

Oklahoma Senate Committee on Appropriations

2017-18 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) 523-4001

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 in 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 Vezey Veterans Complex, 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:

Recent Commission meeting minutes have been posted in the agency website.

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

There is no attendance policy for Commissioners. We have to have a quorum in order to hold a Commission meeting. Currently, all of the nine Commissioner seats are filled.

MODERNIZATION EFFORTS:

Savings and efficiencies achieved this past fiscal year.

- Pursuit of Past Due Accounts/Minimize future delinquent payments: Seeking online payments capability to allow Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs (ODVA) to obtain authorization from our nursing home residents to initiate

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scheduled/recurring drafts from the resident's bank accounts on a monthly basis for maintenance charges payable.

- Updated delivery method for training through on-line delivery for improved tracking and compliance of training requirements.
- Monitoring continued savings in workers compensation expenditures;
- Reduction of maximum maintenance charge of \$4,115 to \$3,925 due to a decrease in the cost of care. Reduction of maximum maintenance will be effective January 01, 2018.

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- Education partnership with the Oklahoma State Board of Regents and Oklahoma National Guard for the joint education fair for veterans was successful. We anticipate expanding this partnership and event(s) to better connect Oklahoma veterans with high quality education and training opportunities.
- ODVA- Veterans Employment Program has partnered with several other state agencies, non-profit organizations, and private industry to bring employment services and hiring events to Oklahoma veterans and their families. One of ODVA's goals for 2018 is to expand efforts to partner with organizations to promote veteran entrepreneurship and business ownership.
- Efforts are on-going to create a statewide Veterans Registry in accordance with HB 1198 and SB 456 which were signed into law and became effective November 01, 2017.

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 that 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 (VSRs) 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. As of the end of November 2017, ODVA represents 29,238 claims (23% increase) with a monthly benefit value of \$42,795,069 (21% increase).

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

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PRIVATE ALTERNATIVES:

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 provided by State Veterans Homes is basically the same as the nursing care provided in the private sector. 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. Private sector nursing homes are dependent on Medicare and Medicaid services for payment and reimbursement. However, some of the nursing homes have contracted with the Federal VA programs for per diem payments.

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

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.