

# SERVING KENTUCKY'S VETERANS



**KDVA FY25  
ANNUAL REPORT  
1 JULY 2024 to 30 JUNE 2025**

## **Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs**

**Office of the Commissioner**

**1111B Louisville Road  
Frankfort, KY 40601**



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| From the Governor  | 3     |
| From the Commissioner  | 4     |
| Agency Accomplishments for FY25                                  | 5     |
| Interstate Information Exchange Initiative & Legislative Summary | 6     |
| Personnel Data & Organizational Chart                            | 7-8   |
| Financial Statement for FY25                                     | 9     |
| Office of Kentucky Veterans Service (OKVS)                       | 11-12 |
| Veterans Cemeteries Division                                     | 12-16 |
| Veterans Benefits Division                                       | 17-20 |
| Veterans State Programs Division                                 | 21    |
| Homeless Veterans Program  | 21-23 |
| Women's Veterans Program   | 24-25 |
| KY Veterans Employment, Training, and Support Services (KyVETS)  | 26-27 |
| Wounded and Disable Program                                      | 28-29 |
| Office of Kentucky Veterans Centers (OKVC)                       | 30    |
| Office of Veteran Legal Services (OVLS)                          | 39-42 |
| Kentucky Veterans Program Trust Fund                             | 44    |
| Veterans Trust Fund Overview & Balance Statement for FY25        | 45    |
| Trust Fund Board Meeting Overview: September 2024                | 46    |
| Trust Fund Board Meeting Overview: December 2024                 | 47    |
| Trust Fund Board Meeting Overview: March 2025                    | 48    |
| Trust Fund Board Meeting Overview: June 2025                     | 49    |

# From the Governor



**Andy Beshear**  
GOVERNOR

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY  
**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

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501 High Street  
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601  
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America is the home of the free because of the brave – and that is why Kentucky has made it a priority to honor, respect and care for our heroic veterans.

Our military veterans are the best among us. My goal as governor is that Kentuckians commit to the hard work of being worthy of their sacrifices, which sustain us. I am proud to say that Team Kentucky's Department of Veteran's Affairs (KDVA) is seeing that commitment through daily.

From helping with benefits and compensation to veteran employment and education, supporting women veterans, caring for our veteran cemeteries, and more, KDVA sees through this work with pride. Thanks to their efforts, I am proud to say we've made great progress for veterans across our commonwealth and beyond.

Together, we've helped create more opportunities for veterans to receive support. First, we're seeing construction continue for the new Louisville VA Medical Center, which will also include a Women's Health Clinic. We also saw through the construction and opening of the new Col. Robert E. "Bob" Spiller Veterans Center in Bowling Green.

I've also made it a priority to sign legislation to support our veterans, military service members and their families, including expanding the Military Family Assistance Trust Fund, ease licensing requirements for spouses and improve leave benefits for state employees who serve in the military.

KDVA and I see this work as our sacred duty, and thankfully our efforts have been recognized time and time again through five consecutive VA Abraham Lincoln Pillars of Excellence Awards for customer service.

As Kentuckians – and as Americans – we must continually give thanks to our veterans for their bravery, selflessness and dedication to our great country – not just in words, but also in action. This is work and progress we plan to build on to fulfill our promise to those who have secured our freedoms and America's future.

A handwritten signature of Andy Beshear in black ink.

Andy Beshear  
Governor

# From the Commissioner

At KDVA, excellence is not just a goal, it is a standard woven into every aspect of our work. As Commissioner, I firmly believe our agency has not only met this high standard but surpassed expectations, laying the foundation for a stronger future for Commonwealth's veterans. What began as a directive to serve has evolved into a culture of exceeding limits, expanding services, and advancing our mission with purpose.

We have collaborated with numerous federal/state agencies, community partners, veteran service organizations (VFW, NABVETS, AMVETS, DAV, American Legion, etc.) and our Kentucky military teammates to execute joint endeavors, host meaningful outreach events, and provided access to services which uplift and support our veteran community. We've leveraged our national-level partnerships with organizations like National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs, National Association of State Veterans Home Association, National Veterans Legal Services Program and others to launch strategic initiatives to improve the quality of life of our veterans and their families. Furthermore, we've worked closely with our boards/committees (Governor Advisory Board, Veteran Program Trust Fund Board of Directors, Women Veterans Coordinating Committee, etc.) to ensure our veteran community has a voice, and we as a team are aligned with the Governor's strategic vision for our military and veteran community.



And the results have been outstanding, both in service and recognition. Our state veteran centers continue to earn highest CMS ratings, our veteran cemeteries uphold the NCA highest standards, our VA-certified Benefits division is the best in the business in getting our veterans the benefits they deserve, and our dedicated State Programs team has worked tirelessly to provide critical support and resources to veterans across the Commonwealth. While accolades and recognition are certainly affirming, what matters most is the real difference we are making in veterans' lives. That is our greatest achievement, and our highest honor.

Looking ahead, I see a bright future for KDVA and our Commonwealth's veteran community. It is a true privilege to lead this remarkable agency and to work alongside great teammates who are deeply committed to ensuring our veterans receive not just the benefits they've earned, but the respect and care they deserve. KDVA and the Commonwealth has gone beyond fulfilling its mandate; it has created transformative programs and initiatives that continue to make a lasting impact on the lives of our veterans, regardless of their circumstances. Everything we do is for them. Their service to this nation commands our deepest gratitude and our strongest commitment. HOOAH!!!!

Respectfully,

*Whitney P. Allen, Jr.*

Whitney Allen,  
Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army (Retired)  
7<sup>th</sup> Commissioner, Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs

*"Let us not wait for other people to come to us and call upon us to do great deeds. Let us instead be the first to summon the rest of the path of honor. Show yourself to be the bravest of all the captains, with more of the right to leadership than those who are our leaders at present." Xenophon*

# Agency's Accomplishments for FY25

As Commissioner, I am extremely proud to highlight KDVA's accomplishments for FY25:

- KDVA won its fifth straight VA Abraham Lincoln Pillar Excellence Award for its Regional Benefits Clinics.
- Veterans Program Trust Fund (VPTF) granted a total of \$861,593.90 to 25 grantees.
- Homeless Veterans Trust Fund granted a total of \$276,144.56 to 509 veterans.
- The Benefits Division generated more than \$530 million dollars in entitlements/pensions for Kentucky veterans, widows, and dependents for FY25.
- Veterans Cemeteries performed 1631 internments during FY25.
- Kentucky Veterans Cemetery Central received the NCA Operational Excellence Award and Kentucky Veterans Cemetery North received the NCA Stewardship Award.
- Radcliff Veterans Center received the Governor's Award for the Arts for providing veteran's therapy through learning musical instruments, writing songs, painting on canvas, in addition to other art programs.
- Paul E. Patton Veterans Center and Joseph Eddie Ballard Veterans Center were awarded the 2025 AHCA/NCAL Bronze National Quality Award.
- Thomson Hood Veterans Center, Joseph Eddie Ballard Veterans Center and Paul E. Patton Veterans Center maintained the CMS top rating of 5 stars.
- KDVA executed several key outreach activities and events to include:
  - 2024 KDVA State Commander's Conference (August 2024).
  - Commonwealth's Wreaths Across America Ceremony (December 2024).
  - Homeless Veterans Program 5K Walk/Run Race (October 2024).
  - Commonwealth/Veterans Cemeteries Memorial Day Ceremonies (May 2025).
  - KDVA/VA "A Veterans' Forum" Event in Louisville, KY (May 2025).
  - 2025 KDVA Women Veterans Conference and Retreat (June 2025).
  - Inaugural Military and Veterans Forum (February 2025).
- Initiation of the Commonwealth of Kentucky Monthly Virtual Job Fair for Kentucky veterans, Kentuckians and Kentucky businesses and companies.



*Picture of all five Abraham Lincoln Pillars of Excellence Awards KDVA has earned for the past five years in a row.*

# Interstate Information Exchange Initiative, Strategic Partnerships & Legislative Summary

KDVA is committed to enhancing the quality of life for our Commonwealth's veterans and their families through the development and utilization of interstate and national-level partnerships. By collaborating with federal agencies such as the Center for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS), Department of Defense (DOD), and Veterans Administration (VA), KDVA is positioned to meet and exceed the latest VA policies and standards. Our alignment with national associations, including the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA), National Association of State Veterans Home Association (NASVH), and the National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLP), ensures that the Commonwealth has a strong voice on critical issues and policies affecting our Nation's veteran community.

A few examples of KDVA joint-endeavors during FY25 include:

1. Collaborating with the VISON 9 Suicide Prevention team and Tennessee Department of Veterans Services on mental health initiatives and policies impacting veterans in the KY/TN region.
2. Partnering with the National Association of County Veteran Service Officers for a joint benefit claims clinic at their national conference scheduled for FY26.
3. Participating in the VA/SAMHSA Governor's Challenge Suicide Mortality Review (SMR) Academy and grant program.
4. Honoring Memorandums of Agreements/Understandings (MOAs/MOU) between VA, state veteran agencies, Kentucky state government agencies and national partners.

Additionally, in FY25, we worked closely with our boards and committees, as well as VSO state department leadership (VFW, AMVETS, American Legion, NABVETS, etc.), to shape veteran-friendly legislation, such as House Bill 191 (Guard and Reserve Burial Act), ensuring Kentucky veterans receive the maximum number of opportunities, benefits and services they deserved.



*Pictures from left to right: 1) Veterans Program Trust Fund Board of Directors review grants; 2) Deputy Commissioner Juan Renaud testifies at VMAPP Committee; and 3) leaders from national/state government, community partners, Veterans Administration/Office of the Secretary, veterans service organizations and military attend KDVA annual State Commanders Conference in Lexington, KY.*

# KDVA Personnel Data: Staffing as of 30 June 2025 and Organization Chart

## Office of the Commissioner

| Position Title                     | Number of Positions Filled |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| • Commissioner                     | 1                          |
| • Deputy Commissioner              | 1                          |
| • Chief of Staff                   | 1                          |
| • Executive Secretary              | 1                          |
| • Budget Manager                   | 1                          |
| • Budget Specialist II             | 1                          |
| • Administrative Specialist Senior | 1                          |
| • Human Resource Branch Manager    | 1                          |
| • Human Resource Specialist Senior | 1                          |
| <b>Total</b>                       | <b>9</b>                   |

## Office of Veteran Legal Services (OVLS)

| Position Title                         | Number of Positions Filled |
|--|----------------------------|
| • General Counsel / Executive Director | 1                          |
| • Staff Attorney III                   | 1                          |
| • Information Officer III              | 1                          |
| <b>Total</b>                           | <b>3</b>                   |

## Office of Kentucky Veteran Centers (OKVC)

| Position Title                     | Number of Positions Filled |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| • Executive Director               | 1                          |
| • Deputy Executive Director        | 1                          |
| • Medical Director                 | 1                          |
| • Licensed Psychologist            | 1                          |
| • Thomson-Hood Veterans Center     | 196                        |
| • Eastern Kentucky Veterans Center | 169                        |
| • Western Kentucky Veterans Center | 156                        |
| • Radcliff Veterans Center         | 110                        |
| • Bowling Green Veterans Center    | 14                         |
| <b>Total</b>                       | <b>637</b>                 |

## Office of Kentucky Veteran Services (OKVS)

| Position Title       | Number of Positions Filled |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| • Executive Director | 1                          |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>1</b>                   |

## Kentucky Veterans Cemeteries Division

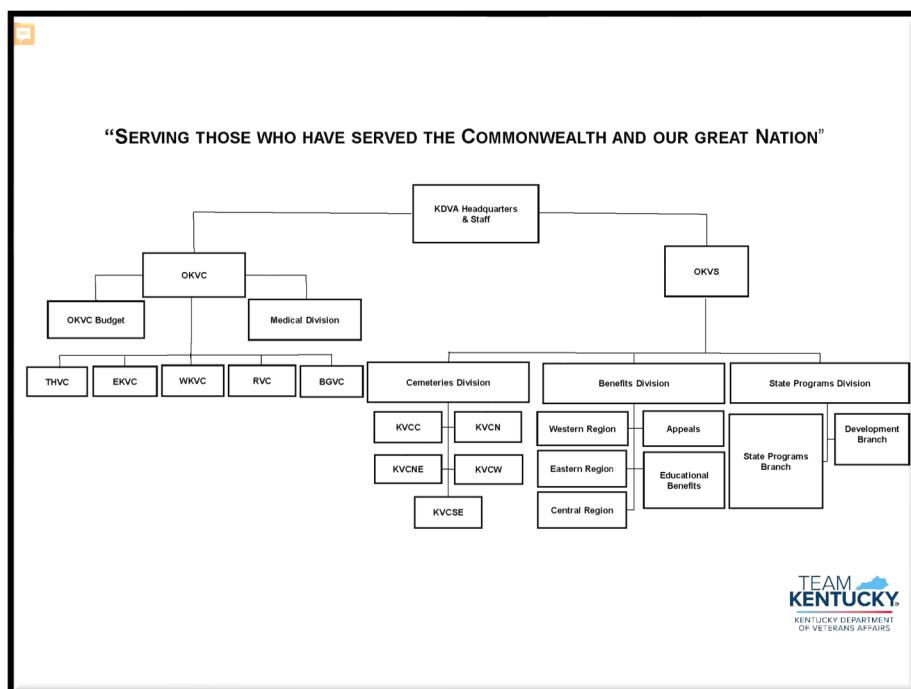
| Position Title                     | Number of Positions Filled |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| • Assistant Director               | 1                          |
| • Cemetery Branch Manager          | 5                          |
| • Cemetery Superintendent          | 5                          |
| • Veterans Cemetery Representative | 2                          |
| • Administrative Specialist Senior | 3                          |
| • Administrative Specialist        | 2                          |
| • Cemetery Caretaker               | 16                         |
| <b>Total</b>                       | <b>34</b>                  |

## Kentucky Veterans Benefits Division

| Position Title  | Number of Positions Filled |
|---|----------------------------|
| • Assistant Director                                    | 1                          |
| • Veterans Benefits Regional Administrators             | 4                          |
| • Administrative Specialist Senior                      | 1                          |
| • Veterans Benefits Field Representatives I & II (VBFR) | 18                         |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>24</b>                  |

## KENTUCKY VETERANS STATE PROGRAMS DIVISION

| Position Title                            | Number of Positions Filled |
|---|----------------------------|
| • Assistant Director                      | 1                          |
| • Homeless Veterans Program Administrator | 1                          |
| • Women's Veterans Program Administrator  | 1                          |
| • KY VETS Program Administrator           | 1                          |
| <b>Total</b>                              | <b>4</b>                   |



# KDVA's Financial Statement for FY25

## Appropriations

|   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| • General Fund Appropriation                      | \$46,058,400.00         |
| • Restricted Fund Appropriation                   | \$77,257,500.00         |
| • Federal Funds Appropriation (CARES Act funding) | \$1,239,600.00          |
| <b>Total Appropriations</b>                       | <b>\$124,555,500.00</b> |

## Allotments

|                                |                         |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| • Kentucky Veterans Centers    | \$112,946,846.33        |
| • Kentucky Veterans Cemeteries | \$4,478,300.00          |
| • Kentucky Veterans Services   | \$7,130,353.67          |
| <b>Total Allotments</b>        | <b>\$124,555,500.00</b> |

## Expenditures by Fund

### General Fund

|  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| • Kentucky Veterans Centers              | (\$29,442,525.85)        |
| • Kentucky Veterans Cemeteries           | (\$2,650,800.00)         |
| • Kentucky Veterans Services             | (\$6,623,104.48)         |
| <b>Total KDVA General Funds Expended</b> | <b>(\$38,716,430.33)</b> |

### Restricted Fund

|   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| • Kentucky Veterans Centers                 | (\$66,172,551.95)        |
| • Kentucky Veterans Cemeteries              | (\$981,971.87)           |
| • Kentucky Veterans Services                | (\$0.00)                 |
| <b>Total KDVA Restricted Funds Expended</b> | <b>(\$67,154,523.82)</b> |

### Federal Fund

|   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| • Kentucky Veterans Centers                 | (\$1,014,592.26)        |
| • Kentucky Veterans Cemeteries              | (\$0.00)                |
| • Kentucky Veterans Services                | (\$4,979.08)            |
| <b>Total KDVA Restricted Funds Expended</b> | <b>(\$1,019,571.34)</b> |

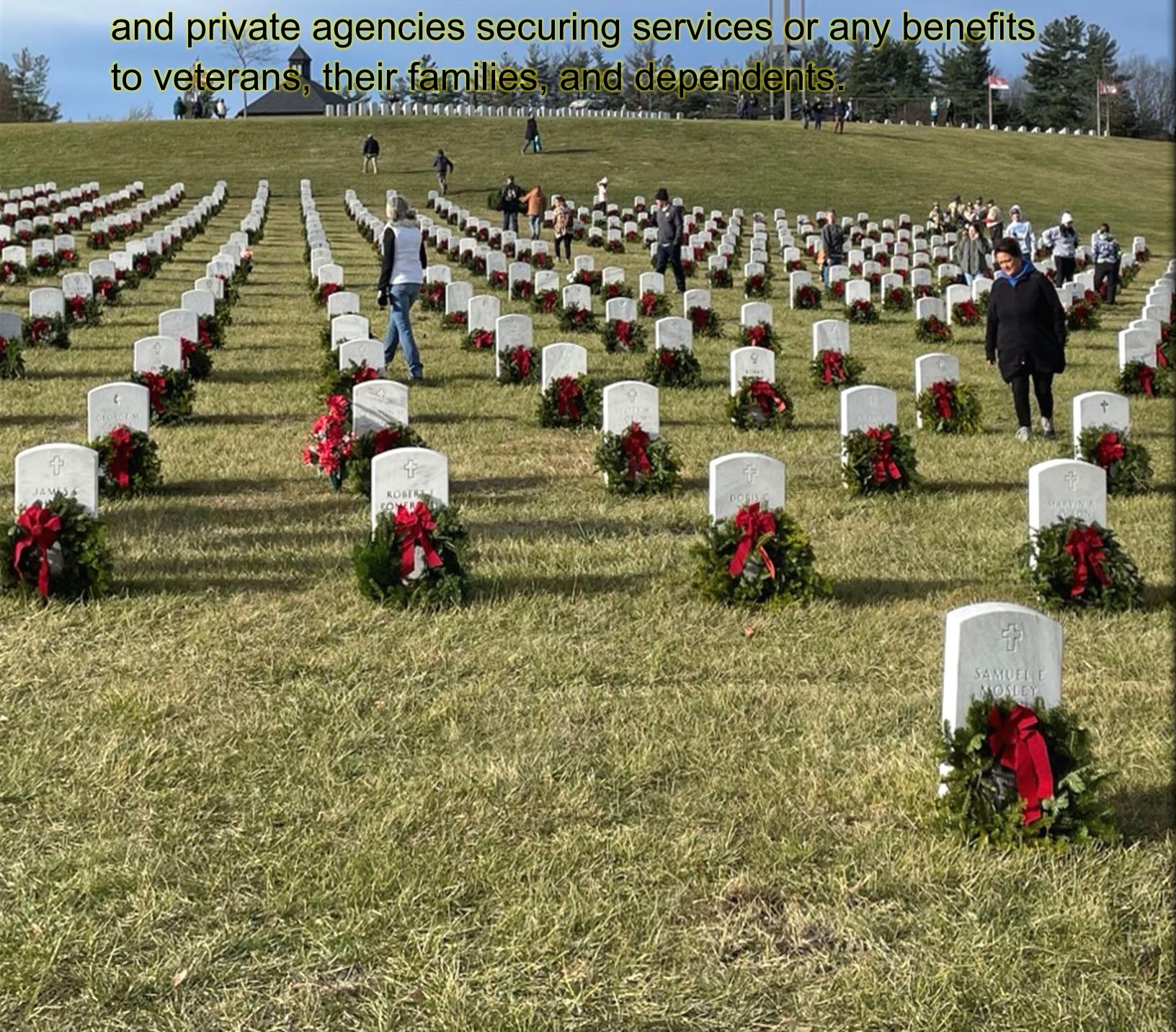
## Total KDVA Expenditures by all Fund Sources

**(\$106,890,525.49)**

## Expenditures by Class

|   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| • Personnel                                   | (\$84,087,921.58)         |
| • Operating                                   | (\$13,532,357.23)         |
| • Grants, Loans & Benefits                    | (\$8,447,018.61)          |
| • Debt Service                                | (\$616,500.00)            |
| • Capital Outlay                              | (\$206,728.07)            |
| • Construction                                | (\$0.00)                  |
| <b>Total KDVA Expenditures by all Classes</b> | <b>(\$106,890,525.49)</b> |

The Department of Veterans' Affairs shall ... assist veterans and their families and dependents in the presentation, proof, and establishment of all claims, privileges, rights, and other benefits which they may have under federal, state, or local laws, and to cooperate with all national, state, and local government and private agencies securing services or any benefits to veterans, their families, and dependents.



# Office of Kentucky Veteran Services (OKVS)

The OKVS mission aim can be summarized by the following 5As: we want to reach 1.) All Kentucky, 2.) All year, 3.) All informing of Kentuckians regarding our services, while doing our best to 4.) recognize All Kentucky veterans and their family members, and consistently high performing OKVS teammates, we want to 5.) develop All OKVS teammates to continue to excel and thrive in providing superb veteran services.

Here are several synergetic opportunities from OKVS operations throughout the Commonwealth:

OKVS represented the agency July 10<sup>th</sup>, as a panel member at the Recovery Oriented System of Care conference in Louisville discussing Service Members, Veterans and their Families (SMVF) needs. KDVA was represented August 19-21<sup>st</sup>, at the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs (NADSVA), Governor Challenge track in Indianapolis, Indiana.

September FY25, the directorate represented the agency at the Kentucky Judicial Commission on Mental Health quarterly meeting in Frankfort and the Recovery month Celebration, on the Capitol lawn. September 24<sup>th</sup>, KDVA held its second virtual suicide prevention forum which included suicide prevention training, shared lived experience, and multiple resources for practitioners and SMVF across the Commonwealth.

KDVA held a wreath laying ceremony to kick off the Wreaths Across America at the Capitol December 9, 2024, in Frankfort, KY. Over the next few days leading up to December 14<sup>th</sup>, wreaths were lain on veterans' gravestones at national and state cemeteries across the nation and Commonwealth.

OKVS provided benefits and program information supporting the National Farm Machinery Show at the Kentucky Expo Center in February 2025.

In March 2025, OKVS attended the Kentucky Substance Use Prevention Skills (KSUPS) training to enhance KDVA's assistance capabilities with SMVF dealing with substance abuse issue. OKVS coordinated training March 19<sup>th</sup> for every available member from the Cemetery, Benefits, and Program Divisions focused on key next level customer service and secondary trauma at the General Butler State Park and Resort.



*Team OKVS: Cemeteries, Benefits, and State Programs conducting Directorate Training focused on resiliency training and customer service.*

OKVS and the agency in partnership with the US Department of Veterans Affairs Center for Faith conducted the third annual Community and Faith Based Forum for SMVF in May 2025, at First Gethsemane Baptist Church in Louisville, KY.

OKVS provided College graduation recognition at participating Universities supporting spring graduation of SMVF.

OKVS led the KDVA and AAPI/ERG sponsored a solemn tribute to the fallen in observance of Memorial Day at the Capitol Rotunda on May 22, 2025. Lieutenant Governor



*On May 17, 2025, KDVA hosted the annual Faith-Based Veterans Forum in Louisville, KY. The event hosted several local community leaders as speakers, breakout sessions on suicide prevention, financial practices, legal resources and more available to veterans.*



*Lieutenant Governor Coleman placing the first wreath in Honor of Memorial Day 2025.*

Coleman was the keynote speaker kicking off a series of wreath-laying ceremonies at State Veterans Cemeteries across the Commonwealth.

OKVS provided College graduation recognition at participating Universities supporting spring graduation of SMVF.

## **Veterans Cemeteries Division**

Kentucky has five state veteran cemeteries that service the 120 counties that make up the Commonwealth of Kentucky. The veterans' cemeteries are fully funded by the General Assembly and staffed by full-time state employees. Kentucky's five veteran cemeteries have completed 23,151 honorable and dignified interments, 1,631 were completed during FY25.

Kentucky Veterans Cemetery West (KVCW) opened on March 1, 2004, in Hopkinsville, Kentucky. Kim Ebeling a U.S. Army spouse currently serves as the Veteran Cemetery Manager for this facility. As of June 30, 2025, 7,013 veterans and family members have been interred at KVCW. During FY24, KVCW averaged 37 interments per month.

Kentucky Veterans Cemetery Central (KVCC) opened on June 1, 2007, in Radcliff, Kentucky. Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Sherman Waters currently serves as the Veteran Cemetery Manager. After seventeen years of operation, 10,743 veterans and eligible family members are interred at KVCC, as of June 30, 2025. During FY25, KVCC averaged 61 interments per month.

Kentucky Veterans Cemetery North (KVCN) opened on August 22, 2008, in Williamstown, Kentucky. Retired Sergeant First Class Robert Miller currently serves as Veteran Cemetery Manager. As of June 30, 2025, 3,136 veterans and eligible family members are interred. During FY25, KVCN averaged 21 interments per month.

Kentucky Veterans Cemetery Northeast (KVCNE) opened on October 1, 2010, in Grayson, Kentucky. Frank Kees a Navy veteran is currently serving as the Veteran Cemetery Manager. As of June 30, 2025, 2,113 veterans and eligible family members are interred. During FY25, KVCNE averaged 15 interments per month.

KDVA's fifth and final cemetery, the Kentucky Veterans Cemetery Southeast (KVCSE) opened on May 1, 2018, in Hyden, Kentucky. Eric Barger a Lesley County native—is currently serving as the Veteran Cemetery Manager. As of June 30, 2025, 180 veterans and eligible family members are interred. During FY24, KVCSE averaged 2 interments per month.

The Cemeteries Division's Budget encompasses both general operating funds and donations made in trust by Kentuckians and Kentucky businesses to aid in the enhancement and beautification of KDVA's five cemeteries. The Cemeteries Division's FY25 budget is as follows:

| <b>Cemeteries Operating Budget</b>       |  | <b>FY25 Annual Report</b> |
|--|--|---------------------------|
| Beginning Cash Balance                   |  | \$1,098,019.11            |
| Revenue                                  |  |                           |
| • General Fund                           |  | \$2,650,800.00            |
| • Interments                             |  | \$962,442.00              |
| • Dependent Burials                      |  | \$180,191.21              |
| • Revenue Returned from Capital projects |  | \$54,010.00               |
| • Refunds                                |  | \$689.79                  |
| Total Revenue                            |  | \$3,848,133.00            |
| Expenditures                             |  | (\$3,667,771.87)          |
| Ending Balance                           |  | \$1,278,380.24            |
| <b>Cemeteries Trust Fund</b>             |  | <b>FY25 Annual Report</b> |
| Beginning Balance                        |  | \$220,397.22              |
| Revenue                                  |  |                           |
| • Donations                              |  | \$52,178.00               |
| • Interest                               |  | \$10,578.49               |
| Total Revenue                            |  | \$62,756.49               |
| Expenditures                             |  | (\$46,115.73)             |
| Ending Balance                           |  | \$237,037.98              |

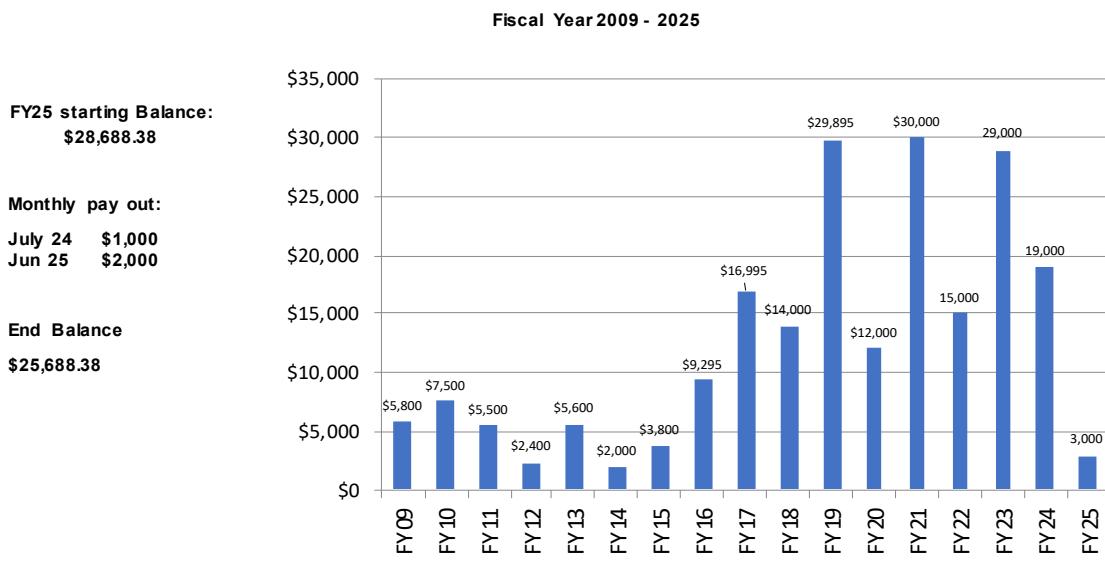
## Indigent Veterans' Burial Program

Many indigent veterans do not have the means to defray the cost of funeral expenses at the end of their life. To correct this unfortunate situation, KDVA's Cemeteries Division oversees the Indigent Veterans' Burial Program.

The Indigent Veterans Burial Program started FY25 with a budget of \$28,688.38. During FY25, the program paid \$3,000.00, to assist with interring 3 veterans. These veterans received an honorable and dignified interment with full military honors. Each Veteran then was interred in the closest state veteran cemetery or the closest national cemetery in Kentucky. Since its inception in 2009, the Program has expended \$195,785.00 to provide indigent veterans with honorable and dignified burials. The average cost of each interment is \$1,000. As a result, all 226 indigent veterans received full military burial honors and were interred in one of KDVA's five state veterans' cemeteries or one of the five national VA cemetery located within the Commonwealth of Kentucky.



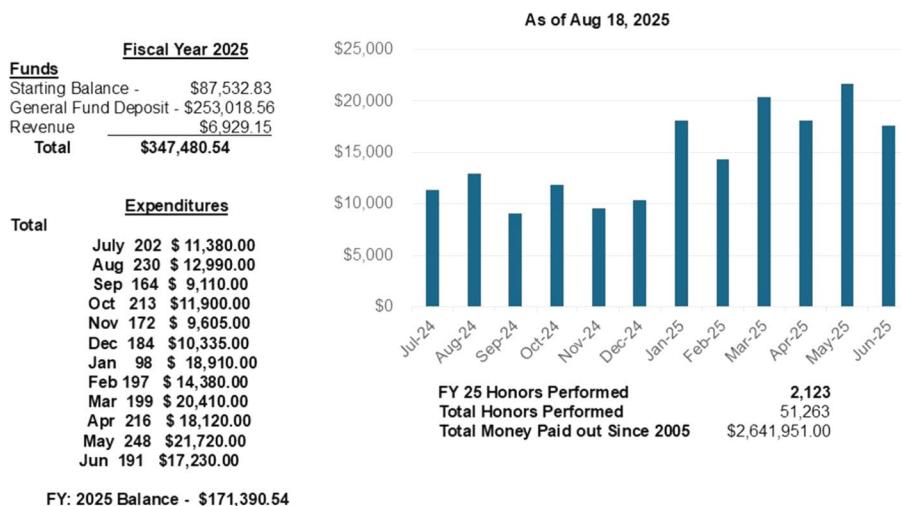
## Indigent Veterans Burial Program



## Veterans' Service Organization Burial Honor Guard Program

On July 1, 2002, the General Assembly promulgated KRS 40.360 & 40.362, which establishes KDVA's Burial Honor Guard Program and the Burial Honor Guard Trust Fund. The Program assists local Kentucky VSOs with augmenting the existing Federal program that offers a two-person honors team. The Veterans Burial Honors Program (BHP) in Kentucky provides a final tribute to the men and women who served our state and nation honorably as members of the U.S. Armed Forces. It allows a grateful nation to pay its last respects in a dignified and solemn ceremony. KDVA administers the Program with assistance from VSOs, funeral directors, and the active duty and reserve components of the U.S. Armed Forces.

### Military Funeral Honors Stipend



### Noteworthy Accomplishments for FY25

On December 11 and 12, 2024 KVCC and KVCN received Outstanding Operational Excellence Award and the Stewardship Award for outstanding performance during the national Compliance Review program inspection (CRP). The Inspection covered three major categories and 96 different measures and was presented by James A. Earp, Director of Veterans Cemetery Grants Programs. Expansion projects at KVCW and KVCC applied for and received a Federal Grant from the Veterans Cemetery Grants Program (VCGP) for \$2.4 million for an expansion of their columbarium walls. Both projects expected to begin October, 2025.



This past year the Cemeteries Division continued to utilize the National Cemeteries Administration's (NCA) national training center school. The Cemeteries Division was able to send seven cemetery employees this past year to gain knowledge, learn new skills or refresh existing ones. This partnership allows us to continue to honor Veterans and their eligible family members with a final resting place in a state cemetery that is worthy of national shrine standards, with a lasting tribute that commemorate their service and sacrifice to our State and the Nation. KVCC has the only 9/11 Memorial in the state of Kentucky that covers all three sites in one memorial. This past year in conjunction with Fort Knox in the lead, they executed another great Patriots Day ceremony honoring the 2,977 souls that were lost that day. All five of the State Veteran Cemeteries held highly successful Memorial Day Ceremonies with hundreds of volunteers placing US flags in front of every headstone. Also, each cemetery participated in the ongoing Wreaths Across America program or similar programs with volunteers raising money to place a wreath on every headstone for the holiday season.

## Cemeteries Division Goals for FY26

Goals for FY26 include the following:

- Finish the Expansion projects at KVCW and KVCC.
- Replace the roofing on the administration building at KVCN.
- Continue to utilize the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) Training Academy for cemetery personnel education.



### Contacting State Veterans Cemeteries

Mr. Shane A. LaGrone, USAF (Retired)

Director State Veterans Cemeteries

O: (502) 782-5731

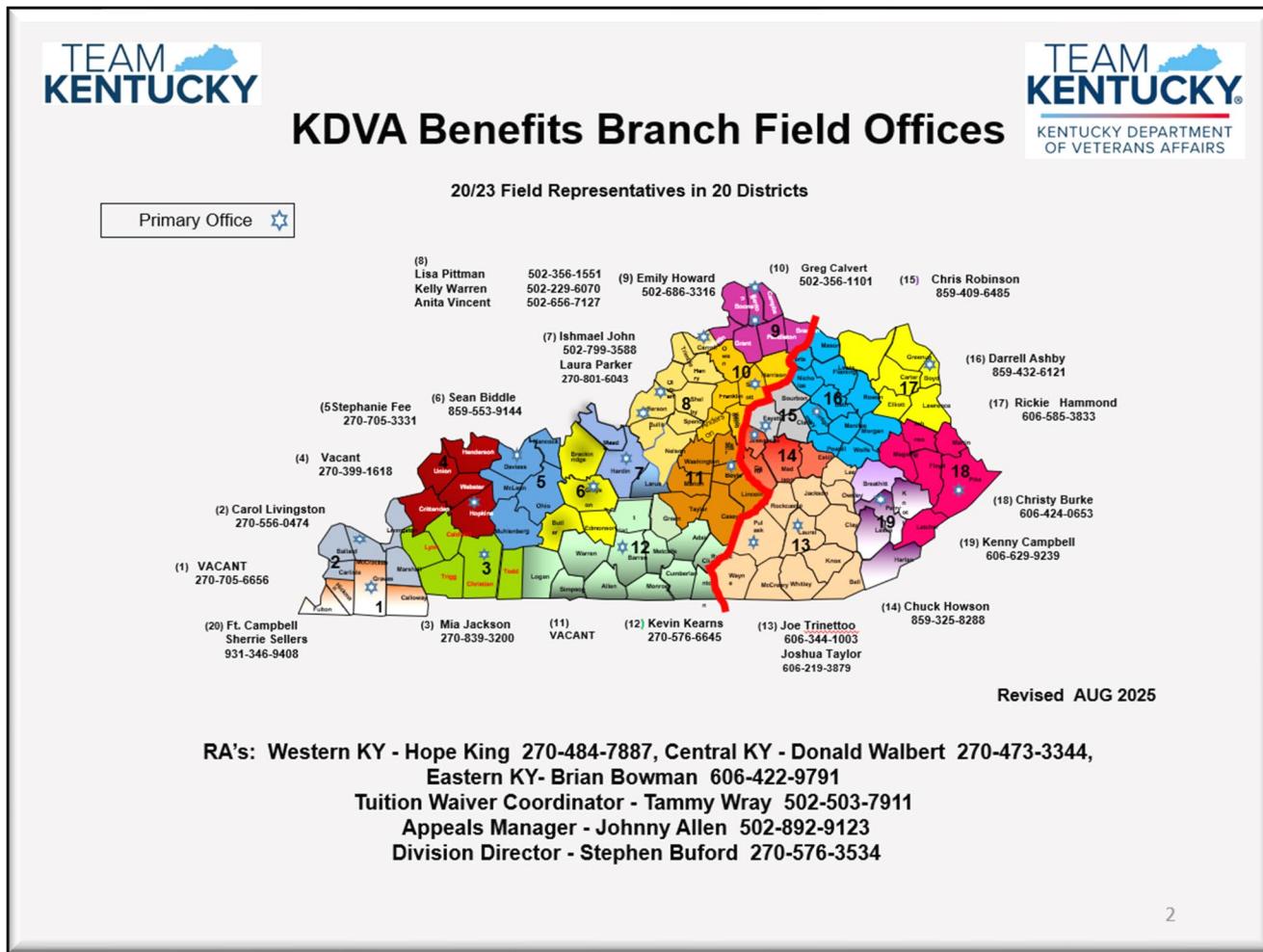
C: (502) 229-2718

[shane.lagrone@ky.gov](mailto:shane.lagrone@ky.gov)

Website: <https://veterans.ky.gov/Cemeteries>

## Veterans Benefits Division

KDVA's Benefits Division's primary mission is to assist veterans and their family members with filing for their federal VA Compensation and Pension Benefits. The Benefits Division has Veterans Benefits Representatives (VBRs) across the Commonwealth to ensure that veterans have 'accredited' representatives when pursuing their VA claims for compensation and benefits. The following demonstrates where representatives are located:



2

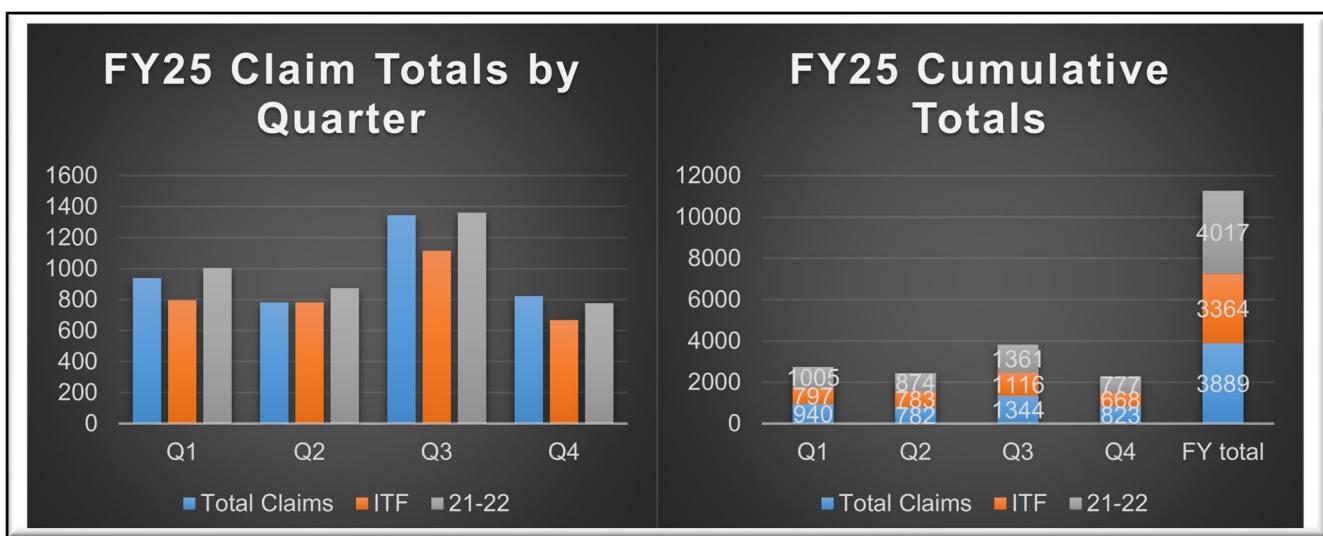
## Noteworthy Accomplishments for FY25

FY25 saw an increase in community partnerships, community outreach, favorable decisions in veteran benefit claims and a record-breaking utilization of the KY Tuition Waiver within the Commonwealth issuing 1,087 tuition waivers with a monetary value of \$32,386,440.00. In FY25 the Benefits Division attended 145 outreach events throughout the Commonwealth providing veterans the opportunity to receive one on one assistance focused on VA benefits. In FY25, 10 Benefit Claims Clinics events were held in densely veteran populated locations providing needed resources to our veteran communities. Partnering with the Cabinet Health and Family Services to establish Veteran Friendly Senior Centers, to date 112 Senior Centers are now considered Veteran Friendly Senior Centers.

This initiative provides benefits claims training to selected employees of senior centers throughout Commonwealth, to ensure that all veterans and family members are aware of all VA benefits of which they may be entitled. The newest partnership with the Department of Community Based Services to enhance awareness to all Kentuckians including Servicemembers, Veterans, and their Families of programs for Veterans, Adult Protective Services, and other impactful opportunities provided by other agencies. While the Benefits Division conducted many in-office visits with veterans and family members, the Division continued to leverage available technology to assist clients who either did not wish to or were unable to travel to a Field Representative Office.

## Annual Claims Data for FY25

In FY25, the Benefits Division submitted 3,889 'fully developed' Pension and Compensation Claims to the U.S. Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA). In addition, the Benefits Division submitted 3,364 Intent to File notices (ITFs), preserving an effective date for future claims. The Benefits Division also added 4,017 Power of Attorneys (21-22) additional veterans and survivors, who appointed KDVA as their accredited representative and performed 34,943 Veteran and dependent actions in FY25.



OKVS, Benefits Central Regional Administrator and team, participating in an Outreach Event.

## Powers of Attorney (POAs) as of 30 June 2025

|  |         |
|--|---------|
| • Total Veterans in Kentucky:                            | 245,036 |
| • Veterans represented by KDVA as of 08.01.25:           | 29,410  |
| • Beneficiaries represented as of 08.01.25:              | 9,937   |
| • Overall Percentage of KY Veterans Represented by KDVA: | 16%     |

Over the course of FY25, the successive monthly combined awards to Kentucky veterans and survivors represented by KDVA approximately 16% of veterans in the Commonwealth with a monthly increase from \$42.3 million to \$45.9 million. The total VBA payments to our clients in FY25 was \$531 million.

## Annual Appeals Data for FY25

The Division's full time Appeals Manager fully supported the BVA's Virtual Hearing ongoing initiative by representing appellants at 25 virtual hearings and 39 Higher Level Reviews. These hearing options allows veterans or family members to participate in their hearings from the comfort of their home. In addition to contributing to the running award totals, successful appeals yielded lump sum retroactive awards more than \$1.4 million.



OKVS, Director of Benefits hosting Veterans Outreach Partners.

### Claims Summary

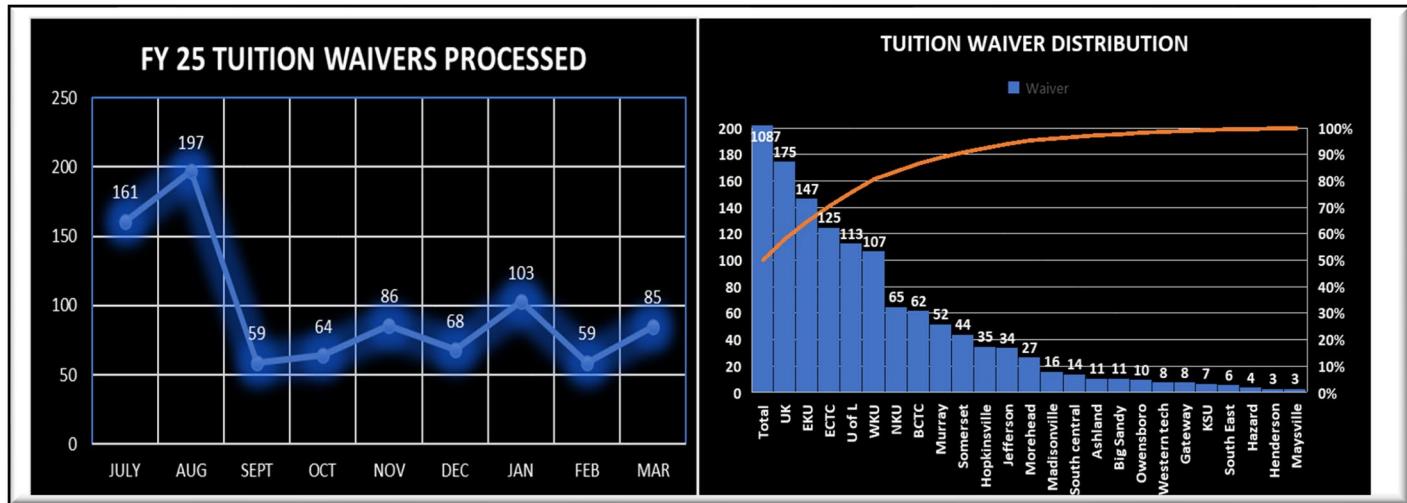
- **Total Claims:** 3,899
- **Intent to File Notices:** 3,364
- **New 21-22 (POA):** 4,017

### Appeals Summary

- Board of Veterans Appeals Hearings: 25
- HLR Conferences: 39
- FY25 Appeals Retro Awards: \$1,428,037.35

## Tuition Waivers for FY25

For FY25, the Benefits Division continued to administer the Kentucky Tuition Waiver program by processing 1,253 applications and awarding 1,087 waivers of tuition to Kentucky's state-funded colleges and universities with a monetary value of \$32,386,440.00.



## Benefits Division Goals for FY25

- Increase veterans claims and Powers of Attorney from 40,000 to 45,000.
- Engage with corporate entities that provide Veterans Resource Groups.
- Reform operation and training within the Division.
- Provide training for claims officers located within Kentucky's Veteran Service Offices.
- Increase engagements in densely populated counties.
- Continue to hire capable VBRs to efficiently process veterans' claims.
- Develop and execute partnerships with outside agencies to benefit veterans throughout the Commonwealth, to provide veterans and surviving family members better opportunities to obtain VA benefits and resources.



### Contacting Veterans Benefits Division

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Director of Veterans Benefits, OKVS

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Website: [veterans.ky.gov/Benefits](http://veterans.ky.gov/Benefits)

## Veterans State Programs Division

KDVA Veteran's Programs Division provides a variety of programs for veterans across the state of Kentucky. These programs include Homeless Veterans Program, assisting with rent and utilities payments, the Women Veterans Program, providing education and connection for women veterans, the Kentucky Veteran Education, Training and Services known as KyVETS, a workforce resource program for veterans seeking employment in the Commonwealth and a Wounded and Disabled program, designed to provide services for veterans with physical and non-physical disabilities. KDVA was hired a new program administrator for the Homeless Program in December of 2024 and hired a new Administrative Specialist for the Homeless Program in August 2025.

### Homeless Veterans Program

KDVA's Homeless Veterans Program (HVP) is focused on preventing veteran homelessness across the Commonwealth by connecting with veterans in need before they are in crisis. The program is a proven, successful program that aids those at imminent risk of homelessness by collaborating with community partners and together working to connect veterans with resources across the state.

### The Homeless Veterans Program: Requested Grants

FY 25 the Homeless Veterans Trust Fund paid out a total of \$277,658.86 to help 509 veterans. Working in conjunction with community partners, numerous veterans found permanent housing. HVP received and expended the following amounts on preventing veteran homelessness:

| Homeless Veterans Trust Fund                      | FY25 Annual Report |
|---|--------------------|
| <b>Beginning Balance</b>                          | \$68.78            |
| <b>Revenue</b>                                    |                    |
| • <b>VPTF Transfers</b>                           | \$60,000.00        |
| • <b>Donations</b>                                | \$15,001.60        |
| • <b>Interest</b>                                 | \$5,017.72         |
| •   |                    |
| • <b>General Funds</b>                            | 200,000.00         |
| <b>Total Revenue</b>                              | \$280,019.32       |
| <b>Expenditures to avoid Veteran Homelessness</b> |                    |
| • <b>Gas (20 claims)</b>                          | \$8,490.06         |
| • <b>Electric (181 claims)</b>                    | \$80,260.18        |
| • <b>Water/Sewer (67 claims)</b>                  | \$16,854.95        |
| • <b>Rent (241 claims)</b>                        | \$169,039.37       |
| • <b>Event Expenses</b>                           | \$1,500.00         |
| • <b>Transfer remaining grant back to VPTF</b>    | \$0.00             |
| • <b>Returned Check Fee</b>                       |                    |
| <b>Total Expenditures</b>                         | \$276,144.56       |
| <b>FY25 Ending Balance</b>                        | \$3,943.54         |

## Noteworthy Accomplishments for FY25



FY 25 was another banner year surpassing the goal of helping 500 veterans, the team approved 509 grants. Remaining responsive to current housing trends and shortages, the program increased the homeless grant amount to \$750.00 in efforts to prevent a greater number of disconnections and evictions for Kentucky veterans.

Generous donations from veteran organizations and corporations throughout Kentucky have greatly increased the available funding for the homeless grant program. Coldwell Banker, AM VETS of Kentucky, and the Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association were a few contributors.

## Programed FY25 Outreach

*KDVA continues to bring awareness to veterans and families experiencing homelessness by sponsoring the fourth annual 5K Run/Walk in Louisville at Iroquois Park on October 19, 2024.*



*December 2024, The Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) donated much needed coats, hats, gloves and scarves. KDVA coordinated with Mountain Comprehensive Care to have the items distributed to homeless veterans in the Central Eastern part of the state.*



*Sue Thomson, daughter-in-law of the former Lieutenant Colonel, George Thomson was among one of the KDVA community partners, making blankets for the HVP. Home Depot Store #2315 donated pocket flashlights for the homeless program backpacks. Corning Incorporated collected personal care items to be included in the program backpacks.*

- KDVA Homeless Veterans Program visited area organizations throughout the state that help support homeless veterans. Veterans Rural Outreach of Shelbyville provided emergency shelter and transitional housing through their six tiny home veterans village.
- KDVA finished up the fiscal year community outreach by visiting one of our valued community partners, Mission BBQ of Bowling Green.
- Mission BBQ serves veterans and first responders in the area, closing their doors twice a year to serve homeless veterans.



### **Contacting the Homeless Veterans Program**

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Website: <https://veterans.ky.gov/Veterans-Programs/Homeless-Veterans/Pages/default.aspx>

## Women Veterans Program

### Noteworthy Accomplishments for FY25

In 2025, the KDVA Women Veterans Program's "Making Ripples" event brought together over 90 women veterans, supporters, and volunteers, creating waves of connection, empowerment, and inspiration. Building on the retreat and conference success, the "You Served. You Deserve." campaign for 2026 will expand this momentum by taking these celebrations on the road to communities that are often less served.



Women veterans across Kentucky were encouraged to volunteer as local ambassadors for the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs Women Veterans Program. These ambassadors host meetups in their counties, creating opportunities for women veterans to connect, share resources, and build community.



Each ambassador serves as a trusted representative of KDVA, helping identify the unique needs of women veterans in their county and connecting them directly to the KDVA Women Veterans Program for support, resources, and advocacy.

Monthly meetings are held with ambassadors to share plans, discuss challenges, and strengthen KDVA's mission to serve Kentucky's women veterans where they live.

The Women's Program organized ten women to be recognized by the Lt. Governor during Women History month at the KY capitol. The KDVA Women Veteran's Program was recognized by the Center for Women Veterans as doing a great job for women veterans in KY which led to an invite to their test program that keeps track of how many women are contacted and spoken to about VA and KDVA through outreach. Developed and designed layout for women veteran's postcard-size advertisement starting a campaign titled "You Served. You Deserve." Cards were given to ambassadors and women veterans to share across the state.

### "You Served. You Deserve." Campaign

In 2026, the KDVA Women Veterans Program will take its mission on the road to communities that are often less served. Under the “You Served. You Deserve.” campaign, two special events will be held during Women’s History Month in two diverse Kentucky locations — Bowling Green and Pikeville.

This initiative honors the service and sacrifices of Kentucky’s women veterans by where they live. These events will be tailored to reflect the unique character of each location while keeping the focus on empowering, connecting, and uplifting women veterans.



The Women Veterans Program has performed outreach in over 27 counties and continues towards the goal of reaching all 120 counties. Currently, contact has been made with 536 new women veterans via private Facebook page and over 1,200 women veterans via email.

KDVA hosted a watch party featuring "The 6888th", in recognition of women veterans and the legacy of women veteran trailblazers. The event brought together women veterans for an evening of camaraderie, history, and reflection. Light refreshments were served, and attendees had the opportunity to engage in meaningful discussion about the contributions of women in the armed forces.

KDVA Women’s Program Administrator holds the title of Historian for the National Association of State Women Veterans Coordinators (NASWVC). This process documents the history of the organization’s origin and maintains its historical record. Responsibilities are research, preserving archival materials, and compiling findings to show legacy and future generations.



### Contacting the Women’s Veterans Program (WVP)

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State Programs Division, OKVS

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Website: <https://veterans.ky.gov/Veterans-Programs/Women-Veterans/Pages/default.aspx>

## Kentucky Veteran Education, Training and Services (KyVETS)

For FY25, the KyVETS program created, organized, and led the inaugural Veterans and Military Family Conference on February 4, 2025, at the University of Louisville's Shelby Campus Conference Center. Over 200 participants attended the conference, which focused on three key areas: health, finance, and education. The event featured 11 breakout sessions covering topics on caregiving support, women veterans' health, the Kentucky medical cannabis program, money management, employment, veteran-owned businesses, executive education, and certifications/apprenticeships — as well as a lineup of distinguished guest speakers.



These included Governor Andy Beshear, Congressman Morgan McGarvey, Kentucky Education and Labor Cabinet Secretary Jamie Link, Public Safety Cabinet Secretary Keith Jackson, U.S. Army Brigadier General Frederick Hockett, U.S. Department of Labor Kentucky Director Donietta Hawkey, and Dr. JC Gregory from the Kentucky Office of Adult Education.



Additionally, KyVETS launched the Commonwealth's first-ever monthly virtual job fair, held for three hours on the third Wednesday of each month. The first hour was reserved exclusively for veterans and military family members, after which the event opened to the public. These job fairs provided a unique opportunity to connect with multi-sector employers such as Fisher Auto Parts, Humana, Jabil, Nucor Tubular Products, United Parcel

Service, and the University of Kentucky. Year to date, more than 600 job seekers have registered — 36% of whom were veterans — along with over 80 employers offering more than 1,000 available positions.

The monthly virtual job fair was promoted by Governor Andy Beshear, Lieutenant Governor Jacqueline Coleman, and Secretary of State Michael Adams through both social and traditional media, including KET's *Kentucky Edition*, LinkedIn, Facebook, and X (formerly Twitter). During a Team Kentucky Update, Governor Beshear stated, *“Thanks to our KDVA folks for knocking it out of the park — both in customer service to our veterans and in working to make Kentucky the most veteran-friendly state in the country.”*

Throughout 2025, the KyVETS program continued to provide job search overviews to transitioning military personnel at Fort Campbell and Fort Knox, military family members, and incoming soldiers with the Kentucky National Guard. The program also continued addressing the pay gap between the compensation servicemembers receive while on active duty and the wages they earn as civilian veterans. The focus remained on helping veterans secure high-quality jobs that not only provide a living wage but also match—or exceed—their active-duty pay and standard of living.



KyVETS continued to develop a broad network of Kentucky employers committed to hiring high-quality veterans at competitive wages. Key partners, including the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, the U.S. Army Transition Assistance Program offices at Fort Knox and Fort Campbell, and the U.S. Department of Labor; remained consistent sources of information and collaboration for the program.

Throughout the year, KyVETS presented at and exhibited in various events, such as the Kentucky Chamber's Military Hiring Academy (MHA) Cohort III, 3rd Annual Veterans Employment & Training Symposium (VETS), Fort Knox's Employer Days, and U.S. Army Kentucky National Guard's Recruiting & Retention Battalion's First Formation. At the MHA, the focus was building connections and understanding the value of military talent, in which, KDVA spotlighted the U.S. Army's Career Skills Program at Fort Campbell, how employers can recruit talent military leaders and spouses, and the Society of Human Resource Management's must-haves for successful recruitment (specifically, identifying the untapped military talent). The VETS Symposium aimed to connect employers with veterans seeking employment, showcasing resources, and discuss veteran recruitment and retention strategies. As the newest soldiers in the Kentucky Guard return home after completing their initial active-duty training, they are welcomed and complete orientation training, which includes an employment presentation by KDVA.



### Contacting the KyVETS Program

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## **Wounded or Disabled Veteran Program**

In early Spring KDVA, with HereNowHelp company, provided Kentucky veterans the HereNowHelp app for their phones. Qualified veterans can download an app to their phones connecting them with three crucial components to health and wellbeing (1) Personal Care, which provides for journaling, meditation, self-reflection, and calendars, there is also a comprehensive resource list for Kentucky residents provided; (2) Peer Care, which offers a program wherein veterans can connect with peers they may have served with or military groups to which they were assigned providing a connection or reflection and sharing among those who know and understand the issues veterans may be facing; (3) Clinical Care which offers 24 hour, 7 days a week, 365 days a year connection to certified, clinic therapists who can provide private and one on one therapy in a comfortable setting for the veteran.

KDVA Wounded and Disabled program executed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) Department for Aging and Independent Living (DAIL) for 100 free phones for the KYNECTAVET program eligible veterans 60 years and older or with a traumatic brain injury as described in the application.

In November, KDVA Wounded and Disabled Program participated in the Veterans Day Event held at Fed's Creek Elementary school in Pike County. The Wounded and Disabled Program became a member of the Homeless and Housing State Coalition Board and has attended six bi-monthly meetings this year.

The Wounded and Disabled program participated on a panel at the Citywide Summitt Mobilization conference to discuss gun violence and its effect on veterans.

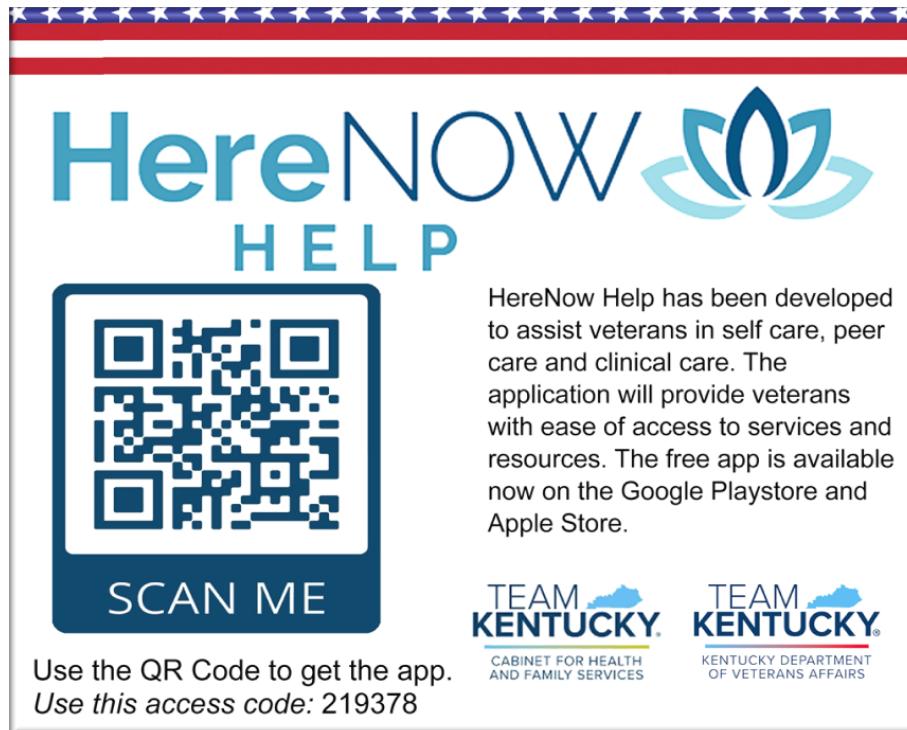
In January the Wounded and Disabled Administrator became a member of the Elder Abuse Committee and attended three bimonthly meetings to discuss issues facing our Kentucky Veterans. The Wounded and Disabled program attended monthly Governor's Challenge meetings.

During May Wounded and Disabled Program met with a representative from Fredrick Douglas School in Fayette County to discuss a series of programs for recording Vietnam war veterans' stories to honor their service.

KDVA received the \$300,000 suicide fatality review cooperative agreement in September 2024. KDVA in conjunction with Louisville Metro Health Department, U of L Foundation and UK Foundation, started building upon the success of the existing Jefferson County Suicide Fatality review committee. KDVA also met with the Suicide Fatality Review committee with U of L three times to observe the process of suicide fatality review in Jefferson County.

KDVA Wounded and Disabled administrator attended the Suicide Mortality Review (SMR) Academy in January along with the KDVA Commissioner and many leaders from the Governor challenge and other state and federal entities. An SMR veterans sub-committee

was created comprised of various community partners for executing the important suicide postvention work of this cooperative agreement to gain critical recommendations for suicide prevention and intervention.



The advertisement features a red, white, and blue header with stars and stripes. The main text "HereNOW HELP" is in large blue letters, with "HELP" in a smaller font below "NOW". To the right is a stylized blue lotus flower icon. Below the text is a large QR code with a blue border. A blue button at the bottom right of the QR code area says "SCAN ME". To the right of the QR code is a text block: "HereNow Help has been developed to assist veterans in self care, peer care and clinical care. The application will provide veterans with ease of access to services and resources. The free app is available now on the Google Playstore and Apple Store." At the bottom are two logos: "TEAM KENTUCKY" with "CABINET FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES" underneath, and "TEAM KENTUCKY" with "KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS" underneath. Below the QR code, the text "Use the QR Code to get the app." and "Use this access code: 219378" is displayed.



### Contacting the Wounded and Disabled Veterans Program

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# Office of Kentucky Veteran Centers

The Office of Kentucky Veterans' Center (OKVC) was established to operate the Commonwealth's veterans' centers and medical division.

Kentucky has four state veterans' centers with a fifth under construction in Bowling Green that service the 120 counties that make up the Commonwealth of Kentucky.



Thomson-Hood Veterans Center (THVC) opened in 1991 in Wilmore, Kentucky. Joni Gosser currently serves as the facility's Administrator. The facility is a 285-bed skilled nursing facility with a secure unit. During FY25 the facility provided 51,902 days of care which is a 12.3% increase from 46,220 days of care in FY24.



The Paul E. Patton Eastern Kentucky Veterans Center (EKVC) opened 2002 in Hazard, Kentucky. Sonya Melton serves as the facility's Administrator. The facility is a 120-bed skilled nursing facility with a secure unit. During FY25 the facility provided 33,053 days of care which is a 12.3% increase from 29,446 days of care in FY24.



The Joseph E. Ballard Western Kentucky Veterans Center (WKVC) opened in 2002 in Hanson, Kentucky. LaDonna Scott serves as the facility's Administrator. The facility is a 156-bed skilled nursing facility with a secure unit. During FY25 the facility provided 29,348 days of care which is a 20.6% increase from 24,338 days of care in FY24.



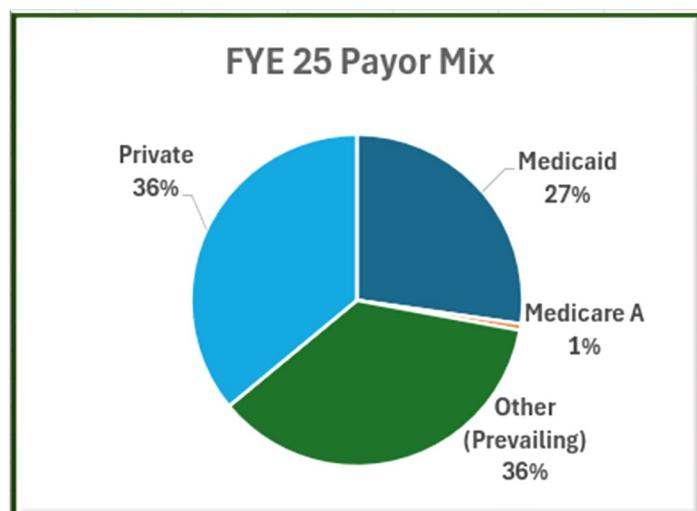
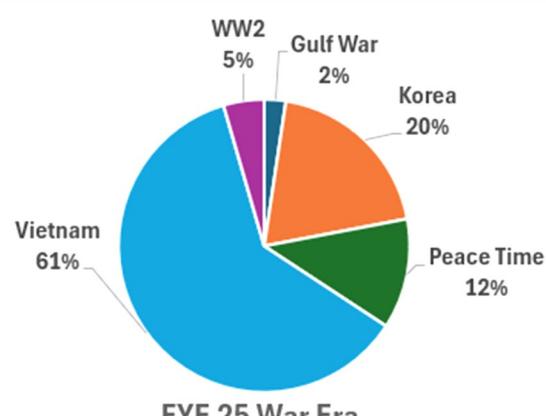
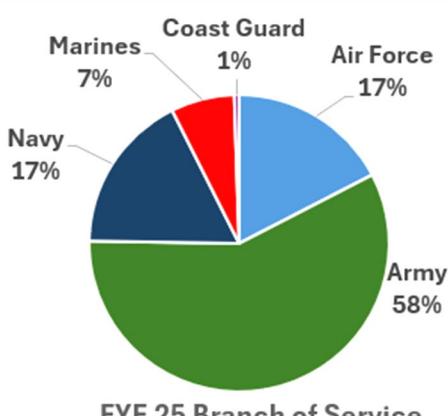
The Carl M. Brashear Radcliff Veterans Center (RVC) opened in 2017 and is located right outside the gates of Fort Knox Army Post. Sue Popplewell serves as the facility's Administrator. The facility is a 120-bed skilled nursing facility with all private suites. During FY 25 the facility provided 21,109 days of care which is consistent with 21,085 days of care in FY24 due to maximum capacity being 60 while the HVAC system replacement is underway.

The Robert E. Spiller Bowling Green Veterans Center started construction in 2023. The 80,000-square-foot, 60-bed all private suite skilled nursing facility is in the Transpark off Mizpah Road in Bowling Green on 25 acres that was donated by the Inter-Modal Transportation Authority at the Kentucky Transpark. Substantial completion is currently scheduled for October 2025, with the first veterans expected to be admitted in January 2026. The Veterans Center will create approximately 120 new jobs and will be the state's fifth long-term skilled nursing care facility.



## Veteran Populations: Who OKVC Serves

OKVC serves veterans of various ages, branches of service, as well as combat and peacetime service eras. The following provides an overview of our veteran population:



## Serving Kentucky's Veterans: OKVC's Operating Budget

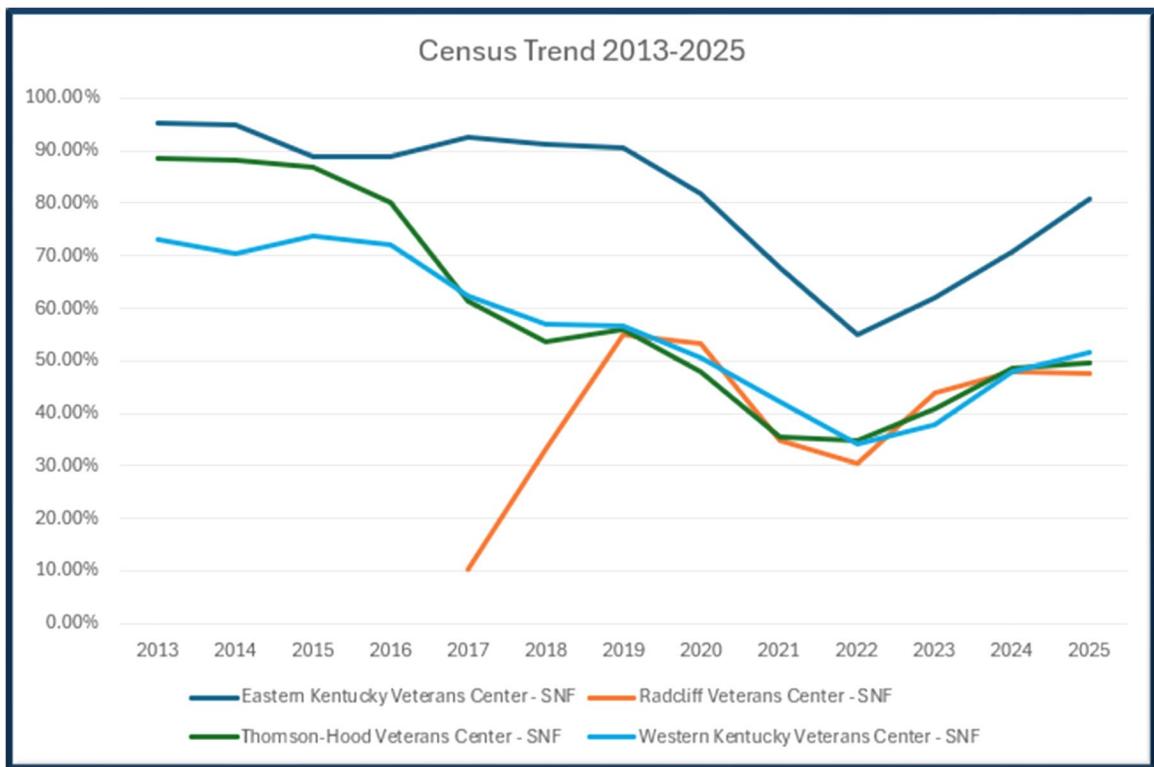
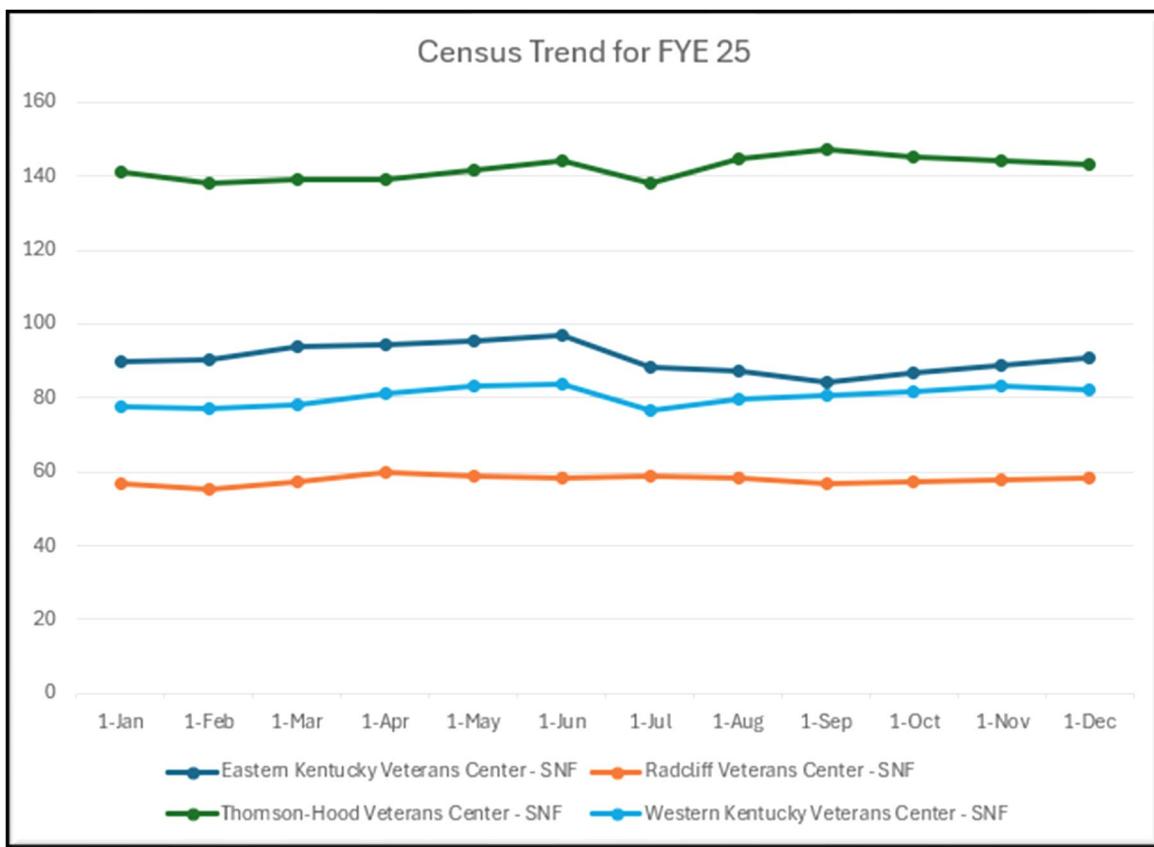
The Office of Kentucky Veterans Centers operations are funded by a mixture of general fund support and restricted revenue in the form of Medicare, Medicaid, Private Pay, Insurance and VA per diem payments. OKVC's FY25 budget report is as follows:

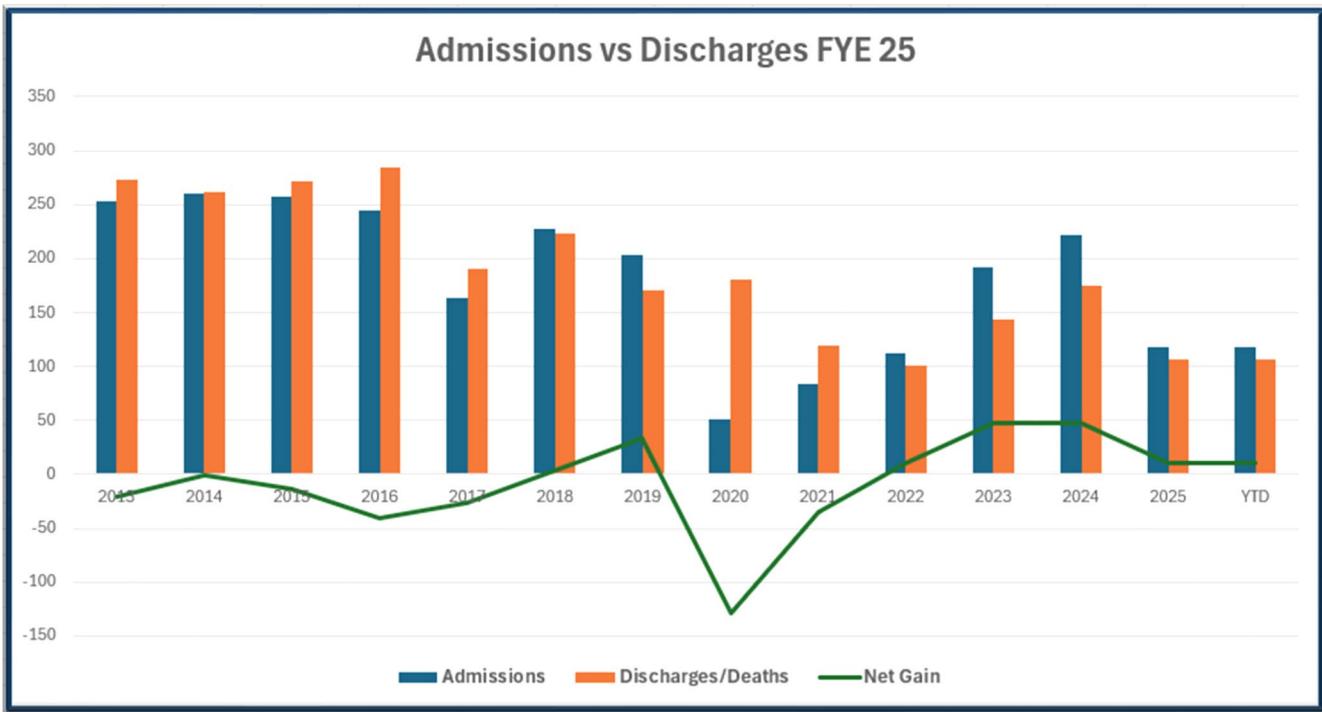
### OKVC Operating Budget for FY25

| <b>Revenue</b>       |                          |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| • General Funds      | \$29,442,525.85          |
| • Federal Funds      | \$86,249.25              |
| • Restricted Funds   | \$71,969,489.48          |
| <b>Total Revenue</b> | <b>\$101,412,015.33</b>  |
| <b>Expenditures</b>  | <b>(\$96,629,670.06)</b> |

The collaborative efforts with the Personnel Cabinet, Office of State Budget Director and State Legislators proved successful in FY25. The approved special entry rates for nursing staff along with locality premiums positioned all four facilities to fill positions that previously had been vacant for a long period of time. This led to increased staff and ultimately improved access to care and services for veterans of the Commonwealth. The following graphic shows the net gains in staffing due to that support. The second graph demonstrates the continued recovery from the decreased census levels experienced during the COVID crisis. The last graphic shows the admission versus discharges trend and net gain in census levels for the past several years. Census levels trended positive in FY25 and are expected to do the same in FY26.

| Veteran Center | 18A FT positions Filled as of 7/1/2024 | 18A FT positions Filled as of 6/30/2025 | Net gain/(loss) For FY25 |
|----------------|--|---|--------------------------|
| EKVC           | 159                                    | 165                                     | 6                        |
| RVC            | 105                                    | 108                                     | 3                        |
| THVC           | 200                                    | 193                                     | (7)                      |
| WKVC           | 145                                    | 153                                     | 8                        |
| BGVC           | 0                                      | 14                                      | 14                       |
| OKVC           | 609                                    | 633                                     | 24                       |





## Noteworthy Accomplishments for FY25

Paul E. Patton Eastern Kentucky Veterans Center and Joseph Eddie Ballard Western Kentucky Veterans Center were awarded the 2025 AHCA/NCAL Bronze National Quality Award.



Thomson-Hood Veterans Center and the Joseph Eddie Ballard Western Kentucky Veterans Centers were recognized as two of America's Best Nursing Homes for 2025 in Newsweek most recent list for facilities over 150 beds.



Thomson Hood Veterans Center, the Joseph Eddie Ballard Veterans Center and the Paul E. Patton Veterans Center maintained the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid services top rating of 5 stars.

Paul E. Patton Eastern Kentucky Center's 1958 National Champion Johnny Cox met with Mark Pope, current University of Kentucky Coach.



In the November Issue of Kentucky Living EKVC has two Veterans Paul Baker and Oakley Hacker featured on the cover and in the main article, The Greatest Generation: WWII Vets Tell Their Stories. The article spoke of their resilience and contributions to their communities in Kentucky through both their military and civilian lives.



Carl M Brashear Radcliff Veterans Center Hosted the Lest We Forget Concert in November.





Later that month Radcliff Veterans Center received the Governor's Award for the Arts for providing Veteran's Therapy through learning musical instruments, writing songs, painting on canvas, in addition to other art programs.



Both the Paul E. Patton Eastern Kentucky Veterans Center and the Carl M. Brashear Radcliff Veterans Center finished their final year of a three-year Eden Alternative Grant through Altarum. Each facility and its team will go through a transformational process to teach culture change and how to develop a more person centered/home like environment for our veterans. We now have Certified Trainers who can conduct Internal Certified Eden Training.



OKVC entered its fifth year of its Nurse Loan Repayment Program. Over the past five years, OKVC has provided seventy-eight (78) nurse loan tuition reimbursement payments totaling \$540,963.72 to qualified nurses in all four state veteran's homes, with our highest total reimbursement amount occurring in 2025. That \$540,963.72 investment yielded an approximate net turnover savings of approximately \$1,170,000.00.

## **Office of Kentucky Veterans Centers Goals for FY26**

- Increased access to care and decreased turn-around times for admissions. Continue to focus on quality of care and services to our veterans.
- Study the possibility of increasing the number of private rooms for a more homelike/person centered care environment where feasible.
- Complete construction of the Robert E. Spiller Bowling Green Veterans Center in Bowling Green, a 60-bed state veterans home. Receive CMS certification and VA recognition and begin admitting veterans.
- Thomson-Hood Veterans Center \$7,000,000 renovation project
- Complete a study to determine the feasibility of a behavioral health program/unit



### **Contacting the Office of Kentucky Veterans Centers**

Mr. Mark Bowman • U.S. Navy Veteran

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# Office of Veteran Legal Services

The Office of Veteran Legal Services (OVLS) operates under the Office of the Commissioner as the Department's in-house legal authority. OVLS provides expert legal counsel and strategic guidance to ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations, mitigate risk, and support informed decision-making across all levels of the agency. In alignment with the Department's mission, OVLS also plays a critical role in advancing initiatives that benefit Kentucky's veterans and their families, ensuring their rights and interests are upheld in all departmental actions.

During Fiscal Year 2025, Governor Andy Beshear appointed Honorable Lily Chan Patteson as Executive Director and General Counsel of the Office of Veteran Legal Services (OVLS). In this dual role, she led the office's strategic legal initiatives and oversaw its daily operations, guiding the team's efforts to strengthen both internal counsel and statewide outreach on behalf of Kentucky's veterans.

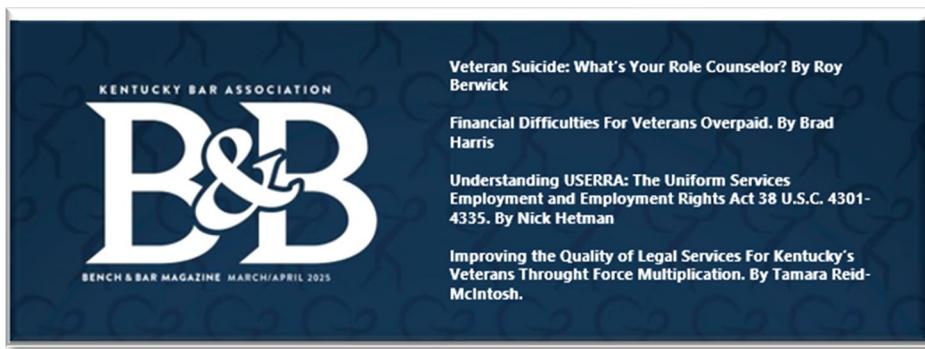
In FY25, the Office of Veteran Legal Services (OVLS) significantly expanded its external engagement efforts to strengthen its visibility and impact within Kentucky's legal and veteran service communities. OVLS forged new partnerships, collaborated with legal aid providers, and participated in statewide initiatives aimed at addressing the unique legal challenges faced by veterans. These efforts have positioned OVLS as a trusted connector between veterans and critical legal resources across the Commonwealth.

OVLS also played a key role in supporting the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs (KDVA) internally. The office provided legal counsel to KDVA's divisions and programs, represented the agency before state administrative boards and commissions, and advised the Veterans Program Trust Fund Board in reviewing and supporting veteran-serving initiatives. Additionally, OVLS served as KDVA's Ethics Officer, ensuring agency-wide compliance with Executive Branch standards. These efforts have reinforced the department's legal integrity while advancing its mission to serve Kentucky's veterans with professionalism and accountability.

As a small but dedicated team of three, OVLS delivered responsive, high-impact legal services that reinforced the department's mission to serve Kentucky's veterans with professionalism and accountability.

## Legal Projects focused on Kentucky's Veteran Population

During FY25, the Office of Veteran Legal Services (OVLS) strengthened and expanded its network of partnerships with organizations dedicated to addressing the legal needs of veterans. Notably, OVLS pursued new collaborations with Legal Aid societies across the Commonwealth to connect veterans with civil legal assistance in areas such as family law, housing issues, contracts, and probate.



OVLS also continued its active support of the Kentucky Bar Association's Military and Veterans Law Committee\*, aiding in the recruitment of attorneys who want to provide legal services to veterans. To grow interest and awareness in veterans' law, OVLS contributed to Military and Veterans Law Committee's professional publications such as the Kentucky Bench & Bar Magazine and engaged future attorneys through presentations at major Kentucky law schools.

## Key Achievements for Fiscal Year 2025

Throughout FY25, the Office of Veteran Legal Services (OVLS) supported staffing and services for the Office of Kentucky Veterans Centers (OKVC) and Office of Kentucky Veterans Services (OKVS). This included drafting, negotiating, and finalizing a variety of agreements such as academic practicum Memoranda of Agreement (MOAs) and service contracts with state agencies, community partners, and vendors, ensuring seamless collaboration and service delivery. Among these efforts, OVLS worked closely to support Office of Kentucky State Programs in their partnership with the Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) within the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) to provide information, training, and coordinated services to better support veterans across Kentucky.

In addition, OVLS continued to strengthen its ongoing collaboration with the National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP), enabling Kentucky veterans to access no-cost legal representation for complex federal VA benefits claims and military service record

upgrades. Building on this foundation, OVLS is actively working toward expanding discharge upgrade assistance for veterans in the coming year, further enhancing the support available to those who have served.

## Notable Key Assignments

Enacted as part of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VI was a landmark provision designed to eliminate discrimination and ensure equal access to programs receiving federal funding. Its enduring importance lies in holding institutions accountable for equitable treatment, as demonstrated by the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs' (KDVA) efforts to maintain diverse representation and inclusive services across its programs. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, along with KRS Chapter 344, prohibits discrimination in all federally funded KDVA programs and services.

## Title VI Compliance Data

KDVA, under KRS 40.310, is committed to serving Kentucky's 300,000 veterans and their families through benefits, healthcare, education, employment, and specialized support, including for women and homeless veterans. Title VI applies to all divisions receiving federal funds, including veterans' centers, programs, and cemeteries.

In FY2025, KDVA continues to demonstrate proactive Title VI compliance and a commitment to equitable inclusion across federally funded programs 27% minority participation on the VPTF Board, 62% on the WVCC, and 13% minority staff overall.

- **Boards/Committees:**
  - *Veterans Program Trust Fund (VPTF): 9 positions-filled of 11 members; 27% minority representation*
  - *Women's Veterans Coordinating Committee (WVCC): total 8 members; 62% minority representation*
- **Staff Diversity:** Of 774 employees, minority representation totals 13%, with the breakdown including 9.5% African American, 1.4% Latino, 1.4% Asian, 0.1% American Indian, and 0.5% two or more races.

## General Counsel's Strategic Priorities for FY25

Looking ahead, the General Counsel's Office has outlined the following strategic goals to further expand the reach and effectiveness of the Office of Veteran Legal Services (OVLS) in FY25:

- **Broaden Legal Referral Services:** Expand OVLS's capacity to offer legal referrals and general legal guidance for veterans, with an emphasis on protecting vulnerable veterans from fraud, scams, and exploitation.
- **Support Veteran Treatment Courts (VTC):** Deepen OVLS's engagement with Veteran Treatment Court programs across the Commonwealth by offering legal guidance and

wraparound support that complements services provided by the courts and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

- **Enhance Access to Civil Legal Support:** Increase assistance to Kentucky veterans navigating civil legal issues, including family law, estate and legacy planning, housing matters, and minor criminal infractions. OVLS aims to connect veterans to the right resources regardless of location or income level.
- **Foster Law School and Pro Bono Partnerships:** Strengthen collaboration with Kentucky's law schools and local bar associations to encourage the development of veteran-focused externships, legal clinics, and pro bono opportunities.
- **Promote Legal Literacy and Empowerment:** Launch a statewide initiative to increase legal literacy among veterans and their families through educational materials, workshops, and outreach events, particularly in rural or underserved areas.

Together, these goals reflect a continued commitment to expanding OVLS's role as a trusted legal resource and advocate for Kentucky's veteran community.



#### **Contacting the Office of Veteran Legal Services**

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*\*Kentucky Bar Association's Bench & Bar Magazine (March/April 2024 Edition)'s Article.*

Image of Paul E. Patton Eastern Kentucky Veteran Center



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**The Department of Veterans Affairs shall manage the Veterans' Program Trust Fund established by KRS 40.460 by hosting all Board meetings, providing logistical support, recording the minutes of each meeting, and authorizing expenditures once the Board has approved a request for funds.**

# Veterans Program Trust Fund

The Veterans Program Trust Fund (VPTF) was established as part of the Kentucky Vietnam Veterans' Bonus Act on December 23, 1988. The purpose of the VPTF is to direct funding to projects and programs that aid Kentucky's veterans.

The Board of Directors must consist of eleven members appointed by the Governor, representing the organizations detailed below:

| Position  | Representative   | Appointed       | Term Expires           |
|---|------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| The Commissioner  | Whitney Allen    | 04 August 2021  | NA                     |
| The Commissioner's KDVA Designee                              | Juan A. Renaud   | 06 June 2023    | NA                     |
| Governor's Advisory Board for Veterans' Affairs               | Dave Best        | 22 May 2023     | NA                     |
| Joint Executive Council of Veterans Organizations of Kentucky | David Rummler    | 16 July 2020    | 15 July 2023 (pending) |
| American Legion, Kentucky                                     | Richard Dallaire | 02 March 2025   | 01 March 2027          |
| Veterans of Foreign Wars                                      | Carl J. Kaelin   | 03 March 2025   | 02 March 2027          |
| Disabled American Veterans                                    | Dave C. Jarrett  | 04 October 2019 | 15 July 2022 (pending) |
| American Veterans   | Vacant           |                 |                        |
| Kentucky National Guard                                       | Pending          |                 |                        |
| At-large Member   | Vacant           |                 |                        |
| At-large Member   | Timothy Martinez | 8 July 2021     | 15 July 2023 (pending) |

## VPTF's Financial Impact

Funding sources include dollars generated by taxpayers who receive an income tax refund and who contribute all or a portion of that refund to the Trust Fund through the tax check-off on their state income tax form. The Trust Fund also receives a \$5.00 fee that is included in the price of an initial or the renewal of a veterans' license plate. The Trust Fund also graciously accepts tax-deductible contributions from individuals, groups, or corporations. This FY25 update outlines the amounts received from each of these sources.

The Trust Fund began the year with a balance of \$676,650.12. Expenditures during FY25 totaled \$861,593.90. The fiscal year ended with a fund balance, less obligations of \$560,136.70.

## Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balance for FY25

|   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| <b>Revenues:</b>                                    |                     |
| <b>Veteran's Plate Sales (R404)</b>                 | 516,880.74          |
| <b>Donations from Taxes (R809)</b>                  | 14,125.00           |
| <b>KYTC Web Based Renewal Donations (R801)</b>      | 63,949.63           |
| <b>Miscellaneous Donations (R802)</b>               | 117,860.31          |
| <b>Refund of a Prior Year Expenditure (R881)</b>    | 2,283.81            |
| <b>Return of Internal Unused Grant Funds (N163)</b> |                     |
| <b>Interest Income (R771)</b>                       | 29,981.00           |
| <b>Total Revenues</b>                               | <b>745,080.48</b>   |
|   |                     |
|   |                     |
| <b>Expenditures:</b>                                |                     |
| <b>Program Grants (E399)</b>                        | 764,917.90          |
| <b>Program Grants (T463, E257)</b>                  | 85,000.00           |
| <b>Program Administration (E142)</b>                | 11,676.00           |
| <b>Total Expenditures</b>                           | <b>861,593.90</b>   |
|   |                     |
|   |                     |
| <b>Excess Revenues over Expenditures</b>            | <b>(116,513.42)</b> |
|   |                     |
|   |                     |
| <b>Net Change in Fund Balance</b>                   | <b>(116,513.42)</b> |
|   |                     |
|   |                     |
| <b>Fund Balance, Beginning</b>                      | <b>676,650.12</b>   |
| <b>Fund Balance, Ending</b>                         | <b>560,136.70</b>   |

### A Year in Review: FY25

During this reporting period, the VPTF obligated funds for 20 projects that benefited the Commonwealth's veteran population. The Trust Fund Board of Directors also approved additional modifications to the application in conjunction with KDVA's website updates. Application enhancements, which have continued since FY20, have significantly improved the quality of grant proposals and the effectiveness of Trust Fund expenditures.

## FY25 Meeting Minutes at a Glance

The remaining pages of the KDVA FY25 Annual Report are dedicated to highlighting the scope of projects undertaken and/or supported by funds obligated and dispersed by the VPTF during FY25. The Board of Directors convened four times during FY25: 18 September 2024, 10 December 2024, 12 March 2025, and 11 June 2025. For each meeting, the organization, funding request, purpose, and award amounts are outlined:

### Kentucky Veterans Program Trust Fund Board Meeting 18 September 2024

**Organization:** Paws-Ability, Inc.

**Request:** \$10,000 to cover the expenses of training and placing two service dogs with local veterans or first responders struggling with PTSD. Stipulations that it only goes to veterans and no salaries.

**Board's Award:** The Board voted to approve an obligation of \$10,000. Motion was made by David Best (GAB) and seconded by David Rummel (JECVO). The motion for approval unanimously carried.

**Organization:** Kentucky Aviation Historical Society, Inc.

**Request:** \$25,000 to provide a two-day festival highlighting the history of aviation and providing a venue for service members to enjoy.

**Board's Award:** The Board voted to approve an obligation of \$25,000.

Motion made by David Rummel (JECVO) and seconded by Carl Kaelin (VFW). The motion unanimously carried.

**Organization:** HorseSensing

**Request:** \$20,000 to provide 9 months of support for homeless veterans in HorseSensing's residential therapeutic job training and placement program.

**Board's Award:** The Board voted to approve an obligation of up to \$20,000.

Motion made by David Rummel (JECVO) and seconded by Juan Renaud (KDVA). The motion unanimously carried.

**Organization:** Kentucky Habitat for Humanity, Inc.

**Request:** \$90,000 to provide critical home repairs for low, to extremely low-income Kentucky veterans.

**Board's Award:** The Board voted to approve an obligation of \$90,000.

Motion made by Carl Kaelin (VFW) and seconded by David Best (GAB). The motion for approval unanimously carried.

## Kentucky Veterans Program Trust Fund Board Meeting 10 December 2024

**Organization:** Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Chapter 003

**Request:** \$3,920 to replace old Honor Guard Uniforms.

**Board's Award:** The Board voted to approve an obligation of \$3,920.

Motion made by Carl Kaelin (VFW) and seconded by David Best (GAB). The motion for approval unanimously carried.

**Organization:** St. Vincent De Paul Louisville

**Request:** \$50,000 to provide affordable housing to veterans who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, or who have experience homelessness in the past.

**Board's Award:** The Board voted to approve an obligation of \$25,000.

Motion made by Juan Renaud (KDVA Designee) to amend and specify that funds only be used for gap funding to help only KY veterans pay for housing. seconded by Carl Kaelin (VFW). The motion unanimously carried.

**Organization:** National Association for Black Veterans (NABVETS), Inc.

**Request:** \$4,000 to purchase updated software subscriptions to VetPro that allows access to VA data which supports veterans claims and benefits.

**Board's Award:** The Board voted to approve an obligation of up to \$4,000.

David Best (GAB) with an addendum pending research regarding the purchasing of software and codifying the use in conjunction with US Dept of Veterans Affairs and seconded by David Rummler (JECVO). The motion unanimously carried.

**Organization:** Centerstone Military Services

**REQUEST:** \$50,000 to provide a safety net of confidential counseling services at no to low-cost for veterans, service members, and military families who are unable or ineligible to access other service options.

**BOARD'S AWARD:** The Board voted to approve an obligation of \$50,000.

Motion made by David Best (GAB) to specify that funds be used only for KY veterans, servicemembers, and military families and seconded by Juan Renaud (KDVA Designee). The motion for approval unanimously carried.

**Organization:** Louisville Armed Forces Committee

**Request:** \$10,000 to honor Armed Forces Day with active service members along with veterans of every branch of service.

**Board's Award:** The Board voted to approve an obligation of \$10,000.

Motion made by Carl Kaelin (VFW) and seconded by David Rummler (JECVO). The motion unanimously carried.

## Kentucky Veterans Program Trust Fund Board Meeting 12 March 2025

**Organization:** Honor Flight Kentucky

**Request:** \$75,000 to fly Kentucky veterans to Washington, DC for an all-expense paid trip to visit memorial sites.

**Board's Award:** The Board voted to approve an obligation of \$75,000.

Motion made by Juan Renaud (KDVA) and seconded by Carl Kaelin (VFW).

The motion for approval unanimously carried.

**Organization:** Hopkins Co. Union Statue Committee

**Request:** \$55,000 to build a Union Civil War statue in Hopkins Co.

**Board's Award:** The Board voted to approve an obligation of \$55,000.

Motion made by David Best (GAB) and seconded by Richard Dallaire (American Legion). The motion unanimously carried.

**Organization:** Veterans Resources United of Central Kentucky (VRUCK)

**Request:** \$15,175 to partner with the Lexington Legends on their Military Appreciation Day and host a Veteran's Resource Day.

**Board's Award:** The Board voted to approve an obligation of \$7,500.

Motion made by David Best (GAB) and seconded by Juan Renaud (KDVA).

The motion for approval carried 4-2 with 1 member abstaining.

**Organization:** The Kentucky Veterans Hall of Fame

**Request:** \$50,000 to honor Kentucky veterans who have honorably served and continued to serve in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

**Board's Award:** The Board voted to approve an obligation of \$50,000. Motion made by David Best (GAB) and seconded by Richard Dallaire (American Legion). The motion for approval unanimously carried.

**Organization:** Homeless Veterans Program (Interagency)

**Request:** \$10,000 to host a 5K fundraiser to bring awareness to veterans currently unhoused.

**Board's Award:** The Board voted to approve an obligation of \$10,000. Motion made by David Best (GAB) and seconded by Carl Kaelin (VFW). The motion unanimously carried.

## Kentucky Veterans Program Trust Fund Board Meeting 11 June 2025

**Organization:** Veterans Memorial Park of Kentucky, Inc.

**Request:** \$35,840 to educate visitors about the Mexican War and the Texas War for Independence.

**Board's Award:** The Board voted to approve an obligation of \$35,840.

Motion made by Carl Kaelin (VFW) and seconded by Juan Renaud (KDVA).

The motion for approval unanimously carried.

**Organization:** Fire Mission Ministries

**Request:** \$19,000 to provide veterans with a safe place to heal from addiction, offering them help to reintegrate into society.

**Board's Award:** The Board voted to approve an obligation of \$19,000.

Motion made by Richard Dallaire (American Legion) and seconded by Juan Renaud (KDVA).

The motion unanimously carried.

**Organization:** Kentucky Historical Society

**Request:** \$25,000 to showcase and provide the history of Kentucky's women military veterans.

**Board's Award:** The Board voted to approve an obligation of \$25,000.

Motion made by Juan Renaud (KDVA) and seconded by David Rummel (JECVO).

The motion unanimously carried.

**Organization:** Kentucky Aviation Historical Society (Bowman Field Foundation)

**Request:** \$35,000 to provide a two-day festival highlighting the history of the field of aviation and providing a venue for all service members free of charge.

**Board's Award:** The Board voted to approve an obligation of \$35,000. Motion made by Carl Kaelin (VFW) and seconded by Richard Dallaire (American Legion). The motion for approval unanimously carried.

**Organization:** Camp Hero Inc.

**Request:** \$50,000 to provide mental health support services for veterans and first responders, using the outdoors and nature.

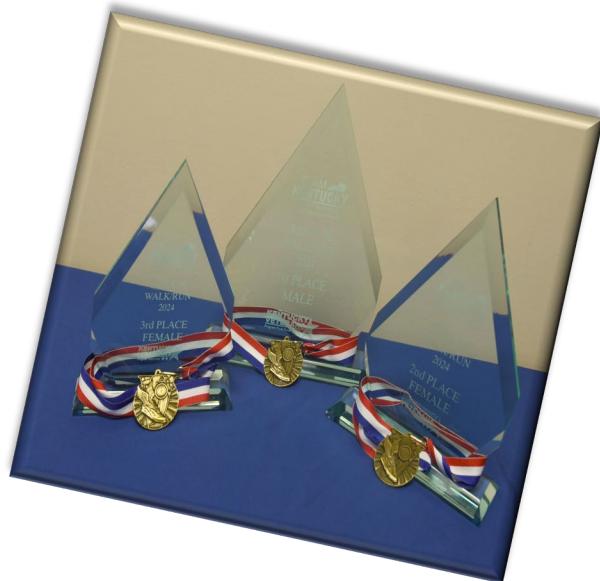
**Board's Award:** The Board tabled this award pending additional program information. Upon receipt of supporting documentation, the board approved a total obligation of \$25,000. This funding is restricted to covering lodging, meals, and equipment for veterans only. No portion of the obligated amount may be used for outdoor instruction or mental health program support. The roll call vote passed with six (6) approvals.

**Organization:** Visual Presentations Inc.

**Request:** \$10,000 to hold a KY Veterans' Parade to honor and celebrate our veteran community.

**Board's Award:** The Board voted to approve an obligation of \$10,000.

Motion made by Carl Kaelin (VFW) and seconded by Juan Renaud (KDVA). The motion for approval unanimously carried.



If you are an agency or organization of the Commonwealth seeking to fund a program and/or project that benefits Kentucky veterans, please visit:  
<https://veterans.ky.gov/veterans-trust-fund/Pages/default.aspx>  
to apply for funding from the Veterans Program Trust Fund (VPTF).

**“THE WILLINGNESS WITH WHICH OUR  
YOUNG PEOPLE ARE LIKELY TO SERVE IN  
ANY WAR, NO MATTER HOW JUSTIFIED,  
SHALL BE DIRECTLY PROPORTIONAL AS  
TO HOW THEY PERCEIVE THE VETERANS  
OF EARLIER WARS WERE TREATED AND  
APPRECIATED BY THEIR NATION.”**

**-GEORGE WASHINGTON**

(ATTRIBUTED)



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