

Department of Veterans' Services

Fiscal Year 2022 Strategic Plan 2-pager

Agency Director:
Strategic Planner:
Last modified:

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Vision:

Arizona Veterans, Service Members and their families will have no barriers to benefits and services they have earned

Mission:

To be the catalyst in response to the evolving needs of Arizona Veterans, Service Members and their families

Agency Description:

The Arizona Department of Veterans' Services (ADVS) assists Veterans, Service Members and their dependents with obtaining Federal and State earned benefits. Veteran Benefit Counselors assist Veterans with a variety of VA disability claims, appeals and referrals. The Department operates State Homes for Veterans (ASVH) and Veterans' Memorial Cemeteries (AVMC) throughout Arizona. The homes are self-funded, skilled-nursing facilities that provide short and long term care services to Veterans, their spouses and Gold Star Family Members. The Department manages the State Approving Agency (SAA) that approves schools to offer curriculum to Veterans under the GI Bill. The Department also administers the Military Family Relief Fund (MFRF), the Veterans' Donation Fund (VDF), coordinates statewide services to eliminate homelessness among Veterans, decrease Veteran suicides and increase employment opportunities for Arizona Veterans.

Executive Summary:

In FY21, ADVS refused to allow the COVID-19 Pandemic to handicap our Herculean efforts to serve our Veterans. Adapting to the crisis by deploying a virtual strategy, we raised our direct services by over 90% over FY20. Arizona Veterans, through our efforts, will receive over \$710 million in VA entitlements, 9% more than last FY. Construction continued at both new ASVHs and is scheduled for completion in CY21. ASVH-T remained a 5 star facility. Both ASVH-P and ASVH-T were again recognized by US News and World Report with their highest rating for long term care facilities. Both homes met the rigid and evolving CMS Pandemic Standards without any serious issues and kept our residents and staff safe, while battling PPE, vaccine and other critical shortages. In-home visits and new admissions have been successfully initiated in Q3. Our Be Connected program continues to thrive and earn national recognition. We significantly added to our partner base and broadened our reach in rural Arizona. Our IT Risk Score continues to lead the State and our ability to provide good stewardship of our finances has strengthened, with cost saving and budget plans prepared by our Assistant Deputy Directors (ADDs). In FY21 ADVS achieved it's highest AMS Assessment scores, allowing our teams to solve problems to remove barriers to better customer service. ADVS implemented a robust customer feedback system to track our service. Our Customer compliments out paced our Customer complaints by over 4 to 1. We are Serving more Veterans Better. FY22 will result in ADVS becoming a Long Term Care coordinated System operating 4 quality homes. We will expand our reach in the community by developing new partners and enhancing our relationship with current ones, especially in Tribal Communities. We will increase our efforts to reduce Veteran Homelessness by naming a State Homeless Coordinator and continue to improve all of our services through relationships and technology.

Summary of Multi-Year Strategic Priorities

| # | Five Year Strategy | Start Year | Progress / Successes |
|---|---|------------|---|
| 1 | Significantly reduce the Veteran suicide rate in Arizona | 2018 | ADVS added 90 new partners through the Be Connected Roadshow. We expanded our reach offering services in rural areas. ADVS remains a national model through their efforts participating in the Governor's Challenge to reduce Veteran suicide. Be Connected calls increased by 9%. |
| 2 | Operate our long term care facilities that all carry 5-Star ratings | 2018 | ASVH-T has carried the 5-Star rating for four years while ASVH-P has risen to 4 Stars in Quality Measures. Both homes also achieved the US News and World Report's highest rating for the second straight year. Construction for ASVH-F and ASVH-Y are on schedule and will open in FY22 using the Standardized Work deployed by ASVH-P and ASVH-T. ADVS has partnered with ADOH to provide safe conditions for residents and staff at our homes |
| 3 | Support ADVS expansion through effective leadership, guidance, administrative and infrastructure services | 2019 | In FY21, ADVS continued to hone our AMS Skills. We scored 4.4 on our latest assessment making us one of the state agency leaders. We strengthened our 1:1 process by measuring our Gemba walks for that process. We tracked and completed more CI projects than any prior year. IT keeps our risk score among the best in the State while creating innovations that have led to our teleworking success. Our HR team is successfully recruiting and hiring quality candidates for our current growth and our Purchasing team has accomplished miracles getting us the PPE and other supplies and contracts to help us thrive during the Pandemic. All this was tied together by the dynamic leadership team that keeps us one step ahead at all times by anticipating and solving problems. |
| 4 | To be Arizona's proven top choice for Veterans' services | 2017 | Arizona Veterans currently receive over \$59 million per month in VA monetary benefits, an increase of 9% over the last year. ADVS funded 189 Veteran Tool Kits helping Veterans find jobs. ADVS increased direct services to Veterans to over 38,000 per month. ADVS granted over \$311K in MFRF money to aid Veterans in need. We increased our contacts with first time participants to 5866. ADVS has developed partnerships with ADES and ADOA to help Veterans find and maintain valuable employment. |

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Strategy # FY22 Annual Objectives

Current Annual Focus
Annual Initiatives

Objective Metrics

| #1 | Increase engagements with high risk segments of the Veteran population | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of need with assigned resource • # of high risk Veterans reached (BT) • # Veterans requesting mental health referrals • # of VBC referrals to Be Connected | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase engagements with specialty partners and providers • Deploy a plan to identify high risk Veterans • Conduct Public Service campaigns • Convert Transportation survey data to an Action Plan • Identify a method to understand the characteristics of our served population • Plan and hold Pop-up outreach events |
|-----|---|--|---|
| #2a | Increase combined rating to an average of 5-Stars. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly quality of care score • Monthly census • # of nursing hours per resident • # of RN hours per resident • # of Medicare/Medicare Advantage Residents | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to increase advanced training opportunities for clinical staff • Hone a business plan that promotes efficiencies to better serve our residents and staff to include Medicare/ Medicare Advantage Rehab services plan • Maintain US News and World Report rankings for nursing homes • Achieve 90% census at all homes • Develop a Customer Service Survey |
| #2b | Ready ASVH-Flagstaff and ASVH-Yuma for opening. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of home opening milestones met (BT) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete 17 tiered A-3's for establishment of ASVHs |
| #3 | Staffing to desired levels. Effective use of our budget as our Agency expands. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funded vacancy rate • % of expenditures to budget • % of ASVH-Y positions filled • % of ASVH-F positions filled • % ADOA Security Control Adoption • # of Standard Work Documents updated or created | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue training each Assistant Deputy Director to manage their own budget • Leverage the best practices learned from the COVID-19 crisis • Develop a long term ADVS Facilities Maintenance plan and Budget • Maximize adoption of ADOA Security Control Policies |
| #4 | Eliminate barriers to quality service. Reach more veterans | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal dollars leveraged • Dollars in donations • % of agency complaints resolved in established time frame • # of direct services provided • # of First Time customer contacts • # of New Rural community partner contacts • # of community and Tribal engagement points | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to redesign the MFRF process for efficiencies • Continue headstone alignment projects in all three State Veterans' Memorial Cemeteries • Develop and deploy a strategy to leverage the different types of Veteran community partners • Modernize and maximize our technology • Implement Website Modernization Plan • Finalize the plan to increase community engagement points • Deploy plan to increase first time customers |