
AGENCY OVERVIEW**Date:** 01/13/2011**321 Department of Veterans Affairs****Time:** 11:02:47

Statutory Authority

North Dakota Century Code Chapters 37-14 and 37-18.

Agency Description

The North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (NDDVA) has the responsibility of ensuring the state's nearly 61,365 veterans and their dependents not only know about the state and federal benefits to which they are entitled for having served their country, but also assist them in obtaining such benefits.

The department is responsible for the collection, filing, safeguarding and maintaining of North Dakota Veterans DD214 and DD215 discharge documents. The department safeguards these records in fireproof locking cabinets and provides certified and true copies to the veterans upon request.

The department is responsible for assisting counties with training of 50 County Veterans Service Officers (CVSOs) who service 53 counties, and are appointed by their respective County Commissions, as well as assisting in the training of Tribal Service Officers from three tribes. The department provides training through a minimum of two training seminars each year to keep the CVSOs as current as possible on issues, topics and programs available to and affecting veterans as well as providing initial and continued one-on-one training with the CVSOs either in the NDDVA office or the CVSO's own office.

The department accepts and carries through to completion veterans claims for entitlement from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and acts as power of attorney in these claims; counsels veterans on employment and entrepreneurial programs and regulations, educational (high school through graduate level) programs, disability benefits, medical (both physical and mental) care entitlement, nursing home assistance, death benefits, and other related veterans activities. The department is responsible for enforcing the state's veterans preference law.

A Veterans Aid Loan Program, Transportation Program, and Hardship Medical Grant Program are all administered by the department.

The department is responsible for distributing information relating to veterans, veterans programs and veterans issues to the state veteran's population, interested parties and the general public through the use of email, news media, CVSOs, veterans organizations and US mail.

The department, working under the supervision of the Administrative Committee on Veterans Affairs, also monitors legislation and assists others in acquiring information.

Agency Mission Statement

The mission of the North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs is to:

1. Assist Veterans and their families to obtain benefits for which they are entitled.
2. Ensure that Veterans of the State of North Dakota are aware of all benefits available.
3. Advocate for adequate and needed benefits for Veterans being mindful of changing needs of those Veterans.
4. Ensure adequate resources for Veterans and Veterans' programs.
5. Develop programs and services to meet Veterans' needs.

Agency Performance Measures

Implementation of:

1. strategic plan objectives: objectives set and are reviewed quarterly.
2. performance audit recommendations: Performance audit conducted by state auditors office with one formal recommendation and 3 informal recommendations. All recommendations have been or are being addressed.
3. legislative action taken by state legislature. All legislation required action has been and is being addressed.

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Major Accomplishments

1. Provided two accreditation conferences for County Veteran Service Officers (CVSOs) and Tribal Veteran Service Officers (RVSOs). These two training events combined provided accreditation opportunities with all veteran service organizations with offices and staff at the Fargo Veterans Affairs Regional Office (VARO), to include American Legion, AMVETS, DAV, VFW. This training also allowed accreditation with Veteran Service organizations such as TREA, MOPH and VVA. This is the first time North Dakota CVSOs have had accreditation training provided to them.
2. Archived over 7,500 DD214s into electronic data base for safe keeping and easy access.
3. Adopted a veterans claims program which will allow NDDVA and CVSOs to maintain, track, process and submit claims to the federal VA electronically. This program is years ahead of the federal VA's goal to be paperless. CVSOs do not need to purchase software or programs, but can pay a user fee and receive access to the program.
4. The women veterans coordinator has established women's veteran support groups around the state, provided brochures, website information and mailer information.
5. Improved its website over the past two years to provide more information and up to date contacts for the CVSOs and veterans of North Dakota.
6. Was involved in legislative changes and updates which resulted in new Gold Star license plates for families of our fallen war heroes, and improved veterans preference laws.
7. Provided three small group instruction training events to try out a different style of training, found to be very effective and the CVSOs are enthused about it.
8. Researched and developed a new training program to be implemented in the fall of 2010 and spring of 2011.

Future Critical Issues

Future critical issues facing the Department are:

1. providing adequate pay to retain and attract employees
2. meeting the needs of state's veterans to ensure they and their dependents are aware of and receive the proper assistance they need to receive the benefits to which they are entitled.
3. meeting the needs of a veterans' population ranging in age from teenagers to those in their 80s and 90s.
4. meeting the needs of the ever increasing number of female veterans by providing the proper outreach and training to assist CVSOs and veterans.
5. providing a safe environment for veterans' records to include fireproof locking files as well as imaging capability to maintain, store and protect veterans' documents.
6. meeting the new and yet unknown needs of the veterans returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

REQUEST SUMMARY

321 Department of Veterans Affairs
Biennium: 2011-2013

Bill#: HB1007

Date: 01/13/2011

Time: 11:02:47

Description	Expenditures 2007-2009 Biennium	Present Budget 2009-2011	Budget Request Change	Requested Budget 2011-2013 Biennium	Optional Budget Request
By Major Program					
Veterans Affairs Administration	862,500	1,040,837	(14,751)	1,026,086	118,290
Total Major Program	862,500	1,040,837	(14,751)	1,026,086	118,290
By Line Item					
Technology Project Carry	0	9,350	(9,350)	0	0
Veterans' Affairs Administration	862,500	1,031,487	(5,401)	1,026,086	118,290
Total Line Items	862,500	1,040,837	(14,751)	1,026,086	118,290
By Funding Source					
General Fund	862,500	1,040,837	(14,751)	1,026,086	118,290
Federal Funds					
Special Funds					
Total Funding Source	862,500	1,040,837	(14,751)	1,026,086	118,290
Total FTE	7.00	7.00	0.00	7.00	1.00

REQUEST DETAIL321 Department of Veterans Affairs
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Description	Expenditures 2007-2009 Biennium	Present Budget 2009-2011	Budget Request Change	Requested Budget 2011-2013 Biennium	Optional Budget Request
Technology Project Carry					
Temporary Salaries	0	7,579	(7,579)	0	0
IT - Data Processing	0	621	(621)	0	0
IT Contractual Svcs and Rprs	0	1,150	(1,150)	0	0
Total	0	9,350	(9,350)	0	0
Technology Project Carry					
General Fund	0	9,350	(9,350)	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0	0
Special Funds	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	9,350	(9,350)	0	0
Veterans' Affairs Administration					
Salaries - Permanent	431,967	518,778	5,822	524,600	66,456
Temporary Salaries	4,053	0	0	0	20,000
Fringe Benefits	178,764	223,807	6,491	230,298	33,454
Travel	61,964	104,613	(6,746)	97,867	(4,983)
Supplies - IT Software	2,014	7,398	(698)	6,700	(6,400)
Supply/Material-Professional	1,733	1,140	(150)	990	350
Food and Clothing	163	300	0	300	0
Bldg, Ground, Maintenance	1,633	386	98	484	0
Miscellaneous Supplies	1,291	850	150	1,000	0
Office Supplies	8,850	7,483	(1,783)	5,700	300
Postage	6,284	4,100	(200)	3,900	0
Printing	2,305	5,183	(7)	5,176	450
IT Equip Under \$5,000	3,170	23,752	(12,152)	11,600	(10,325)
Other Equip Under \$5,000	355	500	0	500	0
Office Equip & Furn Supplies	39,444	600	(160)	440	0
Utilities	2,830	5,280	700	5,980	0
Insurance	1,407	1,482	0	1,482	0
Rentals/Leases-Equip & Other	6,210	7,791	(1,118)	6,673	0
Rentals/Leases - Bldg/Land	56,154	65,474	737	66,211	0
Repairs	1,169	800	0	800	0
IT - Data Processing	9,849	18,238	4,420	22,658	2,095
IT - Communications	15,046	15,181	0	15,181	600
IT Contractual Svcs and Rprs	11,621	5,000	2,500	7,500	0
Professional Development	5,290	9,901	(5,205)	4,696	700
Operating Fees and Services	5,406	350	0	350	0
Fees - Professional Services	3,528	3,100	1,900	5,000	0
IT Equip/Sftware Over \$5000	0	0	0	0	15,593

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Total	862,500	1,031,487	(5,401)	1,026,086	118,290
Veterans' Affairs Administration					
General Fund	862,500	1,031,487	(5,401)	1,026,086	118,290
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0	0
Special Funds	0	0	0	0	0
Total	862,500	1,031,487	(5,401)	1,026,086	118,290
Funding Sources					
General Fund	862,500	1,040,837	(14,751)	1,026,086	118,290
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0	0
Special Funds	0	0	0	0	0
Total Funding Sources	862,500	1,040,837	(14,751)	1,026,086	118,290

CHANGE PACKAGE SUMMARY

321 Department of Veterans Affairs
Biennium: 2011-2013

Bill#: HB1007

Date: 01/13/2011

Time: 11:02:47

Description	Priority	FTE	General Fund	Federal Funds	Special Funds	Total Funds
Base Budget Changes						
One Time Budget Changes						
A-E 1 Technology Project Carryover - Payroll		0.00	(7,579)	0	0	(7,579)
A-E 2 Technology Project Carryover - Expenses		0.00	(1,771)	0	0	(1,771)
A-E 3 Accreditation Training		0.00	(20,000)	0	0	(20,000)
Total One Time Budget Changes		0.00	(29,350)	0	0	(29,350)
Ongoing Budget Changes						
A-A 1 Base Budget Changes		0.00	2,286	0	0	2,286
Base Payroll Change		0.00	12,313	0	0	12,313
Total Ongoing Budget Changes		0.00	14,599	0	0	14,599
Total Base Budget Changes		0.00	(14,751)	0	0	(14,751)
Optional Budget Changes						
One Time Optional Changes						
A-D 1 Discharge Project - Payroll	1	0.00	22,000	0	0	22,000
Total One Time Optional Changes		0.00	22,000	0	0	22,000
Ongoing Optional Changes						
A-C 1 Training Position	1	1.00	111,480	0	0	111,480
A-C 2 Agency Website Redesign	2	0.00	15,593	0	0	15,593
Total Ongoing Optional Changes		1.00	127,073	0	0	127,073
Total Optional Budget Changes		1.00	149,073	0	0	149,073
Optional Savings Changes						
A-G 1 Optional Savings Change	1	0.00	(30,783)	0	0	(30,783)
Total Optional Savings Changes		0.00	(30,783)	0	0	(30,783)

BUDGET CHANGES NARRATIVE

321 Department of Veterans Affairs

Bill#: HB1007

Date: 01/13/2011

Time: 11:02:47

Change Group: A	Change Type: A	Change No: 1	Priority: 1
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Base Budget Changes - Reflect adjustments to base budget

To reflect adjustments needed to ensure the ongoing functionality of the agency.

Change Group: A	Change Type: C	Change No: 1	Priority: 1
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Training Position - Provide training to County Veterans Service Officers

In an attempt to provide more training we are proposing one new FTE to act as the training officer & benefits specialist. 70% of the time would be spent attending training, producing training programs, creating training kits and binders and conducting training with CVSO's. This would include complete initial training for new CVSO's as well as continued training on basic and advanced levels of knowledge for current CVSO's. 30% of the position's time would be spent doing hands on work helping veterans obtain benefits such as filing claims, as they will need to be proficient at what they are instructing and changes happen frequently.

Change Group: A	Change Type: C	Change No: 2	Priority: 2
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Agency Website Redesign - Improve functionality of agency website

This would convert our agency website to Drupal CMS enabling department staff to make content changes to the pages on the website. Presently we have to submit all changes through ITD which is not cost efficient. It would give more control in to the agency in terms of content and management of the website. There would be a one-time cost for the conversion and thereafter a nominal fee for the on-going cost of hosting, storage and maintenance of the site.

The website would still be hosted by ITD and held to the Web Standards in place.

Change Group: A	Change Type: D	Change No: 1	Priority: 1
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Discharge Project - Payroll - Funding for a temporary position to support the project.

To provide continued support of the Discharge Project, which is a safe and secure system in storing and retrieving veterans' discharge papers. On file are DD214s from World War II to present. A DD214 is an essential document for a veteran in securing benefits, either at the federal, state, or county level. We anticipate it would take someone working full-time for at least a year to enter discharges into the databases. This involves scanning, transferring the data and verifying the information in two databases. It is a time consuming task that our small staff are unable to do on a regular basis. We are presently able to keep up with the recent discharges but are unable to handle all the backlog.

Our goal is to provide accessibility to the discharges by the county service officers through the State network. They would be able to look up and retrieve discharges without having to make a request through our office. This database would also be accessible when the department or staff are doing outreach work in North Dakota's rural areas.

Change Group: A	Change Type: E	Change No: 1	Priority: 1
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Technology Project Carryover - Payroll - Remove funding for Discharge Project

To remove one-time funding for Discharge Project

Change Group: A	Change Type: E	Change No: 2	Priority: 2
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BUDGET CHANGES NARRATIVE**321 Department of Veterans Affairs****Bill#: HB1007****Date:** 01/13/2011**Time:** 11:02:47

Technology Project Carryover - Expenses - Remove funding for Discharge Project

To removed one-time funding for Discharge Project expenses.

Change Group: A	Change Type: E	Change No: 3	Priority: 3
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Accreditation Training - Removed funding for CVSO Accreditation Training.

Remove appropriated monies for the purpose of arranging for department of veterans' affairs accreditation training for all county veterans' service officers.

Change Group: A	Change Type: G	Change No: 1	Priority: 1
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Optional Savings Change - Reflect 3% budget savings

To reflect the 3% optional savings package, reductions were taken inTtravel, Supplies-IT Software and IT Equipment under \$5,000.

Reducing our travel monies affects the department's ability to provide outreach support to the county veterans service officers which is a very crucial element of our operation.

Reducing the Supplies-IT Software and IT Equipment under \$5,000 affects the department's ability to adhere to ITD's computer replacement schedule. We would also be unable to effectively upgrade our software to stay current.

Change Group: R	Change Type: A	Change No: 1	Priority:
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Training

Provides \$30,000 to allow the agency to arrange for training of county veteran service officers on emerging issues such as PTSD and TBI.

Change Group: R	Change Type: B	Change No: 1	Priority:
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Discharge Project

Provides funding for temporary salaries to continue the Discharge Project, converting veterans records to electronic format.

Change Group: R	Change Type: B	Change No: 2	Priority:
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Website

Provides funding to purchase website software enabling the agency to customize and update information.