



HOUSE COMMITTEE *on* APPROPRIATIONS
RANKING MEMBER ROSA DeLAURO

Supporting Our Veterans

Veterans Provisions in the Fiscal Year 2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act

We have a moral responsibility to protect those who sacrificed so much to protect us. House Democrats and the Appropriations Committee advanced federal spending bills to support our Veterans and their families and ensure they can live healthy, successful lives.

Overall, the 2023 funding bill provides more than \$139 billion to support our Veterans. Below you will find a summary of the Veterans provisions included in these historic bills.

Military Construction & Veterans Affairs

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

The bill provides a total of \$135 billion in discretionary appropriations for VA, an increase of \$22.5 billion above the 2022 enacted level. These resources will expand access to veterans' services and boost oversight and accountability across the Department. Of this amount, the bill includes:

- \$118.7 billion for Veterans Medical Care, an increase of \$21.7 billion above the 2022 enacted level and equal to the budget request. This funding will provide care for 7.3 million patients expected to be treated by VA in fiscal year 2023. This amount includes:
 - \$13.9 billion for Mental Healthcare, an increase of \$743.8 million above the 2022 enacted level and \$1.5 million above the budget request, including \$498 million for suicide prevention outreach. This funding will support the nearly 2 million veterans who receive mental health services in a VA specialty mental health setting, as well as support suicide prevention services like the Veterans Crisis Line, which is expected to see an increase in demand by over 100 percent in the coming year.
 - \$840.4 million for Gender-specific Care and Programmatic Efforts for Women. Women are the fastest growing cohort within the veteran community, with over 600,000 women veterans using VA health services.
 - \$2.7 billion for Homeless Assistance Programs, an increase of \$541 million above fiscal year 2022. This funding will enhance VA's ability to reach homeless veterans, which is particularly crucial as the most recent homelessness survey showed that on a given night in January 2021, an estimated 19,750 veterans were experiencing homelessness.

- \$183.3 million is for Substance Use Disorder programs, an increase of \$27 million above the 2022 enacted level and \$2 million above the budget request. This funding will help support care for the over 540,000 veterans who had a substance use disorder diagnosis in 2021. Additionally, \$662.8 million is for opioid abuse prevention, an increase of \$41.5 million above fiscal year 2022. This funding will allow more targeted funding for pain management and opioid safety programs, primarily at the facility level.
- \$85.9 million for Whole Health Initiatives, an increase of \$2.3 million above fiscal year 2022 and \$10 million above the budget request. This funding will enable VA to build upon the success of this program that focuses on veterans' overall health and well-being, which saw 573,940 veterans participating in 2021.
- \$128 billion in advance fiscal year 2024 funding for veterans' medical care. This funding will provide for medical services, community care, medical support and compliance, and medical facilities, and ensure that our Veterans have continued access to their medical care needs.
- \$916 million for Medical and Prosthetic Research, an increase of \$34 million above fiscal year 2022 and equal to the budget request. This funding will allow VA to meet the budget request's target of funding approximately 2,697 total projects and partnering with more than 200 medical schools and other academic institutions.
- \$1.8 billion to continue implementing the VA Electronic Health Record Modernization initiative. These funds will allow VA to support the continued deployment of the new electronic health record system at VA medical centers and allow for intensive staff training and support, which is critical to the effort's success. The bill also continues Government Accountability Office oversight of this program to ensure that the system is implemented in a timely manner.
- \$2 billion is for VA Construction programs. Within this amount, the bill provides \$1.4 billion for Major Construction and \$626 million for Minor Construction projects. These funds will support VA's highest priority projects, correct critical safety and seismic deficiencies, and address other performance gaps at VA facilities to ensure that veterans can access care in modern facilities that are safe, secure, sustainable, and accessible.
- \$3.9 billion is for operating expenses of the Veterans Benefits Administration, an increase of \$409 million above the 2022 enacted level and equal to the budget request, to ensure the prompt processing of disability claims. This funding will allow VA to address increasing disability compensation claims and administer service-connected disability compensation payments in 2023 to an estimated 5.5 million veterans and 500,000 survivors and dependents.
- \$150 million is for Grants for Construction of State Extended Care Facilities, an increase of \$100 million above the 2022 enacted level and equal to the budget request. This increase will allow VA to provide more grants to assist States in constructing State home facilities, for furnishing domiciliary or nursing home care to veterans, and to expand, remodel, or alter existing buildings.

- \$155.4 billion is provided in advance mandatory funding for VA benefit programs.

Arlington National Cemetery

The bill supports the operations of America's most prestigious national cemetery by providing \$155.9 million for Arlington National Cemetery, enabling it to continue to meet the needs of veterans and their families.

- This includes \$60 million to complete the urgently needed Southern Expansion project that will create 80,000 additional burial spaces and extend the life of the cemetery.

Transportation-Housing & Urban Development

The fiscal year 2023 bill provides:

- \$30.25 billion for Tenant-based Rental Assistance to continue to serve more than 2.3 million very low- and extremely low-income households nationwide. This level of funding includes:
 - \$130 million to expand housing assistance to nearly 12,000 low-income families, including individuals and families experiencing or at risk of homelessness, including Veterans and survivors of domestic violence. A combined \$57.5 million for the HUD/VA Supportive Housing for Homeless Veterans and Native American Veterans programs.
- \$3.6 billion for Homeless Assistance Grants. HUD's 2022 Annual Homelessness Assessment found that more than 33,100 Veterans were experiencing homelessness on any given night during the year, including more than 13,560 experiencing unsheltered homelessness or living on the street.
- \$4 million for the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), which coordinates a multi-agency Federal response to homelessness, including targeted assistance to veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Commerce-Justice-Science

Department of Justice

The fiscal year 2023 bill includes \$35 million for Veterans Treatment Courts, an increase of \$6 million above fiscal year 2022, which are modeled after drug courts and seek to serve Veterans suffering from addiction, substance misuse, and/or mental health disorders. These special courts combine rigorous treatment and personal accountability to break the cycle of drug use and criminal behavior. The program promotes collaboration among the judiciary, community corrections agencies, drug treatment providers, and other community support groups.

Legal Services Corporation

The fiscal year 2023 bill includes \$560 million for the Legal Services Corporation, an increase of \$71 million above fiscal year 2022. In addition, the legislation includes \$20 million for legal services for low-income persons impacted by natural disasters. The Legal Services Corporation provides civil legal assistance to tens of thousands of low-income veterans each year.

Agriculture-Rural Development- FDA

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides Veterans with farming and ranching opportunities through employment, education, entrepreneurship, financing, and other assistance. USDA's Military Veterans Agricultural Liaison works to help connect Veterans interested in agriculture with groups inside and outside the Department. Programs specifically provided for Veterans in the fiscal year 2023 funding bill include:

- \$5 million to provide grants to nonprofit organizations for programs and services to establish and enhance farming and ranching opportunities for military Veterans.
- \$2.5 million to support outreach and assistance to socially disadvantaged Veteran farmers and ranchers.
- \$3.5 million in resources, part of which sustains the 'Armed to Farm' program that supports veterans with hands-on and classroom learning opportunities for sustainable agriculture.
- In 2019, SNAP households included 22,000 active-duty service members, 213,000 members of the National Guard or reservists, and 1.1 million Veterans.

Financial Services and General Government

The funding bill provides:

- \$18 million for the Small Business Administration (SBA) Entrepreneurial Development Programs for Veterans Outreach, an increase of \$2 million above the fiscal year 2022 enacted level, which supports business outreach and entrepreneurship training specifically for Veterans.
- \$20 million for SBA for the Center for Verification and Evaluation, which verifies veteran eligibility of firms owned by veteran-owned small businesses and service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses.

Labor-HHS-Education

Department of Labor

The package provides \$65.5 million for the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program, an increase of \$5 million above the fiscal year 2022 enacted level.

Department of Education

The bill also includes \$9 million, an increase of \$500,000 over the fiscal year 2022 enacted level, for the Centers of Excellence for Veteran Student Success Program.

Legislative Branch

The funding bill includes:

- \$9.674 million for the House Green and Gold Congressional Aide Program (formerly the Wounded Warrior Program and the Congressional Gold Star Family Fellowship Program).
- \$3.976 million for the Library of Congress Veterans History Project, which supports the collection, preservation, and accessibility of American War Veterans' personal accounts.
- Direction for the Library of Congress to work with the Department of Defense Historian to develop an oral history collection on the impact of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and predecessor policies on servicemembers and veterans.