

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES

Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz

Fiscal Year 2023 Appropriations Bill Summary



Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies

The fiscal year 2023 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill provides \$322.7 billion, an increase of \$38 billion – more than 13 percent – above fiscal year 2022. Of this amount, discretionary funding for programs such as veterans’ health care and military construction totals \$154.2 billion, an increase of \$26.6 billion above fiscal year 2022. The legislation:

- Supports our veterans with investments in health care, including targeted investments that advance women's health, mental health, and homelessness assistance.
- Rebuilds our infrastructure with strong investments to construct critical facilities on military installations, including family housing and child development centers, and build, repair, and retrofit Veterans Affairs facilities.
- Ensures veterans receive the compensation and benefits that they have earned without unreasonable delays.
- Protects our national security with investments to respond to the challenges posed by Russian and Chinese aggression.
- Confronts the climate crisis with increased climate change and resiliency funding to help military installations adapt to rising sea levels and worsening natural disasters.
- Responds to natural disasters by providing funding for recovery and rebuilding of damaged installations.
- Remediate harmful substances and chemicals leaked into the land and water sources.

The appropriations bill also includes—for the first time—\$5 billion in mandatory funding for the Cost of War Toxic Exposures Fund established in the Honoring Our PACT Act of 2022.

In addition, the legislation includes \$41 million in emergency funding to support recovery from Hurricanes Ian and Fiona.

Bill Summary:

Military Construction – The bill provides a total of \$19 billion for military construction – \$4.1 billion above the fiscal year 2022 enacted level and \$6.8 billion above the President’s budget request. Of this amount, the bill includes:

- \$293.3 million for **Child Development Centers**, of which \$45 million is for planning and design for future facilities, and in total is \$204.8 million above the fiscal year 2022 budget request. The funds will support increased capacity and better facilities for the 1.2 million children of active duty servicemembers worldwide.
- \$2 billion for **Family Housing**, an increase of \$562.8 million above the fiscal year 2022 enacted level and \$30 million above the budget request. Within this amount, an additional \$30 million is to increase oversight of DOD-owned and privatized housing.
- \$1 billion for construction or alteration of **Guard and Reserve** facilities in states and territories, an increase of \$113 million above the fiscal year 2022 enacted level and \$409 million above the fiscal year 2023 budget request.
- \$653.3 million for the **Energy Resilience and Conservation Investment Program**, which is \$100 million above the fiscal year 2023 budget request and supports the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD)'s investments in energy efficiency, resilience, renewable energy systems, and energy security.
- \$220.1 million for the **NATO Security Investment Program**, an increase of \$4 million above the fiscal year 2022 enacted level and \$10 million above the fiscal year 2023 budget request, for infrastructure necessary for wartime, crisis, peace support and deterrence operations, and training requirements. The funds will support responses to the challenges posed by Russian aggression as well as the risks and threats emanating from the Middle East and North Africa.
- \$574.7 million for **Base Realignment and Closure remediation**, an increase of \$45 million above the fiscal year 2022 enacted level and \$290 million above the fiscal year 2023 budget request. Within this amount, cleanup of Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) contamination is funded at \$200 million.
- \$1.9 billion for eligible, authorized **Unfunded Requirement (UFR) projects**.
- \$360 million for **Natural Disaster Recovery Construction**, which will support Air Force requirements to recover from damage incurred by natural disasters. In addition, \$41 million is provided in Division N for the Navy and Marine Corps to repair hurricane damage.
- \$95 million for **Climate Change and Resiliency projects**, which is \$95 million above the fiscal year 2023 budget request.

- \$1.3 billion for **Shipyard Infrastructure Optimization Plan (SIOP)** projects, which is \$635 million above the fiscal year 2022 enacted level, and \$50 million above the fiscal year 2023 budget request.
- \$120 million for planning and design, unspecified minor construction, and authorized major construction projects to address priority **Defense laboratory requirements**.
- \$50 million for **Indo-Pacific Command** planning and design and minor construction to advance critical projects in a strategically vital region of the world.

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) – The bill provides a total of \$134.7 billion in discretionary appropriations for VA, an increase of \$22.5 billion above the fiscal year 2022 enacted level and \$328.7 million below the President’s budget request. These resources will serve to expand access to services for veterans and will 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 fiscal year 2022 enacted level and equal to the President’s budget request. This 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**, including \$498 million for suicide prevention outreach. This 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 this year.
 - \$2.7 billion for **Homeless Assistance Programs**. 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 for **Substance Use Disorder programs**. This funding will help support care for the over 540,000 veterans who had a substance use disorder diagnosis in 2021. Additionally, \$663 million is for **opioid abuse prevention**, an increase of \$41 million above the fiscal year 2022 enacted level and equal to the budget request. This funding will allow for more targeted funding of pain management and opioid safety programs primarily at the facility level.

- \$86 million for **Whole Health Initiatives**. This 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.
- Additionally, the bill includes \$128.1 billion in advance fiscal year 2024 funding for **Veterans Medical Care** – equal to the President's budget request. This funding will provide for medical services, medical community care, medical support and compliance, and medical facilities, and ensure that our veterans have continued, full access to their medical care needs.
- The bill includes \$16 billion for VA non-Medical Care programs, which is \$1.2 billion above the fiscal year 2022 enacted level. Of this amount:
 - \$916 million is for **Medical and Prosthetic Research**, an increase of \$34 million above the fiscal year 2022 enacted level and equal to the President's budget request. This funding will allow VA to fund approximately 2,697 total projects and partner with more than 200 medical schools and other academic institutions.
 - \$1.76 billion is to continue implementation of the **VA Electronic Health Record Modernization** initiative, \$741 million below the fiscal year 2022 enacted level and equal to the President's budget request. These funds will allow VA to support improvements to the stability and usability of the new electronic health record (EHR) system, continued deployment of the EHR at VA medical centers, and allow for intensive staff training critical to the success of the effort and to ensure patient safety. The bill also continues robust oversight of this program, including by the Government Accountability Office, to ensure that the EHR system is implemented in a timely and efficient manner.
 - \$2.1 billion is for **VA Construction** programs, equal to the President's budget request. Within this amount, \$1.45 billion is for Major Construction and \$626 million is for Minor Construction. This increase will support VA's highest priority projects and correct critical seismic and safety 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. In addition, \$968 million in funds made available from the Recurring Expenses Transformational Fund will support

additional VA construction projects, for a total funding level of \$3 billion in fiscal year 2023.

- \$150 million is for **Grants for Construction of State Extended Care Facilities**, an increase of \$100 million above the fiscal year 2022 enacted level and equal to the President’s 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.
- \$3.86 billion is for operating expenses of the **Veterans Benefits Administration**, an increase of \$409 million above the fiscal year 2022 enacted level and equal to the President’s budget request, to ensure the prompt processing of disability claims and efforts to continue reducing the disability claims backlog. These funds will allow VA to support service-connected compensation payments to an estimated 5.5 million veterans, 500,000 survivors and dependents. In addition, pension payments will be funded for nearly 300,000 veterans and survivors. The bill also continues rigorous reporting requirements to track each regional office’s performance on claims processing and appeals backlogs.
- Additionally, the bill includes \$155.4 billion in advance mandatory funding for VA benefit programs.
- The bill includes \$5 billion in new mandatory funds for the **Cost of War Toxic Exposures Fund**, established to support costs related to providing veterans and their families the benefits and care associated with the eligibility expansions included in the Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act of 2022 (P.L. 117-168). The combination of these funds and those made available through the discretionary appropriations in this Act and other sources will fully support the Administration’s request to begin implementing the PACT Act, including meeting increased health care needs and providing support for claims processing to ensure veterans are getting the care and benefits they deserve.

Related Agencies – The bill provides a total of \$442.7 million in discretionary appropriations for related agencies, an increase of \$8.5 million above the fiscal year 2022 enacted level and \$700,000 above the President’s budget request. Of this amount, the bill includes:

- \$156 million for **Arlington National Cemetery**, including \$60 million to continue the urgently needed Southern Expansion project that will create 80,000 additional burial spaces. This is equal to the President's budget request.
- \$87.5 million for the **American Battle Monuments Commission**, equal to the fiscal year 2022 enacted level and \$700,000 more than the President's budget request. This will support continued maintenance of the graves of 124,000 American war dead in overseas cemeteries, as well as visitor and education services for the more than 3 million visitors expected to visit these sites in fiscal year 2023.
- \$152 million for the **Armed Forces Retirement Home**, \$75 million above the fiscal year 2022 enacted level and equal to the President's budget request. This will support the needs of the over 800 residents at the two retirement home campuses and invest in critical life and safety infrastructure improvements, including construction funds for the renovation of the main resident building on the Washington campus.
- \$46.9 million for the **Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims**, \$5.2 million above the fiscal year 2022 enacted level and equal to the President's budget request. This will enable the Court to keep pace with its caseload of veterans' appeals, which consisted of over 8,000 appeals in 2021.