



A Review of the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs: Budget, Structure, and Programs

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December 2, 2021

The Heinz Endowments provided support for this work. The views expressed are those of the Clearinghouse researcher(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Heinz Endowments.

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Introduction

This report represents the second phase of work in the development of a policy agenda for military-connected individuals in Pennsylvania. In the first phase of work, a literature review was conducted to describe the transition needs of military-connected individuals in Pennsylvania. This phase II report provides information related to the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) organizational structure and the funding activities that are within its purview. In addition, this report offers details regarding a wide range of veteran programs. The third phase of this effort will compare Pennsylvania's veteran related policies to those of peer states. Note, investigations into corresponding legislation, program implementation, data-collection efforts, and program effectiveness are ongoing and will feature more prominently in reports as the policy landscape continues to become clearer.

Ultimately, this series of reports will serve as the justification for a policy agenda for veterans and other military-connected individuals in Pennsylvania. The policy agenda will propose effective roles of state government based on evidence and will provide any necessary recommendations for adjustments to current operating procedures.

The information contained within this current report relies on the DMVA website and other online government sources (i.e., Pennsylvania's Independent Fiscal Office, Pennsylvania Governor's Office, and the Pennsylvania General Assembly). The structure of this report includes the following sections: (1) a summary of the mission of the DMVA; (2) an overview of the DMVA's budget; (3) a breakdown of the structure of the DMVA's offices and descriptions of its advisory boards; and (4) an explanation of state-provided veteran programs, benefits, and services.

Mission

Pennsylvania's DMVA has a dual mission: (1) to provide quality service to Pennsylvania's veterans and their families and 2) to oversee and support members of the Pennsylvania National Guard (PNG). DMVA fulfills the first part of the mission by (a) providing resources and assistance to Pennsylvania's nearly 800,000 veterans and their families and (b) delivering quality care for aging and disabled veterans. The second part of the mission is addressed by (a) preparing the PNG for combat; (b) performing worldwide combat and combat-support operations; (c) providing global reach and the projection of U.S. military power in support of national objectives; and (d) providing trained personnel to support state and local authorities in times of natural disaster or civil strife, at the command of the Pennsylvania Governor.

The DMVA is overseen by the Adjutant General, a cabinet-level position that is appointed by the Pennsylvania Governor. The DMVA and PNG are headquartered at Fort Indiantown Gap in Lebanon County. DMVA employs approximately 19,000 military and 3,000 civilian personnel in 90 communities statewide.

Budget

Pennsylvania’s state budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 was \$96.6 billion. Many groups are involved in analyzing state spending, both planned and actual spending. For instance, the Independent Fiscal Office (IFO) describes DMVA spending in terms of *activities* (IFO, 2021) (e.g., veteran homes, outreach to veterans, Keystone State ChalleNGe Academy), while the Governor Tom Wolf Executive Budget 2021-2022 (Governor’s Executive Budget) (PA Governor’s Office, 2021) describes spending in terms of *departments* (e.g., DMVA, Treasury, Aging). The DMVA describes itself in terms of *offices* (e.g., Office of Veterans Affairs, Office of Military Affairs, Office of Administration, Office of Facilities and Engineering), and these are somewhat related to the activities mentioned in the IFO’s Performance Based Budget. Beyond the differences that describe *how* the money is used, there are also differences in the *types* of money that are used (e.g., federal appropriations, state appropriations, grants). These different categorizations present challenges when linking money to the offices that are listed in this document. For the purposes of this report, and because it was more detailed than the Governor’s Executive Budget, the IFO’s Performance Based Budget is used as the primary source document.

In 2020-2021, the DMVA budget was approximately \$398 million or .4% of Pennsylvania’s entire state budget. This budget consists of three sources of funds: \$212 million from the federal government, \$157 million appropriated by the state, and \$26 million from augmentations¹ and restricted funds² (PA Governor’s Office, 2021).

The following table lists the total spending, in order of expenditure amounts, from all sources for the six primary activities that DMVA facilitates. Percentages indicate the percent of the total DMVA budget devoted to the listed activity.

Table 1

Percentage of Total Budget Allocated to DMVA Activities

Activity	Spending in Millions	Percentage of Total DMVA Budget
Veterans Homes	\$233.1	58%
Facilities Maintenance	\$82.2	21%
PA National Guard and Military Support	\$38.5	10%
Administration	\$21.9	5%
Outreach to Veterans	\$15.0	4%
Keystone State ChalleNGe Academy	\$7.1	2%

¹ “Monies such as institutional billings or fees credited to a specific appropriation of state revenues. An augmentation can usually be spent for those purposes authorized for the appropriation it augments. Although augmentations usually are appropriated in general terms with no specific dollar limits, federal aid monies must be appropriated specifically” (PA Governor’s Office, 2021, p.27).

² “Identifies funds which are in a restricted account and which may only be spent for very limited purposes related to the state appropriation” (PA Governor’s Office, 2021, p.21).

Source: IFO, 2021

The Pennsylvania government also provides support to veterans through a variety of DMVA-related and DMVA-unrelated services and supports. Some examples of government support to veterans unrelated to the DMVA budget include the following:

- 1) The Department of Revenue's³ elimination of state veterans' benefits and veterans' disability payments from the definition of income for determining eligibility for the Property Tax and Rent Rebate program (see Act 117 of 2016 – PA Governor's Office, 2021, p.151);
- 2) Individuals or corporations wanting to transfer property to veterans' organizations are exempt from the Realty Transfer tax (PA Governor's Office, 2021, p.247);
- 3) Disabled and/or severely disabled veterans are exempted from the cost of vehicle registration (PA Governor's Office, 2021 p.272);
- 4) State Civil Service Commission performs audits of veterans' preference employment (PA Governor's Office, 2021, p.296);
- 5) PA Council on the Arts, in partnership with DMVA, offers art activities in veteran homes (PA Governor's Office, 2021, p.303); and
- 6) Veteran's treatment court strategic planning⁴ (PA Governor's Office, 2021 p.693).

One example of non-DMVA government support of DMVA initiatives was identified: the Health and Human Services' support of veterans' homes (\$100.3 million⁵; PA Governor's Office, 2021, p.78). Another example of a non-DMVA government support was the Job Creation Tax Credit, which provided employers a \$2,500 credit for every veteran they hired. This tax credit has ended. For more information, see Act 84 of 2016 for the initiation of the benefit and Act 13 of 2019 for the elimination of the benefit (PA Governor's Office, 2021, p.163).

Structure⁶

The DMVA is organized into five major offices: Veterans Affairs; Administration; Facilities and Engineering; Policy, Planning and Legislative Affairs; and Military Affairs, which is comprised of the Army and the Air National Guard. See Appendix A for a detailed DMVA organizational chart. More information about each of the five major offices is provided below.

Office of Veterans Affairs

Deputy Adjutant General, Veterans Affairs - Brigadier General (PA) Maureen Weigl

The mission of the Office for Veterans Affairs is to provide advice and assistance to Pennsylvania's nearly 800,000 veterans and their families and to provide quality care to aging veterans. The Office for Veterans Affairs is comprised of the following bureaus:

³ The Property Tax and Rent Rebate Program is funded through the lottery fund.

⁴ This represents a federal appropriation.

⁵ Unless otherwise noted, all budget information references the 2020-21 fiscal year.

⁶ From Resolution No. OR-19-009 July 8, 2019.

Bureau of Veterans Programs, Initiatives, Reintegration and Outreach

- Division of Outreach and Reintegration
- Division of Veterans Services and Programs
 - Fort Indiantown Gap
 - Pittsburgh
 - Philadelphia

Bureau of Veterans Homes⁷

- Division of Health Care Services
- Division of Operations
- Veterans Homes
 - Delaware Valley Veterans Home
 - Gino Nerli Veterans Center
 - Hollidaysburg Veterans Home
 - PA Soldiers' and Sailor's Home
 - Southeastern Veterans Center
 - Southwestern Veterans Center

Office of Administration

Director, Patricia Derry

The Office of Administration is responsible for human resources, budget, procurement, records management, office management, publications, reproduction/duplicating services, mailroom operations, and telecommunications and is comprised of the following bureaus:

Bureau of Budget and Finance

- Division of Federal Budgeting
- Division of State Budgeting
- Division of Grants

Bureau of Office Services

- Division of Procurement and Contracting
- Division of Support Services

Office of Facilities and Engineering

Director, Kevin Ferner

The Office of Facilities and Engineering is responsible for the acquisition, management, maintenance, construction, operation, and disposal of all land and facilities that support

⁷ Covid-19 challenges resulted in restructuring the Bureau of Veterans Homes; however, it is unclear if or how this change impacted funding.

the Pennsylvania National Guard. This includes the Fort Indiantown Gap National Guard Training Center, Keystone Conference Center in Lebanon County, approximately 75 PNG armories dispersed throughout Pennsylvania, and the six state veterans' homes. The Office of Facilities and Engineering is comprised of the following bureaus:

Bureau of Facilities Management

- Division of Installation Maintenance
- Division of Field Maintenance
- Division of Facility Support

Bureau of Military Construction and Facilities Management

- Division of Programming and Property Management
- Division of Infrastructure, Energy and Asset Management

Bureau of Design and Project Management

- Division of Engineering and Architecture
- Division of Project Management

Bureau of Environmental Management

- Division of Conservation
- Division of Environmental Compliance
- Division of Environmental Planning

Office of Policy, Planning and Legislative Affairs

Director, Gilbert Durand

The Policy, Planning and Legislative Affairs Office serves as the link between the United States Congress, the Governor of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania General Assembly, and the DMVA. This Office provides the Adjutant General with the following information: policy, planning, and legislative advice; guidance and recommendations on legislation programs; budget activities; protocol; and communications, and it offers external coordination that affects the PNG and the veterans of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Office of Military Affairs

Deputy Adjutant General, Air – Brigadier General Michael J. Regan Jr.

Deputy Adjutant General, Army – Brigadier General Laura A. McHugh

The Office of Military Affairs oversees and supports the PNG and serves as an advocate for Pennsylvania's larger military community to include installations, personnel, and resources from all branches of Service located in Pennsylvania. The PNG is comprised of 19,000 military personnel; 15,000 serve in the Army National Guard (ARNG); 4,000 serve in the Air National Guard (ANG). Pennsylvania supports two major ARNG units and

three Army schools and maintains 75 armories located throughout the state. The Pennsylvania ANG includes three flying wings and several combat support units.

In addition to training, organizing, and equipping military forces, the Office of Military Affairs is connected to the following activities and programs:

- Armory/Facility Rentals
- Civil Air Patrol Pennsylvania Wing
- Liberty USO
- Pennsylvania Military Community Enhancement Commission (PMCEC)
- Pennsylvania Military Museum (Boalsburg)
- Pennsylvania National Guard Military Museum (Annville)
- Pennsylvania Veterans' Memorial

Keystone State Challenge Academy⁸

The Keystone State Challenge Academy's (KSCA) mission is to intervene in, and reclaim, the lives of 16- to 18-year-old high school dropouts from across Pennsylvania by instilling in these youth the values, life skills, education, and self-discipline strategies that are necessary to help these individuals succeed as productive citizens. The KSCA is slated to open in 2022 and will be located at Fort Indiantown Gap. Once open, the KSCA will be a selective and voluntary alternative-education program that lasts 17 months with both residential and post-residential phases. Meals, housing, uniforms, and school supplies are provided at no charge, and there is no charge to attend. There is no military obligation requirement after completing the program. The KSCA is a joint effort between the PA DMVA and the National Guard Bureau in consultation with the PA Department of Education.

Advisory Boards

Two advisory groups have been established to provide guidance to the Adjutant General and the Pennsylvania Governor on veterans' related issues. These groups include the State Veterans Commission and the Pennsylvania Governor's Advisory Council on Veterans Services.

State Veterans Commission

The Commission is tasked with advising the Adjutant General and the DMVA on all matters that pertain to the status, welfare, benefits, employment, and support of veterans and veterans' programs in Pennsylvania. The Commission is comprised of representatives of all major veterans' organizations throughout the Commonwealth and a representative of the Association of County Directors for Veterans Affairs. The

⁸ The KSCA is included in this section even though it is not formally listed in the DMVA organizational chart. Currently, the KSCA is included as a main link on the DMVA homepage: <https://www.dmva.pa.gov/KeystoneStateChallengeAcademy/Pages/default.aspx>

Commission meets regularly to consider, among other things, pending legislation, which may be of interest to veterans, at the federal and state levels.

[Pennsylvania Governor's Advisory Council on Veterans Services](#)

The Governor's Advisory Council on Veterans Services (GAC-VS) was established as Pennsylvania's first interagency cooperative approach to providing services to veterans. In collaboration with senior staff from state agencies and commissions, the council reviews, evaluates, and assesses state veterans' programs. The GAC-VS is designed to increase information sharing, ensure program fidelity, coordinate complementary programs, and facilitate meaningful enhancements in service accessibility to veterans' benefits and services within Pennsylvania. The GAC-VS consists of seven committees that are comprised of state, federal, and county personnel who have a vested interest in serving veterans. The Committees include Aging; Homelessness; Health Promotions; Education, Employment, Workforce Development; Women Veterans; Veterans in Public Service; and Judiciary.

Programs, Benefits, and Services

The following section details the programs, benefits, and services that are available to veterans and their families. Where information could be sourced, appropriation amounts are provided in addition to the eligibility criteria for the program, benefit, or service.

Benefits for Veterans and their Families

Qualified veterans receive benefits that are paid through state appropriations. Each program, benefit, or service is listed below and is accompanied by its specific appropriation. All information on benefits and their appropriation amounts was sourced from the Governor's Executive Budget. If there was no allocation listed for a service in the Governor's Executive Budget, then, information on annual program cost is not provided below. Program usage numbers are also presented, when they were available. To be eligible for these benefits, veterans must be residents of Pennsylvania and have been honorably discharged from the military. Additional eligibility requirements vary by service or program and are explained below (DMVA, n.d.).

[Money Directed to Veterans and their Families](#)

Amputee and Paralyzed Veterans' Pension (\$3.7 million)

- Eligible veterans receive \$150 per month (PA Governor's Office, 2021 p.614).
- Eligibility qualifications indicate the veteran must have a service-related injury or have incurred a disease that resulted in a loss or loss of use of two or more extremities, must have 40% disability compensation rating or higher in each limb, and must have been a resident of Pennsylvania upon entering the military.

Blind Veterans' Pension (\$200,000)

- Eligible veterans receive \$150 per month (PA Governor's Office, 2021 p.614).

- Eligibility qualifications indicate the veteran must have a service-related injury or have incurred a disease that resulted in a loss of vision and must have been a resident of Pennsylvania upon entering the military.

Supplemental Life Insurance Premiums (\$200,000)

- DMVA pays or reimburses the cost not paid by the federal government of group life insurance premiums for eligible Soldiers and Airmen of the PNG.

Educational Gratuity Program/Education of Veteran's Children (\$100,000)⁹

- This service provides financial assistance to children of honorably discharged veterans who have service-connected disabilities and have served during a period of war or armed conflict or for children of veterans who died in service during a period of war or armed conflict. Payments are provided for up to \$500 per term for no longer than 4 scholastic years (i.e., 8 semesters).
- Veteran eligibility qualifications indicate the veteran must have died in service or has a 100% permanent and total service-connected disability rating and has served during a period of wartime as determined by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).
- Child eligibility qualifications indicate that the child must be between 16 and 23 years old, must be a resident of Pennsylvania for at least 5 years prior to applying for assistance, must attend an approved in-state school, and must demonstrate a financial need.

Military Family Relief Assistance Program (\$100,000)

- This program provides financial assistance, in the form of grants, to eligible Pennsylvania veterans, Service members, and their eligible family members. The grant amount is based on documented financial need up to a maximum of \$3,500. This benefit is funded through the state income Tax Refund Check-Off program, which allows taxpayers to make a contribution to state programs on a state personal income tax form (PA Governor's Office, 2021, p.605, 614).
- Eligibility qualifications indicate the veteran must be a resident of Pennsylvania who has served 30 or more consecutive days of active duty with the U.S. Armed Forces or its Reserve Components, has served 30 or more consecutive days of active duty or state active duty in the PA ARNG or the ANG, is a member in good standing of any Reserve Component for a period of 3 years after release from a tour of active duty and demonstrates that the need for assistance is directly related to the Service member's performance while on active duty, or is a member in good standing of the U.S. Armed Forces or any Reserve Component for a period of 4

⁹ This program is listed under two different names in the IFO's report (i.e., "children of deceased and disabled veterans educational gratuity program" p. 21; "Education of Veterans Children" p.13). The DMVA website titles this program the "Educational Gratuity Program" (<https://www.dmva.pa.gov/veteransaffairs/Pages/Programs%20and%20Services/Educational-Gratuity-Program.aspx>).

years after a medical discharge for a disability that did not exist prior to military service.

Burial Honors Program (\$99,000)

- Veterans are eligible to receive military burial honors for their funerals. DMVA offers a stipend program for organizations that provide burial honors at the three national cemeteries located in Pennsylvania.
- In 2019-20, the number of veterans served was 1,990 (PA Governor's Office, 2021, p.615).

Disabled Veterans' Real Estate Tax Exemption (Costs not known)

- This service provides real estate tax exemption for any qualifying veterans. Upon a veteran's death, an unmarried surviving spouse is eligible to continue to receive this benefit, if financial need can be shown.
- Additional qualifications indicate the veteran must have served during wartime dates established by the VA and must be blind and/or paraplegic or must have sustained the loss of two or more limbs or must have a service-connected disability declared by the VA to be a 100% permanent disability, and the veteran's dwelling must be owned by the veteran and must be the veteran's primary residence. Financial need must also be demonstrated.

Veterans' Temporary Assistance (Costs not known)

- Qualified veterans can receive up to \$1,600 over 12 months to cover basic needs (e.g., food, shelter, fuel, clothing).
- In 2019-20, the number of veterans served was 488 (PA Governor's Office, 2021 p.615).
- Veteran eligibility indicates the veteran must demonstrate financial need by showing loss of income or an increase in expenses that has resulted in the inability of the veteran to provide for basic living necessities, must have discharge of Honorable or Under Honorable Conditions after a period of active duty but not active duty for training, or must have a service-connected disability rating as certified by the VA.
- Surviving dependent eligibility indicates the survivors must be unmarried spouses, children, and/or parents of recently deceased veterans, and they must meet the qualifications listed above. The veteran's death certificate, marriage certificate (for spouses), birth certificates (for children), and the veteran's birth certificate (for parents) must be included in the application.

Other Benefits (Costs not known)

- Free birth and death certificates for veterans, spouses, and dependents¹⁰ are provided.

¹⁰ A \$20/certificate is provided (plus an additional \$10 for ordering certificate online - <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/certificates/Pages/Birth-Certificates.aspx>;

- Free hunting, fishing, and fur trapper licenses for eligible disabled veterans are provided.

Persian Gulf Benefit (Costs not known, discontinued)

- Applications closed for this benefit on August 31, 2015.
- This benefit provided payment to veterans who served during this conflict between August 2, 1990, and August 31, 1991. These veterans are eligible to receive \$75 per month up to \$525.

Money Directed to Programs Supporting Veterans and their Families

Veterans Outreach Services (\$3.1 million)

- This program provides grants to organizations to help improve the administration and delivery of services to Pennsylvania veterans.

PA State Opioid Response Appropriation (\$2.1 million)

- The DMVA budget has allocated \$2.1 million dollars to address the opioid crisis in Pennsylvania. The Governor's Executive Budget does not provide additional information on the purpose of the allocation or descriptions regarding how these funds are distributed or used. The following organizations and counties (in parentheses) received these funds in 2020-21:
 - JFT Recovery and Veterans Support (Cumberland): \$532,919
 - Veterans Multi-Service Center, Inc. (Philadelphia): \$416,500
 - Western Pennsylvania Counseling Services (Westmoreland): \$310,652
 - YWCA Greater Harrisburg (Dauphin): \$112,500
 - Veterans Leadership Program of Western PA (Allegheny): \$100,000
 - Veterans Place of Washington (Allegheny): \$100,000
 - JPL Video Productions, Inc. (Dauphin): \$93,204.50
 - Treatment Court Advocacy Center of Lackawanna (Lackawanna): \$50,000
 - Treatment Trends, Inc. (Lehigh): \$27,429
 - Robert Matthew Jackson Veterans Center (Dauphin): \$25,000
 - Valhalla Veterans Services (Lackawanna): \$25,000

Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Transportation (\$300,000)

- The DAV provides transportation for veterans traveling to and from Veterans Affairs related medical appointments. This service is free for veterans, and the veterans do not have to be members of any veteran-serving organization.

PA Veterans Memorial (\$93,000)

<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/certificates/Pages/Death-Certificates.aspx>) in this benefit to the veteran, which applies to both birth and death certificates (but does not include a fee waiver for the cost of the online fee or UPS delivery charges), and may not exceed the cost of maintaining expertise on the part of processors or on the time required to prove that one is a veteran given that the supporting documentation that is required to be presented to prove veteran status is not listed on the website.

- This memorial honors all veterans from the Revolutionary War forward. This is the largest veterans' war memorial located in any of the 143 national cemeteries operated by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

PA VETConnect (Costs not known)

- This program provides veterans and their beneficiaries with resources to help them meet their needs. Areas of resource assistance include benefit information; employment and financial assistance; and mental wellness, substance use, and post-traumatic stress disorder help.

Pending Legislation

There are several House and Senate bills that are present for consideration in the Pennsylvania legislature that intend to increase the support that Pennsylvania offers veterans. For example, House Bill (HB) 1953 and Senate Bill (SB) 578 propose removing the wartime service requirement for the Disabled Veterans Real Estate Tax Exemption program. Other bills propose an expansion of services or additional outreach to veterans that includes clarifying that Pennsylvania's hiring preference for veterans applies to those who were discharged for medical reasons (SB 849), granting fishing license fee exemptions for veterans in therapeutic programs (SB 241), extending the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance reimbursement to National Guard members on Emergency Federal Status (HB 1612), and codifying PA VETConnect (HB 995) (Wolf Administration, 2021).

On November 9, 2021, Governor Tom Wolf and Major General Mark Schindler urged the Pennsylvania General Assembly to review, update, and pass bills that are aimed at improving the lives of Pennsylvania's veterans. Therefore, eligibility requirements for the benefits listed above could change depending on what bills are put in to law. To see the full package of legislation that Governor Wolf and Major General Schindler support, visit the Wolf Administrations' newsroom at <https://www.governor.pa.gov/newsroom/wolf-administration-encourages-general-assembly-to-back-package-of-legislation-aimed-at-improving-the-lives-of-veterans>.

Veterans Homes

There are six veterans' homes in Pennsylvania that can serve a total of 1,526 veterans. As of FY 2020-21, the average occupancy rate across all six homes was 76%:¹¹

- Delaware Valley Veterans' Home, Philadelphia (Philadelphia County; 171 beds)
- Gino J. Merli Veterans' Center, Scranton (Lackawanna County; 196 beds)
- Hollidaysburg Veterans' Home, Hollidaysburg (Blair County; 424 beds)
- Pennsylvania Soldiers' and Sailors' Home, Erie (Erie County; 207 beds)

¹¹ For comparison, the average occupancy rate from FY 2019-20 was 92%. This variation in occupancy rate is likely due to COVID-19 and construction at the Delaware Valley home.

- Southeastern Veterans’ Center, Spring City (Chester County; 292 beds)
- Southwestern Veterans’ Center, Pittsburgh (Allegheny County; 236 beds)

Veterans’ homes provide varying levels of care to meet veterans’ healthcare needs. Levels of care include adult day healthcare, domiciliary care, memory care, personal care, and skilled nursing care. Veterans’ homes tailor care to the specific health needs of the residents and are supplemented with an array of clinical services that include medical, clinical, and nursing services; drug and nutritional therapy; rehabilitative services such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, and recreational therapy; dental services; social services; laundry; transportation; housekeeping; maintenance; security; and fiscal management.

Veterans Trust Fund

The Veterans Trust Fund (VTF) distributes grants to charitable organizations and County Directors of Veterans Affairs (CDVAs), whose mission is to assist veterans. The fund receives money from the sale of “Honoring Our Veterans” and “Women Veteran” license plates, grants or gifts from public and private entities, and voluntary contributions from people applying for or renewing their Pennsylvania driver’s license/photo ID card and vehicle registration. The DMVA provides up to \$650,000 per year in grant funding from the VTF. The VTF grants go to charitable organizations that have a mission of serving Pennsylvania veterans and are designated as a Veterans Service Organization [501(c)(19)] or a non-profit organization [501(c)(3)]. In addition, the VTF also reserves approximately \$800,000 annually for the Veterans’ Temporary Assistance Program (Weigl, 2021). Current year funding priorities for charitable organization grants and veteran-service organization grants are veterans’ programs that focus on homelessness; behavioral health initiatives; veterans’ court initiatives; or other programs that address newly identified, unmet, or emerging needs of veterans and their families. During FY 2019-2020, 7,732 veterans were assisted through VTF grants. An estimated 9,500 veterans will be served in FY 2020-2021.

Out of 100 Veteran Service Organization applicants and non-profit applicants, 20 organizations were awarded VTF grants in the State Fiscal Year (SFY), which ran from July to June 2020-21. The awards totaled \$650,090. The grantees, their specific award amounts, and the programs supported are as follows (Weigl, 2021):

Table 2

Veterans Trust Fund Grants to Charitable Organizations during SFY 2020-2021

Grantee	County	Award Amount	Programs Supported
3P Ride, Inc.	York	\$49,900	Veteran Transportation Program
Alpha Bravo Canine	Philadelphia	\$10,132	Veteran Service Dogs

Building Bridges Foundation at Anderson Farms	Lancaster	\$25,000	Equine-Assisted Therapy
Central Pennsylvania Food Bank	Dauphin	\$50,000	Military Share Food Distribution
Clinical Outcomes Group	Schuylkill	\$47,840	Veteran Mental Health Community Outreach Program
Community Food Warehouse of Mercer County	Mercer	\$32,762	Military Share Food Distribution
Dog T.A.G.S Program	Cumberland	\$49,995	Veteran-Trained Service Dogs
Meghan's Foundation	Bucks	\$11,100	Veteran Behavioral Health Outreach Program
Montgomery County Community College	Montgomery	\$28,585	Veteran Resource Center Modernization
Operation Troop Appreciation	Allegheny	\$45,000	Welcome Home Veteran Support Program
Outreach Center for Community Resources	Lackawanna	\$34,100	Veteran Outreach and Workforce Development
PA Lions Beacon Lodge Camp	Mifflin	\$22,845	Project New Hope Behavioral Health Program
Pennsylvania Outdoor Veterans Inc.	Carbon	\$23,436	Veteran Outdoor Rehabilitation Program
Robin's Home Inc.	Butler	\$23,750	Fire Escape Renovation
Steven A. Cohen Military Family	Philadelphia	\$49,490	Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Program
Travelers Aid Society of Pittsburgh	Allegheny	\$50,000	Veterans Transportation Assistance Program
United Disabilities Services Foundation	Lancaster	\$19,000	UDS Service Dog Program
Valhalla Veterans Services	Lackawanna	\$50,000	Veteran Behavioral Health Program
VALOR Clinic	Monroe	\$12,155	Veteran Homelessness and Behavioral Health Program
Victory Therapeutic Horsemanship	Blair	\$15,000	Equine Behavioral Health Program

In SFY 2020-2021, 16 out of 67 counties applied for VTF grants, and eight grants were awarded. These awards totaled \$165,592. The eight awarded grants went to the following counties (Weigl, 2021):

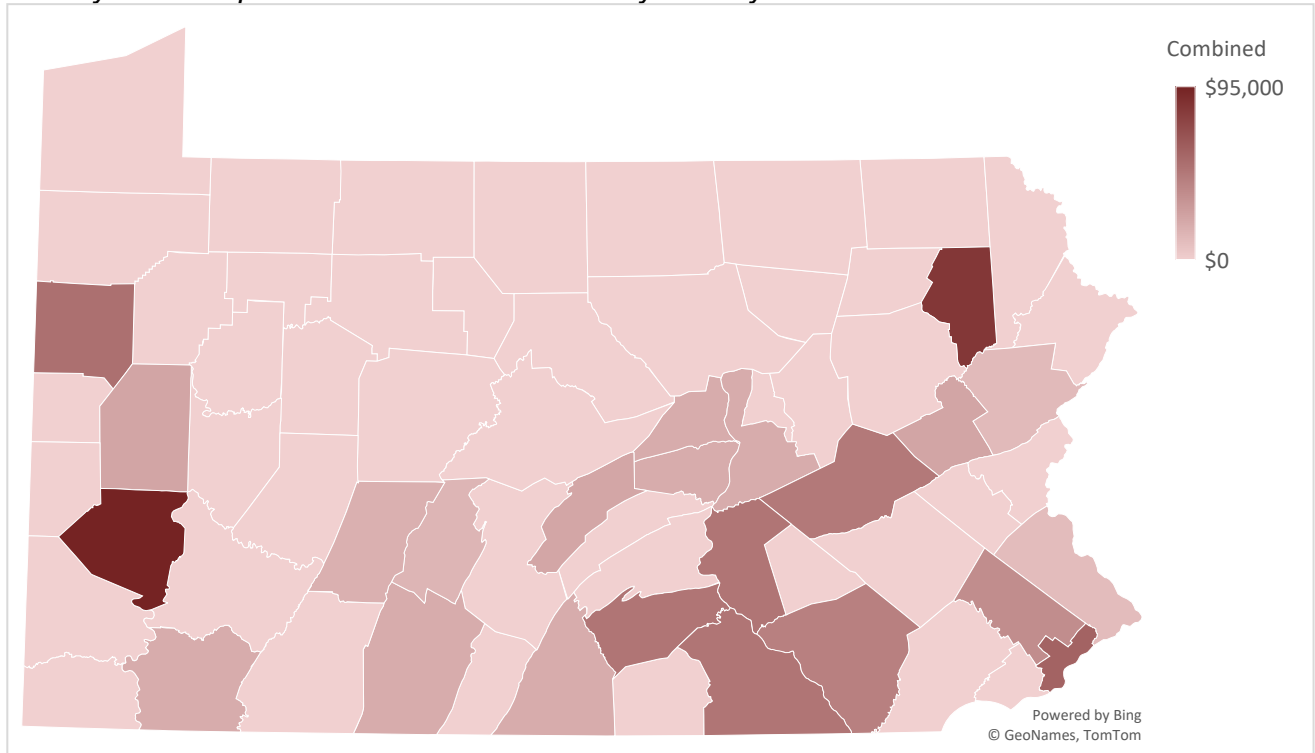
Table 3

Veterans Trust Fund Grants to Pennsylvania Counties during SFY 2020-2021

County	Award Amount	Programs Supported
Bedford	\$20,000	Expand veterans' outreach services
Cambria	\$17,416	Digitization of veteran records
Fayette	\$20,000	Expand mobile outreach services
Franklin	\$20,000	Provide service dogs to veterans
Mercer	\$20,000	Expand veterans' outreach services
Montgomery	\$8,176	Provide transportation services to veterans
Northumberland	\$20,000	Provide outreach services to veterans
Snyder and Union (joint application)	\$40,000	Support homeless veterans, and provide emergency assistance

Figure 2

County and Nonprofit VTF Grants Secured by County



County Directors of Veterans Affairs

County Directors of Veterans Affairs are accredited Veterans Service Officers who provide veterans and their dependents direct assistance to identify and determine eligibility and help in the preparation of applications for county, state, and federal veterans' benefits and programs. This service is provided at no cost to the veteran. Each county has at least one county-funded Veterans Service Officer. The degree of support varies by county and can depend on local funding priorities and available resources. For

example, the DMVA awards grants to County Veterans Affairs offices for efforts that prioritize veterans' outreach and combatting homelessness.

Conclusion and Next Steps

The report gathered and summarized publicly available information on the DMVA budget, structure, and state-funded veterans' programs and benefits. Though Clearinghouse professionals investigated specifics regarding the Pennsylvania budget, they were unable to determine exactly how much money is being spent, where money is being spent, and for what purposes money is being spent in relation to veterans' services. Moreover, without access to outputs (e.g., number of veterans served per initiative) and outcomes (e.g., satisfaction with service provided, resolution of challenge), the Clearinghouse was unable to assess the per veteran expenditure of the money allocated to particular programs, services, or benefits. Based on this examination, the current DMVA structure may foster synergy among department personnel and sharing of resources among bureaus. However, there is not sufficient evidence to answer whether the DMVA structure is optimal. The notion of restructuring has been a recent point of discussion, and, on October 19, 2021, Major General Schindler provided testimony in favor of maintaining the current structure to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives Committee on Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness. Finally, Pennsylvania does provide a wide range of programs, services, and benefits to veterans; however, the effectiveness and impact of these expenditures and efforts are difficult to assess as they are not accurately measured.

The next phase of this effort will attempt to explain how Pennsylvania compares to peer states on expenditures and services. One finding from this review indicates that there is no standardization of data being collected - some of these programs, services, and benefits provide outputs (i.e., the number served), while others do not. Moreover, no information could be located regarding outcomes or measures of effectiveness or impact for any of the programs, services, and benefits. Thus, there is no evidence to help determine whether these collective efforts are supporting Pennsylvania's veterans in meaningful and useful ways.

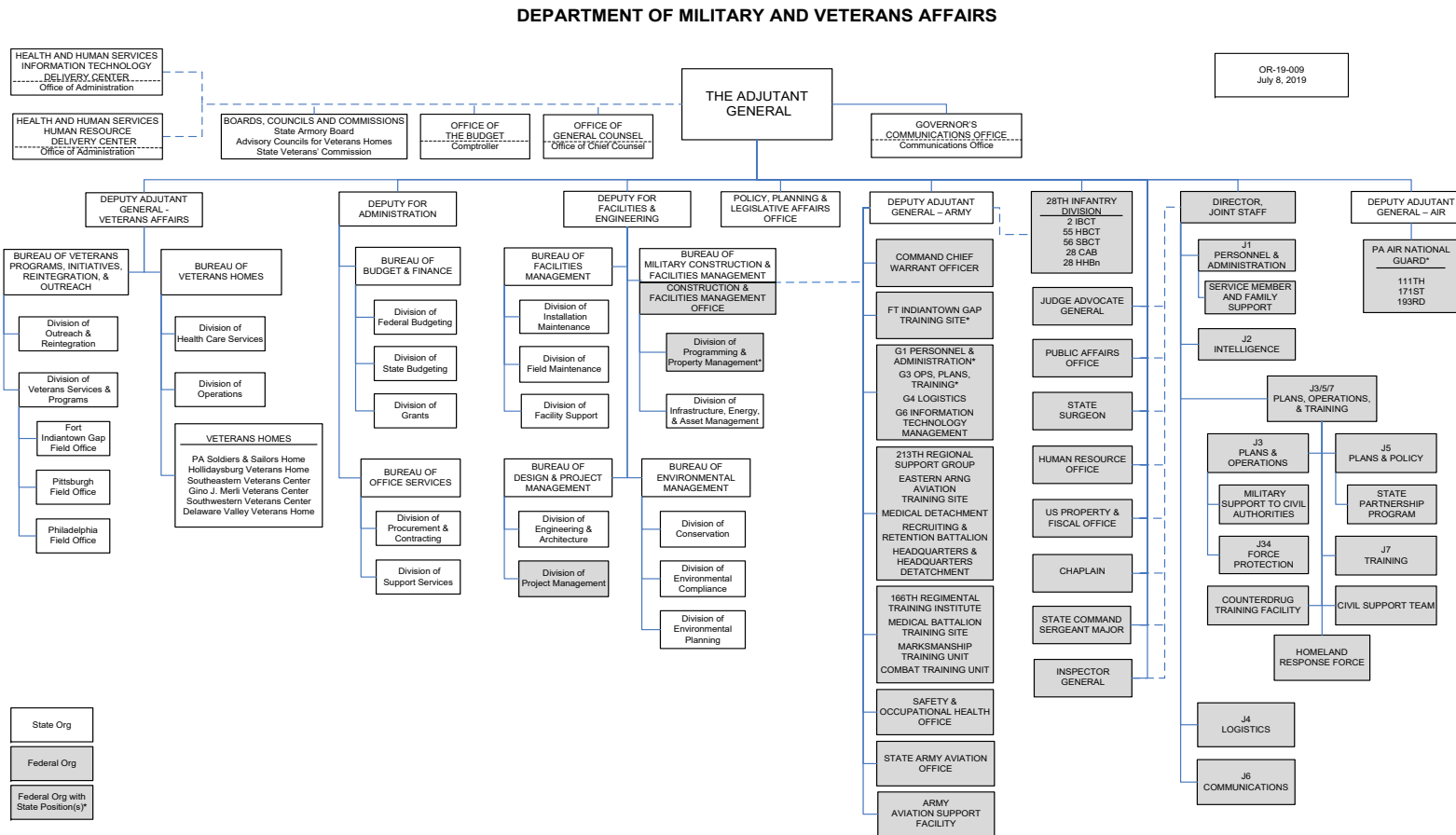
Below are the next action steps the Clearinghouse will take based upon the above-noted conclusions.

- 1) Collaborate with an expert in order to further the Clearinghouse's understanding of Pennsylvania's state government budget to further determine how the money is spent.
- 2) Research whether any entities, state or private, are evaluating or assessing DMVA programs, services, or benefits.

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Appendix A: Pennsylvania DMVA Organizational Chart



Source: Resolution OR-19-009

Leadership positions and personnel are listed below.

- Adjutant General of Pennsylvania – Major General Mark J. Schindler;
- Executive Deputy Secretary – Marc Ferraro;
- Deputy Adjutant General, Veterans Affairs – Brigadier General (PA) Maureen Weigl;
- Deputy for Administration – Patricia Derry;
- Deputy for Facilities and Engineering – Kevin Ferner;
- Office of Policy, Planning and Legislative Affairs – Gilbert Durand;
- Deputy Adjutant General, Air – Brigadier General Michael J. Regan Jr.; and
- Deputy Adjutant General, Army – Brigadier General Laura A. McHugh