

ANNUAL REPORT
2023

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS



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Leadership

The primary mission of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs is to advocate with purpose and passion for veterans and link them to superior services, benefits, and support. Our team is at the forefront of the most demanding challenges confronting our state's veterans and their families, regardless of what era they served in.

Aaron Pollard, Deputy Secretary

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As is the case with our state agencies; our people make a difference. For the team at SDDVA, it truly is a privilege and an honor to serve our veterans and their family members. Our team labors tirelessly to ensure that the State of South Dakota preserves our reputation as “a veteran friendly state.”

Secretary's Office

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (SDDVA) is an agency of state government created for the purpose of advising, counseling, and assisting veterans and their families in receiving their rightful benefits under the vast and complex framework of federal and state regulations.

South Dakota has a long and proud history of service to veterans which began in 1889 with the establishment of the South Dakota Soldiers and Sailors Home.

We are extremely proud of all who have honorably served our country over the centuries; and draw on their rich history and their unique contributions to our nation for inspiration and direction.

SDDVA operates the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home, the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery, and assists veterans and their families to obtain the benefits and services provided by South Dakota and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

Providing quality and effective service and advocacy to veterans and their dependents is, and always will be, our number one mission. In doing so, we pledge to stay current and adjust quickly and carefully to new laws, be diligent in their application, and continually improve our efficiency in service to veterans and their dependents.



A man with glasses, wearing a blue suit, white shirt, and patterned tie, stands on a wide, ornate marble staircase. He has his hands clasped in front of him. The staircase is flanked by white marble balustrades and columns. In the background, a large mural is visible on the wall above the stairs. The floor at the bottom of the stairs is covered in a mosaic tile pattern.

Secretary's Message

On behalf of the entire team at the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, we are honored and privileged to assist those who served in the United States Armed Services, as well as their families. We are fortunate to attract dedicated employees who share our passion for supporting veterans.

Key partnerships for the Department include county/tribal veterans service officers, veterans service organizations, and a number of public and private service providers.

This report highlights the outstanding accomplishments of our superb team of dedicated professionals and the unmatched support we receive from our county, tribal, state and federal partners. We all play a major role in the direct infusion of more than \$1 billion annually for veterans in South Dakota's economy through federal compensation, education, pension benefits, and VA medical services.

Working together toward a positive future for veterans and their families, we'll ensure South Dakota continues to be a veteran friendly state.

Who We Served

There are 941 living World War II Veterans in South Dakota.

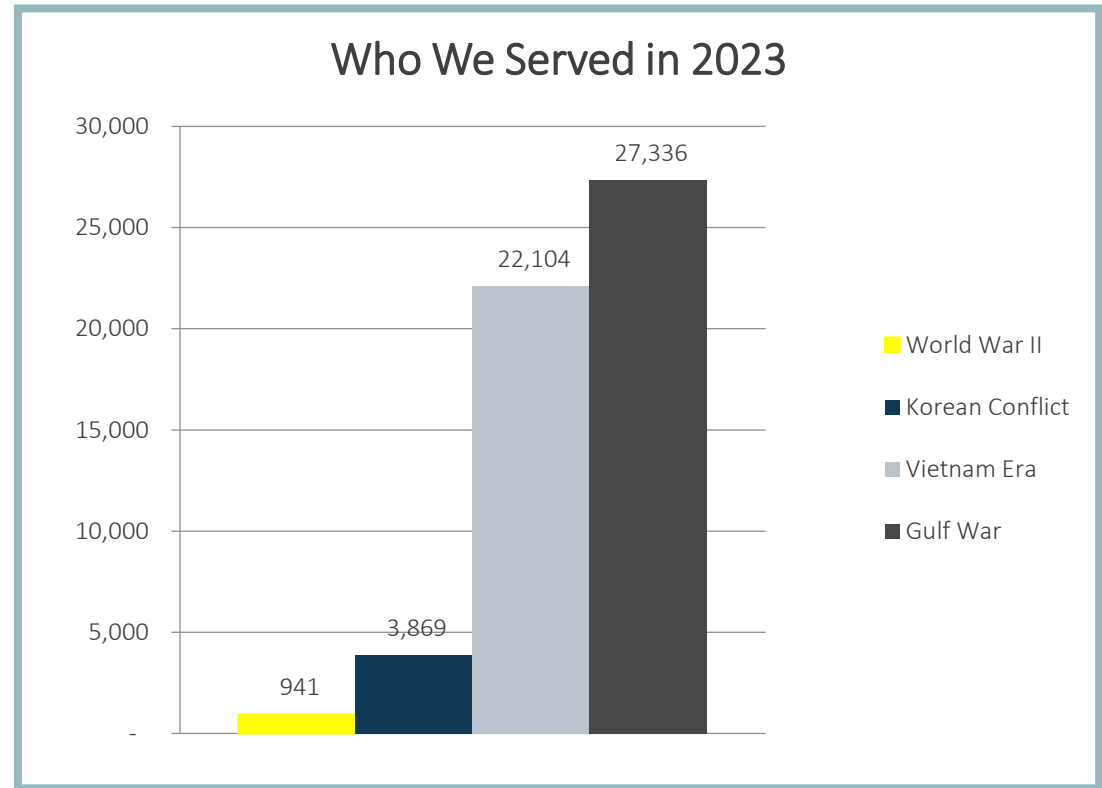
There are 3,869 living Korean War-era Veterans in South Dakota, who served from 1950 to 1955.

There are 22,104 living Vietnam War-era Veterans in South Dakota, who served from 1961 to 1975. SDDVA has seen an increase in disability claims filed on behalf of Vietnam Veterans due to the manifestation of acute diseases brought on by exposure to toxins and the passage of the PACT Act.

There are 27,336 living Gulf War-Era and pre-9/11 Veterans in South Dakota.

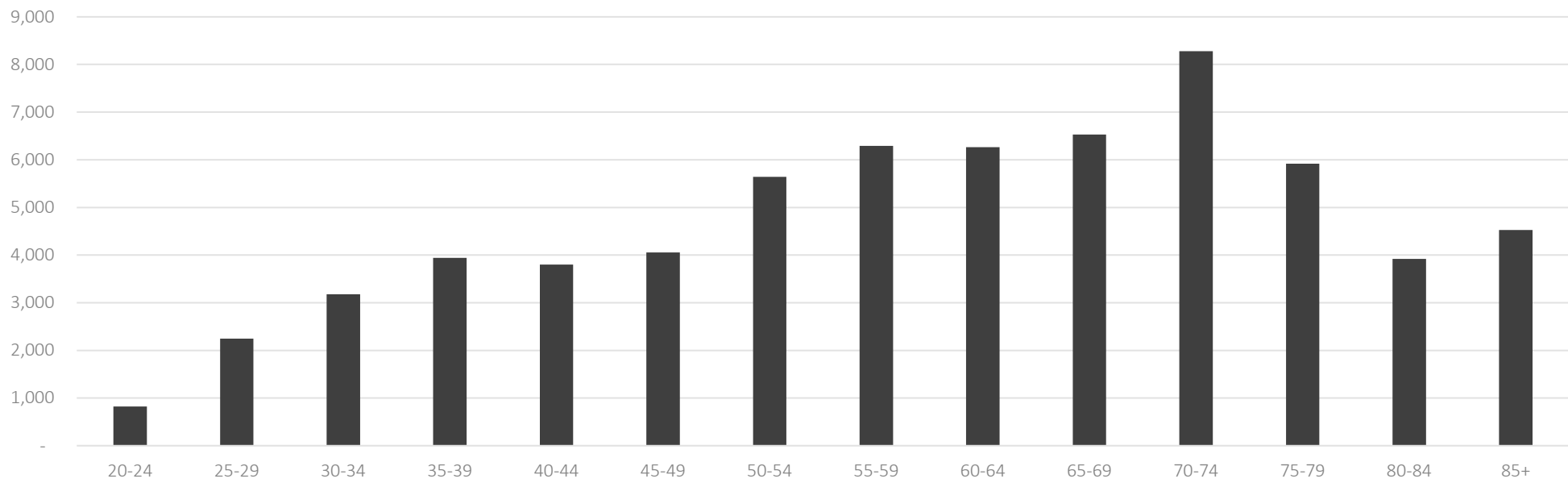
There are 10,946 living post-9/11 Veterans in South Dakota.

There are 13,321 living Peacetime Veterans in South Dakota. They served honorably during a unique and relatively conflict-free time in our history.



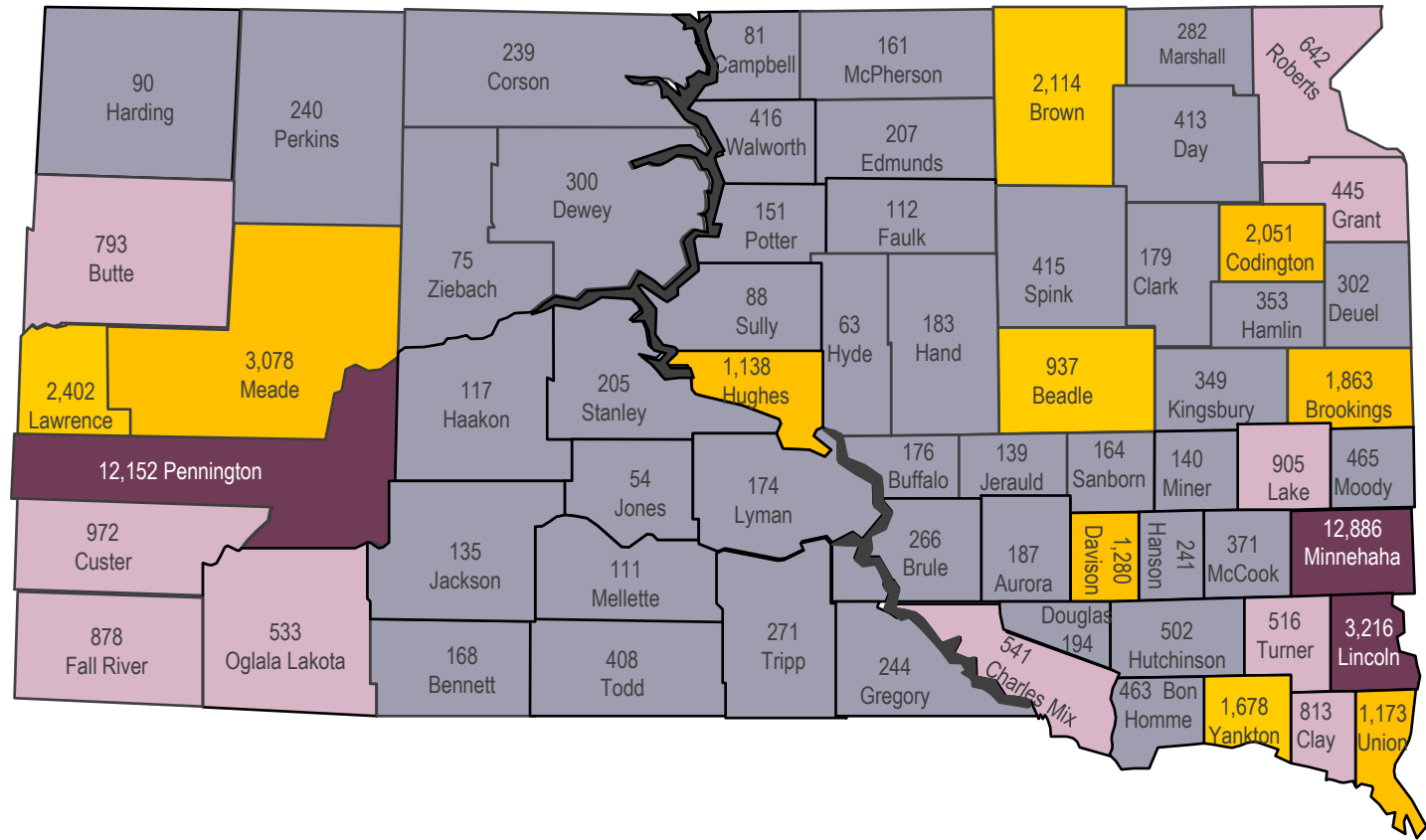
Who We Served

Veterans By Age



Who We Served

SDDVA is on the front line of providing assistance to over 65,000 veterans and their families within our borders and countless additional veterans and their families from all over. Half of our veterans are located within four counties – Lincoln, Meade, Minnehaha, and Pennington.



Legislative Highlights

Revised requirements to have veteran designation added to a state license or ID card to accept Uniformed Services ID as proof of veteran status. (SB 15)

Secured passage of legislation to modernize and clean up statutes relating to the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home. (HB 1038)

Secured funds to increase the basic salary reimbursement for county veterans' service officers. (HB 1045)

Modified free tuition requirements for children or spouses of members of the South Dakota National Guard disabled or deceased in the line of duty to include Board of Technical Education institutions. (HB 1046)

Amended headstone setting fee reimbursement to include the etching of service information on a private headstone for a deceased veteran. (HB 1054)

Increased the headstone setting reimbursement fee to \$200. (HB 1065)

Secured one-time general funds for the state veteran's home for FY23. (HB 1049)

Secured funding for the Department totaling \$14,510,668 for FY24. (SB203)

This summer, SDDVA staff participated in two summer interim study committees that focused on county funding and services and sustainable models for long term care.



Benefits Division

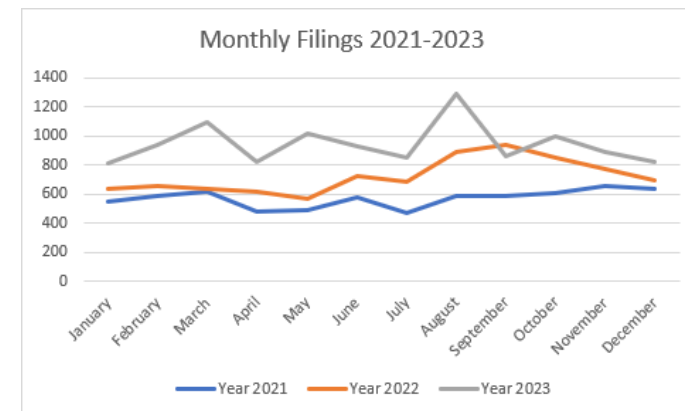
Benefits Division



The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (SDDVA) benefits division assists veterans and their families in obtaining VA benefits. Our claims office team consists of a program manager, an appeals/training manager, six state veterans service officers (VSO) and three claims examiners. In addition to helping veterans and their family members file claims and understand VA processes, the claims office assists our county and tribal VSO partners in building, filing, tracking, and appealing claims for disability compensation, nonservice-connected pension, survivor benefits, education, and healthcare. The claims office works directly with the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) Regional Office staff to expedite claims and advocate to ensure South Dakota veteran's claims are processed correctly and quickly.

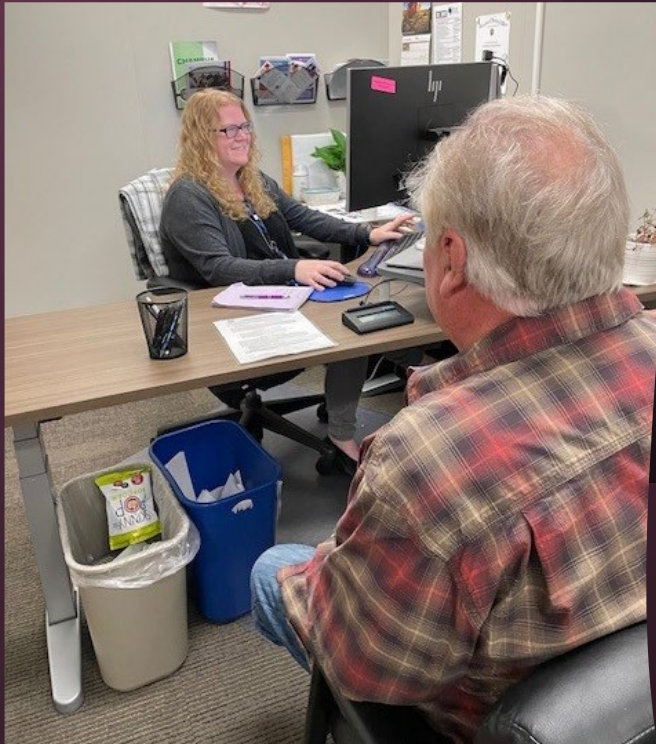
The Cleland-Dole Act, making veterans of the WWII era automatically eligible for VA health care benefits, and the "Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2022", commonly referred to as the PACT Act, were recently passed and increased the number of veterans eligible to file claims. This impacted the VA benefits by adding an additional 709,000 claims over FY2022.

As the number of residents in South Dakota continues to grow, so does the veteran population. With this growth and changes in the law, the SDDVA claims office experienced a significant increase in claims filings over the three-year period of 2021-2023 (see chart below). Our staff also personally assisted 2,356 veterans/family members at the claims office in 2023, an increase of 23% over 2022.



In addition to filing claims, our team takes an active role in training our staff as well as county and tribal veterans service officers on the ever-changing federal rules, regulations, and programs. Annual training includes daylong mini conferences, a three-day conference, bi-monthly virtual trainings throughout the year, and electronic updates as needed.

Economic Impact



Through the efforts of our employees, county and tribal veterans service officers, and other partners; the Department saw significant gains in the monetary and healthcare benefits that our veterans and family members received. The amount of monetary benefits South Dakota veterans, assisted by the SDDVA, tribal and county VSOs, receive from VA disability and pension continues to increase annually and totaled \$378 Million in 2023 (see below graph).

Economic studies indicate these monies turn over between three to seven times in a community.

South Dakota veterans also take advantage of the VA Home Loan Guaranty program which contributes hundreds of millions of dollars annually to the South Dakota economy as well as educational benefit monies paid to South Dakota schools, colleges, and universities. Our team continues to work with each veteran or their family to provide every benefit available.



Field Operations



Five Field Veterans Service Officers (FVSOs) are assigned respective territories throughout the state and are responsible for individually training and assisting the county and tribal veterans service officers in South Dakota's 66 counties and nine tribes to ensure those CTVSOs are familiar with laws, policies, and procedures. The FVSOs work with their respective CTVSOs in filing for veterans benefits and resolving special issues. Collectively they traveled over 104,000 miles in 2023.

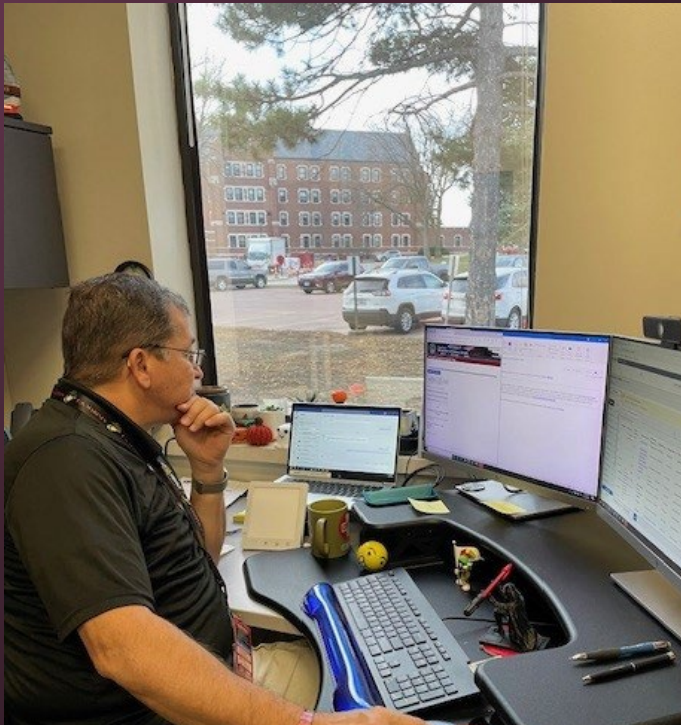
The FVSOs report to the Benefits Division program manager and work closely with the claims office to stay up-to-date on policies and procedures so they can pass this information on to their respective CTVSOs.

SDDVA offers veterans and their families programs and events to foster connections and build strong communities. We are a resource for veterans as they transition from military to civilian life. Our programs are designed to help them build strong foundations to facilitate our mission of helping veterans thrive in South Dakota.

The FVSOs also meet with veterans/families who are unable to travel to county/tribal offices. In addition, they assist the residents of the South Dakota State Veterans Home in filing claims. In November of 2023, SDDVA launched a new outreach program, Operation VNF (Veterans Never Forgotten). VNF affords us the opportunity to communicate with our veterans in long term care facilities and assist them with benefits. To date they have visited 18 facilities.

FVSOs frequently attend outreach events such as Veterans Day programs, Congressional forums, the State Fair, County Fairs, Memorial Day programs, VA sponsored events, Stand Downs and Yellow Ribbons to provide information on benefits.

Appeals



The Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) is an administrative tribunal within the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. With the passing of the Appeals Modernization Act (AMA), the veteran may choose from one of three board appeal options.

- The veteran may opt to have the BVA judge review the file as it stands and render a decision, which is the fastest option, or
- They may submit new evidence for the judge to consider, or
- The veteran can have an in-person hearing before the BVA judge.

Hearings are completed remotely. Veterans can either come to our office or participate from their home. Our SDDVA appeals manager prepares cases for hearings.

Under the AMA, the SDDVA claims office is averaging 130 pending cases per month. As of the end of 2023, there were 25 cases awaiting a hearing date, four hearings scheduled, and the remainder pending decision by the board. Last year, our Department conducted 36 hearings. Of the decisions returned in 2023,

48 cases received favorable grants

24 were denied

25 were remanded back to the Regional Office for further development.

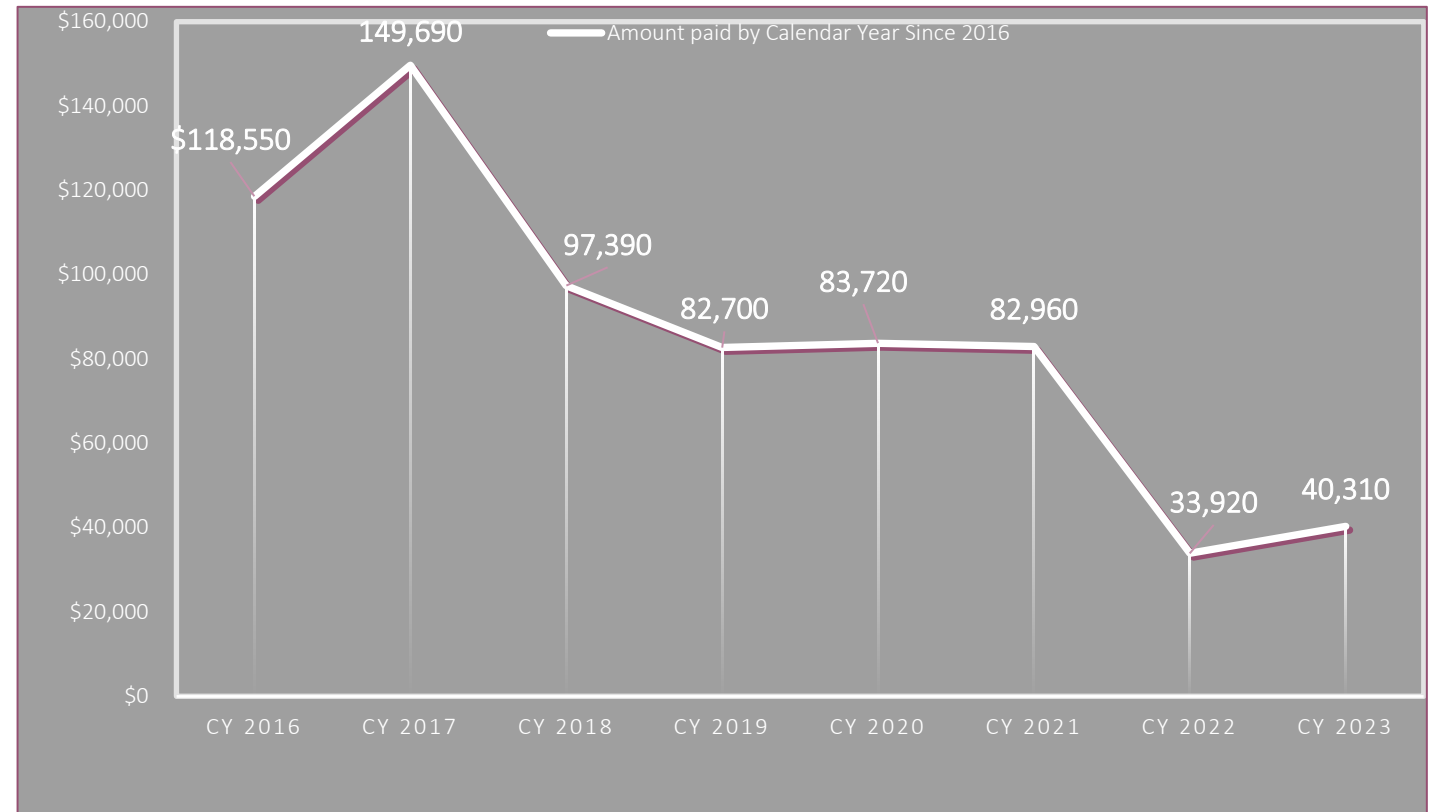
Due to the high number of cases across the country, the current wait time on an appeal from initial filing to a decision is lengthy and a veteran may wait at least one to two years before resolution of their appeal.

Bonus Program



Qualifying veterans can apply for the South Dakota Bonus. South Dakota awards a bonus payment of up to \$500 for service between August 2, 1990 and December 31, 1992. In addition, a \$500 maximum bonus for service from January 1, 1993 through a date to be determined is also available. There are very few states that administer a bonus program like South Dakota.

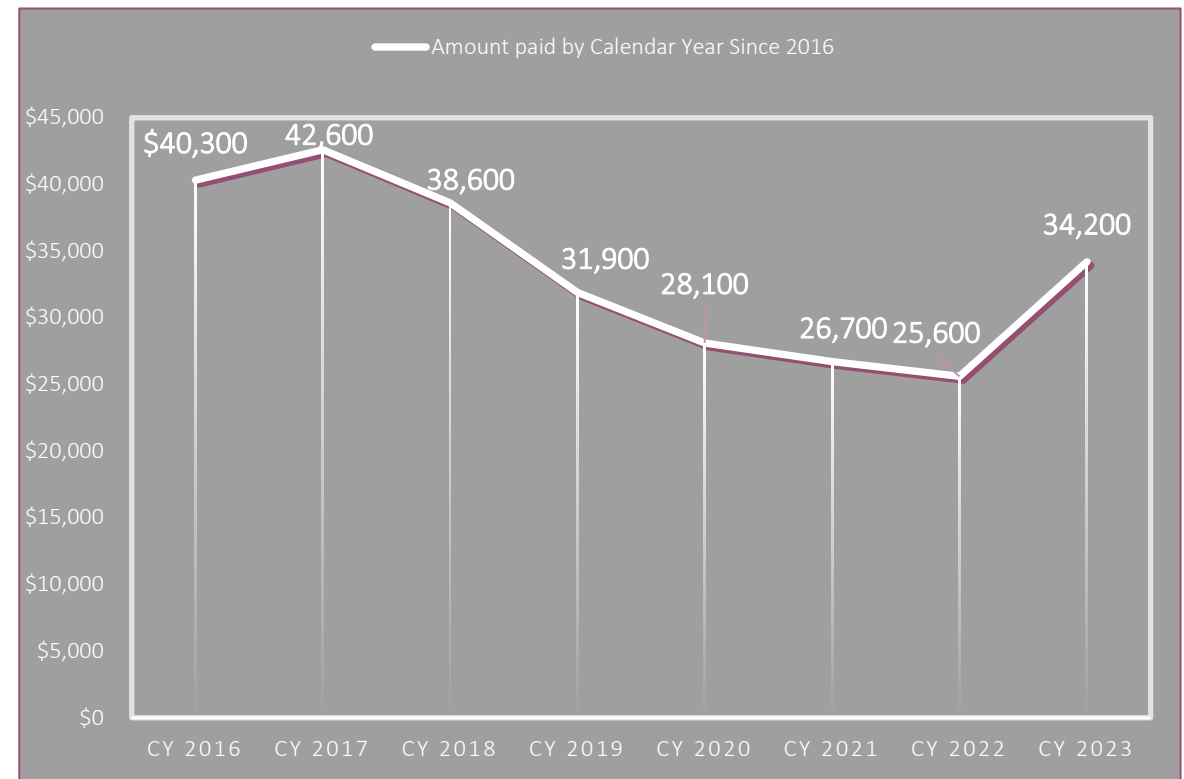
In calendar year 2023, SDDVA processed 107 bonus payments for a total of \$40,310. Details on the South Dakota Veterans/Active-Duty Bonus are available on the SDDVA website at <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/> under the “Benefits” tab.



Headstone Setting Reimbursement

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs pays a stipend toward the setting of US Government issued headstones or markers. The federal Department of Veterans Affairs provides a headstone or marker for the veteran's gravesite at no cost.

The stipend rate had been \$100 for several years, but the 2023 state legislature approved an increase in the reimbursement which allows for markers or headstones set after July 1, 2023, to be eligible for a \$200 payment. In Calendar Year 2023, SDDVA processed 192 applications at the \$100 rate (\$19,200) and 75 forms at the \$200 rate (\$15,000). In total, the department disbursed \$34,200 in headstone setting payments in 2023.



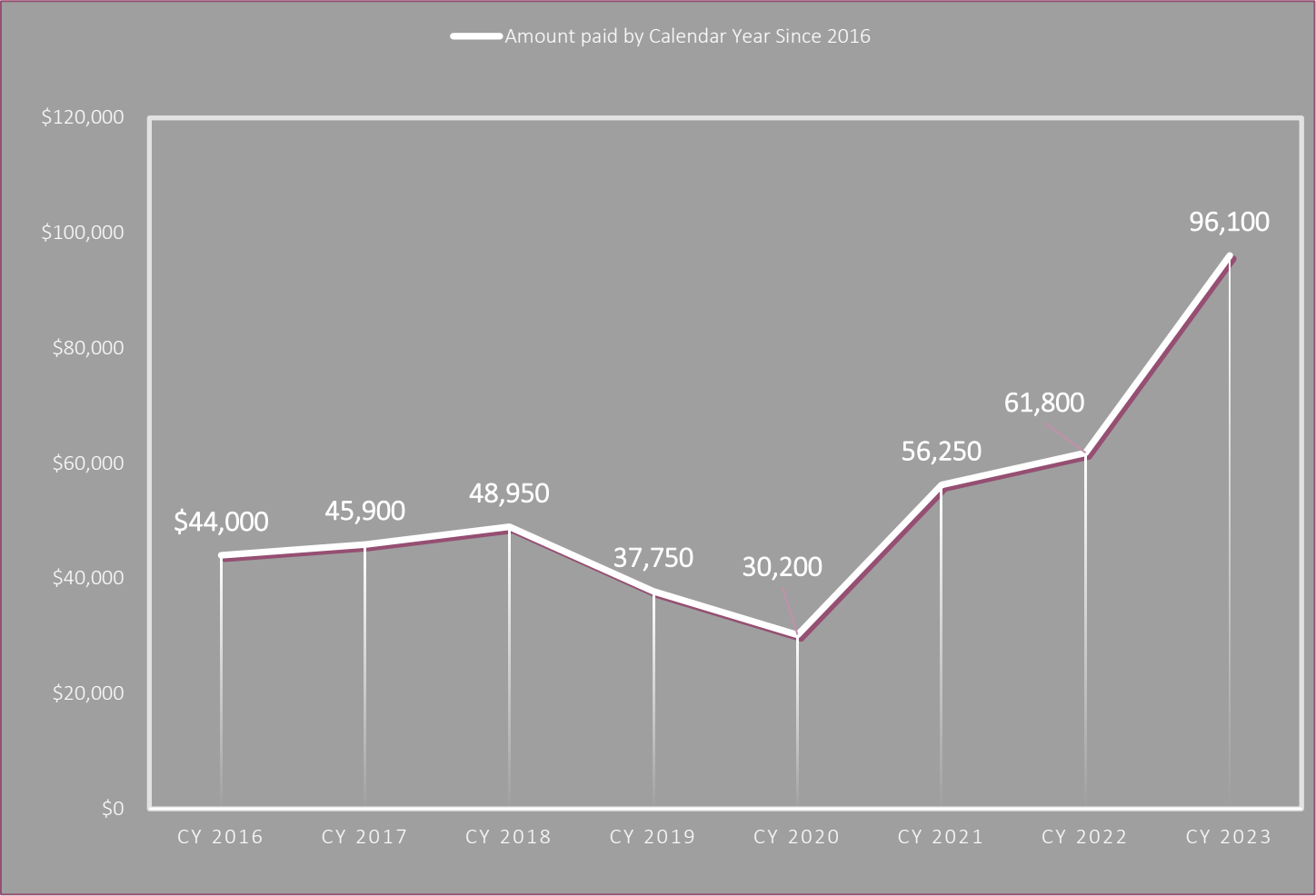
Burial Allowance and Headstone Etching Reimbursement

Among other burial benefits, the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs also administers the Burial Allowance program, in which \$100 is paid toward a veteran or veteran's spouse's burial if the estate is not able to pay the expenses. In Calendar Year 2023, SDDVA did not process any Burial Allowance applications.

The 98th South Dakota Legislature approved the Headstone Etching Reimbursement. The department will pay \$100 when a veteran's service information is professionally etched into a privately purchased headstone. In 2023, the department did not receive any applications for this stipend.

Funeral Honor Stipend

Honor guards from veteran service organizations across South Dakota render funeral honors. This program was established in 2015. At that time, the stipend was \$50 per service. The state legislature approved an increase in funding for the program in 2022. The department currently awards a \$100 stipend to veterans' service organizations for each service they conduct. In Calendar Year 2023, SDDVA processed 961 payments to veteran's service organizations for a total of \$96,100.



Education and Employment Programs



Education looks different for everyone. Our team is poised to help veterans and their families obtain earned education and training benefits. The opportunities include: college degree, and certificate programs, on-the-job training, apprenticeships, flight training, and correspondence courses.

We support the success of veterans, current military members, and their families that are using benefits at South Dakota colleges and universities. We provide comprehensive oversight and information about education benefits and resources, as well as work closely with college and university staff to ensure all veterans or family members using benefits are getting the most of their benefits. We assist in administering various federal and state education benefits to veterans and their families.

In 2023, there were a total of 373 approved On-the-Job Training and Apprenticeship programs. A total of 173 veterans used their GI Bill® for employment with 44 active firms and 51 active programs. In schools, there were 1,241 students using their GI Bill® for education benefits.

Veterans can choose to use their GI Bill® from 35 institutes of higher learning (colleges and universities), 25 non-college degree institutions (high schools, welding schools, and trade schools), and two flight training schools.

Our Department serves as the state approving agency (SAA). As such, we promote and safeguard quality education and training for veterans, ensure greater educational and training opportunities to meet the changing needs of veterans, and protect the GI Bill® resources available for those programs by assisting the VA in preventing fraud, waste, and abuse in the administration of the GI Bill®.

Public Affairs



The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs Communications team strives to help the agency build relationships and improve communications with strategic audiences; informing and promoting veteran-related initiatives that support and further our goals.

A key objective is strengthening relationships and increasing engagement with stakeholders and improving awareness of and participation in SDDVA services. Whether it is printed literature, social media, website, or electronic newsletters, SDDVA is continuously sharing information to help veterans feel connected to SDDVA and our partners.

The Department's website (vetaffairs.sd.gov) is designed to offer veterans a centralized clearinghouse of valuable resources accessible from anywhere in the world. The Department has a mobile website, making it easier for veterans to access information from their smartphones or tablets.

The Department disseminates a weekly newsletter electronically to entities within our veteran network. This newsletter and job postings can be found at: <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/publicaffairs/News%20Updates.aspx>.

In addition to our press releases, the Department distributes a monthly column to the media on issues relating to veterans.

The Department maintains a statewide web calendar at: <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/publicaffairs/upcomingevents.aspx>.

The public affairs office also actively participates in the legislative process by tracking all veteran-related bills introduced, along with committee hearings, during each legislative session; updating department staff daily and partners weekly.

We offer a variety of publications and materials to keep media, veterans, and the general public up-to-date on veteran's issues around the state and nation - from legislative reports, to media contacts, newsletters, press releases, photos, annual reports and more.



Fallen Hero Bridge Dedicatons

Fallen Hero Bridge Dedications

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, in partnership with the Department of Military, Department of Transportation and Governor Kristi Noem, launched the South Dakota Fallen Heroes Bridge Dedication Program in 2019. To date, 42 bridges have been dedicated honoring 44 veterans. This program affords South Dakota the opportunity to dedicate state bridges to South Dakotans who died while in active service or who are missing in action.

In 2023, bridges were dedicated in the following counties: Beadle, Bon Homme, Brookings, Brule, Codington, Day, Edmunds, Gregory, Mellette, Minnehaha, and Pennington.

We have honored 10 Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom Veterans, 15 Vietnam War Veterans, seven Korean War Veterans, 11 World War II Veterans, and one World War I Veteran.

Bridges have been dedicated in the following counties: Beadle, Bon Homme, Brookings, Brule, Charles Mix, Codington, Corson, Day, Dewey, Edmunds, Fall River, Gregory, Hanson, Hughes, Hutchinson, Jones, Lyman, McCook, Mellette, Miner, Minnehaha, Moody, Pennington, Perkins, Roberts, Tripp, Turner, Walworth, Yankton, and Ziebach.

Naming South Dakota bridges in honor of our fallen gives us the opportunity of remembrance, reflection, and respect—to honor the men and women who gave their lives in service to this nation.

The Fallen Heroes Bridge Dedication Committee meets in April and selects twelve South Dakotans to honor each year. Dedication of the bridges are held May through November.

SDDVA currently has 76 pending applications on file (3 OEF/OIF Veterans, 37 Vietnam War Veterans, eight Korean War Veterans, and 28 World War II Veterans).

South Dakota has more than 3,000 veterans that paid the ultimate sacrifice. Although these heroes are no longer with us, their memories live on in the hearts of their loved ones and our state. They cherished liberty and loved freedom enough to lay down their lives to preserve our way of life.



Suicide Awareness

Since 2019, South Dakota's Departments of Agriculture, Education, Health, Social Services, Tribal Relations, and Veterans Affairs, as well as the Great Plains Tribal Chairmen's Health Board have worked together to develop objectives and strategies that center around prevention, intervention, and postvention with the main goal to reduce suicide deaths in South Dakota.

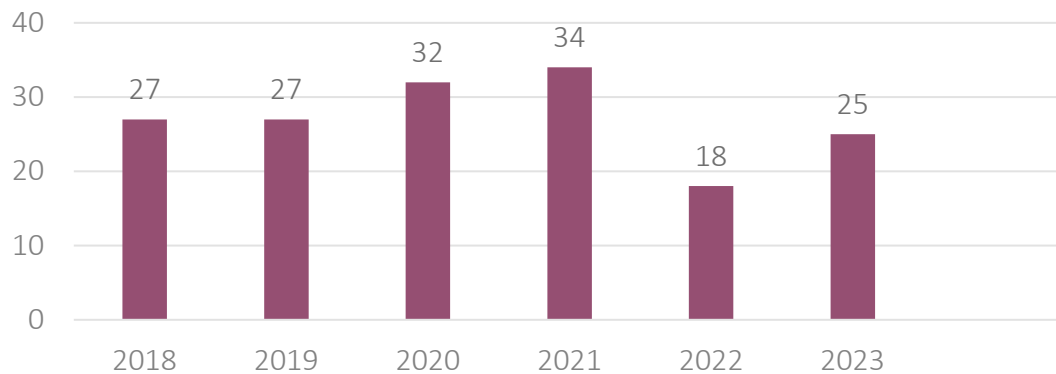
The SD Suicide Prevention website (<https://sdsuicideprevention.org/>), serves as the main source of information. To help with consistent and aligned messaging, an interagency communication plan was developed. The plan includes messages, social media posts, posters, toolkit items, and outreach promotional materials.

SDDVA challenges everyone to do their "buddy checks" to reconnect with veterans who may need assistance but don't know where to go or who to ask. Buddy checks can be done by a personal visit, a phone call, or an email. South Dakota Department of Tribal Relations Secretary David Flute and South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Greg Whitlock created a video to assist in how to do a buddy check. This video can be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0XcvxSjwUic>.

Veterans in acute suicidal crisis are now able to go to any VA or non-VA health care facility for emergency health care at no cost – including inpatient or crisis residential care for up to 30 days and outpatient care for up to 90 days. Veterans do not need to be enrolled in the VA system.

The Veterans Crisis Line's new number—**Dial 988 then Press 1**—gives Veterans in crisis a shorter, easier-to-remember way to get support as quickly as possible.

South Dakota Veteran Suicide Rates



Salary Supplement

Operation CARS

Homeless Veterans

SDCL 33A-1-30 and 33A-1-31 establishes a reimbursement program for SDDVA to provide financial assistance to counties and tribes in paying the salaries of their veterans' service officers. In 2023, 55 counties and three tribes made application for and were deemed eligible for a total reimbursement of \$185,625.

Calling All Returning Service Members (CARS) is a program that the SDDVA uses to reach out to South Dakota residents returning from Active Duty. This is an opportunity for us to provide them with a heartfelt welcome home, contact information to their local county or tribal veterans service officers or our state staff, and answer any questions they may have on their transition back to civilian life. In 2023 staff contacted 505 veterans via CARS.

The South Dakota Housing for the Homeless Consortium is a statewide organization made up of service providers, individuals, city/county governments and state government agencies and works to address homelessness in the state. SDDVA is a member of the Consortium and is focused on the issue of homelessness among the veteran population. South Dakota Housing for the Homeless Consortium is a statewide organization consisting of service providers, individuals, city/county governments, faith-based organizations and state government all working together to address homelessness in the state.

Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Programs include:

- Supportive Housing Program
- Provides housing, including housing units and group quarters, that has a supportive environment and includes a planned service component
- Shelter Plus Care Program
- Provides grants for rental assistance for homeless persons with disabilities through four components: tenant, sponsor, project, and single room occupancy rental assistance.
- Single Room Occupancy Program provides rental assistance on behalf of homeless individuals in connection with moderate rehabilitation of SRO dwellings.

What's Brewing

In 2022, the Department introduced a new program called “What’s Brewing.” This program has been a great opportunity for our department to visit with veterans and hear first-hand about the issues they are experiencing, as well as allow us an opportunity to brief them on new benefits and services. As the advocate for South Dakota veterans, we need to know what challenges our veterans and their families are facing.

During these “brewing” events our team addressed questions about veteran’s benefits; including compensation, education, pension, healthcare, burial, state veterans cemetery, state veterans home, and the Pact Act of 2022.

This year’s 2023 events were held in Gettysburg, Hoven, Mobridge and Spearfish.





Veterans Cemetery

South Dakota Veterans Cemetery

Laid to Rest in 2023

Veterans – 175
Dependents - 50

Laid to Rest to Date

Veterans – 570
Dependents - 140



New Applications Received

Applications Received in 2023 – 331
Total Applications on File – 2,099



Burial Choice

Casket – 44
In-Ground Cremains – 93
Columbarium – 86
Scattering Garden – 2



Phone Calls and Walk Ins

Phone Calls – 1,357
Walk Ins – 1,229





The first phase of construction of the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery has the availability of 2,319 graves, with a full build out of 28,519 graves in 12 phases. In 2023, the Cemetery surpassed a total of 700 interments for Veterans and their eligible dependents since operations began in 2021.

The South Dakota Veterans Cemetery offers burial for veterans, spouses, and eligible dependents. Burial options include casket burial, cremation in-ground burial, columbarium and scattering garden. All burial options are of no cost to the veteran and are \$948 for eligible dependents.

An annual survey conducted by the National Cemetery Administration (NCA), a division of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, reported the following about our South Dakota Cemetery, after surveying next of kin and funeral directors:

- 98.4% of all respondents agreed or strongly agreed the quality of service they received from Cemetery staff was excellent.
- 100% of all respondents agreed or strongly agreed the overall appearance at the Cemetery was excellent.
- 100% of all respondents indicated they would recommend the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery to veteran families during their time of need.



Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home



MICHAEL J. FITZMAURICE
SOUTH DAKOTA VETERANS HOME



State Veterans Home



Who we are

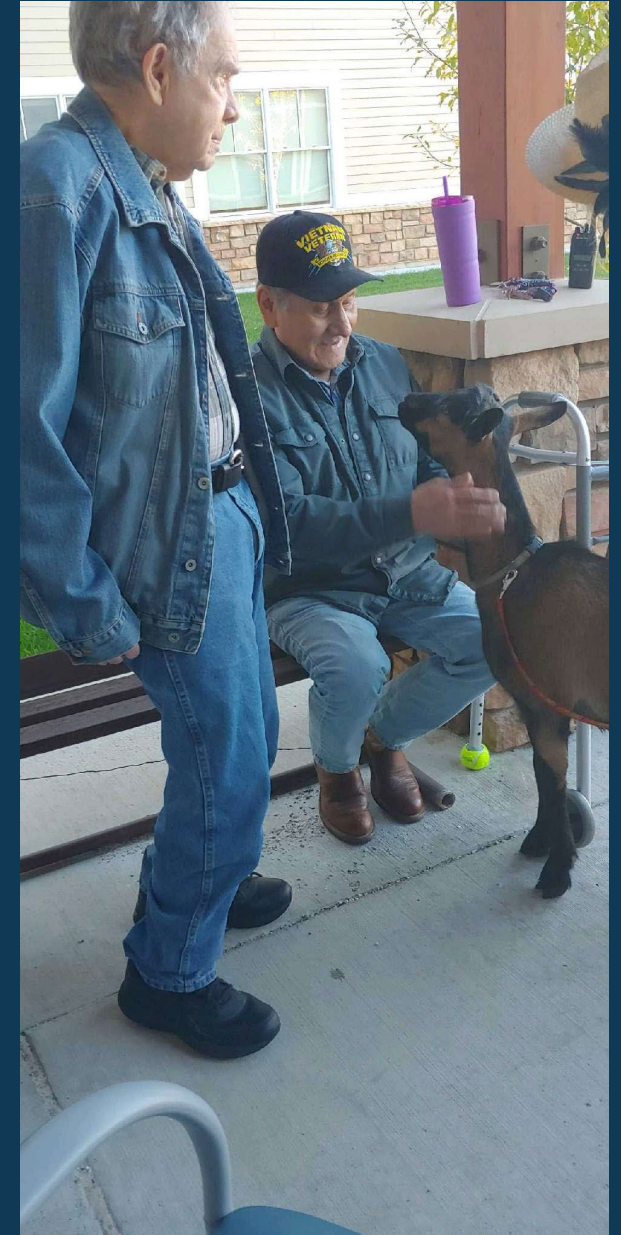
At the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home, we provide quality long-term care services, rehabilitative, and social services to each resident. Our goal is to ensure that each resident experiences the highest possible quality of life, every day.

Additionally, the Home is supported by dedicated volunteers from surrounding communities, veterans service organizations and fraternal organizations who provide many additional supporting services and activities which enhance the lives of our residents. We are indebted to our volunteers and offer our appreciation.

The Home is subject to the regulatory standards of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and the South Dakota Department of Health and undergoes annual licensure inspections by both agencies in areas of resident care, quality, and safety.

We focus on health of the whole person – intellectual, social, occupational, spiritual, emotional, and physical wellness.

2023 marked 134 years of providing care to residents at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home; underscoring South Dakota's rich legacy and commitment to take care of our heroes.



Strategies

We are partnering with Western Dakota Technical college to offer a satellite location for their licensed practical nurse (LPN) program to be offered on our campus.

We are partnering with Hot Springs High School to offer certified nursing assistant (CNA) certification training to local students. We are hoping to attract students from the Hot Springs area that are interested in pursuing a career in healthcare/nursing and enable them to receive their education locally.

Our goal is to fill vacant CNA and LPN positions with people living in the surrounding area which should help to address the shortage of staff and affordable workforce housing in Hot Springs.

We have taken the initial steps to become Medicare certified. This will enable us to accept a larger demographic of residents which will help drive census. We currently offer basic nursing services so when residents need a higher level of care they must seek those services at other facilities. Becoming a skilled nursing facility will allow the SVH to accept residents with Medicare A for short term rehab stays and more clinically complex residents.

We have been awarded a VA nursing grant again this year. The grant funds will be used to offer scholarships in conjunction with the Build Dakota. The funds will also be used provide education to staff to increase their skills needed to care for more clinically complex residents which will aide with becoming a skilled nursing facility.

Across the country, long-term care facilities, including our Home, are faced with staffing shortages. This challenge has made it necessary for us to utilize temporary contract staff, and to temporarily close one household to allow us to focus on our resident's needs and provide quality care.

Aurora – Audrey Chapman
Beadle – Taylor Jans
Bennett – Don Larson
Bon Homme – Eric Elsberry
Brookings – Courtney Steffen
Brookings – Matt Pillar
Brown – Aaron Walberg
Brule – Tim Thomas
Buffalo – Tim Thomas
Butte – Jasen Saivong
Campbell – Lester Goehring
Charles Mix – Jerry Seiner
Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe – Robert Dunsmore
Clark – Darin Lewis
Clay – Drew Gunderson
Codington – Todd Rose
Corson – Kevin Dyda
Crow Creek Sioux Tribe – Vacant
Custer – Todd Fish
Davison – TJ Thomas/ Courtney Ditter/Tim Storly
Day – Jeff Nelson
Deuel – Dennis Evenson
Dewey – Kevin Dyda
Douglas – Jay Vanden Hoek
Edmunds – Barb Schaefer
Fall River – Dan Cullen
Faulk – David Huss
Grant – Scott Malimanek
Gregory – Dale Reber

Haakon – Terry Deuter
Hamlin – David Schaefer
Hand – Dave Johnson
Hanson – TJ Thomas/ Courtney Ditter/Tim Storly
Harding – James Pickett
Hughes – Janet Beck
Hutchinson – Glenn Hartman
Hyde – Dave Johnson
Jackson – Terry Deuter
Jerauld – TJ Thomas/ Courtney Ditter/Tim Storly
Jones – Tim Thomas
Kingsbury – Gary Schumacher
Lake – John Anderson
Lawrence – Jesse Ketzer
Lincoln – Susan Irons
Lyman – Tim Thomas
Marshall – David Daberkow
McCook – Brian Havard
McPherson – Samantha Boshard
Meade – Sean Henderson
Mellette – Clinton Rasmusson
Miner – Timothy Reisch
Minnehaha – Kathy Richardson
Moody – Jerrick Charles
Oglala Lakota – Jerlene Arredondo
Oglala Sioux Tribe – Shawnee Keith
Pennington – Thomas Vallette/Robert Borries/Heather Funk
Perkins – Bridget Keller
Potter – Isaac Full

Roberts – Christopher Hicks
Rosebud Sioux Tribe – Orlando Morrison
Sanborn – TJ Thomas/ Courtney Ditter/Tim Storly
Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate – Geri Opsal
Spink – Steve Wollman
Standing Rock Sioux Tribe – Claudette Walking Elk
Stanley – Janet Beck
Sully – Janet Beck
Todd – Ron Valandra
Tripp – Milton Douglas
Turner – Thomas Sparrow
Union – Lisa Schenzel
Walworth – Peter Weinzirl
Yankton – Robert Stickney
Yankton Sioux Tribe – Dennis Rucker
Ziebach – Vacant

The primary source of contact for benefits are the county and tribal veterans service officers. They are located in each of South Dakota's 66 counties and eight of South Dakota's reservations.

Partners: County and Tribal Veterans Service Officers

The South Dakota County and Tribal Veterans Service Officers Association (SDVSOA) is an organization consisting of county and tribal veterans service officers across the state.

The primary purpose of the SDVSOA is to promote and further the work of all county and tribal veterans service officers in the State of South Dakota and to ensure that all of the state's veterans and/or their families are reached and receive the care and benefits to which they are entitled. Current board members are as follows:

President—Aaron Walberg (Brown County)

Vice President—Dan Cullen (Fall River County)

Secretary-Treasurer—Sam Boshard (McPherson County)

Judge Advocate—Dennis Evenson (Deuel County)

Partners: South Dakota County and Tribal Veterans Service Officers Association

The South Dakota Veterans Council is comprised of the following Congressionally chartered veterans' service organizations: American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Vietnam Veterans of America. Membership consists of three members from each veterans service organization.

Council Leadership:

President—Connie Johnson (Military Order of the Purple Heart)

Vice President—Anna Arnold (VFW)

Secretary/Treasurer—Marty Pennock (Disabled American Veterans)

Judge Advocate—Terry Hawk (Vietnam Veterans of America)

Partners: South Dakota Veterans Council



Veterans Service Organizations provide advocacy, educate veterans on benefits, lobby Congress and legislators, and provide a network for veterans. SDDVA works closely with these congressionally chartered veterans service organizations.

American Legion

American Legion Auxiliary

Disabled American Veterans

Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary

Marine Corps League

Military Officers Association of America

Military Order of the Purple Heart

National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs

National Guard Association of South Dakota

National Guard Enlisted Association

National Guard Enlisted Association Auxiliary

Non-Commissioned Officers Association of America

Paralyzed Veterans of America

The Retired Enlisted Association

Veterans of Foreign Wars

Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary

Vietnam Veterans of America

Partners: Veterans Service Organizations

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

<https://vetaffairs.sd.gov>



Pierre Administrative Office:

South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs
425 E. Capitol
Pierre, SD 57501-3100
605.773.3269

Sioux Falls Administrative Office:

South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs
SD Military Heritage Alliance Bldg.
Suites 406 and 407
1600 W. Russell Street
Sioux Falls, SD 57104-1330
605.360.4173

Sioux Falls Claims Office:

South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs
c/o VA Regional Office
2501 W. 22nd Street
Sioux Falls, SD 57105-1305
605.333.6869
605.333.5386 (fax)

State Veterans Cemetery:

SD Veterans Cemetery
25965 477th Avenue
Sioux Falls, SD 57104-6519
605.277.8094

State Veterans Home:

Michael J. Fitzmaurice SVH
2500 Minnekahta Avenue
Hot Springs, SD 57747-1129
605.745.5127

