>489</b>	Waseca	<b>1,071</b>
Lake	<b>786</b>	Washington	<b>12,895</b>
Lake of the Woods	<b>294</b>	Watonwan	<b>590</b>
Le Sueur	<b>1,595</b>	Wilkin	<b>357</b>
Lincoln	<b>368</b>	Winona	<b>2,449</b>
Lyon	<b>1,386</b>	Wright	<b>7,039</b>
Mahnomen	<b>256</b>	Yellow Medicine	<b>605</b>
Marshall	<b>515</b>		

All numbers reflect FY 2025.



**“Over the past 20 years of Jeffrey’s service, I’ve learned that strength doesn’t mean doing it all on your own. The hardest, yet most important, lesson has been realizing there’s no shame in asking for help. True strength is knowing when to reach out and let others support you.”**

— Jessica Cook, Air Force Veteran and military spouse



Jessica and Jeffrey Cook and their four children on the beach at Lake Superior.

## Service: A family commitment

Having served as a firefighter in the Air Force for seven years, including deployment to Iraq, Veteran Jessica Cook approaches family life with resilience and a sense of purpose.

Jessica’s spouse, Air Force Master Sergeant Jeffrey Cook, is an instructor for the Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) program at the University of Minnesota Duluth. When duty to country requires Jeffrey to be away from home, Jessica’s own service has enabled her to put the mission first, adapt quickly to change and find strength.

Whether supporting the effort to establish Women Veterans Recognition Day in Minnesota or building awareness of available benefits for Veterans and their families, Jessica has made it her civilian duty to create and foster community.

### 08.27.24

MDVA participated in Military Appreciation Day at the Minnesota State Fair, honoring military spouses like Veteran Jessica Cook.



# Striving to end Veteran homelessness

**Minnesota continues to invest in a Veteran homelessness response system that is proving successful.**

Following a decade of focused attention, Minnesota is close to effectively ending Veteran homelessness across the state with the Hennepin County Continuum of Care, the ninth of 10 regions in the state, reaching “functional zero” in October 2024.

“Functional zero” means that a community has measurably solved Veteran homelessness and when it does occur, it is rare, brief and non-recurring. MDVA continues to work to bring all regions to functional zero, maintain that status and continue to improve and invest in Veteran needs.

“At a time when homelessness is rising across the country, we’ve turned the tide. Since February 2023, across the state, Veteran homelessness has been reduced by 43% and chronic Veteran homelessness by 92%. And in Hennepin County specifically, Veteran homelessness has been reduced by 44% and chronic Veteran homelessness has been reduced by an astonishing 84%. Each of these numbers represents a Veteran who now has a home,” says Commissioner Lindsay.

## Throughout FY 2025

Residents moved into Ultima House, a new eight-unit apartment building that opened in May 2024. It is the first supportive housing option for Veterans experiencing homelessness in the Rochester area. Ultima House was purchased and is operated by Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV) with financial support from MDVA.



Ultima House Veteran Residents from left to right: Kevin Weinkauf, Barrie Skweres, Donald Battey with Bentley, Lisa Ablietner Watson, Brandon Engelke and Darrell Carlson.



## Continued efforts to reduce the number of Veterans who experience homelessness

The Minnesota Homeless Veteran Registry connects Veterans who are experiencing homelessness with housing and services in their community.

The Veteran Temporary Emergency Housing Assistance Program (VTEMP) reimburses community service providers for covering the cost of temporary hotel rooms or non-congregate temporary units for Veterans and members of their households who are actively experiencing homelessness — especially in areas of Minnesota with little or no access to temporary or emergency housing. The success rate for VTEMP was 77%.

## MDVA Programs

- The Minnesota Veterans Entering Stable Tenancy (MNVEST) Program** provides housing subsidies for Veterans experiencing homelessness, or in danger of experiencing homelessness, and are not eligible for federal housing subsidies.
- SOAR (SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery)** works with key organizations and community groups to provide Minnesota's at-risk Veterans and those experiencing homelessness with expanded access to Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits.
- The Homes for Veterans Property Management Incentive Program** offers property managers the support, financial incentive and risk protection for providing a home to a Veteran.

## FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR VETERANS

MNVEST Program	\$ 2.16 million
SOAR	\$ 61,068*
Higher Barrier Incentive Fund	\$ 114,000
Vacancy Relief Fund	\$ 6,064

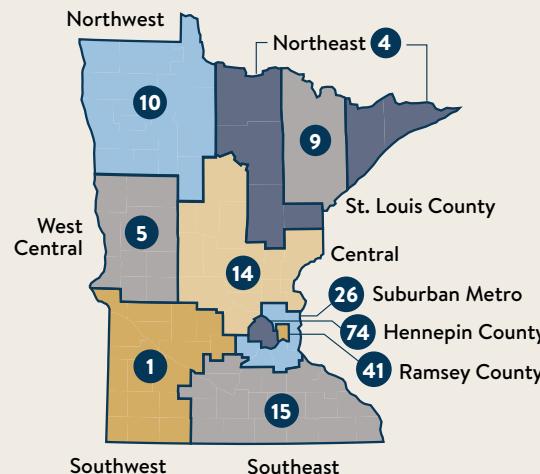
\*Monthly federal benefits attained through the Social Security Administration.

IN FY 2025

522

Minnesota Veterans were included in the Minnesota Homeless Veteran Registry.

## NUMBER OF VETERANS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN MINNESOTA BY REGION as of June 30, 2025



## NUMBER OF VETERANS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS BY RACE

White	111
Black or African American	59
American Indian	14
Asian	0
Native Hawaiian	0
Two or more races	13
Unknown	11



**“When I signed the papers and got the keys, it was a relief. Not only for me but for my dog, Shasha.”**

— Kevin Weinkauf, Army Veteran



## Partnerships help prevent or resolve housing crises

MDVA has a long history of partnering with MACV to provide supportive housing options to Veterans. Since 2022, this partnership has helped 203 Minnesota Veterans secure permanent housing.

Additionally, Minnesota Veterans are supported with financial assistance for:

Permanent housing	\$ 325,000
Rent	\$ 613,553
Operation Opening Veterans to Every Resource (OVER) funds	\$ 100,000
Security deposit	\$ 121,700
Utility expenses	\$ 72,549
Mortgage	\$ 84,598
Transitional houses	\$ 6,653
Transportation costs	\$ 11,335
Food costs	\$ 3,517



## Learning and applying skills for success



**“The Veteran student support at Winona takes a lot of stress out of getting benefits. They do a great job to remind students and help them be prepared.”**

—Landen Merseth,  
Veteran and student



### The Veterans Education and Occupational Resources team focuses on three core areas:

- Education benefits for Veterans and eligible family members.
- The quality and integrity of education and training programs for Veterans in Minnesota.
- Protection of Veteran rights while working for public employers.

#### Minnesota GI Bill

Different than the federal GI Bill®, the Minnesota GI Bill can reimburse out-of-pocket costs for Veterans pursuing professional exams, licenses and certifications. Additionally, the Minnesota GI Bill provides financial assistance for necessary living expenses while a Veteran is training for a career or trade.

#### MINNESOTA GI BILL PARTICIPANTS IN FY 2025

##### Higher Education

Veterans	1,461
Spouses	109
Dependents	378
Licensing and certification	181
Apprenticeship	155
On-the-job training	63

Veteran and ROTC students at Winona State enjoy connection and camaraderie on the beautiful campus. Left: Landen Merseth, Holly Foss and Colton Rothfork. Above: Capri Constantineau, Amanda Riggs and Sharron Johnson.



## Education benefits

Education Regional Coordinators provide one-on-one assistance to answer questions about benefits and resources available to help Veterans earn a degree, license, certification or on-the-job training. Popular education benefits include the Minnesota GI Bill and the 48 Veterans Resource Centers (VRC) on college campuses across Minnesota.

Students can visit on-campus VRCs to connect with peers and learn about benefits, scholarships, support resources and more. VRCs welcome more than 40,000 visitors annually.



Above: Veteran dependent Beau Grindland meets with Mark Larsen, Southeast Education Regional Coordinator, at the VRC at Winona State. Below: Beau walks the campus with National Guard student, Rose Cases.



**“With the support of MDVA, using the Post-9/11 GI Bill has helped my college career tremendously. The resources on campus, and all of the people involved with the process, are extremely helpful and valuable.”**

—Beau Grindland, Veteran dependent and student



159

CASES OF VETERAN RIGHTS IN PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

The Minnesota Veterans Preference Act grants most Veterans a limited preference over non-Veteran candidates for hiring and promotion with public employers. The Veterans Education and Occupational Resources team ensures Veteran rights are upheld in accordance with the law and managed 159 cases regarding Veteran preference.

## Program quality

The Minnesota State Approving Agency (SAA) ensures the quality and financial integrity of educational and training programs when GI Bill benefits are used. The SAA evaluates facilities and conducts ongoing surveys to ensure compliance.

### SAA CERTIFIED FACILITIES IN MINNESOTA

Apprenticeships / On-the-job training	62
Private schools	43
Public schools	44
Non-college degree schools	28

Above: Veterans and students Nathan Smith, Chaska Herman and Micah Ziemer in class at South Central Minnesota Electrical Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee lab. Below: Veteran and instructor Casey Saunders meets with Nathan.





## Advocating for Veterans seeking benefits they have earned

Claims and Field Operations team members prepare, submit and monitor Veteran claims for federal benefits.

Working as a mobile claims unit, Field Operations representatives meet with Veterans and their families to provide access to benefits, services and resources.

Army Veteran and MDVA employee Jennifer Shumaker (middle) is a resource for Women Veterans like Navy Veteran Kati Carpenter (left) and Army Veteran Mary Rodenkirchen (right).

**06.12.25**  
Women Veterans Recognition Day marks the anniversary of the act that allowed women to serve as permanent members of the U.S. Armed Forces.



## Recognizing the unique needs of women Veterans

Women Veterans face unique challenges including reproductive healthcare, military sexual trauma and the need for individualized support. MDVA is dedicated to ensuring equitable support for women Veterans by employing a dedicated female coordinator and claims representative — addressing longstanding gaps in care and access.

MDVA increased efforts to identify and address resource gaps affecting women Veterans through an extensive survey and engages directly with women at events such as:

- VA Women Veterans Community Support Forum
- McLeod County Women Veterans Event
- Olmsted County Women Veterans Gala
- Women Veterans Recognition Day at Fort Snelling
- Regular meetings of the Women Veteran Community Advisory Board for the future Minneapolis VA Medical Center Women Veteran Clinic

## Close collaboration with Minnesota Veterans Homes

The Claims and Field Operations teams began closely collaborating with the Minnesota Veterans Homes to ensure Residents are maximizing their benefits. This initiative, dubbed “Operation Homefront,” is a comprehensive effort that examines the benefits each Resident is currently claiming, reviews files within the federal VA system and identifies opportunities where there may be more available. The progress made on this coordinated effort offers promising momentum.

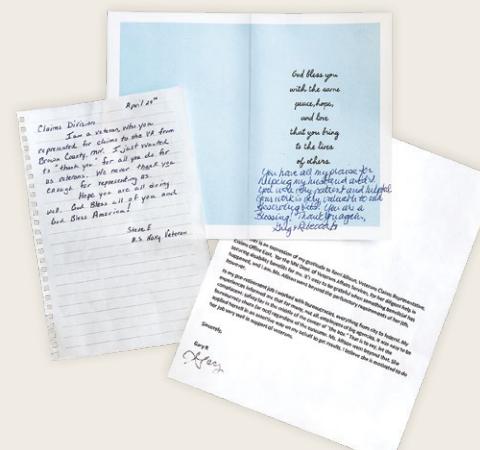
IN FY 2025

# 21,568

MDVA Claims and Field Operations employees worked on 21,568 claims actions on behalf of Minnesota Veterans and their families.

## \$4.3 BILLION

Minnesota Veterans and their survivors received \$4.3 billion in overall compensation and healthcare benefits during the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) FY 2024.



## 8,292 hrs

MDVA Field Operations Training Team provided 8,292 hours of direct training to County Veterans Service Officers (CVSO), Assistant CVSOs and MDVA staff.



Above: Nancy Thao and Aaron Allen, part of the administrative support team, are often the first to interact with Veterans and county representatives on claims. They work to ensure data quality and keep claims moving throughout the process.

At left: The Claims and Field Operations division receives countless letters detailing how their work makes a difference in the lives of Veterans and their families.



**“A government building can be intimidating to a Veteran in need or in crisis. Meeting Veterans where they are works best! Working with women Veterans and Gold Star families is a highlight of my job, meeting those parties’ unique needs.”**

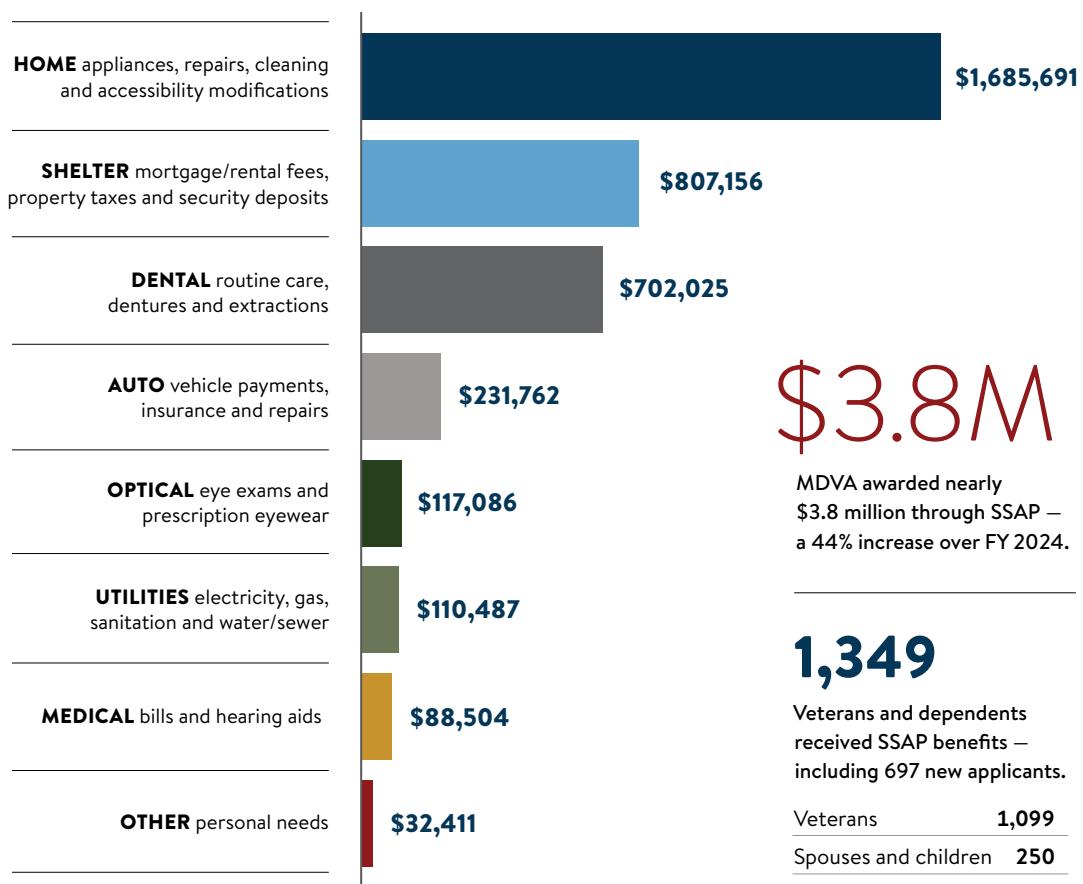
— Jennifer Shumaker, Women Veteran and Gold Star Family Coordinator, Veteran Claims Representative and Army National Guard Veteran



# Helping Veterans feel valued

In addition to federal benefits, Minnesota Veterans can access state benefits through the State Soldiers Assistance Program (SSAP) and other support programs.

**SSAP makes a big impact, providing Veterans with emergency financial assistance.**



# \$3.8M

MDVA awarded nearly \$3.8 million through SSAP – a 44% increase over FY 2024.

# 1,349

Veterans and dependents received SSAP benefits – including 697 new applicants.

Veterans	1,099
Spouses and children	250

## SSAP BENEFITS BREAKDOWN BY COUNTY

Aitkin	\$ 19,628	Martin	\$ 6,690
Anoka	\$ 45,094	McLeod	\$ 20,094
Becker	\$ 9,575	Meeker	\$ 36,968
Beltrami	\$ 40,068	Mille Lacs	\$ 46,142
Benton	\$ 47,218	Morrison	\$ 317,389
Big Stone	\$ 9,021	Mower	\$ 29,184
Blue Earth	\$ 16,415	Murray	\$ 6,881
Brown	\$ 21,240	Nicollet	\$ 40,907
Carlton	\$ 30,944	Nobles	\$ 1,100
Carver	\$ 9,908	Norman	\$ 1,787
Cass	\$ 58,139	Olmsted	\$ 34,517
Chippewa	\$ 10,713	Otter Tail	\$ 46,773
Chisago	\$ 18,172	Pennington	\$ 595
Clay	\$ 93,030	Pine	\$ 51,745
Clearwater	\$ 23,261	Pipestone	\$ 4,882
Cook	\$ 2,000	Polk	\$ 25,279
Cottonwood	\$ 36,869	Pope	\$ 1,780
Crow Wing	\$ 126,007	Ramsey	\$ 217,321
Dakota	\$ 239,625	Red Lake	\$ –
Dodge	\$ 12,967	Redwood	\$ 1,159
Douglas	\$ 34,024	Renville	\$ –
Faribault	\$ 7,196	Rice	\$ 17,401
Fillmore	\$ 11,379	Rock	\$ 500
Freeborn	\$ 53,507	Roseau	\$ –
Goodhue	\$ 5,613	Scott	\$ 34,229
Grant	\$ –	Sherburne	\$ 64,669
Hennepin	\$ 363,600	Sibley	\$ 1,450
Houston	\$ 190	St. Louis	\$ 263,556
Hubbard	\$ 54,576	Stearns	\$ 286,100
Isanti	\$ 42,069	Steele	\$ 16,713
Itasca	\$ 193,320	Stevens	\$ 9,483
Jackson	\$ 6,385	Swift	\$ 56,054
Kanabec	\$ 35,984	Todd	\$ 27,420
Kandiyohi	\$ 32,623	Traverse	\$ 69,843
Kittson	\$ –	Wabasha	\$ –
Koochiching	\$ 25,463	Wadena	\$ 9,961
Lac Qui Parle	\$ –	Waseca	\$ –
Lake	\$ 16,877	Washington	\$ 98,163
Lake of the Woods	\$ –	Watowan	\$ 1,170
Le Sueur	\$ 65,073	Wilkin	\$ 1,159
Lincoln	\$ –	Winona	\$ 34,190
Lyon	\$ 17,434	Wright	\$ 45,741
Mahnomen	\$ 4,000	Yellow Medicine	\$ 1,411
Marshall	\$ 5,510		



**“Every time we share the SSAP program, it gives Veterans and surviving family members a sense of dignity, recognition and belonging. It reminds them that their service is honored and that they are entitled to this support. Many Veterans and their families feel hesitant to ask for help, but when we present these programs, it reinforces that these are earned benefits – not favors or handouts.”**

— Kristina Von Berge, Morrison County Veterans Service Officer and Army National Guard Veteran



### SSAP in Action

When a 91-year-old surviving spouse visited a CVSO for her annual dental and optical vouchers, she also learned about the SSAP program. With an urgent need in mind, she quickly submitted her paperwork and was approved for \$7,800 to replace her hot water heater. She had been living with cold showers, and this benefit made an immediate difference in her quality of life.

## \$2.86 MILLION

MDVA awarded some of the highest Veterans Relief Grant (VRG) payouts ever in FY 2025, totaling \$2.86 million. The VRG is an SSAP benefit that provides a once-per-lifetime financial grant to help Veterans and their families stabilize their lives in a time of hardship.

### Well-being counseling

MDVA has a long-standing partnership with Lutheran Social Service (LSS) of Minnesota for the Counseling and Case Management, Outreach, Referral and Education (CORE) program to help improve quality of life for military members, Veterans and their families.

In recent surveys, all people who use CORE report being treated with respect, finding service helpful and would recommend CORE to other Veterans.

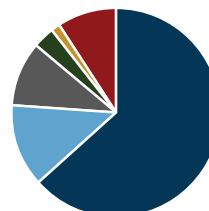
#### COUNSELING CLIENTS

Veterans	576
Spouses	167
Dependents	60
Total	803

#### COUNSELING CLIENT AGES

0-19	7%
20-34	9%
35-44	21%
45-54	16%
55-64	17%
65-74	13%
75-84	13%
85+	4%

#### TYPES OF COUNSELING PROVIDED



Behavior	64%
Individual	13%
Financial	10%
Family	3%
Housing	1%
Other	9%



## 14,256 hrs

CORE provided 14,256 hours of free, confidential counseling services for eligible Veterans, military members and their families.

“Once I started using the LSS CORE services, I felt empowered to take charge of my treatments, to look into my disability benefits and to get myself on a path to recovery. I feel lucky I’ve been able to figure out where I want to be, thanks to LSS.” — Veteran

### Opening the door to help

To better share information about benefits with Minnesota Veterans, the Benefits team collaborates closely with the Claims and Field Operations teams on several outreach events. These events encourage more Veterans to pursue the resources and benefits they have earned.



#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Learn more about available benefits from your County Veterans Service Officer, by calling 1-888-LinkVet (546-5838) or visiting MinnesotaVeteran.org/Benefits.

### LinkVet

The Veterans Linkage Line (LinkVet) is a toll-free customer service line for all Minnesota Veterans and their families.

#### TYPES OF LINKVET INQUIRIES

Inbound Calls	3,125
Outbound Calls	1,519
Emails	644
Online Chats	472
Total	5,760

#### LINKVET TOPICS OF INQUIRY

Assistance and Families	2,186
Health and Disability	1,200
Education	436
Crisis	286
Veterans Homes	285
Memorial Affairs	284
SOAR	201
Employment	144
Post-9/11 Service Bonus	77
Homelessness Prevention	36
Suicide Prevention	8
Other	387

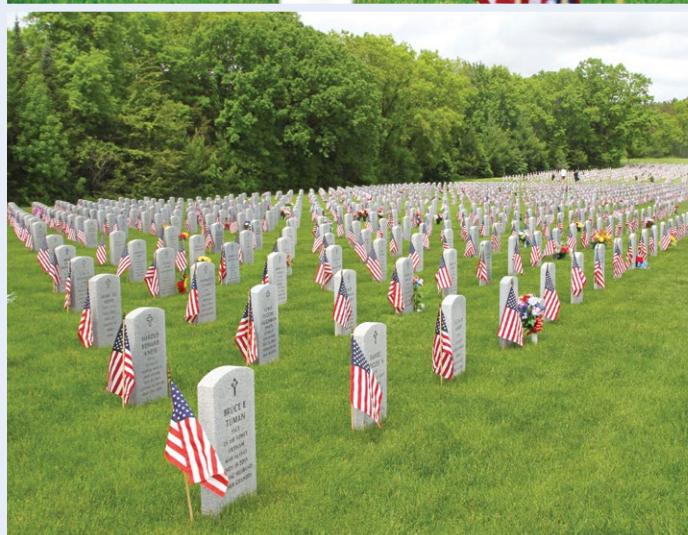
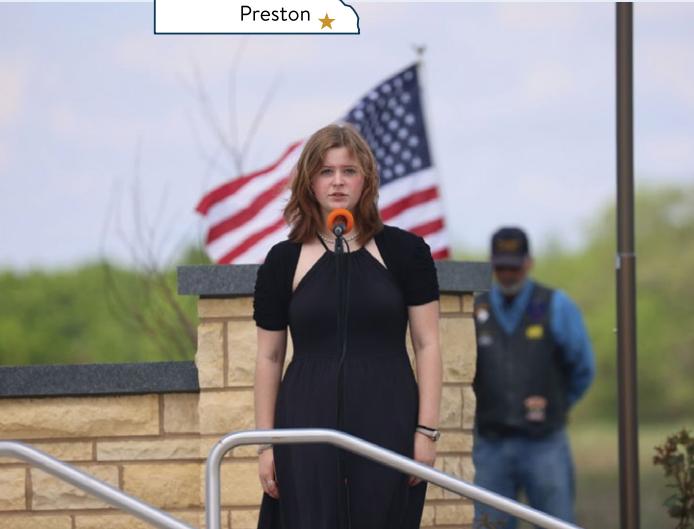


## Final resting places of respect and honor

MDVA is committed to providing dignified and compassionate perpetual care for eligible Veterans in areas accessible throughout the state.

**05.25.25**

All four State Veterans Cemeteries host Memorial Day programs to remember those who have served our country.





For many Veterans, the only benefit they request is interment at a Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery.

**THE STATE OF MINNESOTA OPERATES FOUR STATE VETERANS CEMETERIES THROUGH MDVA**

	Est.	Acres	Total laid to rest since establishment
LITTLE FALLS	1994	39	10,989
PRESTON	2015	169	1,541
DULUTH	2018	104	1,255
REDWOOD FALLS	2023	77	87

**LAID TO REST IN FY 2025**

	Total laid to rest	Veterans	Spouses and dependents
LITTLE FALLS	615	383	232
PRESTON	208	153	55
DULUTH	228	165	63
REDWOOD FALLS	43	32	11

**SERVICES PERFORMED IN FY 2025**

	Casket burials	Columbarium	In-ground cremation
LITTLE FALLS	125	180	310
PRESTON	21	72	115
DULUTH	25	83	120
REDWOOD FALLS	7	20	16

IN FY 2025

**1,094**

Veterans and their spouses and dependents were laid to rest in Minnesota State Veterans Cemeteries.

**\$1.3 MILLION**

Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery in Little Falls was awarded a federal construction grant of over \$1.3 million from the Veterans Cemetery Grants Program in August 2024 to add 1,080 columbarium niches.



**Showing up for unaccompanied Veterans**

When a Veteran does not have a family member to make burial arrangements or attend a service, MDVA steps in to ensure these unaccompanied Veterans are remembered by a grateful country.

In September 2024, an unaccompanied Veteran was laid to rest at Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery - Preston. Community members plus Residents and team members from the Preston Veterans Home attended the service.



**“Honoring a Veteran who has no family members provides us with an opportunity to act as honorary family members. I personally consider it a privilege to attend these dignified services.”**

— Robert Gross, Preston Cemetery Administrator

 **70,200 kWh**

The grounds and building at Redwood Falls are designed with sustainability in mind. The solar array produced a total of 70,200 kWh of renewable energy on site during FY 2025. Renewable energy helps to lower energy costs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

**MORE INFORMATION**

[MinnesotaVeteran.org/Cemeteries](http://MinnesotaVeteran.org/Cemeteries)





Minnesota Veterans Homes provide a nurturing and engaging environment. Left: Larry Roddy, Army Veteran attends an event in Minneapolis. Right: Curtis Hanson, Army Veteran receives physical therapy in Montevideo.



## Resident-centered healthcare for Minnesota Veterans

Each of the eight Minnesota Veterans Homes operates 24/7 to provide a combination of skilled nursing care, dedicated care units for dementia and Alzheimer's, domiciliary care, rehabilitation services, recreational therapy and work therapy programs.

The MDVA Healthcare division also includes the Veterans Community Health team (see page 28) that is responsible for the Veteran Suicide Prevention initiative, the Minnesota Veteran Suicide Prevention Collaborative and the Veteran Health Navigators Program.



**“Minnesota Veterans Homes take pride in maintaining excellence in all aspects of operations and Resident care. We consistently strive to not only meet but exceed quality standards.”**

— Eric Meittunen, MDVA Deputy Commissioner –  
Veterans Healthcare

## Top 15%

Minnesota Veterans Homes in Fergus Falls, Luverne, Minneapolis and Silver Bay consistently rank among the top 15% of skilled nursing care providers nationwide in customer satisfaction surveys.

**05.11.25–05.17.25**

Minnesota Veterans Homes Week honors dedicated staff who care for Veteran Residents and their families. The week includes special snacks, dress-up days and other celebratory activities at all eight Homes.



## CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AWARDS

For the seventh year in a row, Minnesota Veterans Homes in Fergus Falls, Luverne, Minneapolis and Silver Bay earned the 2025 Customer Experience Award from Activated Insights, which conducts surveys with Residents and families to help facilities deliver the best care experiences. This distinction shows the Homes consistently rank among the top 15% of skilled nursing care providers nationwide in customer satisfaction.



## BEST NURSING HOMES

Out of almost 15,000 nursing homes across the nation, *U.S. News & World Report* named three Minnesota Veterans Homes — Fergus Falls, Luverne and Minneapolis — as the Best Nursing Homes of 2025. *Newsweek* also recognized the Veterans Homes in Luverne and Minneapolis.

Right: Fishing is brought in to Residents at the Minneapolis Veterans Home. Below: Bemidji Veterans Home staff interact with a Resident.

8

MINNESOTA HAS EIGHT STATE VETERANS HOMES

### FACILITIES CAPACITY

#### SKILLED NURSING CARE BEDS

Silver Bay	54
Preston	54
Montevideo	72
Minneapolis	300
Luverne	64
Fergus Falls	85
Bemidji	72

#### DOMICILIARY CARE BEDS

Hastings	144
Minneapolis	50

#### ADULT DAY CENTER CLIENTS

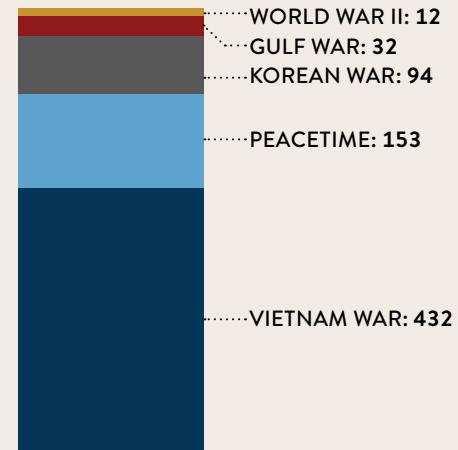
Minneapolis	35
-------------	----

743

Total Residents as of June 30, 2025

Male Veterans	704
Female Veterans	15
Non-Veteran Spouses	24

#### RESIDENTS BY SERVICE ERA



### Get to know Minnesota Veterans Homes

Virtual video tours for all eight of the Minnesota Veterans Homes are available, giving potential Residents and their families easy access to experience what life might be like in each Home.

Visit: [MinnesotaVeteran.org/Homes](http://MinnesotaVeteran.org/Homes)





The lodge-like style of the **Silver Bay Veterans Home** on Minnesota's North Shore offers stunning views and abundant activities that foster appreciation of the great outdoors.

EST. 1991 | AVERAGE CENSUS: 48 | CENTERS FOR MEDICARE & MEDICAID SERVICES (CMS) OVERALL QUALITY RATING: 5/5

★ 2025 Activated Insights Customer Experience Award



#### ANNUAL CHARTER FISHING TRIP REMAINS A FAVORITE

Each summer, the Silver Bay Veterans Home hosts the Charter Fishing Trip on Lake Superior. All Minnesota Veterans Homes are invited to participate and in 2025, Residents from Hastings and Minneapolis also joined. Nine boats transported 17 Residents on a four-hour trip that hooked a total of 41 fish. Participants enjoyed a food truck lunch, then savored the fruits of their labor during a fish fry at the Home.



#### GARDEN-TO-TABLE PROGRAM PROVIDES ENRICHMENT ALL YEAR

The Silver Bay staff, volunteers and Residents plant, grow, harvest, process and prepare food grown onsite with each new season, offering Residents new experiences and understanding of healthier living with whole food.

In the winter, Residents brainstorm to create a vision for next season's garden. As spring approaches, Garden Clean Up Days bring volunteers and Residents together to prepare the garden for the growing season. Residents participate in watering and weeding while watching plants grow. Finally, at harvest, the team uses the space in the Resident coffee shop called Valor Café to prepare fresh produce — lettuce, radishes, raspberries, zucchini, lavender, kohlrabi, onions and more — in Resident meals.



**“Once the fruits and vegetables began growing, something amazing happened. The excitement and energy from the Residents began to grow, too.”**

— Julie O’Neil, Recreation Director



Residents and the Home's dog, Charlie have daily opportunities to enjoy smiles, shakes and more.

MINNESOTA VETERANS HOMES - PRESTON

Set amid southeast Minnesota's historic bluff country, the **Preston Veterans Home** incorporates local limestone and provides a peaceful atmosphere.



Donated by a local Veterans organization, rides in the Home's new golf cart are popular among Residents and staff.

#### CHARLIE THE CARING CAVAPOO

Charlie, the Home's dog, is a Cavapoo who lives with Preston Home Administrator Dave Dunn. Residents, staff and visitors alike enjoy cuddles with Charlie, as well as his tricks for treats. Dunn says, "Charlie will make his way around the Home and socialize. Some Residents aren't very verbal but when they see Charlie they just light up."

#### A WHEELING GOOD TIME

Residents enjoy weekly golf cart rides in the fall in a six-passenger golf cart that was donated by the Rochester Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Chapter #28 and Preston Veteran Organizations. Additionally, Residents and staff enjoy the Preston Historical Society's Fall Tractor Ride, which makes a special stop at the Home.

#### MAKING IT INTO THE MEDIA

A local PBS program "Off 90" featured a visit to the Preston Veterans Home, including interviews with Residents "Skip" Vogel, Marine and Navy Veteran; Walter Hanson, Army Veteran; James Loven, Marine Reserves and Army National Guard Veteran; and Harold Kerkvliet, Army Veteran.



#### WATCH ONLINE

Check out the PBS episode. Visit: [to.pbs.org/4r1ZwKi](https://to.pbs.org/4r1ZwKi)





Reflective of its prairie environment, the **Montevideo Veterans Home** honors the history of the region while celebrating the welcoming communities that surround it.

EST. 2024 | AVERAGE CENSUS: 41



#### YES, CHEF!

As the only Minnesota Veterans Home to have an executive chef, Montevideo Residents enjoy a variety of unique dining experiences. Executive Chef Virgil Emmert and the food and nutrition team cater meals to individual tastes and dietary needs by focusing on made-from-scratch dishes and fresh, wholesome ingredients. Chef Virgil's "Around the World" hands-on cooking demonstration and taste testing brought new flavors to the table while Residents shared travel stories and interactions with diverse cultures.



## 51,304 kWh

The Montevideo Veterans Home solar array produced 51,304 kWh of renewable energy on site. Renewable energy generated in Montevideo helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions and lower costs for the Home.

Residents take a day trip to visit a friend's farm and enjoy a collection of restored Allis-Chalmers tractors.

Entertainment is available to Residents in many forms including music, art, games and more.

#### BUILDING STRENGTH, CONFIDENCE AND CAMARADERIE

Most days, you will find a line of Residents eager to get into the therapy department for a daily dose of well-being activities. The therapy team creates one-on-one programs for individual Residents, and plans group exercises and activities, too. It is a motivating environment where movement and progress deliver both empowerment and enjoyment to Residents.



**"The doctors told me I would never walk without help. I came in using my power chair and now the only thing I use is my walker. The therapy department was amazing, and I truly feel blessed to live at the Veterans Home."**

— Don J., Resident and Marine Veteran



Actress and longtime Veteran advocate Ann-Margret visits Residents and families on Vietnam Veterans Day weekend.

**The Minneapolis Veterans Home campus overlooks the Mississippi River and is adjacent to Minnehaha Falls.**

### ENTERTAINMENT COMES TO CAMPUS FOR RESIDENTS TO ENJOY

The Minneapolis Veterans Home brings fun happenings directly to campus for Residents, guests and staff to enjoy. Here are some favorites:

- “State Fair on Campus” event, which includes classic food favorites, live music, a caricaturist, a balloon artist, carnival games, horticulture and art displays.
- “Vettes for Vets” car show featuring classic muscle cars and their owners’ on-the-road tales.
- Thanks to Muskies, Inc., the fishing opener features a giant tank filled with trout and Residents cast a line and reel in fun. Fish are cleaned, fried and served alongside a full shore lunch with all the fixings.
- The Family Council Potluck Picnic treats volunteers who have or have had a loved one living at the Home.



**09.03.24**

Grand opening of the indoor storage room for employee bike commuters.



**“I’m proud of our diverse campus at Minneapolis. We put up a mural as a tribute to that diversity! Our staff and our Residents thrive when we feel we are part of a welcoming, inclusive community.”**

— Sarikah Pannirselvam, Minneapolis Veterans Home Finance Director



★ Best Nursing Homes 2025, Newsweek

★ Best Nursing Homes 2025, U.S. News & World Report

★ 2025 Activated Insights Customer Experience Award



## Part of the Minneapolis Veterans Home Campus, the **Adult Day Center**, also known as “Vets Club,” creates community and connection while helping Veterans live at home for as long as possible.

EST. 2012 | DAILY CAPACITY: 35



In the fall, Adult Day Center participants board the Minneapolis Veterans Home Trolley to explore campus history and beauty.



Celebrating its 13th year, Vets Club is one of just two programs like it in the country. While continuing to live in their own homes, Veterans have a place to meet and participate in fun activities including trivia, games, movies, music and more. The program also includes nutritious breakfasts, lunches and snacks, as well as health assessments.

In addition to supporting Veterans, Vets Club helps ease the daily demands that family members and other unpaid caregivers face. The monthly support group for caregivers is extremely popular.

Vets Club includes meals developed by registered dietitians and lots of opportunities for Veterans to share stories and laughs.



#### ENJOYING EARTH WEEK

To celebrate sustainability, the Luverne Veterans Home learned about bees from local beekeeper Dean Lethje, son of Resident Keith Lethje, Army Veteran, plus the sustainable use and protection of natural resources within nearby Blue Mounds State Park.



**“I can’t think of any other place I’d want to go. The staff is like my family. From the day I came, I was happy and relieved to be here.”**

— David Smith, Resident and Army Veteran

#### 04.22.25

Earth Day activities for Minnesota Veterans Homes Residents, as well as MDVA employees, include online seminars, sustainability challenges and fun projects.



**The Luverne Veterans Home offers Residents a lakeside view, access to the outdoors, garden beds and a strong connection with the community.**

EST. 1994 | AVERAGE CENSUS: 62 | CMS OVERALL QUALITY RATING: 5/5



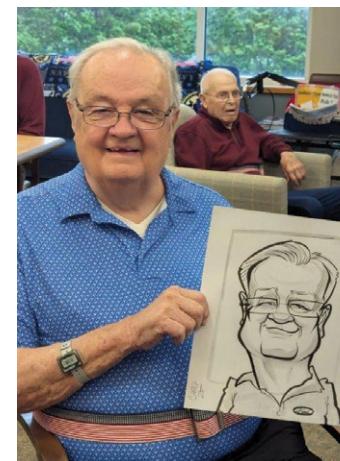
#### ANNUAL EVENTS ABOUND

There is no shortage of fun at the Luverne Veterans Home, and many events have become tradition over several years. Here is a look at some favorite happenings:

- Each spring Residents attend a professional bull riding event.
- During the school year, fifth-grade students from the Luverne School District visit weekly to spend time with Residents under the Adopt-A-Grandparent program.
- For the 30th year in a row, the State of Minnesota American Legion auxiliary sponsored the annual Holiday Gift Shop, including a gift for each Resident.
- For the 28th year, the Radisewitz family from Luverne provided a Christmas Eve church service on campus.

#### PICKING UP MORE PRIVATE ROOMS

During FY 2025, the Luverne Veterans Home worked to transform shared rooms into private rooms. Following this effort, Luverne now has 20 private rooms — a significant increase from the previous four private rooms.



★ Best Nursing Homes 2025, *Newsweek*

★ Best Nursing Homes 2025, *U.S. News & World Report*

★ 2025 Activated Insights Customer Experience Award



Set among rolling hills and clear lakes, the **Fergus Falls Veterans Home** feels like a small town – complete with an inn, specialized shops and an interior open-air recreational area.

EST. 1998 | AVERAGE CENSUS: 77 | CMS OVERALL QUALITY RATING: 4/5



★ 2025 Activated Insights Customer Experience Award

★ Best Nursing Homes 2025, U.S. News & World Report



#### STARS AND STRIPES PARADE DOPLES IN SIZE

Each year, the Minnesota Veterans Homes - Fergus Falls shines a light on Independence Day by hosting a Stars and Stripes parade.

Guests enjoy watching entries travel the parade route, including businesses and organizations driving Kor-Kar Birak Shrine Indy cars, Minnesota Army National Guard vehicles, classic cars and more. Volunteers ensure that Residents, families and community members all have a memorable experience.

**“I’ve never been more recognized for my service than I have since living here. Here, they know and honor Veterans.”**

— Marcella Gosch, Resident and Navy Veteran

#### EMBRACING RESIDENT TALENTS

One of three female Navy Veterans living in the Fergus Falls Veterans Home, Marcella Gosch (pictured) is known as the “queen of optimism” and broadcasts a positive message over the Home’s intercom every day. This tradition started when Marcella first began offering uplifting messages to the Home’s housekeeping team. A nurse overheard those inspiring ideas and thought they should be shared with all.



Additionally, the greenhouse continues to be popular. Residents enjoy caring for the flowers, herbs and vegetables that grow onsite – often riding the golf cart to and from their gardening activities.



Throughout the year, Residents participate in a variety of outdoor excursions and trips to local events.



**The Bemidji Veterans Home** showcases a cabin-like feel appropriate for its Northwoods location.

EST. 2024 | AVERAGE CENSUS: 31

#### CONNECTING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Residents of the Bemidji Veterans Home connect with the surrounding community through activities and excursions. For example:

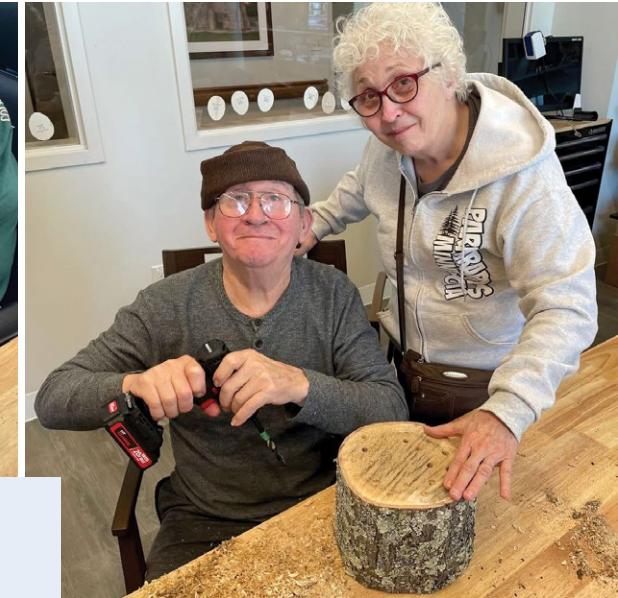
- All year long, members of the In Country Vietnam Motorcycle Club volunteer their time and raise funds to facilitate weekly bingo games and build fellowship.
- During the summer, Residents enjoy weekly fishing trips on Lake Bemidji, in partnership with the Let's Go Fishing organization.
- In October 2024, the Home opened its doors for its first trick-or-treat event, with Residents and staff greeting kids in costume.

Above and below: All year, Residents choose to take part in both seasonal and everyday fun, from holiday celebrations and special snacks to outings in the community. Activities at the Bemidji Veterans Home consider Resident interests as much as possible.



**“My favorite thing about the Veterans Home is the amazing opportunities they offer to the Residents, such as fishing, fall color drives, bowling, going to state parks and every Resident getting their own birthday cake and party.”**

— Rachel Vigen, Bemidji Veterans Home Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)



#### INVITING BIRDS AND BEES

The Mississippi Headwaters Audubon Society was awarded a grant to initiate a “Birds for Veterans – Blending Nature and Honor” program at the Home. With it, Residents made bee hotels and bird feeders. Several donated birdhouses are installed throughout the grounds and outside Residents’ windows. Additionally, a biology professor from Bemidji State University provided guidance on a purple martin birdhouse project. The collaboration creates an environment friendly to birds, bees, pollinators and people.





The only program of its kind in Minnesota, the **MDVA Domiciliary Program (DOMS)** provides Veterans in transition with access to medical, mental health, financial and social well-being support services.

EST. 1978 | AVERAGE CENSUS HASTINGS: 113 | AVERAGE CENSUS MINNEAPOLIS: 43

DOMS helps Veterans to find stable housing, work toward vocational goals and better manage their overall well-being. Designed to remove barriers to care and bridge the gap between living independently and skilled nursing care, DOMS Residents manage their daily schedules and activities and continue to experience independent living while they follow the path that best meets their needs — whether that's aging in place at the Minnesota Veterans Homes, returning to living successfully and independently in the community or getting support for their mental health or sobriety.

DOMS is one program that operates at two Minnesota Veterans Homes locations: Minneapolis and Hastings. Both feature outdoor spaces that allow staff and Residents to access the well-being effects of nature, including walking trails and bike paths.

Resident interests are celebrated in a variety of available activities, including gardening, fishing and more.



#### A CARING COMMUNITY IS CRUCIAL

Since the Hastings Veterans Home opened in 1978, Navy Veteran and member of the local Veterans of Foreign

Wars (VFW) post Jim Murtaugh has been volunteering there. Always willing to pitch in when necessary — including occasional support hours at the DOMS Minneapolis location — Jim's volunteer activities include driving Residents to appointments, helping with popular bingo games and operating the clothing room, which is open twice a month for Residents to come in and select clothing items.



**“Residents need the help and are so appreciative. Help when you can — you don’t have to be there every day.”**

— Jim Murtaugh, DOMS volunteer and Navy Veteran



**“There is no comparison to the quality of care we give to our Veterans and the amount of involvement from family and local organizations has been second to none.”**

— Billy Benso, Bemidji Veterans Home Assistant Director of Nursing and Marine Veteran



Raymond Finney,  
Air Force Veteran talks  
with Billy Benso at the  
Bemidji Veterans Home.



# Reaching out to help save Veteran lives

The Veterans Community Health team collaborates with partners statewide to prevent suicide, promote health and help Minnesota Veterans navigate the healthcare system.

## Reducing Veteran suicide deaths is a top priority

Each year, about 100 Veterans die by suicide in Minnesota. While this number was 78 in 2024 – a 20% reduction from 2023 – a one-year change is not a trend.

Year over year, Veterans who die by suicide are overwhelmingly older, with ages 75-79 as the highest group at year end 2024. Non-Veterans who died by suicide were most often age 54 and younger.



Former St. Cloud Mayor Dave Kleis (left) and his younger brother Tom (right) both served in the Armed Forces. When Tom died by suicide, it was a shock to the whole family. Dave believes that sharing his brother Tom's story may encourage Veterans to embrace hope and find the strength to reach out for support.

Johanna, a National Guard Veteran, considers how social media impacts the balance between oversharing and not sharing enough.

David, a Vietnam Veteran, shares his journey with PTSD – a story of courage, resilience and the power of seeking help.

## ► Shared experiences

Dave, Johanna, David (at right) and other Veterans share their personal stories and experiences in the Beyond Active Duty audio interview series, which profiles a variety of Veterans who want to help other Veterans by telling their stories.



### LISTEN TO THE BEYOND ACTIVE DUTY SERIES

[MinnesotaVeteran.org/  
BeyondActiveDuty](https://MinnesotaVeteran.org/BeyondActiveDuty)

### EACH YEAR ABOUT 100 VETERANS DIE BY SUICIDE IN MINNESOTA

78

Minnesota Veterans died by suicide in 2024

52

Minnesota Veterans died by firearm



Deaths included 31 Veterans from the metro area and 47 from outstate Minnesota.



19,000

MDVA and its collaborative partners distributed 19,000 gun locks to those who requested them.



**“Suicide is a complex issue that affects Veterans from all backgrounds. Many Veterans, like Travis, may not be connected to a Veteran organization. This highlights the importance of understanding and using community resources.”**

— Shelly Hanson, Mother of Marine Corps Veteran Travis Nowak, and Executive Director of the Armadillo Project in Hibbing MN, speaking about losing Travis to suicide



*Help is available – if you or someone you know is in crisis, call the Veterans Crisis Line at 988 and press “1” or text 838255 for Veteran-specific support.*

### Support for Veterans and military families impacted by suicide

The Veteran Suicide Prevention Team continues to grow, streamline suicide prevention efforts statewide and expand partnerships with nonprofit and other Veteran organizations. The Minnesota Veteran Suicide Prevention Collaborative advances state and national priorities by aligning with the Governor’s Challenge and Minnesota’s Suicide Prevention Plan to reduce suicide among service members, Veterans and their families.

Throughout the year, the team participates and engages hundreds of Minnesotans to promote training and connections to Veterans resources. In October, Veterans, advocates, supporters and community leaders come together for the annual Minnesota Veteran Suicide Prevention and Awareness Day.

From top, left to right: Chief Master Sergeant Jeffrey Pinger, 148th Fighter Wing Maintenance Group; Shelly Hanson; Duluth Mayor Roger J. Reinert; members of the Minnesota Veteran Suicide Prevention Collaborative.

### Veteran Health Navigator Program

This initiative supports Veterans and their families by improving health, wellness and quality of life through suicide risk screening and connection to comprehensive resources. It also embeds Veteran Health Navigators and military service identification into non-VA healthcare systems and their electronic health records to enhance care coordination and outcomes across Minnesota.



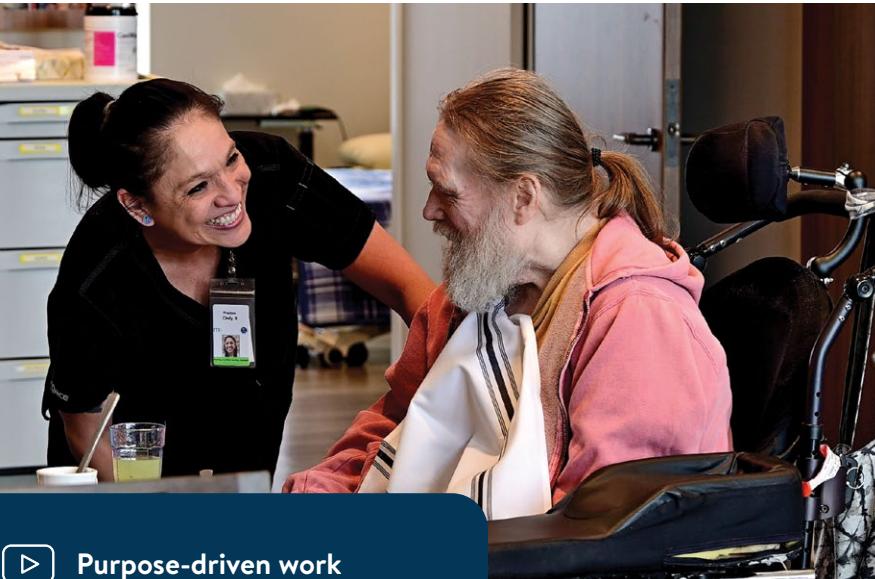
### ONLINE RESOURCES

Additional resources for Veterans, including how to request a free gun lock, are available on the MDVA website at [MinnesotaVeteran.org/EndVetSuicide](http://MinnesotaVeteran.org/EndVetSuicide).



# Making a difference daily

Employees focus on improving the lives of Minnesota Veterans and their families.



## Purpose-driven work

Ask an employee what they value most about their role, and many will highlight the fulfillment that comes from purpose-driven work.



**WATCH ONLINE**  
Explore video clips of team members sharing their experiences firsthand:  
[mn.gov/mdva/about/work-for-mdva/](http://mn.gov/mdva/about/work-for-mdva/)

Brand Ambassadors such as Cindy Boettcher, CNA at the Preston Veterans Home (above), share with the community, and potential staff, the purpose they feel serving those who served.

## Strengthening workforce excellence

By prioritizing workforce stability and satisfaction, MDVA ensures consistent, high-quality care for Veterans and their families. MDVA remains committed to attracting and retaining top-tier talent through competitive incentives, including targeted hiring bonuses for critical positions and retention benefits like student loan reimbursement programs.



Job fairs are an effective way to connect potential employees to career opportunities with MDVA.

## FY 2025 LEADERSHIP

Brad Lindsay, Commissioner

Eric Meittunen, Deputy Commissioner - Veterans Healthcare

Ben Johnson, Deputy Commissioner - Programs and Services

Dave Bellefeuille, Chief of Staff

## STAFF BY DIVISION

Central Office	94
Healthcare	1,813
Programs and Services	134

## STAFF BY VETERANS HOME LOCATION

*Full-time and part-time*

Bemidji	133
Fergus Falls	207
Hastings	95
Luverne	187
Minneapolis	696
Montevideo	147
Preston	121
Silver Bay	165

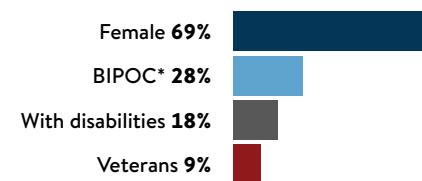
2,041

Total staff as of June 30, 2025

95%

of employee accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act were approved

## MDVA TEAM DEMOGRAPHICS



\*Black, Indigenous and People of Color



**05.21.25**

The annual Veterans Career Fair helps connect Veterans with local businesses in need of talent.

**“Last year’s Veterans Career Fair was a turning point in my job search. I was able to connect with a representative at a non-profit where I had applied. Now, I’m working as a Senior Clinical Research Coordinator at Children’s Minnesota.”**

— Christa Swanson, Army Veteran



**Informing and entertaining listeners**

For over 15 years, award-winning Minnesota Military Radio (MMR) has been the forum for sharing the stories of Minnesota’s heroes – those currently serving, those who have served and the families and communities who support them. These stories air on 70 stations statewide and nationally through the Wreaths Across America Radio Network, reaching an estimated 300,000 listeners each week on air and online.

MMR is hosted by retired Army Command Sergeant Major Doug Wortham and includes a team of producers from the Minnesota National Guard, MDVA and Minneapolis VA Health Care System.



**FIND MMR ONLINE**  
MinnesotaMilitaryRadioHour.com.



# Advocating for Minnesota Veterans

The 2025 Legislative Session concluded with significant bi-partisan investment in providing benefits, programs and services for Veterans and their families.



**04.09.25**

Minnesota Veterans, their families and supporters gather to make their voices heard for the annual Veterans Day on the Hill event at the State Capitol.



## Annual advocacy event

Veterans Day on the Hill is an annual event hosted by the Commanders' Task Force and the Minnesota Association of County Veterans Service Officers. Hundreds gathered for lunch at the Cedar Street National Guard Armory before marching to gather at the State Capitol Rotunda to hear from MDVA Commissioner Brad Lindsay, Governor Tim Walz and several Veterans Service Organizations (VSO).

## Ongoing investment in Minnesota Veterans

For a fourth consecutive year, a stand-alone Veterans and Military Affairs Omnibus Bill was passed by the Minnesota Legislature. Governor Tim Walz signed the bill into law on May 23, 2025. Honoring service and sacrifice, this law provides critical funding to ensure that Minnesota takes care of Veterans and their needs.

Here are just a few examples of how funding will make a difference:

- Ensure the newest Minnesota Veterans Homes continue ramping up staffing to serve more Veterans.
- Support efforts to prevent Veterans dying by suicide.
- Help Minnesota put a functional end to Veteran homelessness.
- Assist Veterans who are dealing with food insecurity.
- Enable upgrades to Minnesota Veterans Homes and State Veterans Cemeteries.

**“These bills provide a historic investment in MDVA programs and services and reinforce that Minnesota Veterans are a priority. The omnibus bills are now a precedent, and we expect them to continue for many years to come.”**

— Brad Lindsay, MDVA Commissioner



# Funding initiatives that serve Veterans

Annually, MDVA distributes funds from Legislative Grants and Support Our Troops (SOT) Grants.

## LEGISLATIVE GRANTS

### VSO GRANTS

Funds based on membership were distributed to legislatively selected VSOs in Minnesota.

American Legion	<b>\$ 239,076</b>
Veterans of Foreign Wars	<b>\$ 129,023</b>
Disabled American Veterans	<b>\$ 106,719</b>
Paralyzed Veterans of America	<b>\$ 45,734</b>

### CVSO GRANTS

The Legislature awarded and MDVA distributed grants to 87 CVSOs. Expenditures include **\$952,097** to CVSOs and **\$100,000** to the Minnesota Association of CVSOs.

### MACV GRANTS

MDVA works closely with MACV to support motivated Veterans and their families who are homeless or experiencing other life crises.

MNVEST Rental Vouchers	<b>\$ 2,158,090</b>
Direct Veterans Assistance	<b>\$ 1,124,579</b>
Supportive Housing Grants	<b>\$ 775,676</b>
Operation OVER Division Funds	<b>\$ 100,000</b>

### OTHER LEGISLATIVE GRANTS DISTRIBUTED BY MDVA

#### **\$540K**

to Meals on Wheels, a program that delivers nutritious meals and social connection to Veterans.

#### **\$300K**

to Veterans Resilience Project to give eye-movement desensitization and reprocessing therapy, which helps with the effects of PTSD.

#### **\$225K**

to Minnesota Military and Veterans Museum for museum staff to provide direct services to Veterans and their families.

#### **\$150K**

to Camp Bliss, which provides retreats to eligible Veterans and their families for therapy, activities and transportation to the camp.

#### **\$100K**

to Every Third Saturday (ETS), which provides Veterans with emergency relief assistance, plus an internship to an ETS program.

#### **\$50,000**

to Veterans on the Lake, which provides vacations for Veterans and their families in the Superior National Forest.

## SOT COMPETITIVE GRANTS



The annual minimum contribution of \$30 for an SOT license plate is used for the advancement of underserved Veterans and military families. Minnesota organizations with programs designed to support and improve the lives of Veterans and their families may apply.

### TOTAL SOT COMPETITIVE GRANTS AWARDED

Gaits of Hope	<b>\$ 100,000</b>
Support the Troops, MN	<b>\$ 100,000</b>
YMCA of the North	<b>\$ 100,000</b>
Ironwood Springs	<b>\$ 50,000</b>
Prairie Five Community Action Council, Inc.	<b>\$ 20,000</b>
Blue Star Mothers of America	<b>\$ 9,720</b>

Additionally, MDVA is still administering prior SOT grants to:

- Believet Canine Service Partners
- Paralyzed Veterans of America
- Patriot Assistance Dogs
- The Landing



### Grants in action

Beltrami County was awarded a \$180,000 grant to provide a mobile claims unit that enhances the ability of the Veterans Service Office to reach underserved populations in rural areas and tribal lands. By bringing services directly to these communities, the Veterans Service Office can effectively facilitate the processing of federal and state claims in remote locations and enable early identification of Veterans at risk of homelessness or severe medical hardship.



### MORE INFORMATION

Nonprofit organizations that serve Veterans — especially those that serve diverse and underserved Veteran populations including Native Americans, seniors and those experiencing homelessness — can learn more about applying for available grants at [MinnesotaVeteran.org/Grants](http://MinnesotaVeteran.org/Grants).

# High-quality services require sound financial stewardship

MDVA remains passionately committed to be steadfast stewards of financial resources to improve the lives of Minnesota Veterans and their families.

**REVENUES** **\$224,069,015**

## GENERAL FUND APPROPRIATIONS

Healthcare	\$ 100,797,000
Programs & Services	\$ 31,214,000
GI Bill Appropriation	\$ 4,464,046
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 136,475,046</b>

## REVENUES

Federal VA Per Diem	\$ 62,159,617
Resident Maintenance Charges	\$ 19,038,488
Medicare Reimbursements	\$ 3,849,858
Cemetery Reimbursements	\$ 1,044,507
License Plate Receipts (SOT-WWII)	\$ 621,697
Other Revenue & Reimbursements	\$ 471,555
Other Healthcare Receipts	\$ 408,247
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 87,593,969</b>

**DONATIONS** **\$1,404,742**

Healthcare	\$ 1,341,721
Programs & Services	\$ 63,021

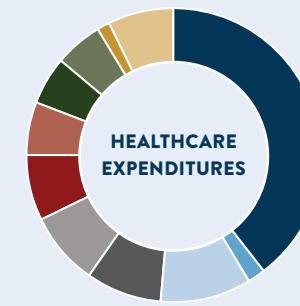
**CAPITAL BONDING EXPENDITURES** **\$15,585,478**

Asset Preservation Improvements	\$ 10,745,232
New Construction (Cemeteries & Homes)	\$ 4,840,246

**EXPENDITURES** **\$227,910,321**

## HEALTHCARE

Minneapolis Veterans Home	
Skilled Nursing	\$ 74,111,725
Adult Day Center and Domiciliary	\$ 3,410,355
Fergus Falls Veterans Home	\$ 18,666,935
Luverne Veterans Home	\$ 15,354,138
Silver Bay Veterans Home	\$ 15,277,737
Hastings Veterans Home	\$ 13,481,291
Montevideo Veterans Home	\$ 10,673,532
Bemidji Veterans Home	\$ 10,107,243
Preston Veterans Home	\$ 9,478,818
Pharmacy & Dental	\$ 2,853,120
Administration	\$ 13,146,549
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 186,561,443</b>



**\$243 MILLION**

Directed to support and improve the lives of Minnesota Veterans and their families

## PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Homelessness Prevention	\$ 7,959,199
State Soldiers Assistance Program	\$ 7,932,470
Claims & Outreach	\$ 5,869,531
State Veterans Cemeteries	\$ 4,688,040
Minnesota GI Bill	\$ 4,464,046
Education	\$ 2,755,702
Legislative Initiatives	\$ 2,461,054
Veterans Service Bonus	\$ 601,400
Administration	\$ 4,617,436
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 41,348,878</b>





Minnesota continues to prioritize ending Veteran homelessness. Pictured from left: Veteran Homelessness Initiative team members Kal Johnson and Derek Holt with Veterans Todd Smith, Army Veteran, Leon Doniphan, Coast Guard Veteran, and Katie Smith, Veteran spouse, at the Capitol Grounds.

## ★ MISSION

Serving Minnesota Veterans, their dependents and survivors by connecting them with the federal and state care and benefits they have earned.

## ★ VISION

To continue working toward fulfilling the needs of Minnesota Veterans and their families by providing innovative programs and services to maximize quality of life.

## ★ VALUES

- V** Veterans first in our hearts, minds and actions
- E** Excellence is our standard
- T** Trust through results
- E** Ethics is our cornerstone
- R** Respect for service (past and present)
- A** Advocacy for care and services
- N** Nation-leading services
- S** Stewardship of resources

# Have a question? Need support?

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs offers support seven days a week for Minnesota Veterans and their families through LinkVet.

## CALL

1-888-LinkVet (546-5838)

## CHAT & EMAIL

LinkVet.org

## SCAN



## MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

20 W. 12th St., St. Paul, MN 55155  
651-296-2562 | [MinnesotaVeteran.org](http://MinnesotaVeteran.org)



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