

VMFC Issues for NM Legislature M&VA Interim Committee Meeting 10 August and 2023 Session

Ongoing Efforts We Support

NMServes Update – A landscape assessment for a NMServes coordinated care network will be underway soon through CNM in partnership with the D’Aniello Institute for Veterans & Military Families (IVMF) at Syracuse University.

The assessment funded in last year’s Junior Bill by Senator Pope and Representative Sariñana has unfortunately been held up 60+ days so far due to inconsistencies with the deployment of Junior Bill money between the NM State Dept of Finance Authority and CNM’s Procurement office. This delay is a problem because the IVMF team must ensure proper time is spent with stakeholders across the state to make the best recommendations for implementation of this important program.

Despite that slow-down the landscape assessment is due to begin after August 15th. The VMFC will stay in touch with CNM and IVMF to receive updates on those next steps and will keep the M&VA Committee informed.

Next Steps: While the outcome of the assessment will provide clear next steps and implementation recommendations, a general model for the next phases of building a Serves network will generally follow the models established in 15 other states that have adopted this program.

To properly establish funding for a sustainable Interconnected Coordinated Care Network Rollout, multiple phases will be needed, beginning with regional centers and building to a statewide culturally and geographically competent model.

Step 1 - Conduct a Landscape Assessment.

- One-time cost of \$100k was funded last year and the survey will soon be underway.

Step 2 – Design and Implementation Plan with rollout phases.

- The assessment will identify phases for rolling out the program such as starting with a local network and coordination care center and expanding that to a regional scope.
- This will include areas of special interest such as Native Veterans living on or near Tribal land, and then expanding and connecting the program state-wide.
- Cost estimate is minimal; most of the work here will be provided as part of the assessment, new work will be primarily outreach and training.

Step 3 - Implementation of Phase 1 Plan.

- Identify a target location for the coordinated care center (Hub). If no obvious location presents itself, develop and send out an RFP.
- Build the initial phase Hub and identify the local area Spokes that will connect to the Hub. Spokes include veteran-serving non-profits, local governments serving veterans, etc.
- Cost will be based on the results of the Assessment.

Step 4 - Regional coordination and expansion with additional Spokes.

- Connects veteran-serving organizations within a region. For example, connect Santa Fe and Albuquerque and connect Valencia and Sandoval Counties.
- Evaluates connecting to other coordinated care programs such as the Santa Fe Connect program.
- Rolls out training and Spoke resources to additional organizations throughout the region.

Step 5 – Expand to include Communities of Special Interest.

- Areas such as NW NM Tribal Country, Rio Grande Pueblos and others would be evaluated to ensure the creation and rollout of services is culturally and geographically appropriate to be the most effective possible network to serve veterans in those communities.

Step 6 – Expand to State-wide Network.

- Continue bringing new Spokes on board, develop the community of practice and coordinated events that allows for training and implementation to happen efficiently.
- Cost savings are achieved as the program grows. IVMF is evaluating estimated costs for future planning.

Recommendation: The Caucus will stay apprised of the progress with NMServes through coordination with CNM and IVMF. We further advocate for committee members to seek accountability from CNM to ensure future delays do not inhibit this program and consider allocating 3 more months to allow IVMF a full year to conduct the landscape assessment.

Other Consideration:

- Americas Warrior Partnership (<https://www.americaswarriorpartnership.org/dine-naazbaa-partnership>) has established a network across the Navajo Nation. IVMF is very interested in building an extended coordinated care network for Native veterans in partnership with AWP across New Mexico and will work with them to identify additional gaps, lessons learned, and ways to connect this network to the statewide NMServes.

Military Spouse Licensing

Recommendation: DoD-State Liaison Office (D-SLO) advocates, and we support, NM signing onto 7 more interstate Licensing Compacts that already exist. No new legislation is required save for adopting the interstate compacts which may be achieved through coordination with the Superintendent of NM Regulation and Licensing Dept, Linda Trujillo.

Licensing Compacts - 1/8 Compacts passed

- Nurse Licensure Compact – Passed 01/19/2018
- Emergency Medical Services Licensure Compact
- Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact
- Physical Therapy Licensure Compact
- Audiology/Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact
- Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact
- Licensed Professional Counseling Compact
- Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Compact

New Priorities

1. State Funding Levels for Veterans Services

NM DVS Budget \$5.9M → Total VA Spending in NM is \$1.7B

Research is just beginning, but we are looking at data available through new reports to see whether New Mexico's overall spending at the state level is appropriate considering the scope of spending coming from the Veterans Administration. With a DVS budget of under \$6M the state is unable to fully address issues and connect veterans with the more than \$1.7B that the VA spends in NM. We may be missing an opportunity of taking full advantage of VA resources for our veterans.

Recommendation: We would like access to any research the Legislature has on this issue. If none has been done yet, we think this would be a worthwhile area to investigate for potential benefit to veterans.

2. Shared Services Model – Co-locate VSO Offices with Local Governments

In some states (e.g., NY, PA, IN) the state veterans services departments have adopted a shared services model to **save money and better deploy the state's limited Veterans Services Officers (VSOs)**. These states work with local governments to co-locate VSOs in government owned buildings to save rent and establish better coordinated services with staff who provide constituent's services.

Here in NM most VSO offices are in commercially rented office buildings. According to the last DVS report, 9 out of 14 designated VSO offices are either housed in commercially rented spaces or we could not confirm that the building was a government building. Three locations are confirmed to be co-located in a government funded buildings with other government entities serving veterans. Three VSO positions are vacant, one of which will be co-located when filled.

Recommendation: Review all current VSO locations to determine if a suitable local government building exists to facilitate co-location and collaboration with local government staff who serve veterans. This is an opportunity to save money on rent and to coordinate VSO work with local constituent services' staff to boost effectiveness and better serve our veterans.

NM DVS VSO Locations in NM:

Vacant (3 Locations), Co-located (3 Locations), Stand-alone/Unknown (9 Locations)

Alamogordo - 411 10th Street #107

Albuquerque (NE Heights) – 5201 Eagle Rock Blvd. NE (Includes NM Veterans Small Business Center)

Albuquerque Downtown - 2120 North Alto St. 500 Gold Ave. SW - (Federal Building)

A second VSO position at **Albuquerque Downtown** is vacant

Carlsbad - 101 N. Halagueno Street

Clovis - 904 W. 6th Street

Farmington - San Juan College Vet Center

Gallup - 908 Buena Vista Ave. Room 1A

Grants - Vacant

Hobbs - 2120 North Alto Street

Las Cruces - 2024 E. Griggs Ave.

Las Vegas - 917 Douglas Ave.

Rio Rancho - Sandoval County Government Complex/Bldg. D
Roswell - 1600 SE Main Street. Suite 1A
Santa Fe - Vacant

3. Teaching Certificates for Veterans

According to the American Federation of Teachers, more than 1,000 licensed educator positions are unfilled in New Mexico. Many states have enacted teaching certificate programs for veterans, transitioning servicemembers, and military spouses to fill these positions with excellent results.

Recommendation: Commission a study to evaluate the efficacy of teaching certificate programs aimed at increasing the opportunity for veterans, transitioning servicemembers, and military spouses to obtain teaching certifications or alternate teaching certifications in NM. Such a study would look at programs in other states and evaluate appropriate actions New Mexico may choose to pursue to increase both the opportunities for veterans and military spouses to teach in the school systems they send their children to and to address the critical teacher shortage in our state.

We are NOT advocating for the "Florida model" that grants teaching certificates to non-college graduate veterans because it has stirred up a hornet's nest with the teacher unions there. Rather we support an evaluation of the existing programs such as "Troops to Teachers" and our "Alternative Teaching Certificates" to see if opportunities to recruit qualified veterans and military spouses to fill much needed roles are possible.

4. Veterans, Transitioning Members and Military Spouse Education, Training and Workforce Development Ideas

Statewide Apprenticeship Coordinator

This position would assist veterans and transitioning servicemembers in connecting with apprenticeship programs. Veterans would gain marketable skills to earn a livable wage and could use Veterans Education Benefits as part of their apprenticeship. It has been done in Washington state successfully.

Military Spouse Outreach Initiative

This position would be designed to share resources with military spouses, convene workgroups on important issues such as employment and childcare, and advocate for military spouses.

Veterans Conservation Corps

The Veterans Conservation Corps was established by the Washington State legislature in 2007. Today, across the country, corps modeled after the program aid thousands of veterans in better adapting to post-service life among their peers through hands-on involvement with natural resources. They monitor and restore streams and watersheds, plant native vegetation, restore forests, prairies, and native grasslands, and study environmental education.

Veterans Local Government Management Fellowship

The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) runs the VLGMF program. They currently serve 100+ cities, counties, and townships in 24 states.

Recommendation: NM could evaluate this program in conjunction with other DOD SkillBridge Programs (see below) as possible solutions to fill difficult-to-recruit positions throughout state government with qualified NM veterans.

VLGMF is a 12-to-25-week Department of Defense SkillBridge Program that provides transitioning service members with management training and hands-on experience in the local government environment to prepare them for smooth transitions into local government careers. Think internship.

This program will match eligible and selected fellows with surrounding local government sponsors based on skills, education, experience, and the preferences of both parties.

Current VLGMF Locations in the Southwest US:

New Mexico: 0

Utah: 0

Arizona: 4 - City of Goodyear, City of Sierra Vista, City of Surprise, City of Tucson

Colorado: 17 - City of Commerce City, City of Lakewood, City of Manitou Springs, City of Wheat Ridge, City of Woodland Park, Colorado Springs Utilities, County of El Paso, County of Elbert, County of Fremont, County of Jefferson, Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments, Pueblo West Metropolitan District, Town of Kiowa, Town of Monument, City of Fountain, City of Aurora, City of Colorado Springs

Nevada: 1 - City of Las Vegas

Oklahoma: 1 - City of Durant

Texas: 12 - City of Coppell, City of Copperas Cove, City of Dayton, City of Georgetown, City of Houston, City of Jersey Village, City of Lake Worth, City of Live Oak, City of San Antonio, City of Schertz, City of Shavano Park, County of El Paso

DOD SkillBridge Program – Enabling Veterans to Serve in Local and State Government

This program offers an opportunity to help communities across NM recruit veterans and transitioning servicemembers by providing support through potential grants and the Dept of Workforce Solutions to enable the full use of DOD SkillBridge Programs and the VLGMF program.

IVMF Onward to Opportunity (O2O) – NM National Guard

O2O is a no-cost industry-focused and validated career skills program that connects transitioning servicemembers and active-duty military spouses to high-demand careers in customer service, information technology, and business management.

Recommendation: Since there is no O2O program in NM, we recommend that the legislature evaluate the potential benefits of such a program for the NM National Guard.

Other Training Programs:

CyberVET - Fully-sponsored (**No GI Bill Needed**) "veterans first" workforce development initiative dedicated to transitioning servicemembers with no IT or coding background to highly skilled and high-paying IT careers.

- <http://cybervetusa.com>

Hire Heroes USA - Provides free job search assistance to U.S. military members, veterans and their spouses, and helps companies connect with opportunities to hire them.

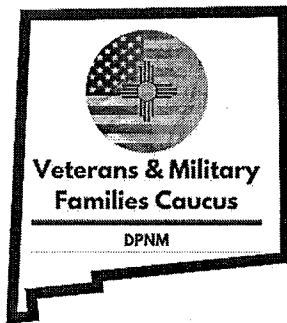
- <https://www.hireheroesusa.org>

Training Partners – A list of more than 75 other training partners focused on Veteran Job Skills development.

- <https://www.hireheroesusa.org/training-partners/>

Research links for further reading:

- [NCSL Military and Veterans Affairs Task Force | Presentations | May 2022](#)
- <https://www.ncsl.org/research/military-and-veterans-affairs/military-and-veterans-affairs-task-force-presentations-may-2022637886500.aspx>



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