



OREGON DEPARTMENT
of VETERANS' AFFAIRS

REPORT TO THE

VETERAN

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MARCH 2025



REPORT TO THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

For the regularly scheduled quarterly virtual meeting on December 4, 2024.

This report can be downloaded at: www.oregon.gov/odva/Connect/Pages/Advisory-Committee.aspx

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ADVISORY COMMITTEE INFORMATION

Since the Advisory Committee was established in 1945, it has held a distinct and fundamental role in advising the Director and staff of ODVA. Advisory Committee members are military veterans appointed by the Governor, act as advocates for veteran issues, and represent veteran concerns across Oregon. The Advisory Committee is fortunate to have volunteer members from every generation of veterans and communities across this state who bring diverse talents and experiences. As an Advisory Committee, they are informed by the broader veterans' community that they serve. As such, all Oregon veterans, their families, and our partners are invited to attend and participate in the quarterly meetings held across the state.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS *See member bios [here](#)*

Robert “Bob” Van Voorhis, Vice Chair, USA.....	John Day
Christina Wood, Secretary, USAF.....	Portland
Christopher Waine, USA.....	Hermiston
Mary Mayer, USAF.....	Portland
Ashley Taylor, USA.....	Scappoose
Shawn Flynn, USA.....	Portland
Mario Smith, USA	Portland
Tim Smart, USN	Gresham
James Little	Roseburg

COMMITTEE INFO AND CONTACT ONLINE

Learn more about the committee, meetings, or learn how to apply to be appointed by the Governor to serve as a member of the Veterans Advisory Committee.

Webpage: www.oregon.gov/odva/Connect/Pages/Advisory-Committee.aspx

Email: odva_vaac@odva.oregon.gov



OREGON DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS LEADERSHIP

Dr. Nakeia Daniels, USA	Director
Jamal Fox.....	Deputy Director
Rex Emery.....	Chief Operating Officer
Esmeralda Boies.....	Executive Assistant to the Director
Jay DeFillipo, USA.....	Legislative Director
Nicole Hoeft.....	Strategic Communications Director
Nicole Dolan.....	Interim Chief Financial Officer
David Kampff, USAF.....	Chief Information Officer
Vacant.....	Human Resources Director
Kelly Breshears.....	Aging Veteran Services Division Director
Sheronne Blasi, USN.....	Strategic Partnerships Director
Joseph Glover, USN.....	Appeals & Special Advocacy Director

CONTACT ODVA ONLINE

Learn more about agency programs, access a staff directory, or learn about federal and state veteran benefits using the links below:

- Website:** www.oregon.gov/odva
Blog: www.oregondva.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/odvavet
Subscribe: <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/ORDVA/subscriber/new>
Order Veteran Benefit Magazines for your organization or self:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VeteransBenefitMagazine>



ADVISORY COMMITTEE QUARTERLY MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday, March 5, 2025 | 9:30 AM – 12:00 PM | Held Virtually

- I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**
 - a. Pledge of Allegiance
- II. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**
 - a. Recognition and Welcome of New Members
- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 - a. Approval of the [December 2024 VAC Quarterly Meeting Minutes](#)
- IV. ODVA DIRECTOR'S REPORT**
- V. ODVA PROGRAM REPORTS**
 - a. Aging Veteran Services – Kelly Breshears, Division Director
 - b. Appeals and Special Advocacy – Joe Glover, Division Director
 - c. Strategic Partnerships – Sheronne Blasi, Division Director
- VI. INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION**
 - a. Healing Advocacy Fund - Heidi Pendergast, Oregon Director
Heroic Hearts Project - Alistair Sweeney, Veteran Domestic Programs Manager
- VII. OLD BUSINESS**
- VIII. NEW BUSINESS**
 - a. Nomination of Committee Officers
- IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS**
 - a. In-person Committee Orientation and Training – June 10
- X. BUSINESS MEETING ADJOURNED**
 - a. Next Advisory Committee Quarterly Meeting
Date: June 11, 2025 | Time: 9:30 AM – 12:00 PM
Location: In-person, location TBD

VETERAN TOWN HALL

Following every quarterly business meeting, the VAC holds a Town Hall inviting the public to ask questions or share information with the committee and Director. This time is set aside for individuals to bring up broader veteran community issues. Community members are also invited to submit written public comments to the committee by emailing odva_vaac@odva.oregon.gov.

VETERAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBER BIOS

Robert VanVoorhis, Vice Chair	Robert volunteered in 1966 for the US Army and proudly served with the 1/3rd Infantry Regiment (Old Guard) at Arlington National Cemetery and the 2/39th Infantry Regiment with the 9th ID in Vietnam. After college, he worked in software development and finance and served as a reserve deputy in King County. He is a life member of the VFW, American Legion, DAV, MOPH, and National Infantry Association. He served on the board of the SE District Oregon St. Elks and drives for John Day DAV/VA van transport.
Christina Wood, Secretary	Christina enlisted in the Air Force in 1998 as a Serbian Croatian Cryptologic Linguist, ultimately serving a decade in the military intelligence community before separating to follow her husband's career overseas. While living at USAG Yongsan, Korea and USAG Wiesbaden, Germany she dedicated herself to the local nonprofit organizations supporting military families with morale, welfare, and scholarship support. Retiring to Oregon in 2015 she established a second career in nonprofit work. She is an active community volunteer focusing on public education and veterans' advocacy issues. Christina, her husband, and their four incredibly adaptable "Army brats" call Portland home.
Christopher Waine	Chris served with the 1-25th Infantry Support Battalion out of Ft. Lewis WA where he worked as a wrecker operator providing field level repair and vehicle recovery for Deuce Four infantry's Critical Response Team. He is semiretired and operates a business in Eastern Oregon. Chris is a lifetime member of Disabled Veterans of America and has over 15 years of personal experience navigating Veteran Benefits and Health Administrations.
Mary Mayer	Mary is a Vietnam era woman veteran and native of Portland, retired from the United States Air Force in 2002. Mary is involved with MOAA Portland Chapter, United Veteran Groups of Oregon (UVGO), Air and Space Forces Association and NCMA. She also has a history of serving veterans with her positions on numerous veteran committees and boards, in addition to other community involvement.
Ashley Taylor	Ashley is a Post 9/11 Army veteran from Columbia County, currently working on the Suicide Prevention Team at the Department of Veterans' Affairs. Ashley is also a veteran spouse and advocate of veteran's behavioral health.

Shawn Flynn	Shawn served in the Army as an Airborne Ranger in the medical field. Residing in Multnomah County, he is the Chairman for Veterans Affairs Portland NAACP and NABVETS, specifically partnered to enhance VSO functions. He also works with black businesses to help them grow; financing, mentoring, connecting and recruiting.
Mario Smith	Mario Smith is from Multnomah County and is a dedicated advocate for veterans. Smith served in the U.S. Army, including a deployment in Afghanistan. As a Black male veteran of the LGBTQIA+ community, he is actively involved in veteran-focused organizations, including the Veterans Service Organization (VSO), the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), and the National Association for Black Veterans (NABVETS), where he contributes his lived military experience and voice to supporting and advancing veteran causes.
Tim Smart	Tim Smart is a Native American veteran from Multnomah County with a distinguished record of military service. Serving first in the U.S. Navy and later in the Army National Guard from 1984 to 2009, Smart's career spans multiple wartime and peacetime periods, where he dedicated himself to protecting and supporting his country. His broad service experience provides him with valuable insight and commitment to the well-being of veterans.
James Little	James Little, of Roseburg, enlisted in the Navy at 17, serving 30 years as an enlisted man and commissioned officer, retiring as a Chief Warrant Officer W-4. His career included key assignments in major historical events and leadership roles, including overseeing officer assignments and strategic deployments. He received 29 medals and ribbons for his service. After retiring, he worked as a Department of Defense Exercise Engineer training military air traffic controllers. A 100% service-connected disabled veteran, he is the author of Brotherhood of Doom: Memoirs of a Navy Nuclear Weaponsman and Sweet & Sour Uncle. He has held leadership roles in multiple veterans' organizations and has been recognized for his humanitarian contributions, including the Four Chaplains Legion of Honor and Bronze Medallion awards.



REPORT TO THE VETERAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE FROM DIRECTOR DR. NAKEIA DANIELS

As we progress through the first quarter of 2025, it has already been a busy start of the year, beginning with the 2025 Regular Session. Our teams have been busy in this new session as we engage with Legislators, the Governor's Office and partners to deliver great outcomes for veterans.

New Directors Office Staff



I am pleased to introduce Esmeralda Boies as my new Executive Assistant. Esmeralda joined our team on December 16 and brings more than 25 years of high-level executive support experience. She is already making a significant impact, ensuring the seamless coordination of operations at the Director's Office.

Her career began with service in the United States Air Force after graduating from high school in Albany, Oregon. Subsequent to her military service, Esmeralda transitioned to the private sector, excelling in executive roles with companies such as Hewlett-Packard and Polycom.

Nearly five years ago, Esmeralda brought her extensive expertise to the State of Oregon, where she has continued to demonstrate excellence in executive operations and leadership support.

Veteran Advisory Committee Appointment Update

ODVA has submitted a final recommendation to the Governor's Executive Appointments Office to fill the Veteran Advisory Committee (VAC) position recently vacated by James Gardner, who served two consecutive terms.

We appreciate James for his commitment, leadership as a past chair, and contributions to the committee. His service has helped shape policies and initiatives that continue to support Oregon's veterans. We look forward to welcoming a new appointee and will share updates once the appointment is finalized.

2025-27 Governor's Recommended Budget

On February 26, ODVA I testified before the Transportation and Economic Development Subcommittee on Ways and Means to present the agency's 2025-27 Governor's Recommended Budget. This budget reflects ODVA's strategic priorities and aligns with Governor Kotek's focus on veteran housing stability, behavioral health, and education.

The 2025-27 GRB reflects addressing these issues through 22 Policy Option Packages that prioritizes:

- **Veteran Housing Stability** through expanded programs and grants to prevent homelessness as recommended by the Governor's Interagency Housing Council.
- **Behavioral and Mental Health Access** to reduce barriers and address access to mental health needs.
- **Veteran Education Programs** to continue grant funding that supports educational and career goals.
- **Reaching Underserved Veterans** by funding programs that connect historically marginalized veterans to services.
- **Honoring Veterans at Every Life Stage** with investments that meet the evolving needs of five distinct eras of service.
- And, **Strengthening ODVA's Operations** to ensure our internal functions are scaled to support our growing programs, meeting both current and future demands.

ODVA's 2025-27 GRB represents a \$191 million total investment in Oregon's veteran community, with funding from the General Fund (\$10 million), Lottery Funds (\$24.8 million), Other Funds (\$154 million), and Federal Funds (\$1.9 million). This budget increases the number of ODVA positions to 108, increasing capacity in critical support and programmatic roles to meet the evolving needs of the agency and Oregon's veterans.

Following this report is ODVA's 2025-27 GRB One-Sheet, summarizing the agency's recommended budget, key funding allocations, and policy initiatives.

Home Loan Refinance Program

One important initiative the agency has been working on is the development of a Home Loan Refinance Program. After consulting with the Department of Justice about ODVA's authority, we have begun the rule-making process to initiate a Refinance Program in Oregon Administrative Rules.

As a part of the process, ODVA has set up an initial Rules Advisory Committee (RAC) that will work with the agency on rewriting current Home Loan Rules and incorporating refinance rules. This process also includes a review of Draft Rules by the RAC, a public hearing and comment period followed by the publication of rules. To sign up to receive ODVA Administrative Rules notices:

https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/ORDVA/subscriber/new?topic_id=ORDVA_32

ODVA expects this process to be complete by the end of May with rules published in June 2025. We estimate the first refinance loans could be ready by the end of this year.

Supporting Native American Veterans: Lottery Beneficiary Video



***Pictured:** Clips from the Tribal Veteran Service Offices Lottery Video featuring the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation Veteran Service Office.*

Earlier this year, I had the opportunity to sit down with the Oregon Lottery to participate in a beneficiary video highlighting how Lottery funds are supporting critical veteran services in Oregon. This initiative is part of ODVA's ongoing partnership with the Oregon Lottery to raise awareness about programs funded by new Lottery revenues and their impact on veterans statewide.

Native Americans have one of the highest rates of military service per capita of any ethnic group. In Oregon, 1.5% of our 266,000 veterans identify as Native American. Since the passage of Measure 96 in 2016, 1.5% of Oregon Lottery revenues have been dedicated to funding veteran services, including Veteran Service Officers (VSOs) on tribal lands. These VSOs ensure that Native veterans receive their earned benefits, including disability compensation, healthcare, home loans, and vocational rehabilitation.

Watch ODVA's Lottery Beneficiary Video: [Supporting Native American Veterans](#)

ODVA is proud to have Oregon Lottery as a strong partner in amplifying programs funded through new Lottery revenues. Through video storytelling and outreach efforts, Oregon Lottery helps increase public awareness of

these vital services and their impact on veterans across the state. More Lottery-funded veteran services videos: <https://www.oregonlottery.org/veteran-services/>

Honoring Black History Month

Throughout Black History Month in February, ODVA featured stories of Black veterans whose military service has profoundly shaped our history.

I was honored to be featured by KOIN 6, spotlighting my journey as the first Black woman to lead ODVA. As an Army veteran with deep family military roots, I understand firsthand the importance of connecting with every veteran in our community. My hope is these messages reach some of the most hard to reach veterans and amplify the good work and programs ODVA has to offer every veteran.

Watch the full feature here:

[KOIN 6 Story: Oregon VA Director Spreads Help for Veteran Services](#)

Veteran Services in Douglas County



Clockwise: From left to right, Douglas County Commissioner Freeman, Roseburg VAMC Executive Director Patrick Hull, Dr. Nakeia Daniels; Dr. Daniels with Roseburg County leadership and veterans; Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians Tribal VSO's Jennifer Bryant and Matthew Case with Dr. Daniels; Visit to new Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Indians Tribal Office; Douglas County Veteran Service Office staff including Director Mary Newman-Keyes and veteran clients.

At the end of January, I visited Douglas County to meet with the Roseburg VA and visit with local Veterans Service Offices. During my visit to the Roseburg VA Medical Center, I met with leadership to discuss the Roseburg

Veterans' Home. I also had the opportunity to visit the Douglas County Veterans Service Office, where I was fortunate to meet veterans who were there for assistance and to discuss local veteran needs with our county partners. Additionally, I visited the newly opened Veteran Service Office of the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, where I learned about their outreach efforts and initiatives designed to raise awareness of the office and bring tribal veterans together.

ODVA's Commitment to Every Veteran: Response to Federal DEI Draw Down

In response to the federal government's decision to draw down Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts, as the state agency responsible for serving veterans, ODVA reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to serving every Oregon veteran. The statement aimed to reassure our community of ODVA's continuing service to and support of every Oregon veteran. Our public statement on this issue received significant engagement and positive response on ODVA's media platforms:

"The Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs stands proudly and unequivocally beside every veteran who served our nation with honor, regardless of sexual orientation, race, or gender identity. We remain steadfast in advocating for and supporting every veteran who served our nation."

ODVA's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion remains unshaken. We will continue working to eliminate barriers to access for veterans of all backgrounds. We are immensely proud to have been the first state in the nation to establish a dedicated LGBTQ+ Veterans Coordinator in 2016, ensuring veterans receive the full range of their earned benefits at the federal, state, and local levels. Oregon's commitment to its veteran community remains unchanged.

As changes have occurred at the federal VA, ODVA is monitoring these developments closely and responding to questions and concerns from Oregon veterans. For veterans who are concerned about what they are hearing regarding federal policies and activities, we encourage you to contact your congressional representative to share those concerns and ensure your voice is heard at the national level.

Strengthening International Partnerships & Honoring Korean War Veterans



Pictured: Dr. Daniels attended a congratulatory reception for Dr. Edward Kimmi, the newly appointed Honorary Consul for the Republic of Korea in Northern Oregon.

On February 6, I had the honor of attending a congratulatory reception for Dr. Edward Kimmi, the newly appointed Honorary Consul for the Republic of Korea in Northern Oregon. The event, which celebrated Dr. Kimmi's new role, was attended by Consul General of the Republic of Korea in Seattle Seo Eunji, Oregon Secretary of State Tobias Read, former Honorary Consul Greg Daniels, state representatives, and other dignitaries.

ODVA remains committed to fostering strong international partnerships, particularly in support of Oregon's Korean War veterans, who played a pivotal role in the U.S.-Korea alliance. The Republic of Korea consulate continues to be a valuable partner in recognizing and honoring these veterans, ensuring their service and sacrifice are never forgotten.

Congratulations to Dr. Kimmi, and deep appreciation to him and the Republic of Korea Consulate for their ongoing efforts to strengthen ties between our two nations and support veterans across the state.

Support Veterans Through the Oregon Charitable Checkoff Program This Tax Season

As tax season approaches, ODVA encourages everyone to consider a meaningful way to support Oregon's veterans through the Oregon Charitable Checkoff program. This program allows Oregonians to direct a portion of their state tax refund to critical veteran services and initiatives.

By choosing to donate through the Charitable Checkoff program, taxpayers can directly contribute to programs that provide care and resources for some of Oregon's most vulnerable veterans—aging veterans, those struggling with behavioral health challenges, and suicide prevention efforts.

ODVA has two programs that receive charitable checkoff funding:

- The Oregon Veterans' Homes – Provides high-quality, long-term care for aging and disabled veterans. (Charity Code 12)
- Veteran Suicide Awareness and Prevention – Supports programs aimed at preventing suicide and expanding mental health resources for veterans in crisis. (Charity Code 23)

To donate, use the Charity Code when filing your taxes. Every dollar donated has the power to positively impact the lives of those who have served our country. This is an easy and tangible way to give back to veterans.

Currently, ODVA's [BeyondtheMilitaryUniform.com](https://beyondthemilitaryuniform.com) outreach campaign, funded through donations to the Veteran Suicide Awareness and Prevention Charitable Checkoff Fund is a new Behavioral Health Resource for the veteran community.

This website and campaign are designed to provide resources that support veterans and their families in their behavioral health journey. The campaign is about care, connection, and comradery. We want veterans to know they are not alone in this journey, and that it's ok to reach out for support. The website contains Oregon based information about activities, volunteer opportunities and other reasons to connect with other veterans, federal, state and community based behavioral healthcare resources and tools anyone can use on their own to improve their wellbeing.

We invite the community to share information about Beyond the Military Uniform by posting on social media and including this information in newsletters. Social media graphics can be downloaded at <https://oregondva.com/suicide-awareness-prevention-resources/>



2025-27 GOVERNOR'S RECOMMENDED BUDGET

GOVERNOR'S RECOMMENDED BUDGET

VETERAN SERVICES INVESTMENTS

The 2025-2027 Governor's Recommended Budget for ODVA continues investments in agency programs that address many of the challenges facing today's diverse veterans across a broad spectrum of needs.

With a focus on housing stability, behavioral health, education, equity, honoring veterans, and operational capacity, this budget enables ODVA to continue delivering critical and essential services while meeting the evolving needs of those we serve.

Supports Veteran Housing Stability
by expanding programs and grants to promote housing stability and prevent homelessness.

Invests in Veteran Behavioral Health
by improving access to behavioral health services for veteran.

Continues Support for Veteran Education
by helping veterans overcome barriers to achieve education goals.

Reaches Underserved Veterans
by ensuring historically marginalized and underserved veterans are supported.

Honors and Serves Veterans at Every Life Stage
by investing in programs and services that honor veterans' service.

Strengthens ODVA's Operations and Technology
by building a fully equipped agency to meet current and future needs.

2023-25 L.A.B. TO 2025-27 G.R.B. BUDGET COMPARISON

	2023-25 Legislatively Adopted Budget	2025-27 Governor's Recommended Budget
General Fund	\$ 8,956,423	\$ 10,040,731
Lottery Funds	\$ 21,872,654	\$ 24,870,414
Other Funds	\$ 138,624,314	\$ 154,142,932
Federal Funds	\$ 3,881,025	\$ 1,961,694
Total Funds	\$ 173,334,416	\$ 191,015,771
Positions	101	108

*Excludes Debt Service, Non-Limited, and Roseburg Veterans' Home.

AGENCY LEGISLATION

HB 2341: Adds a uniformed service member's or veteran's e-mail address to the information that the Director of Human Services, Early Learning System Director, Director of Transportation and Director of the Oregon Health Authority are required to provide to the Director of Veterans' Affairs.

HB 2344: Relating to the World War II Memorial located on the Capitol Mall to ensure ODVA has authority and funding to make needed structural and administrative changes to the memorial.

HB 2559: Defines "honorable conditions" as related to the discharge or release of a veteran.

2025-27 GOVERNOR'S RECOMMENDED BUDGET INVESTMENTS BY PROGRAM

	Operations Program	Home Loan Program	Appeals and Special Advocacy	Strategic Partnerships	Oregon Veterans' Homes	Aging Veteran Services
General Fund	\$ 227,256	\$ -	\$ 4,801,765	\$ 4,286,191	\$ -	\$ 725,519
Lottery Funds	\$ 2,766,920	\$ -	\$ 2,155,116	\$ 16,342,074	\$ -	\$ 3,606,304
Other Funds	\$ 22,327,468	\$ 5,902,437	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 125,913,027	\$ -
Federal Funds	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,961,694	\$ -	\$ -
Total Funds	\$ 25,321,644	\$ 5,902,437	\$ 6,956,881	\$ 22,589,959	\$ 125,913,027	\$ 4,331,823
Positions	50 (48.50 FTE)	13 (12.75 FTE)	16 (16.0 FTE)	13 (12.50 FTE)	4 (4.0 FTE)	12 (12.0 FTE)

*Excludes Debt Service, Non-Limited, and Roseburg Veterans' Home.



**OREGON DEPARTMENT
of VETERANS' AFFAIRS**



2025-27 GOVERNOR'S RECOMMENDED BUDGET

2025-27 GRB GRANTS AND PASS-THROUGH TO PARTNERS

	General Fund	Lottery Funds	Federal Funds	Total Funds
County Veteran Service Offices	\$ 2,122,422	\$ 8,115,726	\$ -	\$ 10,238,148
National Service Organizations	\$ -	\$ 138,891	\$ -	\$ 138,891
Tribal Veteran Service Offices	\$ -	\$ 420,000	\$ -	\$ 420,000
Veteran Services Grant	\$ -	\$ 500,000	\$ -	\$ 500,000
Highly Rural Veteran Transportation Grant	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,000,000
Rural Veteran Healthcare Transportation Grant	\$ -	\$ 1,051,157	\$ -	\$ 1,051,157
Campus Veteran Resource Center Grant	\$ -	\$ 1,000,000	\$ -	\$ 1,000,000
Veteran Educational Bridge Grant	\$ -	\$ 602,665	\$ -	\$ 602,665
Veterans' Emergency Financial Assistance	\$ 116,985	\$ 1,000,000	\$ -	\$ 1,116,985
Oregon Military Helpline	\$ -	\$ 395,978	\$ -	\$ 395,978

POLICY OPTION PACKAGES

Package 100	MITAS On-Going Services & Maintenance	\$1,000,000 OF
Package 101	Strengthen ODVA Human Resources	\$445,937 OF 2 POS
Package 104	Strengthen ODVA Facilities Program	\$194,056 OF 1 POS
Package 105	Strengthen Home Loan Staffing	\$206,855 OF 1 POS
Package 106	Strengthen ODVA Finance Unit	\$397,380 OF 1 POS
Package 108	Establish DEIB Program	\$264,035 OF 1 POS
Package 109	Strengthen ODVA Directors Office	\$343,737 OF 1 POS
Package 110	Data & Performance Measures	\$248,612 OF 1 POS
Package 112	Veteran Behavioral Health Coordinator	\$221,352 LF 1 POS
Package 113	Rural Veteran Healthcare Transportation Grant	\$401,157 LF
Package 114	Tribal Veteran Service Office Funding	\$420,000 LF
Package 115	Veterans Emergency Financial Assistance	\$1,000,000 LF
Package 116	Veterans Educational Bridge Grant	\$400,000 LF
Package 117	Campus Veteran Resource Grant	\$1,000,000 LF
Package 118	Veteran Services Grant	\$500,000 LF
Package 119	Legacy Application Support (AS400)	\$325,000 OF
Package 121	Electronic Claim Tracking & Processing	\$60,000 LF
Package 122	World War II Memorial Update and Expansion	\$115,000 OF
Package 125	Capital Construction of OVH (Roseburg)	\$35,350,000 OF (XI-Q Bond Sale)
Package 126	ODVA & Vet Homes Capital Construction DM	\$10,162,846 OF (includes debt service)
Package 501	HH Expanding Incarcerated Veterans Program	\$221,352 GF 1 POS
Package 502	HH Incarcerated Veterans Grant Program	\$400,000 GF

2025-27 GOVERNOR'S RECOMMENDED BUDGET

Oregon Department
of Veterans' Affairs 2025-27
Governor's Recommended
Budget is estimated to be
posted February 2025 at
www.oregon.gov/odva.

VETERAN LEGISLATION

Read about 2025 Session
legislation impacting
Oregon veterans by scanning
the QR code or visit
[www.oregon.gov/odva/
Connect/Pages/Legislation.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/odva/Connect/Pages/Legislation.aspx).



LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

Contact ODVA's Legislative
Director Jay DeFillipo at
jay.defillipo@odva.oregon.gov



LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Jay DeFillipo, Legislative Director

Just a few short weeks ago the 83rd Oregon Legislature convened for its biennium long session. The start of session has Salem a buzz with large groups of lobbyists and advocates roaming the Capitol steps. In the Veterans landscape, this session sees a lot of new faces to our two Veteran's Committees. The House Emergency Management, General Government and Veterans Affairs has 3 new members under the leadership of Chair Thuy Tran.

Rep. Mari Watanabe, Rep. Alex Skarlatos and Rep. Court Boice joining the ranks bring a new perspective to the House committee. In the Senate Veterans, Federal and World Affairs Committee, Sen. James Manning continues his tenure as Chair and is now joined by Sen. Mark Meek and Sen. Brock Smith.

Both the House and Senate committees got off to a running start with over 100 bills that address Veterans and ODVA equities. These bills can be tracked and the progress followed by signing up for the ODVA Legislative Digest, a comprehensive list of bills that I track for the Agency. Sign up to receive this information weekly at <https://www.oregon.gov/odva/Connect/Pages/Legislation.aspx>. As bills move through the process, we update actions and remove bills that the committees no longer plan to move forward. February 25th was the deadline in both chambers for any new bills.

Bills of interest for many Veterans are tax relief bills such as SB 387 that offers property tax relief for our disabled Veterans. SB 519 and HB 2050 relieve Income Tax on military retired pay. Other bills call for grants to address many veterans' issues across the state and provide resources for those most in need. Another important bill is SB 150 which targets companies and individuals that seek compensation for assisting Veterans with claims processing commonly known as *claim sharks* or *claim poachers*. ODVA has several bills including an update to the World War II memorial on the Capitol Grounds and another to have a technical fix to the "Cremains Bill" passed in 2023. A bill of significant interest to ODVA is HB 2559 that updates the definition of a veteran in Oregon statute(s) to match the USDVA definition. The language in HB 2559 establishes that the term "honorable conditions" meets the same definition as that given by USDVA. Many of our veterans have received federal recognition and benefits but do not meet the state definition. This bill corrects that.

One bill of particular interest is HB 5038 which was heard before the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Transportation and Economic Development subcommittee last week. This is the ODVA agency budget bill which provides funding as addressed in the Governors Recommended Budget. We will be closely monitoring the progress of this bill as the legislature wrestles with many grant program requests.

ODVA is launching a Veterans Home Loan Refinancing Program. As a part of the process to stand up this new program, ODVA has set up an initial Rules Advisory Committee (RAC) that will work with the agency on rewriting current Home Loan Rules and incorporating refinance rules. As mentioned in the Director's report, to sign up to receive ODVA Administrative Rules notices:

https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/ORDVA/subscriber/new?topic_id=ORDVA_32

ODVA expects this process to be complete by the end of May with rules published in June 2025.

We encourage all of our veterans to participate in the legislative process and ensure your voices are heard. The Oregon Legislative Information system at Oregon State Legislature provides easy to understand information on the legislature and information on how to testify on bills.



AGING VETERAN SERVICES DIVISION

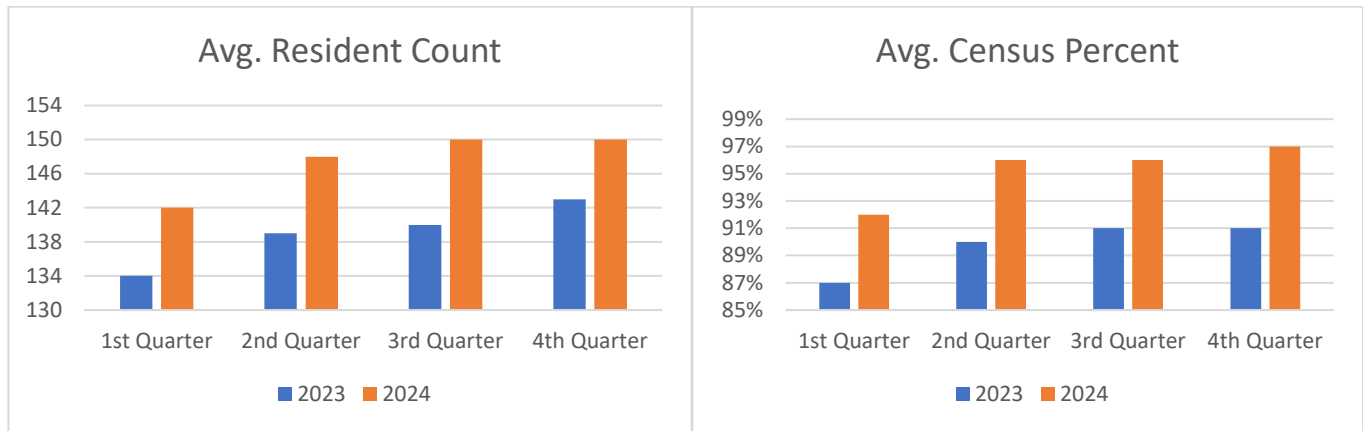
Kelly Breshears, Aging Veteran Services Director

Oregon Veterans' Homes Lebanon Program Director: Sharlane Keener

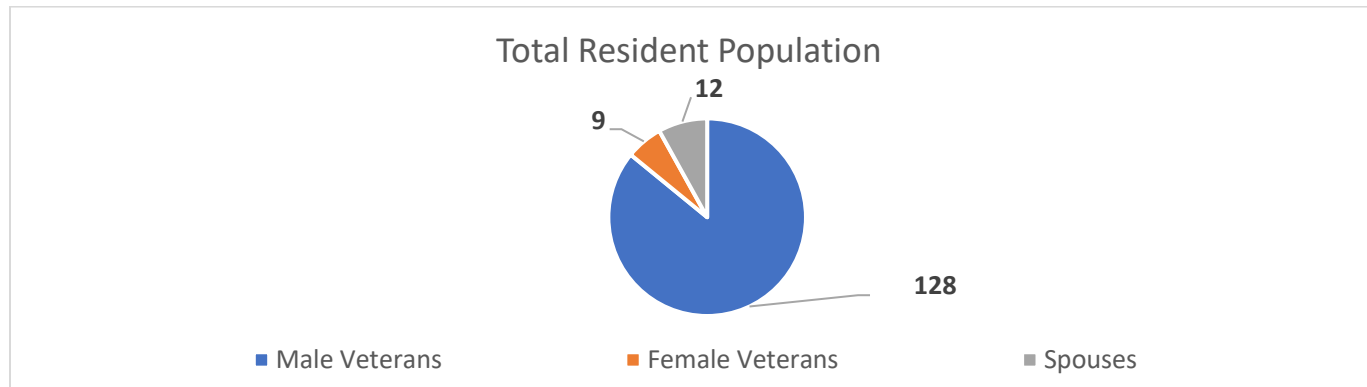
The Oregon Veterans' Home Lebanon (OVHL) strives to provide care and support to Veteran and spouse residents in a vibrant environment promoting physical and mental health. The ODVA Program Director, Sharlane Keener, collaborates with OVHL staff and the contractor (VCCO) leadership to promote high quality, and consistent care in a clean, comfortable, and safe environment. The Program Director also works closely with residents and family members providing VA claims and other assistance. She also conducts outreach to increase community awareness of the Veterans' Homes, and federal and state veteran benefits.

Census

OVHL has a maximum capacity of 154 residents. The admissions team has been busy, and census has been steadily rising over the past 2 years as reflected in the charts below.



Current demographic data shows the following:



Staffing

OVHL continues to offer tuition free Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) classes and has increased the frequency of classes in 2024. This has enabled us to train hire skilled individuals and reduce the use of agency CNAs at a faster rate than that of nurses. Currently we have openings for five licensed nurses (3 days, 2 nights) and two CNAs (1 day, 1 night).

Survey Compliance

OVHL is survey compliant with both the State and Federal VA. Preparation has begun for the upcoming 2025 surveys by inviting OSHA to provide a survey type assessment of physical safety in the facility. The Home also conducts a mock survey to ensure care and documentation standards are maintained.

Process improvement is continuous and achieved through a number of performance improvement plan teams that assess strengths, weaknesses, and risks and employs strategies to achieve and maintain success. These focused teams include fall management, wound management, and infection prevention and control. The Safely U program's motion sensor detection of falls continues to be of great value in determining the cause and prevention of falls.

Pinnacle Customer Satisfaction Survey score results continue to be high ranging from high 80s to high 90s except for the Quality of Food category which received 75%. Although this score is higher than the national average, staff at the Home continue to work collaboratively with residents to provide a wider variety of food and address other resident concerns.

Facility Maintenance

The OVHL maintenance team is quick to address issues as they arise in and around the building and grounds. The housekeeping team reliably maintains cleanliness and tidiness throughout the buildings. OVHL maintenance staff works collaboratively with ODVA facilities staff addressing any concerns or suggested improvements that may arise from ODVA's quarterly onsite building inspections.

The most significant challenge currently is the HVAC system. Continuous repairs are being made as needed while we move towards a complete replacement the HVAC system in the 2025-2027 biennium.

Recreation Activities

OVHL has become well known by families and the community for its robust resident activity program. Our activities program includes numerous in-house activities and community outings including fishing, casino, shopping, and swimming trips, as well as gardening. We are mindful of including culturally diverse activities such as hosting an LGBTQIA allies meeting, cultural lunches, and cultural dance groups. Both homes have also welcomed a songwriter to work with our veterans to create lyrics significant to their experiences which she has put to music. We are hoping to create an album between the two homes in the future. The Home also hosts some annual events people look forward to such as our Spring Fling, Freedom Fest, Trunk or Treat, and participation in the Albany Veterans Day Parade. Residents also look forward to the semi-annual "Shooting with Linn County Sheriffs" event.

Special Event

One the more memorable events in 2024 would be the celebration of OVHL's 10th Birthday on September 20th. For three days, the Home was honored to host the Oregon Memorial Traveling Wall presented by Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) post 805 out of Roseburg. The wall contains the names of fallen

Oregon Heroes from the Vietnam era through Operation Enduring Freedom. Members from Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 630 in Salem brought a display of Korea and Vietnam era uniforms and ODVA’s *I Am Not Invisible* display was onsite as well.

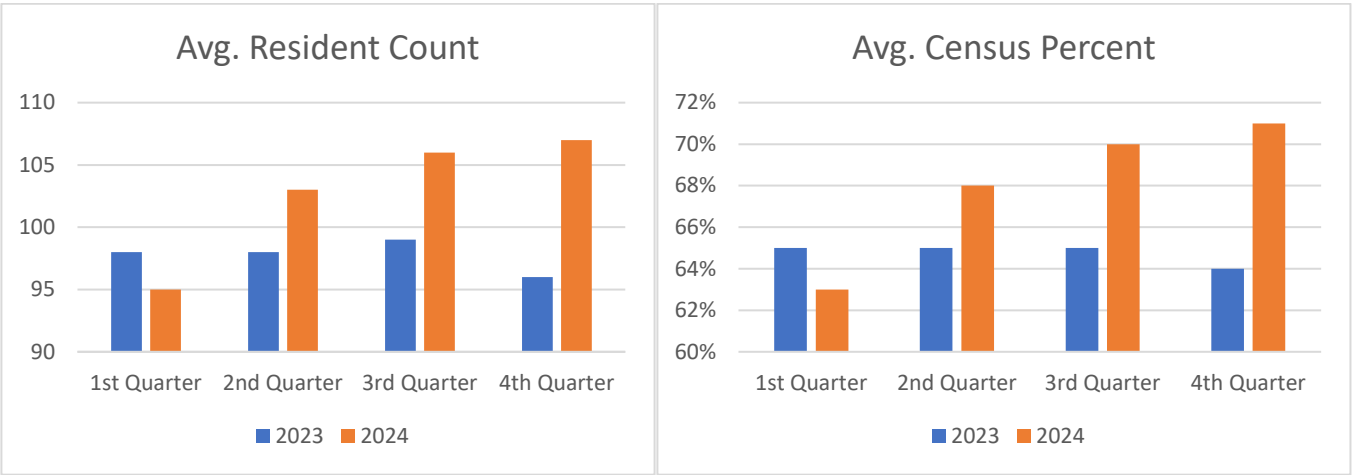
The day included refreshments, live music, and tours of the facility. Among the speakers was ODVA Director Dr. Nakeia Council Daniels, Westcare Managements Vice President of Operations Kelly Odegard, and former Samaritan President and CEO Larry Mullins. During the presentation, we had the opportunity to recognize advocates, volunteers, and employees with 10 years of service.

Oregon Veterans’ Homes - The Dalles
Program Director: Sarah Reed

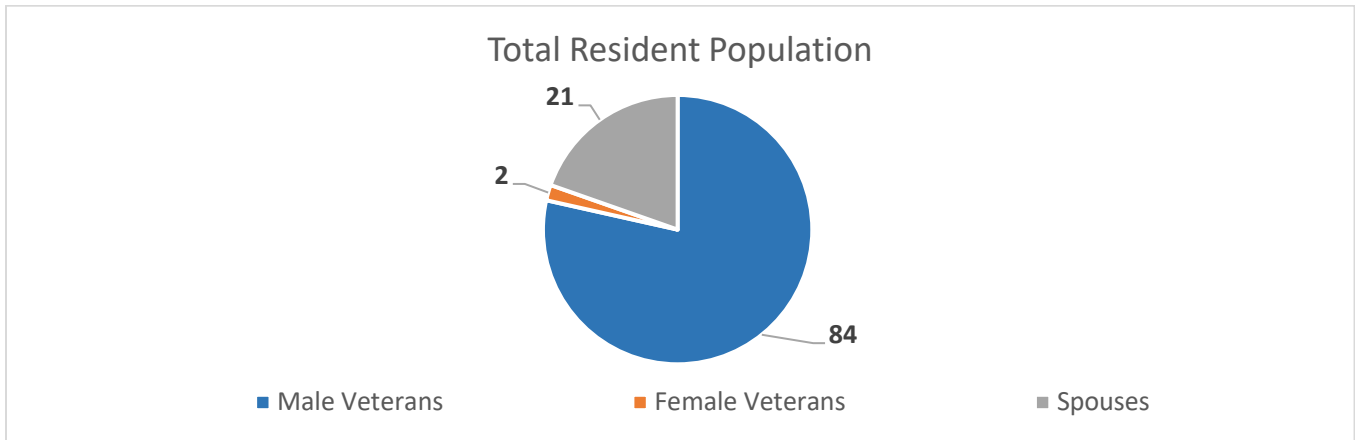
Census

OVTD has a maximum capacity of 154 residents. The admissions team has been busy, and census has been steadily rising over the past 2 years as reflected in the charts below.

In 2024, OVHTD continued to struggle with admissions due to our rural location and lack of Mental Health resources. Mental Health continues to be the leading cause for denials to the facility and we are still without a sharing agreement with the Veterans Administration. While the facility continues to strive for a sharing agreement, other avenues of admissions have been successful. During 2024, OVHTD was able to secure a contract with Pacific Source Health Insurance to admit veterans for Rehabilitation (Skilled Care) and Medicaid. Pacific Source is largely used among our local service area and will have a positive impact on our Rehabilitation admissions.



Current demographic data shows the following:



Nursing Home Surveys

OVHTD is survey compliant with both the State and Federal VA. In November, the facility had their annual VA Survey. This concluded with both clinical and life safety citations. The facility has the Corrective Action Plan (CAP) in place and continues to monitor all areas cited. OVHTD has also been in their survey window for Oregon since December, but the survey has not occurred.

OVHTD also has process performance improvement plan teams that assess strengths, weaknesses, and risks and employs strategies to achieve and maintain success. These focused teams include fall management, wound management, and infection prevention and control. The Home also conducts a mock survey to ensure care and documentation standards are maintained.

Activities Department

The OVH Activities Department has been working hard to elevate the quality of life each resident has while living at the Home. In 2024, the Activities Department hired a staff member to focus on outings. This resulted in taking residents to the beach, Blazers games, Museums, Coffee Clubs, and much more. The biggest outing of the year was a two-night camping trip to Camp Morrow. Staff, residents, and family members had an amazing time fishing, swimming, boating, golfing, and enjoying some time outdoors by the lake. It was such a hit, the facility has plans to make two trips in summer 2025.



Other activities the facility participated in:

- Monster Truck Rally
- The Dalles Art Center
- OVH Family Thanksgiving Gathering
- All Alaskan Racing Pigs
- Tattoo and “Boos” Party
- Takohachi Drumming Event
- Reindeer Visits & Carriage Rides
- Pendleton Round Up
- New Year’s Eve Party & Karaoke
- Tank Races & Poker Run
- Oktoberfest Event
- Classical Dance of India
- Annual Turkey Shoot
- Duke the Halls Western-Themed Christmas Party

Quality Award

Based on Baldrige Excellence Framework, the National Quality Award Program focuses on a system-based approach to quality improvement. There are three levels; Bronze, Silver, and Gold; and six areas address within each level; leadership, strategic planning, customer and workforce, operations, and knowledge management. Previously, OVHTD climbed the ladder all the way to Gold, but if a facility wants to win Gold again, they must start over.

In 2024, OVHTD submitted and was awarded the Bronze level. This was a huge accomplishment for the facility. Subsequently, the Home has now applied for the Silver award and will hear back sometime in the Summer of 2025.

Awards and Accolades

Although some of these awards were not won within the last quarter, they are noteworthy none the less:

- Oregon Healthcare Association’s Nurse Leader of the Year – Skilled Care
- Pinnacle satisfaction scores: 99% favorability rating and an average overall score of 4.88/5
- CSM Five-Star Rating – 5 Star Overall
- Pinnacle Resident Satisfaction Scores – 15/15 Categories were better than National Average in Q4
- 2024 Pinnacle Customer Experience Award for top 15% across the Nation
- Gold Award from Bicoastal Media for Best Place to Work in The Gorge
- Gold Award from Bicoastal Media for Best Nursing Home/Rehabilitation in The Gorge
- Fourth highest ranked Nursing Home in the state of Oregon



APPEALS AND SPECIAL ADVOCACY DIVISION

Joe Glover, Appeals and Special Advocacy Division Director

Houseless Veteran Advocacy

The Houseless Veteran Advocacy program (WVC) exists to help provide both direct and indirect support to the over 1,400 veterans in Oregon who are either experiencing houselessness, or at imminent risk of becoming houseless.

Per the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2024 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report to Congress, it is estimated that Oregon has the fifth highest number of veterans experiencing houselessness in the nation. Additionally, approximately 55% of these veterans are living unsheltered which is defined as lacking an adequate nighttime residence.

For direct service support, the program coordinator is an accredited Veterans Service Officer who assists linking veterans with federal and state resources such as federal disability payments, needs-based Pension, and free or reduced health care. This program also assists veterans with applying for federal GI Bill education benefits and Vocational, Readiness, and Employment to allow veterans to pursue higher education and training when appropriate.

Because ODVA does not provide direct housing placement, the program must rely upon networking of resources and partnerships across the state to ensure that prompt and appropriate support is being given. The networking and resource benefits that are provided to veterans and their families through this program directly help eliminate or significantly reduce the number of veterans who are experiencing houselessness, it helps eliminate or significantly reduces the number of veterans who are experiencing mental or behavioral health crises by placing a focus on enrollment and connection with Veterans Health Administration support.

Outreach events such as “Standdowns” help bring awareness of resources and support available to these veterans in their local communities, and ODVA maintains a commitment to being a presence at these events.

There are no tiered service levels for access to this program. The WVC works with veterans and families who served in the military and require support. This program work includes making sure that all veterans who are either currently experiencing houselessness or imminently at risk of losing stable housing are supported which can include applying for discharge upgrades from the Department of Defense or Character of Service Waivers from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Accordingly, eligibility requirements to access this program or service does not require honorable service, nor does it require eligibility under ORS 408.225.

In addition to assistance applying for veteran related benefits, the HVC reviews the monthly applicants for the Oregon Veterans Emergency Financial Assistance Program (OVEFAP) that ODVA administers. The

OVEFAP receives applications from veterans and surviving spouses from all over the state that are often seeking emergency support for housing and rent, but unfortunately with the average requested amount over \$3,000 per applicant, the monthly need far outweighs the program's resources. By cross-supporting these veterans with other programs that may be able to assist in supporting their needs.

The next standdown event will be on February 22nd at the Florence Elks Lodge. It will feature services such as:

Meals, Clothing, Haircuts, Local Community Resources, VA Benefits Counseling, Social Security Information, Food Stamp Referrals, Housing, Employment Referrals & Information, medical, dental, mental health Counseling and Referrals.

If an individual wishes to reach out to James Connolly, currently filling the role of the agency's Houseless Veteran Program Coordinator, they are able to do so through a variety of different ways. ODVA has established a general email for veteran outreach and engagement: HouselessVets@odva.oregon.gov or James.Connolly@odva.oregon.gov. James can also be reached at 503-428-0724.

Houseless Veteran Coordinator - Team Success Story

Reaching Oregon's Homeless Veterans: DMV Partnership List

Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA) embarked on a mission to identify and assist veterans experiencing homelessness. Leveraging data from the partnership with the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), a list of 164 veterans with no fixed address or general delivery was compiled. As the months progressed, this number grew to 214. The Houseless Veteran Coordinator went on an approved extended leave, and the agency promoted an internal employee to a temporary Work Out of Class during this period to complete this mission.

To reach these veterans, a multi-faceted outreach strategy was implemented. Where applicable, phone calls and emails were sent to everyone, but the reality of homelessness presented significant challenges. Veterans had invalid or disconnected phone numbers, while others relied solely on a single communication method. Disappointingly, some were completely unreachable.

Those who were reached exhibited a wide range of responses. Some expressed frustration over delayed engagement or a lack of available resources, and duplication of resources they've already had engagement with. While others were receptive and engaged in productive conversations. These varying reactions underscored the importance of empathy, clear communication, and tailored approaches in outreach efforts.

Despite these challenges, ODVA remained committed to assisting these veterans through the lens of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility. By collaborating with veteran service organizations, veteran services offices, and leveraging available resources, the agency aimed to connect veterans with housing and other essential support services. While it was not possible to reach each veteran on the list, the goal was to ensure that every veteran, regardless of their circumstances, had access to the resources they needed to rebuild their lives.

Notable Successes

The coordinator:

- Connected with a woman veteran. Was able to assist with some legal referrals for child custody, and DMV issues. Assisted with a referral to a federal VA Homeless program, ORCCA/SSVF referral, and holiday gift options for her two children. Additionally, was able to provide VBA claim information and guidance regarding already initiated claims with their current veteran service office. During this discussion employment was discussed and resources for employment were given. While on the phone assisted veteran with application to VA Veteran Readiness and Employment program since they were open to engaging with employment and reentering the workforce.
- Spoke with a veteran who was confused as to why we had contacted them, but still engaged in conversation about veteran benefits they might consider. Provided a referral to their Lane County VSO and during the phone call addressed questions they had about discharge upgrade options for their son. Explained the process of potential consideration of the discharge upgrade process and again referred them to their local VSO for assistance with supporting the discharge upgrade for their son.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS DIVISION

Sheronne Blasi, Strategic Partnerships Division Director

The Strategic Partnerships Team is made up of Special Advocacy Coordinators (e.g. Tribal Veterans, Incarcerated Veterans, Campus Veterans); the Veterans Education Team (State Approving Agency, Campus Veteran Coordinator, and an Education Manager); a Grants Coordinator; a Grants Specialist; and the Division Director.

Our entire team was busy supporting Oregon veterans and their families this past quarter through outreach and engagement, administering grants, and assisting with providing access to earned benefits and other supportive services.

ODVA's Incarcerated Veteran Program

We previously shared information about ODVA's Incarcerated Veteran Program in June 2024, but with new members on the Advisory Committee, I wanted to take the opportunity to tell you about this impactful program and share an update.

The Incarcerated Veteran program was established in August 2016 to assist incarcerated veterans transitioning into Oregon Department of Corrections (ODOC) custody, and as they transition back to their communities. The program Coordinators verify veteran status of those entering ODOC custody at Coffee Creek Intake Facility so benefit eligibility can be assessed.

The coordinators also focus on mitigating the negative impacts of incarceration to veterans and family members. This includes ensuring timely notification to the USDVA of the veteran's incarceration to prevent overpayments, addressing overpayments by establishing manageable payment plans, and transferring withheld monetary benefits to family members if financial need can be established

Another way we are helping veterans in custody is by establishing the Veteran Assistance Program within ODOC correctional facilities. In collaboration with ODOC we working to expand on a program established at the Oregon State Penitentiary where a specially selected veteran in custody advises other veterans on benefit eligibility. This Veteran Benefit Specialist explains the claim process, ensures veterans know the correct forms to use and how to submit claims. This helps prevent procedural denials of claims, unnecessary and time-consuming rework by both veterans and the USDVA and reduces general frustration with the application process. It also increases the likelihood claims can be approved before the veterans are released back to their communities, which can provide more resources for formerly incarcerated veterans. This is in addition to the work done by ODVA's Coordinators.

In addition to all the great work conducted by Pat McGuffin and Kim (Mack) McKandes, ODVA's requested policy option package (POP) to expand the Veteran Assistance Program has been included in the Governor's Recommended Budget (GRB) for 2025-27. This would allow ODVA to hire someone to further develop this program, and in collaboration with ODOC, train additional veterans in custody. Those trained veterans would then provide information on benefits to other veterans where they are housed at ODOC. Because ODOC facilities are spread across Oregon, it is impossible for ODVA's two

Incarcerated Veteran Coordinators to cover the entire state and work with veterans and their families in a timely manner. Having other veterans trained on information about benefits will get that important information to veterans timelier.

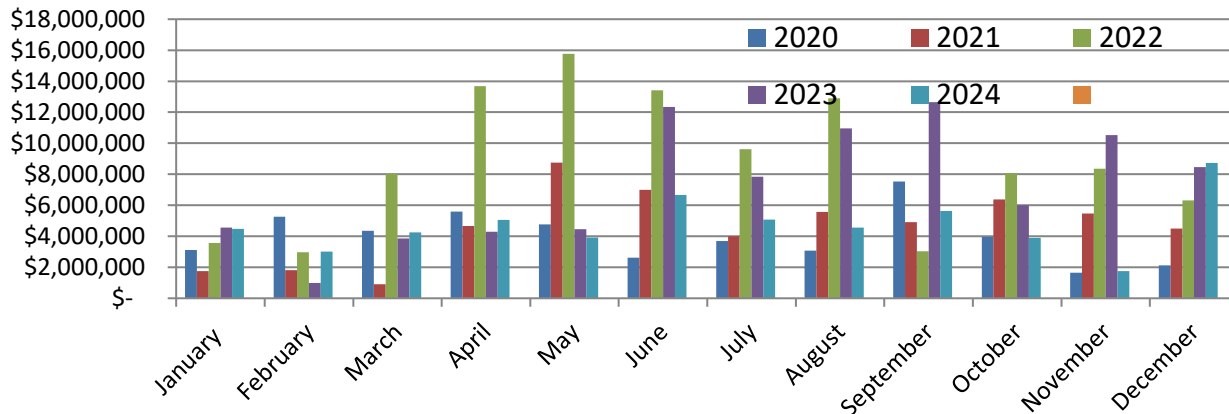
Also included in the Governor's Recommended Budget for ODVA is a new grant program to help veterans exiting incarceration obtain housing. Examples of how these grant funds might be used include addressing back housing related debt such as rental, mortgage, or utilities debt, or funding for rental down payment or utilities hookups, or funding for temporary safe lodging. This grant program would be the first of its kind in Oregon.

Both programs are in alignment with the Governor's priorities addressing housing stability and homelessness and would continue to strengthen our valuable partnership with ODOC. These programs, as with our existing Incarcerated Veterans programming can also help address recidivism among veterans and provide support to their families.



HOME LOAN PROGRAM REPORT

Cody Cox, Home Loan Program Manager



Home Loan Production Review

- Home Loan Program production for the 4th Quarter 2024 was 39 loans for \$14.4 million. For the same period in 2023, production volume was 66 loans for \$25.3 million.
- The chart below shows a 2020 - 2024 monthly production comparison of dollar volume funded for the OrVet Home Loan program.
- 4th Quarter 2024 reflects the calendar year end. For the calendar year of 2024, ODVA funded 142 new loans for \$57.0 million. Production for the previous year was 224 loans for \$87.3 million in production. The 34.65% reduction in volume illustrates the strain in the home purchase marketplace in Oregon and nationwide. With higher interest rates and lower inventory for home purchases, all lenders in the marketplace suffered similar production reductions.
- At the end of the 4th Quarter 2024, ODVA has a total of 1,578 loans in portfolio, with a total dollar amount under servicing of \$399,031,258. Of these, 1,521 loans and \$395,239,258 are 'new' loans. 'Old' loans were at 57 units totaling \$3,791,901. At the end of the 4th Quarter 2023, the ODVA had a total of 1,557 for \$381,993,503 under servicing. Year over year, our servicing portfolio increased by \$35,274,880, which represents an increase of 9.80%.
- The current servicing portfolio is the largest dollar amount of loans since 2013.

Loan Delinquency Review

- For the reporting period of 10/31/2024, there were no State-Owned Properties/Real Estate Owned (SOP/REO) in inventory. ODVA has not had any foreclosures for the past 5+ years.
- At the end of 4th Quarter 2024, there is 1 loan in a Foreclosure status. One loan that was previously headed to foreclosure reinstated just prior to the foreclosure auction, bringing the loan current. Our servicing portfolio remains strong as the rest of the industry is showing signs of increased delinquencies.
- At the end of 4th Quarter 2024, ODVA has two loans in a bankruptcy status.
- The total of all loans reporting in the 90-day or greater delinquency position was at 8 units, expressed as 0.5% in unit delinquency on a portfolio of 1,578. This is unchanged from the previous quarter.
- ODVA servicing portfolio performance shows a continued reduced delinquency rate as compared to other Government and private sector residential loan programs. The Mortgage Bankers Association publishes a quarterly National Delinquency Survey, and the following represents Oregon specific comparative data from the most recently available Fourth Quarter 2024 report. The delinquency rate expressed as a percentage of total loans (units) past due for the Federal Veterans Affairs home loan program in Oregon was 4.06%. FHA home loans in Oregon were at 8.04%. Conventional Prime home loans Oregon was at 1.68%. All these delinquency rates are increased from the prior quarter. For this reporting period, the total delinquency for the ODVA home loan program was 1.00% at 16 units, which is decreased from the prior quarter.

-END OF REPORT-

APPENDIX

Summary Of Programs

Aging Veteran Outreach: The Aging Veteran Outreach Coordinator position was established in 2017, and coordinates services directed at aging veterans residing in their homes or care facilities around the state. The position is integral to the Agency's mission to ensure aging and vulnerable veterans receive the highest quality and priority representation from an ODVA veteran service officer. The outreach coordinator works with the Department of Human Services and other agencies on aging in conjunction with the Federal VA to ensure each aging Veteran has applied for benefits and is receiving all entitlements through USDVA and other government and nonprofit entities.

More information: www.oregon.gov/odva/Resources/Pages/Aging-Veterans.aspx

Appeals and Claims: The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA), Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), involves a complex legal system. To qualify for benefits, veterans, their dependents, and survivors must file a claim against the United States by providing evidence they are eligible to receive the benefit through the submission of legal, military, and medical evidence.

ODVA employs state-certified and federally accredited Veterans Service Officers (VSOs), who are subject matter experts in Federal VA law (Chapter 38 United States Code and Chapter 38 Code of Federal Regulations). These VSOs represent veterans, their dependents, and survivors before the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) and the Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA) in claims and appeals through a signed Power of Attorney.

More information: Email ORVets.Benefits@odva.oregon.gov

Campus Veteran Resource Center Grant: Senate Bill 143 (2017) established the Campus Veteran Resource Center Grant Program to support campus veteran resource centers and resource coordinators on the campuses of Oregon community colleges and public universities. The grant funds aim to help veterans successfully transition from military service to college life, succeed in college and complete educational goals, and transition from college to the workforce.

More information: www.oregon.gov/odva/agency-programs/grants/Pages/Campus-Grant.aspx

Conservatorship and Representative Payee Programs: In 1964, the Legislative Assembly authorized the Conservatorship program to manage the financial affairs of veterans who could not oversee their affairs and had no other recourse. Today, ODVA's Conservatorship Program provides professional fiduciary services to manage the income and assets of veterans and their dependents deemed incompetent by the Federal VA to manage their federal resources. Conservatorship clients are appointed to ODVA as Conservators by a circuit court judge.

Conservatorship helps to ease the burdens often associated with paying bills, collecting funds on debts owed to the Veteran, corresponding with creditors, and buying or selling real estate or other investments. Professional fiduciaries work closely with family members and other interested parties, such as guardians, to plan for the welfare and best interests of the Veteran.

In 2014, SB 251 clarified the law to allow ODVA to act as fiduciary and Representative Payee for veterans. Representative Payees serve veterans deemed incompetent by managing the Veteran's monthly income provided by the USDVA and the Social Security Administration. The Representative Payee applies for benefits, establishes budgets, and arranges payment for care and other bills for services for the client. The Representative Payee works with the USDVA, Social Security Administration, guardians, family members, social workers, and other responsible individuals to ensure the veterans' financial needs are met within their ability to pay.

Learn more: www.oregon.gov/odva/Benefits/Pages/Long-Term-Care.aspx

County Veterans Service Officers Program (CVSO's): ODVA's statewide partnership with counties began when the legislature appropriated money to aid counties in promoting services to veterans on a local level. It is an effective network of trained County Veterans Service Officers (CVSO) in all 36 counties who provide veterans, their eligible dependents, and survivors with VA benefits and claims representation.

CVSOs are not supervised by ODVA; however, the Agency provides initial and ongoing training, certification and accreditation, guidance and support, and outreach to the CVSOs. The ODVA Appeals Team in Portland handles most CVSO appeal cases for the USDVA.

Locate a County VSO: www.oregon.gov/odva/Services/Pages/County-Services.aspx

Highly Rural Transportation Grant: Highly Rural Transportation Grant: Since 2014, ODVA has administered the US Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) Highly Rural Transportation Grant (HRTG), which provides free transportation to and from VA and VA-authorized medical appointments for any veteran living in one of ten Oregon's VA defined highly rural counties. The agency partners with ODOT to distribute grant funding to its transportation district partners within each of the ten counties. Services include door-to-door pick-up and drop-off in ADA-compliant vehicles, with assistance in loading or unloading at no cost to the Veteran. The program runs year-to-year, and transportation services are subject to grant fund availability each federal fiscal year. As of the end of 2022, veterans living in highly rural counties have received free rides totaling more than 2 million miles.

Locate transportation: www.oregon.gov/odva/Services/Pages/Transportation-Services.aspx

Home Loan Program: A constitutional amendment approved by voters in 1944 established the Veterans' Home and Farm Loan Program to fund the purchase of homes and farms by Oregon residents who served in the armed forces during World War II. Persons who joined the armed forces on or after September 1, 1940, were eligible to receive loans if they served for at least 90 days after mobilization and were honorably separated, discharged, or furloughed into a reserve unit.

Today, this program provides low-interest rate mortgages on single-family, owner-occupied homes to qualified veterans. The Home Loan program is a historically self-supporting program that uses other funds. Revenues are derived from loan and contract repayments, proceeds from bond sales, fee and rental income, and investment earnings. No General Fund monies are used in its operations.

More information: www.oregon.gov/odva/Home-Loans/Pages/default.aspx

Houseless Veterans: The 2019-21 LAB established the Agency's first Houseless Veteran Coordinator. ODVA began the Houseless Veteran Program upon hiring its first Houseless Veteran Coordinator in June 2021. The Houseless Veteran Coordinator collaborates with federal, state, county, and tribal agencies, Veterans Service Officers, and community homeless service providers to meet the urgent and unique needs of Oregon's diverse veteran

communities. In addition to advocating for Oregon veterans experiencing houselessness or at risk of being houseless, the program provides direct service to veterans and their families seeking federal and state veterans' benefits, including access to local VA health care, documentation of service, as well as other available state benefits, and local homeless services organizations and low-income assistance programs.

More information: www.oregon.gov/odva/Resources/Pages/Homeless-Veterans.aspx

Incarcerated Veterans: First established in 2016 and codified by HB 4038 (2018), the Incarcerated Veterans Program is in its seventh full year of operation and has been highly successful. This program aims to work with veterans entering the state prison system and transitioning to release. Since the program began in August 2016, the ODVA Incarcerated Veteran Coordinators, in coordination with the Oregon Department of Corrections, met with over 3,500 individuals transitioning through the state prison system to determine veteran status and then provide assistance as needed to veterans and their families.

To facilitate a successful transition to the community and to reduce recidivism rates for veterans, the ODVA Incarcerated Veterans Coordinator also collaborates with the US Department of Veteran Affairs' re-entry social worker to meet with veterans when they are transitioning out of the prison system to identify available resources, ensure all possible benefit claims are filed and enroll veterans in Federal VA healthcare.

Learn more: www.oregon.gov/odva/Resources/Pages/Justice-Involved-Veterans.aspx

LGBTQ+ Veterans: Senate Bill 946 (2015) created the LGBTQ+ Veterans program that offers direct services to veterans in the LGBTQ+ community, assists with military records corrections, discharge upgrades, and service-connected claims work for VA benefits. The program also provides extensive outreach to LGBTQ+ veterans. It helps enroll veterans with specialized health care through a Veterans Health Administration LGBTQ+ Veteran Care Coordinator. Through these efforts, veterans within the LGBTQ+ community now receive trauma-informed and dignity-affirming care while also connecting these veterans with state and local services.

Learn more: www.oregon.gov/odva/Resources/Pages/LGBTQ-Veterans.aspx

National Service Organizations (NSO): ODVA partners with national veteran service organizations in Oregon that provide veteran benefit and claims representation, like state, county, and tribal Veterans Service Officers; however, they do not work under ODVA's Power of Attorney and are not trained and certified by ODVA. The American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the National Association of Black Veterans participate in this funding opportunity.

Oregon Veterans' Homes: The 1993 Legislative Assembly authorized the Director of Veterans' Affairs to establish and administer a State Veterans' Home to provide long-term care for needy, disabled veterans. The Dalles was selected as the first Oregon Veterans' Home location and opened in the fall of 1997. The 1995 Legislative Assembly laid the groundwork for establishing a second Veteran's Home to be operated by a non-government entity. The statute limits Oregon to two Veteran's homes until they are constructed and operated for a period of time to determine efficiency and feasibility. Cited in Lebanon, the second OVH opened in 2014. The 2011 Legislative Assembly, through HB 2578, gave authority to build a third Veterans' Home in Roseburg.

Care at the Oregon Veteran's Homes is an "earned benefit" available to veterans, their spouses, and parents who had a child die while serving in the United States Armed Forces. Qualifying veterans must have served as defined by the Federal VA to be eligible for this benefit. Both homes provide rehabilitative and long-term nursing services by staff whose knowledge and skills meet the unique needs of veterans. In addition, both homes have an

endorsed memory care community, which allows them to care for veterans with Alzheimer's and other dementias.

Learn about Oregon Veterans' Homes: www.oregon.gov/odva/Vets-Homes/Pages/default.aspx

Rural Veterans Healthcare Transportation Grant: During the 2019 Legislative session, and again in the 2021 session, ODVA was provided funding to create a veteran's healthcare transportation program for counties and tribes that are rural but do not meet the federal restrictions, defining the county as highly rural. Veterans are provided free rides to their healthcare and behavioral healthcare-related appointments and are not restricted to VA facilities. ODVA partners with the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to administer this grant program.

Locate transportation: www.oregon.gov/odva/Services/Pages/Transportation-Services.aspx

State Approving Agency: In 2019, ODVA assumed Oregon's State Approving Agency (SAA) function under a contract with the USDVA. The SAA monitors and approves eligible schools and training facilities that administer federal GI Bill® education benefits to ensure compliance with applicable state and federal laws designed to protect the integrity of the GI Bill® program. ODVA receives federal funds primarily to cover salary-related costs, and some state funding supplements the program.

More information: www.oregon.gov/odva/agency-programs/Pages/SAA.aspx

Military Help Line: Military Help Line: Since 2017, ODVA has contracted with Lines for Life to provide a military and veterans crisis hotline that provides 24/7, confidential crisis supports for veterans and their loved ones. ODVA does not retain funds to administer this program.

Call the Lines for Life Military Helpline today: 1-888-457-4838 or www.linesforlife.org/get-help-now/services-and-crisis-lines/military-helpline/

Training, Certification and Outreach: ODVA is responsible for the training, certification, and accreditation of all counties, tribal, and state Veterans Service Officers (VSOs) operating under ODVA's power of attorney with the USDVA. Training is conducted on the latest Federal VA legal, medical, and process information and eligibility information about accessing Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and National Cemetery Administration (NCA) benefits.

ODVA trains and accredits VSOs to file defensible claims for disability compensation and pension benefits on behalf of veterans and their families. Claims are filed through ODVA's Powers of Attorney (POA) or a national service organization's POA, as the claims are legal documents reviewed and adjudicated by the US Department of Veterans Affairs.

More information: Email ORVets.Benefits@odva.oregon.gov

Tribal Veterans Service Officer Program (TVSO's): SB 80 (2017) directed ODVA to provide aid and assistance to federally recognized Indian tribes in Oregon regarding programs and services for Native American veterans overseen by the tribes. The legislation also codified efforts of the federal VA's Office of General Counsel, supporting the accreditation of tribal Veterans' representatives in Oregon.

The budget includes pass-through funding for a Tribal Veterans Service Officer (TVSO) Program to provide direct veteran VA benefits and claims representation through the federally recognized tribes in Oregon. ODVA partners with tribal governments with a Memorandum of Understanding with ODVA. As with County VSOs, Tribal VSOs are not supervised by ODVA; however, the Agency provides training, certification, accreditation, guidance and support, and outreach support to their programs. The majority of TVSO appeal cases are also handled by ODVA's Appeals office in Portland.

Locate a Tribal Veteran Services Office: www.oregon.gov/odva/Services/Pages/Tribal-Veteran-Services.aspx

Veteran Services Grant: House Bill 2891 (2017) established the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs Veteran Services Grant Fund. The grant funds aim to leverage existing programs and resources available to veterans in local communities. Eligible grant recipients are not-for-profit organizations, local and tribal governments, and other related entities that provide direct services to veterans in Oregon. Services provided free of charge to veterans include legal assistance, housing and services, outreach to tribal veterans, behavioral health services, peer-to-peer support services, and employment assistance programs.

More information: www.oregon.gov/odva/agency-programs/grants/Pages/Veteran-Services-Grant.aspx

Veteran Volunteer Program: Established by HB 2908 in 2017, the Veteran Volunteer Program, developed in 2018, was created to train and coordinate volunteer activity around the state to identify aging veterans who are not yet receiving veteran benefits and connect them with County or Tribal Veteran Service Offices to learn about potential state and federal earned benefits. Once a veteran has been referred to a local Veteran Service Office, volunteers provide follow-up to ensure that the veterans have access to any services or benefits needed. In addition to educating veterans about their earned benefits, volunteers provide vital information about other state resources such as food stamps, Medicaid, and housing programs for which veterans may qualify. While not trained VSOs, these volunteers help to guide veterans to the various offices where they can receive assistance.

Learn more about volunteering: www.oregon.gov/odva/Benefits/Pages/Volunteer-Program.aspx

Veterans Educational Bridge Grant: House Bill 2201 (2019) created the ODVA Veterans Educational Bridge Grant Program to assist veterans in education or training programs who experience an interruption in their degree or training progress due to the unavailability of necessary courses or student debt, preventing them from registering for classes. The bill also provided funding for a grant administrator to implement and oversee the grant program.

The grant program's purpose is to provide financial assistance to veterans who cannot receive GI Bill® benefit payments when classes or training hours are not available or have student debt preventing course registration. The Bridge Grant can help stabilize the Veteran's household finances until they are able to access classes or training hours, which will allow them to resume their benefit payments. The program aims to support veterans' successful completion of their academic programs and transition to civilian career and community life

More information: www.oregon.gov/odva/agency-programs/grants/Pages/Educational-Bridge-Grant.aspx

Veterans' Emergency Financial Assistance Program: Established by HB 3504 (2005), this program aims to provide a one-time grant to veterans or their immediate family members who need emergency financial assistance. Grants are awarded monthly to veterans who experience sudden and unanticipated financial instability. Most grant requests support keeping veterans in their homes by assisting with past-due monthly rent and mortgage payments, utility payments, home and vehicle repair, and dental and medical expenses. Applicants are also connected with a local county or tribal Veteran Service Officer for access to other veteran services and benefits and community resources to encourage financial stability.

Grant Application:

www.oregon.gov/odva/Documents/VS1024%20Oregon%20Veterans%E2%80%99%20Emergency%20Financial%20Assistance%20Program%20Application_02-2022.pdf

Women Veterans: House Bill 3479 (2015) created funding and authority for a program to improve outcomes for Oregon women veterans in five specific areas: outreach, advocacy, data, research, and policy. Focused outreach and advocacy are achieved via listening sessions and ongoing outreach to women veterans around Oregon to increase awareness of women veterans and their unique experiences, issues, and needs, as well as to assist in claims filing, especially related to difficult or challenging claims.

Learn more: www.oregon.gov/odva/Resources/Pages/Women-Veterans.aspx