

Oklahoma Senate Committee on Appropriations

2015-16 Performance Report

Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs

AGENCY MISSION STATEMENT:

In partnership with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs, State and Local Agencies, and Veterans Service Organizations, the State of Oklahoma will facilitate in providing to the Veterans residing in the State of Oklahoma the highest quality support and care available anywhere in the Nation.

LEAD ADMINISTRATOR:

Myles Deering, Executive Director (405) 521-6098

GOVERNANCE:

The Oklahoma Veterans Commission is the controlling board of the Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs. It is composed of nine members, of which at least 8 are honorably discharged Veterans; provided three of the members shall be Veterans of the Vietnam Conflict and one shall be a Veteran of the Persian Gulf Wars. The members are selected in the following manner: The state executive board or committee of the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Disabled American Veterans, the Paralyzed Veterans of America, the Military Order of the Purple Heart, and the National Guard Association of Oklahoma shall each submit to the Governor a list of five persons qualified to serve as members of the Oklahoma Veterans Commission. The Governor shall name one member from each of these organizations to serve on the Commission. The Governor shall also appoint three members at large, one of whom may be a non-Veteran on the condition they have a family member residing in one of the state's 7 Veterans Centers. Members of the Oklahoma Veterans Commission shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor. In addition, it administers the veterans program on Oklahoma through a Director appointed by and responsible to the Commission. The Office of the Director is maintained in the Central Office which is located in the Veterans Memorial Building, Oklahoma City, OK. From this location, the Director exercises operational oversight of the two principal operations of the Department: The Oklahoma Veterans Centers and the Claims and Benefits Division.

GOVERNANCE ACCOUNTABILITY:

I will be sending the copies of the minutes for Commission meetings the agency has had since January 2015 in electronic format.

Is there an attendance policy for board members/commissioners? If so, is it being followed?

There is no attendance policy for Commissioners. However, historically we have complied with the attendance requirements. Currently, all of the nine Commissioners are filled.

MODERNIZATION EFFORTS:

Savings and efficiencies achieved this past fiscal year.

- Replaced Care-Tracker (Electronic Medical Record) with Point-Click Care resulting in \$61,000 savings.

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- Hired Safety Programs Administrator that would result in continued savings in workers compensation expenditures;
- Added natural gas cars to our fleet;
- Increased use of P-cards resulted in rebate of \$51,151 for FY 15.

Are there efforts that have been successful which you believe could serve as a model for other state agencies seeking to keep costs minimal? Information about how an agency reform or update has resulted in better services for citizens or less burden for businesses?

- ODVA is partnering with the Oklahoma Works initiative to help bring the state's workforce resources together and connecting employers and Veteran job-seekers with information and programs.
- ODVA is gathering with the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (ODMHSAS) to better serve the mental health needs of Oklahoma Veterans.
- ODVA is a partner with Oklahoma City's Homeless Alliance and the Community Service Council of Greater Tulsa to combat Veteran homelessness.
- Increase community outreach through participation in Veterans Town Hall meetings, Veterans Stand Downs, and online social media (Facebook and Twitter).

CORE MISSION:

What services are you required to provide which are outside of your core mission? Are any services you provide duplicated or replicated by another agency? Are there services which are core to your mission which you are unable to perform because of requirements to perform non-core services elsewhere?

We do not regularly provide services which are outside of our core mission.

One of the key components of our core mission is assisting Veterans obtain federal VA benefits including disability compensation, pension, survivor benefits, healthcare, education, etc.. The Federal VA and other private organizations replicate this service to some degree. ODVA is the only service provider in the state with a comprehensive network of full-time, professional Veterans Service Representatives (VSR) that cover all urban and rural areas. Our VSRs are accredited by the USDVA to represent Veterans in all claims actions including representation before the Board of Veterans Appeals. ODVA is named power of attorney over approximately 21,000 Veteran's claims that have been awarded almost \$32,000,000 in monthly federal benefits.

There are no core mission services that we are unable to perform because of non-core services.

PRIVATE ALTERNATIVES:

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Are any of the services which are performed by the agency also performed in the private sector in Oklahoma? In other states? Has the agency been approached by any foundation, for-profit or not-for-profit corporation with efforts to privatize some of the functions of the agency?

Nursing Care is provided in the private sector; however, the level of care is different than that provided in the State Homes and the private facilities are not participants in the State Home Program for per diem to eligible residents, nor are they eligible to participate in the State Home Construction Grant program with a 65% match for construction related programs.

Every state has State Veterans Homes Program for long-term nursing care.

No. The agency has not been approached by any foundation, for-profit or not-for-profit Corporation with efforts to privatize some of the functions of the agency.