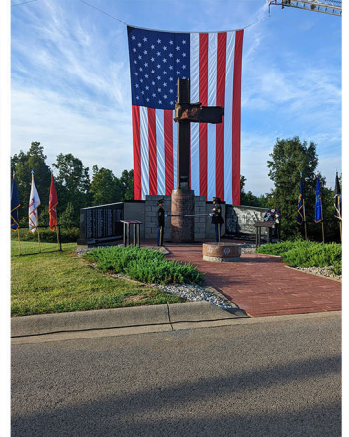


Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs

Serving those who have served the Commonwealth and our great Nation



FY 2024-2028 Strategic Plan

Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs
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KDVA Winner of 2021, 2022 and 23 VA Abraham Pillar of Excellence Award

A. CABINET NUMBER (2 DIGITS) & CABINET NAME

31 – General Government Cabinet

B. DEPARTMENT NUMBER (3 DIGITS) & DEPARTMENT NAME

074 – Kentucky Department of Veteran Affairs (KDVA)

C. OFFICE/UNIT NUMBER (OPTIONAL) & OFFICE/UNIT NAME

N/A

D. AGENCY STRATEGIC PLAN ORIGINATION DATE

July 01, 2024

E. AGENCY STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE/REVISION DATE

F. AGENCY STRATEGIC PLAN REVISION NUMBER

N/A

I. AGENCY MISSION STATEMENT

Educate, assist, and serve veterans and their families to “ENSURE” they receive the benefits and services under federal and state laws.

II. AGENCY VISION STATEMENT

To be a transformational organization which serves as a “STRATEGIC PLATFORM” for advocacy, initiatives and comprehensive “wrap-around” services for the Commonwealth’s veterans and their families through investment in KDVA’s brand, infrastructure, legacy, and employee-talent.

III. AGENCY ORGANIZATIONAL CORE VALUES

A. COMMITMENT TO OUR CUSTOMERS “THE VETERAN” – Provide the best possible care and services to our veterans and their families with compassion, patience, and professionalism.

B. FOSTER A CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE – Create a culture of dedication, compassion, and selfless service where synchronized efforts create superior veteran-centered care and services. Positive leader/team engagements, “bottom-up” feedback/input and recognition of achievements are always the “norm”, not the exception.

C. BOLDNESS – Willingness to explore innovative ideas, take “responsible” risks and act innovatively in achieving our agency’s goals and objectives.

D. PASSION – Strive to become the best possible professionals who provide superior customer care and services our veterans and their families truly deserve. We should come to work “loving” our veterans.

E. DRIVE INNOVATION/OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE – Empower and equip our KDVA teammates with resources and tools to become analytical and strategic thinkers. We should be strategic in all our actions, always forward planning and thinking two to three steps ahead of our current situation.

F. ETHICAL INTEGRITY – Strive to perform all duties and functions in a legal, moral, and virtuous manner reflective of the honorable service of the veterans we serve.

G. INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP ACCOUNTABILITY – Treat each other with honesty, respect, and integrity. Every leader or team member is accountable to themselves and each other.

H. COLLABORATIVE/ENGAGING PARTNER – As an agency, KDVA will work together and with community, corporate and government partners to produce the highest quality of life for Kentucky's veterans and their families.

IV. STATEMENT OF ALIGNMENT WITH GOVERNOR'S STRATEGIC THEMES/GOALS

A. SUPPORTING SENIORS AND MOST VULNERABLE

- Provide excellent healthcare coverage and services to veteran center residents ensuring they experience a nurturing, stable environment, and quality of life.

- Ensure Commonwealth’s veterans and family members are aware of critical healthcare (i.e., mental health, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), Suicide Prevention, etc.) resources and services available for them at the federal, state, and local levels.
- Collaborate with state agencies, such as the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) and Cabinet for Justice and Public Safety, to synchronize service coverage for special veteran’s groups and populations.

B. INVEST IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Establish strategic partnerships with businesses, community organizations and federal/state/local government agencies to create a viable veteran talent pipeline for Commonwealth’s businesses and companies.
- Collaborate with the Education and Labor Cabinet in developing strategies and programs to attract veterans to work and live in Kentucky.
- Educate the businesses and companies on the value of hiring veterans and their family members.

C. STRONGER COMMUNITY

- Serve as the lead advocate and voice for the Commonwealth’s veteran community.
- Encourage veterans’ involvement and service in their communities.
- Promote veteran service organizations’ (Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Veterans, American Legion, etc.) community involvement and successes.

D. JOBS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (GROW KENTUCKY’S ECONOMY)

- Support the Governor and his administration’s initiatives to make Kentucky a place of destination for veterans and their families.
- Double the current Commonwealth’s annual benefits compensation revenue for veterans and dependents over the next four years.

E. SUPPORTING THE MILITARY

- Propose/support, veteran-friendly legislation which improves the quality of life for veterans and their families living in Kentucky.
- Actively recruit “out of state” or “transitioning to civilian life” military personnel to work and live in Kentucky.
- Adopt and implement Department of Veterans Administration’s (VA) and “sister” states’ best practices and lessons learned into KDVA’s operations.



Stronger Community/Grow Kentucky's Economy: COL Robert E. Spiller Bowling Green Veterans Center Groundbreaking Ceremony, Kentucky Transpark, Bowling Green, KY on Wednesday, November 02, 2022. The 8,000-square-foot, 60-bed facility is expected to be completed in 2024.

V. STATEMENT OF ALIGNMENT WITH AGENCY'S BUDGET REQUEST & 6-YEAR CAPITAL PLAN

The goals and objectives outlined within the department are within the requested levels of funding in the 2024-2026 Biennial Budget submission and the 2024-2030 Capital Plan.

VI. SITUATION ANALYSIS/ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

A. ORGANIZATIONAL DESCRIPTION

KDVA is an approximate 800-person agency dedicated to the advocacy and service of the Commonwealth's approximately 300,000 veterans and their families. Established in 1998, KDVA, with its four (4) veterans' centers (nursing homes), five (5) state veterans' cemeteries and numerous benefits division offices, is strategically dispersed across the Commonwealth to ensure every veteran in Kentucky has access to its services. The duties of KDVA are outlined in KRS Chapter 40.310 with the focus on veterans' benefits/entitlements counseling, skilled long-term healthcare services,



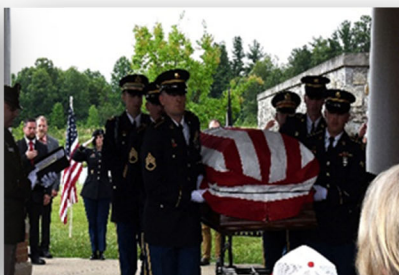
Governor Andy Beshear signs House Bill 2 at the capitol building in Frankfort, KY, Feb. 15, 2023. The bill granted the additional funding needed for the Robert E. Spiller Bowling Green Veteran Center. due to have construction completed in 2024.

dignified interments (military burials), and dedicated state outreach programs to support special population groups such as disabled, homeless and women veterans. KDVA's motto "*Serving Kentucky Veterans*" sums up its work - "ensuring that Kentucky's veterans receive all the benefits and services they have earned."

B. SWOT ANALYSIS

- Agency's strengths and opportunities for success:
 - Experienced and dedicated leadership and staff at all levels of KDVA.
 - Out of the box, innovative thinking of new leaders and staff.
 - Governor's support of KDVA's mission and obligations to the Commonwealth's veterans and their families.
 - Valuable partnerships with stakeholders at national, state, and local level.
 - Established synchronization meetings, tracking systems and tools which allow effective bottom-up feedback, and effective top-down decision making.
 - Passion to love and serve veterans by KDVA employees at all levels of the agency.
- Agency's areas of improvements/weaknesses:
 - Historically low salaries (especially healthcare positions) and tight healthcare talent market which prohibit the agency from effectively competing with private and federal competitors for good talent.
 - Limited budget to support current mission or support of new personnel staffing, priorities, and projects.
 - Poor brand recognition of KDVA across the Commonwealth.
 - Prevention of outside interest to influence or implement initiatives on agency, to include unfunded mandates.
- Opportunities for operational success:
 - Veteran-friendly and supportive Governor's administration which focuses efforts and resources on improving the quality of life of the Commonwealth's veterans and their families.
 - Potential expansion of services to parts of Kentucky and untap veteran's markets not covered in the past (east/southeast Kentucky, Cumberland's region, and Ft. Campbell/Hopkinsville community, etc.).
 - "State-friendly" United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) whose policies and outreach initiatives value states' "veteran agencies/veteran services" as allies and teammates.
 - Incorporation of the latest Human Resources (HR) best practices and Personnel Cabinet HR/Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) initiatives into KDVA operations to recruit and retain top talent, create an inclusive winning culture of service, and improve customer service.

- Capitalize on latest VA federal funding opportunities (grants funding, etc.), passed legislative bills (The Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2022 (PACT ACT), etc.) and initiatives (Governor’s and Mayor’s Challenges to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families, small business, etc.) to improve KDVA customer service and community outreach capabilities.
- Expand KDVA services and outreach capabilities to reach previously ignored veteran populations such as minorities, women, and other groups.
- Funding opportunity to upgrade/modernize KDVA facilities and infrastructure.
- Threats to the agency’s mission and objectives:
 - Critical shortages in qualified healthcare professionals which impacts veteran centers’ resident census and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Star Ratings.
 - Potential budget constraints/reduction which disrupts/severely impacts may reduce services provided to veterans and their families, as well as safety of KDVA employees at its various facilities and properties.
 - Partnering with organizations who lack appropriate credentials, credibility or lack the proper operation, training, and maintenance structure to properly conduct their mission.
 - Sudden shift in public perception/political priorities to support veterans and veteran-related programs.
 - Resistant management – potential elements of the agency resistant to cultural or institutional change to meet new mission requirements and objectives.



“Ensuring that Kentucky's veterans receive all the benefits and services they have earned.”



“Serving Kentucky’s Veterans Since 1998.”

VII. MEASURABLE GOALS, OBJECTIVES & KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

A. GOAL 1: ESTABLISH KDVA AS THE PREMIER VETERAN SERVICE AGENCY FOR THE COMMONWEALTH AND THE NATION.

- Objective 1: Serve as a reputable connection/liason between VA, veterans and veteran service organizations.
- Objective 2: Double the current Commonwealth’s annual benefits compensation revenue for veterans and dependents over the next four years.
- Objective 3: Implement a comprehensive strategic communication and marketing plan using television, radio, and social medial platforms to enhance KDVA’s brand, programs, and initiatives.
- Objective 4: Leverage national/regional VA assets and veteran service organizations such as the VA Veterans Experience Office, Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs and National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs Directors (NASDVA) to execute regional outreach events in selective veteran markets throughout the Commonwealth.
- Objective 5: Strive to achieve national/state/local level recognition for top performing programs and employees.
 - Submit best practices, programs, and individuals for awards such as the VA Abraham Lincoln Pillar of Excellence, National Cemetery Administration (NCA) Stewardship Award, State Transformation in Action Recognition (STAR) Award, the Governor’s Ambassador Award, etc.
 - Established employee monetary/non-monetary recognition program.



B. GOAL 2: RECRUIT AND RETAIN PROFESSIONAL, DEDICATED, COMPASSIONATE TALENT DEDICATED TO THE PURPOSE AND MISSION WHICH KDVA SERVES.

- Objective 1: Recruit and retain resolute, enthusiastic teammates with the right experience, management skills and technical knowledge to accomplish KDVA’s strategic objectives.
- Objective 2: Increase KDVA personnel end strength to 90% of mandated personnel cap of approximately 1,000 personnel by 2026.

- Implement current HR best practices and lessons learned in KDVA’s hiring, professional development, onboarding, and recruiting processes.
- Increase KDVA employees benefits and salaries, especially healthcare professionals and ancillary healthcare positions, to a level competitive to federal and private sector competitors.
- Promote working for KDVA as a “commitment of service”, regardless of position or role in the organization.
- Implement a “non-paying” summer internship or cooperative-study program for college/high school students and veterans interested in careers in state government.
- Expand the number of partnership opportunities between Office of Kentucky Veterans Centers with state nursing school programs.
- Focus on diverse groups, schools and specific career fields which will enhance KDVA’s workplace culture and mission capabilities.



Eastern Kentucky Veterans Center Restorative Department receives the Governor’s Ambassador Award 2023 for Teamwork from Governor Andy Beshear.

- Objective 3: Implement multi-layer/multi-step hiring/talent selection process and standard operation procedures at all levels of the agency.
- Objective 4: Hire critical leadership and program management positions to enhance KDVA capabilities. Fill the General Counsel/Executive Director of Office of Kentucky Veterans Legal Services, Executive Staff Advisor, Staff Assistant and Policy Specialist positions by end of FY2025.
- Objective 5: Expand professional development and certification/mentorship programs for leaders, program managers and teammates at all levels of KDVA.
 - Incorporate professional development training in master calendar/regular training cycle (weekly, monthly, quarterly).
 - Align professional development training with the Governor’s Office and Personnel Cabinet’s employees’ professional development goals and initiatives.
 - Establish a DE&I Council for the agency by FY2025.
 - Encourage KDVA specialty positions personnel to achieve higher-level professional certification training (have certification training in their fields) or education to build a strong bench of agency’s experts and certified professionals.

C. GOAL 3: EXPAND KDVA’S VETERAN SERVICES AND OUTREACH CAPABILITIES.

- Objective 1: Increase Benefits Branch Division Veterans Benefits Field Representatives (VBFRs) personnel strength of 23 VBFRs to 33 VBFRs (10 VBFRs) by end of FY2026 to meet the increasing

demand of requests of services from the Commonwealth's approximately 300,000 veterans and their family members.

- Objective 2: Establish Office of Kentucky Veterans Services (OKVS) budget and capabilities to meet Commonwealth's increasing outreach missions, tackle current-day veterans' challenges (such as mental, suicide prevention, etc.) and reaching veteran populations (such as disabled, minorities and women) previously ignored in the past.
- Objective 3: Increase annual joint-events with VA and state government partners from two (2) per year to six (6) per year by end of FY2025.
- Objective 4: Increase KDVA annual sponsored state/regional outreach events from four (4) per year to eight (8) per year by end of FY2025.
- Objective 5: Establish a comprehensive marketing campaign to include use of commercials, direct mailing, social media platforms, web-based technology, and word-of-mouth campaign.
- Objective 6: Secure federal/state grants to augment operational funds used to execute veterans outreach events, initiatives, and programs.
- Objective 7: Connect, engage, and provide KDVA services to 8,000 Kentucky women veterans by end of FY2026.
- Objective 8: Establish comprehensive Suicide Prevention Program to reduce and eventually eliminate suicides rate for Kentucky veterans.
 - Reduce Kentucky Veterans annual suicide rate by 50% of VA's current data tracking of Kentucky veterans' suicide rates since 2017.



D. GOAL 4: ENHANCE KDVA OPERATIONAL AND SUSTAINMENT EXCELLENCE.

- Objective 1: Achieve/maintain Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS) gold standard of CMS 5-star ratings for our veterans centers.
- Objective 2: Achieve at least 90% on the NCA assessments.
- Objective 3: Exceed federal and state regulatory audits and accounting standards for appropriated/non-appropriated funds spent on programs and items supporting KDVA's mission.
- Objective 4: Establish agency-wide lifecycle tracking system to forecast replacement or upgrade of aging equipment, facilities, and technology infrastructures/systems.



Flags at the gravesites for Memorial Day in the Kentucky Veterans Cemetery Southeast in Hayden, KY, May 29, 2023.

- Objective 5: Transition veteran centers' admission process to a paperless admission agreement to decrease or reduce admission decision time for veterans and their families.
- Objective 6: Conduct deliberate budget forecasting and planning for capital projects, infrastructure upgrades, maintenance pool operations. Ensure the budget forecast reflects inflation and incidental costs.
- Objective 7: Implement a private room and board rate increase schedule to offset inflationary costs.
- Objective 8: Analyze/implement Medicare billing opportunities to reduce operational costs when cost effective.
- Objective 9: Secure federal/state grants and obligated funds for capital projects supporting KDVA cemeteries and veteran centers' facilities/properties in need of expansion, renovation, repair, or upgrade.

E. GOAL 5: IMPLEMENT AN EFFECTIVE AGENCY CRITICAL INFORMATION REQUIREMENT/ KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM TO MAKE EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AND POLICYMAKING DECISIONS IMPACTING COMMONWEALTH'S VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

- Objective 1: Establish/regularly update Commissioner's Critical Information Requirements (CCIRs) to ensure decisions and the passing of critical information across the agency occur in a rapid, efficient, and timely manner.
- Objective 2: Leverage VA/state agencies, Legislative Research Commission, and nonprofit organizations, like the Council of State Government (CSG), databases and resources to develop, implement, and shape veteran-friendly policies for Kentucky.
- Objective 3: Conduct quarterly/monthly/weekly synchronization meetings between agency's leadership, staff, and managers on the progress of the agency's priority programs, projects and operational initiatives.
- Objective 4: Incorporate guidance and recommendations from the Governor's Advisory Board (GAB), Kentucky Veterans Program Trust Fund (VPTF) and Women Veterans Coordinating Committee (WVCC) into KDVA's policies and priorities.
- Objective 5: Establish a Knowledge Management office/database system to analyze, collect and process veterans' information to create metric products for KDVA to make effective decisions and policies which will improve KDVA's operations, collaboration with strategic partners, and marketing strategy to reach the Commonwealth's veterans community.



Veterans participating in songwriter program at one of KDVA's four veterans centers.
