



**MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF
VETERANS & MILITARY FAMILIES**

Office of the Secretary

WES MOORE
Governor
ARUNA MILLER
Lt. Governor
Ed Rothstein
Secretary

Maryland Department of Veterans & Military Families

FY 2027 Operating Budget

Response to Department of Legislative Services Analysis

SENATE BUDGET AND TAXATION COMMITTEE
PUBLIC SAFETY, TRANSPORTATION, AND ENVIRONMENT SUBCOMMITTEE
Senator Shelly Hettleman

February 20, 2026

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HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
PUBLIC SAFETY AND ADMINISTRATION SUBCOMMITTEE
Delegate Gabriel Acevero

February 19, 2026

Introduction

The Maryland Department of Veterans & Military Families (DVMF) thanks analyst Yashodhara Rai for her insightful analysis of our agency's FY 2027 budget request.

We welcome the opportunity to update the Committee on our activities over the past year. Our singular mission, the reason we were established as a State agency in 1999 and continue to exist today, is **to deliver services and programs to assist veterans, their families and survivors in obtaining Federal, State, and local benefits provided by law in recognition of their service to state and country.**

We also appreciate the opportunity to respond to the Department of Legislative Services' (DLS) analysis of the FY 2027 Governor's Allowance for DVMF.

This document contains the Department's response to recommendations or questions formally presented in DLS's analysis. It also contains the following information:

- A letter from Secretary Ed Rothstein
- A profile of the Maryland Department of Veterans & Military Families.
- A summary of services provided by the Department.
- A brief history of the Department.
- Demographic trends among Maryland's veterans.

DVMF concurs with the Governor's Allowance for FY 2027.

Dear Senator Hettleman, Delegate Acevero, and members of the Subcommittees:

Over the past year, DVMF made meaningful progress in strengthening services and expanding access statewide. Our Service and Benefits Program delivered record levels of claims assistance, connecting veterans and families to millions of dollars in earned benefits. Charlotte Hall Veterans Home achieved a significant quality turnaround, improving to a four-star CMS rating and reinforcing our commitment to safe, high-quality long-term care. Through Maryland Joins Forces, we deepened collaboration with community, nonprofit, and government partners—turning service, outreach, and connection into tangible support for military families across the state. We also continued to honor service through our cemeteries and memorials, expand support for women veterans, and provide critical financial assistance through the Maryland Veterans Trust Fund.

When the federal government shutdown threatened the financial stability of veterans, service members, and their families, DVMF responded quickly. We worked alongside the Governor's Office and our Maryland Joins Forces partners to connect impacted families with emergency assistance, address food insecurity, and ensure no one was left to navigate uncertainty alone. During this period, the Veterans Trust Fund experienced an increase in applications, underscoring both the need for—and the importance of—strong, responsive state support.

These accomplishments are the result of strong partnerships, dedicated public servants, and the voices of the military-connected community who guide our work. As we look ahead, DVMF remains focused on building on this momentum—listening, learning, and leading to ensure every veteran and military family has access to the care, benefits, and support they have earned.

I want to thank you, the members of the General Assembly, and Governor Moore for your support as we strive to make Maryland the best state in the nation to be a member of the veteran and military-connected community.

Respectfully,

Ed Rothstein
Secretary

Agency Profile

Purpose

The mission and purpose of the Maryland Department of Veterans & Military Families is to assist veterans, active-duty service members, and their families and dependents in securing benefits earned through military service. The agency fulfills this mission through **veterans benefits services**; a robust **veterans cemetery program**; maintenance of the **State's veteran memorials**; provision of **skilled nursing and assisted living care** for veterans and eligible spouses at the State's veterans home; **communications, outreach, and advocacy**; and administration of the **Maryland Veterans Trust Fund**, all while exercising responsible management of available resources.

Core Functions

- Provide the most effective possible **statewide benefits services** to veterans, their dependents, and survivors; assist in the preparation, development, and submission of claims for adjudication to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Honor the memory of Maryland veterans through providing interment in **State veterans cemeteries** that will come to be considered as national shrines.
- Maintain and protect the **State's veteran memorials**.
- Provide the finest assisted living and skilled nursing residential care to qualified Maryland veterans and eligible spouses at the **Charlotte Hall Veterans Home**.
- Ensure through effective **communication, outreach, and advocacy** that veterans and their dependents, including Maryland's **women, minority, and underserved veteran populations**, are increasingly informed and educated about the various benefits and services to which they are entitled as a result of their service.

FY 2025 At A Glance

Maryland Veteran Population (2025 projection): 348,459*

The Service Program *filed 5,667 claims on behalf of Maryland veterans (an 11% increase from FY 2024) and achieved a record \$54.4 million in veterans benefits awards (an 18% increase from FY 2024).*

The Cemetery & Memorials Program performed *3,327 interments- 128,541 veterans & dependents interred since inception.*

Under DVMF's partnership with PruittHealth, Charlotte Hall Veterans Home *achieved a four-star overall rating, placing it among the top 25% of state veterans homes nationwide* as it continues to grow its census.

Among its many roles and initiatives, DVMF's small Communication, Outreach and Advocacy team achieved *15,398 face-to-face or virtual contacts, 2+ million newsletters distributed, and recorded 117,727 social media views.*

Maryland Veterans Trust Fund supported more veterans and military families than ever before, *awarding more than \$800,000 in grants and recorded \$760,434 in contributions and other income.*

*Source:

<https://www.data.va.gov/stories/s/38ij-jq95>

- Provide **non-emergency, temporary monetary assistance** to veterans facing financial hardship through the Maryland Veterans Trust Fund.

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Summary of Services Provided

Our **Service Program** requires knowledge of relevant US Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) rules, operating policies, and procedures. Employees must have the skills to apply the required knowledge within USDVA systems to successfully provide veterans and their families with all the services needed to obtain their benefits and entitlements. Each veterans benefits specialist must be certified as a veterans' services counselor by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

Our **Cemetery Program** requires knowledge of relevant U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration policies and procedures regarding capital construction, land management, and building and equipment maintenance and procurement. These increasingly demanding standards provide direction for the Program's operations and the pursuit of national shrine status for Maryland's veterans' cemeteries.

Our **Memorials Program** requires the skills necessary to maintain such landmarks as reverent symbols of the sacrifices made by veterans.

Our **Veterans Home Program**, which provides assisted living and skilled nursing residential care program for veterans and eligible spouses, requires knowledge of relevant U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and State of Maryland laws, operating policies and procedures, and facility management standards to ensure safe and proper health care to an aging, predominantly male, veteran resident population.

Our **Communications, Outreach and Advocacy (COA) Program** requires not only a continually growing understanding of veterans' needs but also the communication skills and tools to reach Maryland's estimated 348,000 veterans and advocate for them. The COA Program plays a vital role in the Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans and Families (SMVF).

The **Maryland Veterans Trust Fund** exists to help meet non-emergency, temporary financial needs of veterans in hardship situations, with the goal of helping them achieve self-reliance.

The Maryland Department of Veterans & Military Families strives daily to fulfill its mission to a veteran constituency comprising 7.1% of the total adult population of our State⁽¹⁾, as well as to eligible dependents and survivors of those veterans. We are proud to honor Maryland's veterans by bringing our best to their service every day.

(1) Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs VETPOP2020(veteran population); www.census.gov (accessed 2/14/2026) (Maryland population 18+ years old).

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DLS Questions and Recommended Actions: FY 2027 Operating Budget

Page 6, Charlotte Hall Veterans Home

Considering the fiscal 2027 allowance for the Veterans Home program decreases by 3.6% from \$52.3 million in fiscal 2026, after accounting for deficiencies, to \$50.4 million in fiscal 2027, DVMF should comment on whether the allowance is adequate to cover projected costs and how it will fund operating costs associated with an increase in resident census in CHVH in fiscal 2027 if current upward trends continue.

Agency Response:

The Department proposes to fund the census increase with increased revenues from the VA, Medicare, Medicaid, and private pay sources, and to continue working to reduce the level of subsidy required from the general fund through cost containment and efficiency measures without sacrificing the quality of care. The well-being of the Home's residents will always be DVMF's top priority.

When expenses outpace revenues, the State general fund subsidizes the difference. DVMF is heavily prioritizing the implementation of strategic and tactical steps to bring Charlotte Hall as close as possible to a fully self-supporting entity requiring as limited a subsidy as possible from the State. This effort includes growing the census, which puts upward pressure on both revenue and expense. The effort also includes heightened efficiency and control on the expenditure side, regardless of census. In the meantime, the State general fund subsidizes the difference between revenues and expenses.

The Governor's Allowance is projected to be adequate to cover costs but if non-VA revenues exceed the general fund appropriation, we will continue to monitor costs and communicate with DBM. In the meantime, the reduction to GF in FY 2027 should be viewed as a planned reduction of the contract subsidy, not a reduction in overall expenditures at the Home.

Page 8: Charlotte Hall Veterans Home

Committee narrative in the 2025 Joint Chairmen's Report (JCR) requested that DVMF submit quarterly updates on CHVH operations, staffing, and federal ratings. DVMF has maintained staffing levels above 4 hours per patient day for 24-hour registered nurses, as compared to the State minimum of 3 hours per patient day and the federal minimum of 3.48 hours per patient day. In the first and second quarterly reports, DVMF reported an overall rating of one star from the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for CHVH. In its third quarterly report, DVMF reported a significant improvement from its previous one-star rating to receiving an overall rating

of four stars in the federal CMS report, with staffing receiving five stars, health inspections receiving three stars, and quality measure receiving two stars. **DVMF should comment on what actions resulted in the significant improvement in the facility's federal CMS rating.**

Agency Response:

The journey to a 5-star rating is made up of many small steps and every interaction with every resident matters. The most recent CMS-eligible survey in 2025 resulted in a significant improvement in the facility's federal CMS rating. PruittHealth and DVMF have sought success by:

- a. Proactively eliminating reliance on temporary agency staffing, replacing 100% of all temporary agency nurses with Pruitt employees. With a focus on hiring RNs and the retention of Key Leaders.*
- b. Providing employee training and retraining; ultimately, holding every employee accountable for his or her interactions with residents.*
- c. Actively monitoring at-risk patients in collaboration with DVMF via weekly meetings and daily clinical meetings*
- d. Participation in internal surveys and third-party surveys*
- e. Utilizing a quality improvement system to provide predictive analytics for survey readiness, improve quality measures, and prescribe targeted action plans.*
- f. Consulting continuously with PruittHealth corporate nursing leadership*
- g. Benchmarking internal 5-star report data against state and national averages*

Page 8: Charlotte Hall Veterans Home

Pursuant to Section 19-14C-02(a)(1) and (2) of the State Government Article, two survey reports were submitted on September 10, 2025. The first survey report was an annual recertification survey for all of CHVH's skilled-nursing and assisted-living facilities, conducted by the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ) from July 15 through July 25, 2025. The survey report noted that CHVH was not in compliance with the federal requirements for long-term care facilities including residents' rights or exercise of rights, reasonable accommodation needs or preferences, right to be free from chemical restraints, development or implementation of comprehensive care plans, activities of daily living care provided for dependent residents, label or storage of drugs and biologicals, food procurement, and infection prevention and control. **DVMF should brief the committees on**

corrective actions and measures taken to address these issues highlighted in MDH OHCQ annual survey report.

Agency Response:

After the 2025 Annual Survey concluded, OHCQ issued a statement of deficiencies. It is important to note that none of these deficiencies had a scope or severity that resulted in an “Immediate Jeopardy” or potential harm citation. This is the first time in over a decade that CHVH has not received a tag indicating immediate jeopardy or harm to the veterans of CHVH. The deficiencies cited as a result of the 2025 survey were minor in scope and severity and yielded opportunities for improvement. Upon receipt of the statement of deficiencies, PruittHealth Administrative and clinical staff carefully reviewed the deficiencies and worked together to draft a Plan of Correction (POC) to address all deficiencies. The POC was implemented along with extensive auditing by the PruittHealth team over the time period outlined in the POC. OHCQ conducted a review, and CHVH was returned to compliance with CMS rules and regulations across all areas of operation.

Page 8: Charlotte Hall Veterans Home

The Department of Legislative Services (DLS) recommends adopting committee narrative requesting the continued submission of quarterly reports in collaboration with the CHVH contractor on the progress of CHVH’s operations, including efforts to increase staffing and residency numbers, and corrective actions or measures taken to address the noncompliance issues highlighted in MDH OHCQ and the USDVA annual survey reports.

Agency Response:

DVMF concurs with this recommendation.

Page 9: Maryland Joins Forces

DLS recommends adopting committee narrative requesting the submission of a progress report on the activities of the MJF initiatives, including an update on the five pillar-based subcommittees and development of the performance indicators.

Agency Response:

DVMF concurs with this recommendation.

DVMF should brief the committees on the reason for removing certain project components from both projects' original scope of work. DVMF should also provide an updated timeline of completing architectural or engineering design, permitting, and other supporting documents for both capital projects to meet the federal readiness requirements and compete for the federal fiscal 2028 VCGP.

Agency Response:

Certain components were removed from the original scope of work for the Garrison Forest and Crownsville cemetery expansion projects due to changes in federal grant funding criteria and federal readiness requirements.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans (USDVA) Cemetery Grants Program has updated its funding criteria to prioritize projects that directly increase burial capacity. Under current guidance, the USDVA will fund only burial-related infrastructure, such as gravesites, columbaria, roads, utilities, and associated site work. The program no longer funds buildings or non-burial facilities as part of cemetery expansion grants.

As a result of this change, building and facility components originally included in both projects were removed or deferred from the federally funded scope, as they are no longer eligible for USDVA participation.

In addition, to compete for federal funding, projects must be fully "shovel-ready," with architectural and engineering design, permitting, and supporting documentation completed by the federal submission deadline. The State was unable to complete this work by September 30, 2026, which is required to compete for the Federal Fiscal Year 2028 funding cycle. Scope elements that increased design complexity or extended permitting timelines were therefore removed or deferred.

These scope adjustments were made to:

- *Align both projects with updated USDVA eligibility requirements,*
- *Focus resources on critical burial and columbarium capacity needs,*
- *Maintain competitiveness for federal funding, and*
- *Reduce schedule and funding risk within the Capital Improvement Program.*

Removed components may be reconsidered in future phases using non-federal funding sources, subject to availability and legislative approval.

*To meet federal readiness requirements and compete for **FFY 2028 Veterans Cemetery Grants Program (VCGP)** funding, the DVMF's Cemetery and Memorials Program, will advance architectural and engineering (A/E) design and permitting in advance of federal funding decisions.*

Fiscal Year 2026

- *Procure and contract architectural and engineering (A/E) services for both Crownsville and Garrison Forest.*
- *Initiate full schematic design and design development focused on burial-capacity-eligible infrastructure.*
- *Begin environmental reviews, site investigations, and early permitting coordination with State and local agencies.*
- *Establish project scopes aligned with updated USDVA eligibility criteria, limited to burial capacity improvements.*

Fiscal Year 2027

- *Complete construction documents to a permit-ready level for both projects.*
- *Secure all required local, State, and federal permits and approvals.*
- *Finalize cost estimates, phasing plans, and supporting technical documentation.*
- *Assemble complete and fully compliant VCGP application packages.*

Federal Fiscal Year 2028

- *Submit fully “shovel-ready” applications to the USDVA.*
- *Position both projects to compete competitively for federal construction funding based on readiness, scope eligibility, and cost effectiveness.*

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History

The Maryland Veterans Commission was created by the General Assembly in 1924. Initially, it was charged with providing financial relief to indigent veterans and widows. The Commission's objective remained essentially the same until the beginning of World War II. At that time, the Veterans Administration began to recognize the need to provide adequate counsel to veterans in claims before it. To assist in providing this service, the Veterans Administration provided the Maryland Veterans Commission with free office space in their principal offices.

In 1946, the Veterans Administration eliminated all of its offices serving Maryland except for the regional offices located in Washington, D.C. (which housed the claims files for Prince George's and Montgomery Counties) and the Baltimore Regional Office, which serviced the veterans' claims for all other counties in Maryland. To fill the void created by the consolidation, the Commission had to provide increased service. Today, DVMF maintains service offices across the State.

In 1973, the Legislature authorized the beginning of the State Veterans Cemetery Program.

In 1999, the Legislature created the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) as an executive agency with the mission of assisting veterans, active-duty service members, their families, and dependents in securing benefits earned through military service.

In 2006, the Legislature authorized the beginning of the State Veterans Outreach and Advocacy program.

In 2021, Governor Hogan created the Women/Veterans Inclusion Program within MDVA. This initiative aims to raise awareness of the needs of Maryland's women, minority, and underserved veteran populations. Also, in 2021, MDVA identified the site of the State's second veterans home and developed facility plans for this vital capital addition, which will expand our ability to serve those who served.

In 2024, to better represent the communities we serve, our department was renamed Department of Veterans & Military Families (DVMF), reaffirming our dedication to supporting veterans, service members, their families, and caregivers. Additionally, we established a Deputy Secretary position focused on Military Family Policy & Programs, created the Commission on Veterans and Military Families, and designated Maryland's first Veterans Suicide Prevention Day—further underscoring our commitment to addressing critical needs.

How We Serve Veterans

Service Program

The DVMF Service Program assists veterans and their eligible dependents in obtaining benefits rightfully earned through military service to their country. The Service Program provides general information to veterans seeking assistance, regardless of representation, in all matters pertaining to veterans' disability benefits and rights. DVMF is the designated agency of the State of Maryland to represent the State and its veterans before the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA). The agency represents veterans in filing USDVA disability claims and during USDVA appeals processes and assists dependents with survivor benefits.

DVMF employs Veterans Benefits Specialists accredited by the USDVA to represent veterans with disability claims and appeals and enjoys relationships with a handful of other accredited individuals outside the agency, who submit claims to the USDVA through DVMF. The agency's Veterans Benefits Specialists also help veterans and their families with questions regarding benefits, survivor and dependent needs, USDVA paperwork, and medical issues.

Veterans Benefits Specialists are located throughout Maryland: Annapolis, Baltimore City, Bel Air, Camp Springs, Capitol Heights, Charlotte Hall, Cumberland, Easton, Elkton, Frederick, Gaithersburg, Glen Burnie, Hagerstown, Laurel, Rosedale, Salisbury, and Waldorf. Many of these offices have just a single benefits specialist; a few have an office secretary to assist with administration. This small team does a remarkable job with incredible discipline and efficiency. **In FY 2025, Maryland veterans and their families were awarded nearly \$54.4 million in benefits. Initial benefits claims were accepted at a rate of 95%. With a budget of just over \$2.5 million (FY 2026), the DVMF Service Program is arguably one of the State's best investments.**

DVMF maintains a strategic partnership with the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) that started with placing the new Anne Arundel County service officer at the MVA facility in Glen Burnie and **has now expanded to a total of ten (10) Service offices co-located at MVA centers (Annapolis, Bel Air, Cumberland, Elkton, Frederick (late-February 2026), Gaithersburg, Glen Burnie, Hagerstown, Salisbury, and Waldorf).** DVMF greatly appreciates MVA's support for this collaboration, which provides veterans with easy access to benefits services while they are already at MVA for other business.

Cemetery Program

The State of Maryland, through the Cemetery Program of the Maryland Department of Veterans & Military Families, offers Maryland veterans and their eligible dependents a final resting place at one of five state veterans cemeteries located throughout Maryland. The program, one of the largest of its kind in the nation, bases its standard of excellence on striving to ensure that our state cemeteries are maintained as national shrines to those who have gone before.

A Pre-Interment Program is available, through which veterans may indicate their desire to be buried in one of the state's cemeteries and verify their eligibility for such burial on a pre-need basis. DVMF's cemeteries provide interment services Monday through Friday year-round and are open to the public 365 days each year.

There are five State Veterans Cemeteries located across our State:

Cheltenham State Veterans Cemetery is located on U.S. Route 301, approximately 8 miles south of Upper Marlboro, Maryland. The site was formerly used for agricultural purposes. The Cheltenham Veterans Cemetery provides a final resting place for 32,642 veterans and eligible dependents, reservists, and members of the National Guard since opening in July 1978. The Chapel at the cemetery was dedicated to the memory of Senator Edward T. Conroy, who was instrumental in passing of legislation enabling the development of Maryland's State Veterans Cemeteries.

Crownsville State Veterans Cemetery at Crownsville is located off State Route 178 on Sunrise Beach Road. The site, originally used for farming, is surrounded by a peaceful Severn River residential community. Near the center of the state cemetery is a one-acre old family cemetery dating back to 1875, retained by the heirs and assigns of the Carter family in perpetuity. The Crownsville Veterans Cemetery, which opened in 1980, provides a final resting place for 28,730 veterans and eligible dependents, reservists, and members of the National Guard.

Eastern Shore Veterans Cemetery in Hurlock, Maryland, is located two miles south of Preston and about five miles northwest of Hurlock on State Route 331. Eastern Shore Veterans Cemetery, which opened for operation in December 1976, is the final resting place for 8,747 veterans, eligible dependents, reservists, and members of the National Guard. Donated by the citizens of Dorchester County, the site was formerly a 35-acre wheat field and has since expanded. The design of this cemetery is unique. The layout of the burial sites is based on a system of radials and concentric circles centered on the American flag in the plaza area at the Chapel.

Garrison Forest Veterans Cemetery is the final resting place for 47,843 veterans, eligible dependents, reservists, and members of the National Guard since its opening in December 1983. The Garrison Forest Veterans Cemetery is located on Garrison Forest

Road, near the former Rosewood State Hospital, in Owings Mills, Maryland. Formerly used for agricultural purposes, the site is bounded by woodlands.

Rocky Gap Veterans Cemetery is located within the Rocky Gap State Park, just off State Route 68 in Allegany County. The Rocky Gap Veterans Cemetery is approximately 10 miles east of Cumberland and is arguably the most beautiful of the five State Veterans' Cemeteries. Approaching the cemetery, visitors are treated to views of the park's lake and mountainous backdrop. A total of 5,990 veterans, eligible dependents, reservists, and members of the National Guard have been laid to rest at the cemetery.

The National Cemetery Administration (NCA) of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs publishes a formula for recommended staffing of veterans cemeteries. This formula considers number of interments performed, number of maintained gravesites, and cemetery acreage.

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Memorials Program

The Maryland Department of Veterans & Military Families manages three veteran memorials and the Gold Star Family Monument. The Maryland World War II Memorial is in Annapolis, and the Vietnam War and Korean War Memorials are in Baltimore. The Gold Star Family Monument is in Annapolis, adjacent to the Maryland World War II Memorial. Additionally, the Department shares joint responsibility with the City of Baltimore for the War Memorial Building in Baltimore. The memorials recognize the contributions of the men and women who fought for the principles of freedom, both abroad and at home. They also serve to educate present and future generations about the sacrifices made by members of the Uniformed Services of the United States.

Veterans Home Program

The Charlotte Hall Veterans Home (CHVH) provides assisted living and skilled nursing residential care for honorably discharged veterans and eligible spouses of veterans.

The Home is situated on 126 beautiful acres in St. Mary's County and offers a continuum of care from assisted living to skilled nursing. Charlotte Hall Veterans Home also offers memory care in secure units. The Home is Medicare/Medicaid certified, and all veterans receive a per diem subsidy from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs that reduces their cost of care. The Home is inspected annually, as required by the Office of Health Care Quality of the Maryland Department of Health, and by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

The State of Maryland, through DVMF, contracts with a private healthcare management contractor to operate the Home. DVMF works closely with the management contractor's staff to ensure our veterans receive the best possible care in a clean, caring environment. The staff understands and respects the sacrifices veterans have made and the privilege of living out the Home's motto: "Serving Those Who Served."

Communications, Outreach & Advocacy Program

The Communications, Outreach & Advocacy (COA) Program's mission is to develop innovative ways to identify Maryland's veterans; to educate them about benefits and services available from federal, state, and local organizations; and to solicit feedback from veterans on their needs for additional services.

The Program is also responsible for:

- The Department's Public Information Officer (PIO) function and point of contact for all public information requests
- The Department's electronic newsletter, a bi-weekly publication comprised of notable veteran and military-related events across Maryland
- The Department's website, veterans.maryland.gov
- Welcome Home Maryland Veterans mailings sent to all veterans returning to Maryland
- The Department's social media presence
- Communications and public relations
- Participation in Commissions and Councils, including
 - Maryland Veterans Commission
 - Maryland College Collaboration for Student Veterans Commission
 - Governor's Commission on Suicide Prevention
 - Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH)
- Leading and/or participation, including drafting regulations, in other initiatives and mandated programs, including
 - Governor's Challenge to prevent service member, veteran and families suicide/PREVENTS
 - Comprehensive Statewide Veterans Suicide Prevention Plan
 - Women Veterans Health Summit
 - Incarcerated Women Veterans Initiative
 - Women Veterans Recognition Day
 - Governor's Customer Service Initiative
 - Maryland Veterans Service Animal Program
 - Veterans Services Specialist Program
 - Joint County Veterans Commission meetings

The COA team is often asked to implement new, including unfunded, legislative mandates for programs and other services that naturally fit nowhere in the agency's existing programs.

Maryland Veterans Trust

The Maryland Veterans Trust (the Trust) has been designated as an organization exempt from Federal income tax under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The Trust provides non-emergency, temporary financial assistance program to veterans facing short-term financial crises, such as rent assistance following the loss of a job. The program aims to assist those who will be self-reliant after receiving the assistance and cannot address chronic issues. The Board of Trustees governs the organization, and the Secretary of DVMF serves as the Board's chair.

The Trust is funded by private donations, but now also has additional permanent funding sources through donations collected at Maryland casinos, slot revenue received from Veteran Service Organizations under the State Lottery, and the 2025 Maryland Income Tax Return Checkoff, which allows taxpayers to make voluntary contributions.

The Trust Fund is primarily used for assistance with rent/mortgage and utilities. The Trust does not assist with taxes, child support, speeding tickets, legal fees, payday and interpersonal loans, credit card debt, home repairs, food, appliances, and vehicle purchases. Further, the Trust does not find housing for veterans.

All applicants must be Maryland residents for at least 12 months at the time of application. Applicants must have completed a full term of military service, have an honorable discharge, or a general discharge under honorable conditions. Applicant income may not exceed 300% of the federal poverty guidelines. (Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, this threshold had been 200%, but the Board increased it temporarily to 250% during the pandemic and has since voted to make 300% the new threshold.) Benefits from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Social Security, and Social Security Disability count as income.

Widows and widowers may apply if they have both the discharge papers and a certificate of death from the deceased veteran.

All awarded grant money is paid to the vendors to satisfy the veteran's liabilities, and none is paid directly to the veteran.

Demographic Trends

A projected 348,460 veterans live in Maryland as of 2025, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA), ranking 19th nationally for veteran population. In addition to veterans, the state includes tens of thousands of active-duty service members, National Guard and Reserve members, and their families, creating a large and diverse military-connected community across all regions of the state.

As service members transition following overseas deployments, many will need assistance with ongoing medical, mental health, or reintegration issues. Some may require assistance with re-employment, education, or emergency help to overcome a financial crisis. Along with other State agencies committed to veterans' assistance programs, the Maryland Department of Veterans & Military Families is helping veterans to meet these challenges.