

Department of Veterans' Services

Fiscal Year 2023 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 (VBC) assist Veterans and other eligible claimants with a variety of Veterans Administration (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:

FY22 saw ADVS grow and achieve despite the continuing affects of the COVID virus. We saw the completion of construction on two new Veterans' homes and the recruitment and hiring of the two administrators. We completed hiring for our Nursing Home Regional Team which includes a Nursing Home Deputy Director, a Regional Director of Nursing, and a Regional Minimum Data Set (MDS) Coordinator. We also created a centralized billing function. At the same time, with hiring conditions being tough at best we have filled some other key positions in the Yuma facility. Our VBCs are now processing over 700 claims per month with an approval rate at over 92%. We are seeing nearly \$70 million per month in federal funds entering the state resulting from those claims. We have reached nearly 9000 high risk Veterans through media ads, pop up events and stand downs, connecting them to the help they need. We continue to use our budget wisely to protect our residents and staff as well as making needed repairs to our aging infrastructure. Staffing is still a concern and will be a strong focus in FY23. We made changes in our compensation package designed to attract and retain top talent to ensure the best services for those who have served us so well. FY23 will see 2 new ASVHs opening, Yuma in September 2022 and Flagstaff in March 2023. We will continue our partnership with the Arizona Department of Administration (ADOA) and the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) to increase the hiring of Veterans in State jobs and reducing homelessness among all Arizonians with emphasis on Veterans, as well as, increasing our presence with high risk Veterans especially within our Tribal Communities.

Summary of Multi-Year Strategic Priorities

#	Five Year Strategy	Start Year	Progress / Successes
1	Significantly reduce the Veteran suicide rate in Arizona	2018 with 2022 refresh	In FY22, ADVS defined High Risk Veterans and reached nearly 9000 to connect them to needed resources. We partnered with local media to run ads that encourage Veterans to find help. We opened 13 itinerate sites to expand our reach. Hired a Housing coordinator to support the increasing rise in veterans homelessness
2	Operate four long term care facilities that all carry 5-Star ratings	2018 with 2022 refresh	ASVH-P (Phoenix) and ASVH-T (Tucson) again achieved the US News and World Report's highest rating for the third straight year. Construction for ASVH-F(Flagstaff) and ASVH-Y (Yuma) has been completed. Both will open in FY23 using the Standardized Work deployed by ASVH-P and ASVH-T. ADVS continues it's partnership with ADOA and ADHS to combat COVID and provide safe conditions for residents and staff at our homes.
3	Support ADVS expansion through effective leadership, guidance, administrative and infrastructure services	2019	In FY22, ADVS continued to hone our AMS (Arizona Management System) 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 created or updated over 300 Standard Work documents to better serve our customers. 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 navigating the challenging labor market and recruiting and hiring quality candidates. Our ADDs (Assistant Deputy Directors) gained expertise in managing their budgets while accepting customer compliments at a rate of 3 to 1 over customer complaints. ADVS has initiated several initiatives to ensure quality candidates are recruited and retained. All this is 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 with 2022 refresh	Arizona Veterans currently receive nearly \$70 million per month in VA monetary benefits, an increase of 17% over the last year. ADVS funded nearly 400 Veteran Tool Kits helping Veterans find jobs which doubled last year's count. ADVS increased direct services to Veterans to over 30,000 per month. ADVS granted over \$700K in MFRF money to aid Veterans in need. We increased our contacts with first time participants to nearly 6,000. ADVS has developed state and local partnerships to help Veterans find and maintain valuable employment and housing.

Strategy #	FY23 Annual Objectives	Objective Metrics	Annual Initiatives
#1	Increase presence and awareness of benefits in rural and Tribal communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of need with assigned resource • # of high risk Veterans reached • # of VBC referrals to Be Connected • # of Veterans using Virtual System • # of community and Tribal engagement points (Breakthrough) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate regular engagements in Rural and Tribal Areas • Engage with high risk Veteran population • Develop Transportation Action Plan • Continue to hold Pop-up outreach events, incorporating Virtual VBC coverage • Team with DHS to implement Tribal Connectivity Program • Hire Tribal Veterans as VBCs • Secure the " Staff Sargent Fox" grant
#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 Registered Nurses (RN) hours per resident • Nursing positions filled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain US News and World Report rankings for nursing homes • Implement staffing plan that cares for residents and increases cash flow • Start feasibility study for 5th home in Northwest Arizona • Implement nursing step plan
#2b	Ready ASVH-Flagstaff and ASVH-Yuma for opening.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of home opening milestones met (Breakthrough) • % of ASVH-Y positions filled • % of ASVH-F positions filled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Monthly task list for both ASVH-F and ASVH-Y
#3	Bring 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 revenue • % ADOA Security Control Adoption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue training each Assistant Deputy Director to manage their budgets • Develop a long term ADVS Facilities Maintenance plan and Budget • Maximize adoption of ADOA Security Control Policies • Review expenses for creative reductions • AMS Refresh • Manage Trust fund
#4	Increase seamless access to Veterans' Services Reach more Veterans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal dollars leveraged • # of direct services provided • # of First Time customer contacts • # of New Rural community partner contacts • # of homeless Veterans who are not "service connected" in pilot program 	<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 • Deploy plan to increase first time customers • Participate in State Homelessness Breakthrough • Develop a "Justice Involved" Veterans tool kit • React to legislation providing scholarships for Veteran Spouses