



The Guardian

The monthly newsletter of the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services

April, 2021

The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (DVS) continues to provide benefits assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

All 18 DVS certified Veterans Service Officers are working remotely to help veterans with filing VA claims or applying for state veterans benefits.

For phone assistance:
(505) 383-2400

For Email assistance:
nmdvs.info@state.nm.us

DVS website for more information:
www.nmdvs.org

DVS Expands Service of the Rural Veterans Transportation Program

The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (DVS) has launched Phase 2 of its *Rural Veterans Transportation Program* to expand service to now include veterans in Quay, Harding, Mora, San Miguel, and Union counties.

The program provides free round trip service for veterans to and from their home and any VA or VA-approved medical appointment. This also includes confirmed appointments for COVID-19 vaccines. Neither the New Mexico Department of Health nor the New Mexico VA Health Care System (NMVAHCS) are administering COVID-19 vaccines to anyone who did not pre-register and has a confirmed appointment.

DVS has contracted with the Disabled American Veterans/Dept. of New Mexico (DAV), An Angel's Touch, and Golden Spread Rural Frontier Express to provide transportation for veterans to the following VA facilities:

- Albuquerque Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical Center
- Amarillo (TX) Thomas E. Creek VA Medical Center
- Raton Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC)
- Las Vegas (NM) CBOC
- Clovis CBOC
- Santa Fe Vet Center
- Albuquerque Vet Center

Round-trip rides will also be provided to veterans for any VA preauthorized appointments at non-VA health care facilities.

Veterans must make a reservation for these free round trip rides at least three days in advance of a medical appointment by calling the DAV at (505) 582-4544 Monday through Friday from 9am-5pm.

Upon pickup, veterans will be required to show proof of veteran status to the driver—who, per COVID-19 safety protocol, will be wearing a mask. Veterans will also be required to wear a face mask for the duration of the trip.

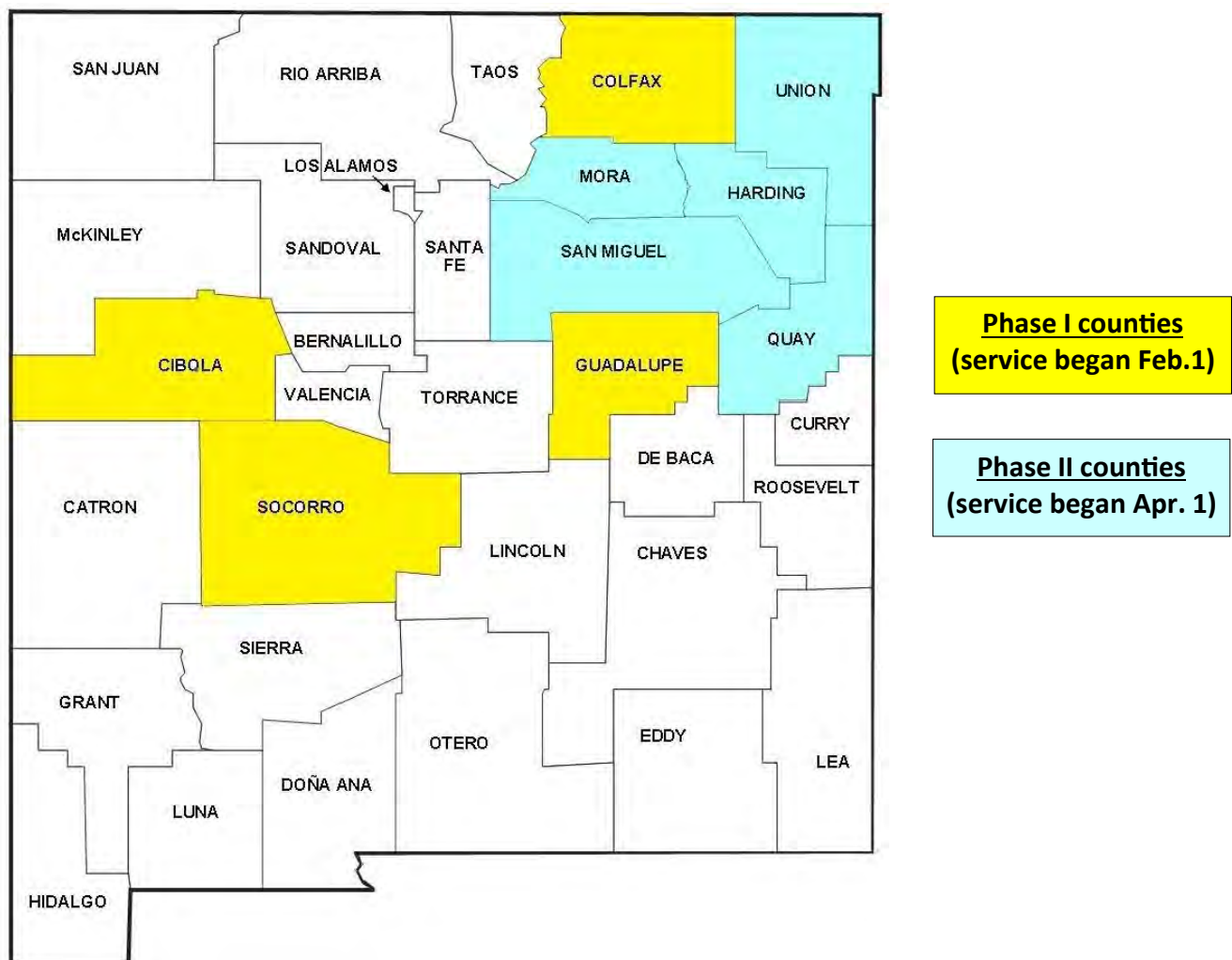
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“The lack of transportation is often the reason why many veterans say they haven’t been addressing their health care needs,” said DVS Secretary Sonya L. Smith. “DVS, the DAV, An Angel’s Touch, and Golden Spread Rural Frontier Express are excited and honored to form this partnership to provide this critical service for our rural veterans.”

The DAV is also looking for volunteers to serve as drivers to these appointments, and to help identify veterans who would benefit from this program. Training will be provided for all volunteers, and drivers will be reimbursed for mileage. For more information, call Lupe Cruz at the DAV at (505) 582-4544.

The DVS Rural Veterans Transportation Program

The Rural Veterans Transportation Program was launched in February, with service beginning for veterans in Cibola, Colfax, Guadalupe, and Socorro counties. Veterans in these counties can still call the DAV to arrange for round-trip rides from their homes to medical appointments at any VA or VA-authorized facility.



The program is made possible through a grant awarded to DVS by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs’ (VA) Highly Rural Transportation Grants Program. This grant is awarded to qualified organizations that can demonstrate the need and ability to provide transportation for veterans in “highly rural areas” who have trouble getting VA health care due to the lack of available transportation options.

VA defines a highly rural area as a county with less than seven people per square mile, and provided DVS with a list of qualifying counties in New Mexico. DVS will re-apply for the VA annual grant to expand the Rural Veterans Transportation Program beyond the current nine-county service area.



DVS to Launch Limited Property Tax Exemption “Drive-Up/Curbside” Service In Albuquerque

The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (DVS) will begin limited daily curbside property tax certificate drive-up service in Albuquerque on the week of April 19-23 from 1pm-4pm in the parking lot of its northeast heights office at 5201 Eagle Rock NE.

The same curbside service continues the following week (April 26-30) from 9am-noon.

DVS staff, wearing safety masks in adherence to ongoing COVID-19 safety protocol, will provide curbside “car hop-style” service for the filing of the state veterans property tax exemption or property waiver for Bernalillo County veterans or unmarried surviving spouses of veterans. DVS staff will print the necessary certificates needed while the veteran or unmarried surviving spouse of a veteran remain in their vehicles.

This state veteran’s property tax exemption is a \$4,000 reduction of the taxable value of the primary residence of a veteran or unmarried surviving spouse of a veteran. Veterans with a 100% service-connected disability can have their entire property tax liability waived. Bernalillo County veterans may also be entitled to a \$2,000 “head of household” exemption offered by the county. Veterans and surviving spouses of veterans must bring a copy of the veterans’ DD-214, proof of residency, and if claiming a disabled veteran tax waiver, the VA award letter stating 100% permanent and total disability.

A Step-by-Step Video Shows How to File From Home

For veterans anywhere else in New Mexico, or who can’t stop by the DVS northeast heights office from April 19-30, filing for the veterans property tax exemption or the 100% permanent-and-total service-connected waiver can be done from your home. DVS has produced a video offering step-by-step instructions for filling out the forms:

https://youtu.be/xoHNpvzwU_E

The forms can be accessed by going to the DVS website: www.nmdvs.org. On the right side of the homepage, scroll over the “services” heading...then to the “state benefits” heading...and then click and print the form you need. Fill it out completely, sign and date it, and then mail the completed form to:

The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services
407 Galisteo St./Room 134
Santa Fe, NM 87501
Attn: State Benefits Division

Your property tax exemption or waiver certificate will be mailed by DVS in 2-3 weeks.

DVS VSO Featured in National VA Women's History Month Campaign

DVS Farmington-based veterans service officer Beverly Charley has been selected as one of 27 women veterans selected from across the country featured in a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) national campaign celebrating Women's History Month.

The women are highlighted in *2021 Trailblazers: Women Veterans Leading the Way*, a campaign by VA's Center for Women Veterans (CWV) honoring women the VA considers as trailblazers for their actions during and after their military service.

According to the CWV, the campaign showcases the impact these women have made on a single event or action or demonstrated over time in the areas of education, employment, entrepreneurship, homelessness, law, mental health and wellness.

Ms. Charley is honored as one of the driving forces behind *Operation Stand Down/Project Hand-Up*, an event for homeless veterans in Farmington she helped organize in 2012 to provide clothing, a hot meal, housing assistance, counseling, and other services for homeless veterans. It is now an annual event in late October/early November.

"I am beyond honored," said Ms. Charley, who was born and raised in the Farmington/Four Corners area. "I am deeply humbled and grateful to receive the trailblazer award with all these amazing women. I look forward to what other doors God is opening for me!!"

The campaign also honors Ms. Charley's 14-years of honorable service in the U.S. Army, who completed her service as a sergeant, and mentions her additional role at DVS as the agency's tribal liaison tasked with working with the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department on Native American issues.

"The entire DVS family is absolutely thrilled for Beverly," said a beaming DVS Secretary Sonya L. Smith. "I want to thank the Center for Women Veterans for recognizing what we all know about her—she is a tireless worker who is dedicated to helping veterans and their families in the Four Corners area. We are proud and honored to have Beverly here at DVS."

For more information on VA's Center for Women Veterans 2021 Trailblazers: Women Veterans Leading the Way campaign, and a look at the 27 honorees: <https://www.va.gov/womenvet/cwv/trailblazers2021.asp>



DVS Seeking Applicants to Fill Its Grant County/Santa Clara Veterans Service Officer (VSO) Vacancy

Job Posting Date: 4/5/21 – 4/20/21

Interviews will be conducted approximately two weeks from the end of the job posting.

Why does the job exist?

This position provides a full array of customer services in assisting veterans and their eligible dependents with filing for VA and state veterans benefits earned through their service to our country. The Veterans Service Officer (VSO) will perform duties as outlined by the service delivery system of the NM Department of Veterans Services. This position will maintain current knowledge of and accreditation in accordance with the Title 38 CFR 14.629 and eligibility of benefits under the provisions of Chapter 7, section 7-35-5, New Mexico laws of 1978 as amended.

How does it get done?

The Veterans Service Officer (VSO) must submit necessary reports to the supervisor and maintain confidential resources in accordance with the requirements of the data privacy laws and Health Insurance Portability Accountability Act (HIPAA). The VSO will coordinate with the supervisor to develop and plan marketing strategies along with coordinating community veterans outreach and town hall meetings. The VSO must collaborate with the supervisor concerning the status of individual veteran's claims. The VSO will keep current on all federal and state veteran benefits, and will coordinate with the supervisor to maintain all mandatory training and accreditation set forth by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

Who are the customers?

The Veterans Service Officer (VSO) processes complex state and federal benefit claims for veterans and eligible dependents in accordance with state and federal rules, regulations, policies and procedures.

Ideal Candidate

This position requires some travel. An ideal candidate will be someone who has the ability to travel in their geographical area of the state and will be someone with excellent customer service skills, well organized, and has effective communication skills.

Minimum Qualification

High school diploma or equivalent and two (2) years' experience in customer service, office administration, government assistance programs such as welfare, unemployment benefits, social security benefits and/or public housing. Substitutions apply. See substitution table below.

Hiring preference will be given to veterans of the United States Armed Forces.

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Substitution Table

These combinations of education and experience qualify you for the position:

Education Experience

- 1) High School Diploma or Equivalent **AND** 2 years of experience
 - 2) Associate's degree or higher (Bachelor's, Master's) **AND** 0 years of experience
- Education and years of experience must be related to the purpose of the position.
 - If Minimum Qualification requires a specific number of "semester hours" in a field --(e.g. 6 semester hours in Accounting),
--applicants **MUST** have those semester hours in order to meet the minimum qualifications.
- No substitutions apply for semester hours.

Working Conditions

Work is performed in an office setting with exposure to Visual/Video Display Terminal (VDT) and extensive phone and personal computer usage. Direct client interaction and some travel may be required.

Bargaining Unit Position

This position is not covered by a collective bargaining agreement.

To Apply

As with all state classified positions, applicants must apply through the New Mexico State Personnel Office (SPO). This can be done by clicking on the following link:

https://careers.share.state.nm.us/psc/hprdcg/EMPLOYEE/HRMS/c/HRS_HRAM_FL.HRS_CG_SEARCH_FL.GBL?Page=HRS_APP_SCHJOB_FL&FOCUS=Applicant

Do not contact DVS to apply for this position. This is a "classified" state government position which, like all other classified state positions, requires applicants to go through the state government hiring process as established by the State Personnel Office (SPO).



Governor Lujan Grisham Signs Two Bills Into Law Affecting the New Mexico National Guard

Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham signed Senate Bill 146 into law on April 5 that amends the emergency activation of the New Mexico State Defense Force for “militia duty” by order of the governor.

The New Mexico State Defense Force operates under the oversight of the Adjutant General of New Mexico, a command relationship which would continue during state activation of the New Mexico State Defense Force.

This bill, sponsored by State Senator William Burt (R-Chavez, Lincoln, and Otero), ensures the New Mexico National Guard remains agile, relevant and prepared to defend our state and nation.

“I want to thank Senator Burt for sponsoring SB 146 which authorizes our governor to activate State Defense Force personnel as a force multiplier for the New Mexico National Guard during disaster/ domestic missions,” said Maj. Gen. Ken Nava, the Adjutant General of New Mexico. “Thank you to our senators and representatives for their work on the bill, and Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham for signing the bill into law.”

Additionally, House Bill 31, which was sponsored by State Rep. Debbie Sarinana (D-Bernalillo) and signed by the governor, updates Section 20-12-51 of the Code of Military Justice relating to rape and other sex crimes. The new law substantially expands the scope of conduct that will subject a person covered by the Code of Military Justice to criminal prosecution for rape and sexual assault, and adds additional crimes of aggravated sexual contact and abusive sexual contact.

This bill applies only to military members of the New Mexico National Guard. It does not apply to other Reserve service members or to Guardsmen deployed under federal law.

For more information, contact New Mexico National Guard Public Affairs Officer Joe Vigil at joseph.l.vigil2.civ@mail.mil.

COVID-19 UPDATE

COVID-19 Vaccine Update from the New Mexico Dept. of Health

The New Mexico Department of Health (DOH) is allowing registrants who are 60 years and older to now schedule your own COVID-19 vaccine appointments. To do so, users can simply log in to vaccineNM.org using their confirmation code and date of birth. You can then choose their location, and select from available appointments in your area. Event codes for New

Mexicans 60+ are no longer required, though they are required for younger populations.

In the event that a user does not immediately find an available appointment, DOH encourages you to check back again. Providers are continually updating their appointment schedules. Seniors and those with disabilities can also call 1-(800) 432-2080 for support with registration and scheduling.

The New Mexico Department of Health (DOH) is also reporting that 100% of in-state Phase I registrants have received an invitation to a vaccine appointment.

- All New Mexicans 16 years and older are now eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine, but the state is prioritizing invitations for New Mexicans 75 years and older and New Mexicans 60 years and older with a chronic condition
- The Department of Health also encourages New Mexicans to update their profiles on vaccineNM.org if they registered through the state system but got vaccinated elsewhere (either out-of-state or with another provider).

COVID-Related Financial Assistance

Funeral Costs: Starting Monday, April 12, those who lost loved ones to COVID-19 will be able to apply to FEMA for retroactive reimbursements for burial costs. Applicants can receive up to \$9,000 per burial.

To apply, you must call (844) 684-6333. The call center will be open from 7am to 7pm ET, starting April 12. For more information: <https://www.fema.gov/disasters/coronavirus/economic/funeral-assistance>

Housing Costs: Applications for the COVID-19 Housing Cost Assistance Program, operated by the New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority, must be completed by 5pm on April 15. Income-eligible recipients will receive as much as \$1,500 per month for up to three months for rental and mortgage-related payments. Details of all qualifying criteria can be found at housingnm.org. Applicants may also call (505) 308-4206 or toll free at 866-488-0498 for more information.

Utility Costs: New Mexico Gas Company has established \$1.2 million in COVID-19 relief funding to assist income-qualifying customers and small business owners who have fallen behind on their gas bills because of the pandemic. Qualified residential customers will receive a one-time payment of \$150 toward their bill, and small business owners who qualify will be eligible for a one-time credit of up to \$250.

Residential customers can apply for help through New Mexico Gas Company's HEAT New Mexico program. For customers seeking to learn more, please go to nmgco.com or reach out to 1-888-664-2726. Small business owners can apply online at www.nmgco.com/SmallBusiness/CovidRelief

COVID-19 Vaccine Update from the New Mexico VA Health Care System

The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (DVS) is reminding veterans in New Mexico that they can also get their COVID-19 vaccine from the New Mexico VA Health Care System (NMVAHCS).



The NMVAHCS is expanding its COVID-19 vaccinations under the SAVE LIVES Act and dependent on the readily available COVID-19 vaccine supply. VA will continue to prioritize veterans who are eligible and enrolled in VA care. As with the DOH option, pre-registration is also required. “Walk-ins” are not allowed. No one will get a vaccine through the NMVAHCS without registering in advance for a vaccine appointment.

To register, VA-enrolled veterans can call the NMVAHCS at (505) 265-1711, and then using either of the following four extensions: 3915, 3916, 2910, or 2912. Once registered, the NMVAHCS will contact you when your vaccine is ready. The NMVAHCS will also contact you for your second dose or “booster” of the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines. (the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is a single dose vaccine)

For VA-enrolled and eligible veterans in the Albuquerque metro area, the vaccine will be given at a special drive-through clinic set up in the parking lot of the Albuquerque Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical Center’s main building. The following groups who are eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine at VA, as long as the vaccine supply is available are as follows:

- Veterans of all ages
- Spouses of a Veteran
- Caregivers of a Veteran
- Widowers of a Veteran
- Recipients of Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs benefits (CHAMPVA)
- Anyone who served in the U.S. military - Reservists, National Guard and Coast Guard, who are retired or were never activated
- All veterans regardless of Character of Discharge

Vaccines are also available at the 13 Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) managed by the NMVAHCS: Alamogordo, Artesia, Española, Farmington, Gallup, Las Vegas, Raton, Rio Rancho, Santa Fe, Silver City, Taos, Truth or Consequences, and Durango (Colorado).

The following three CBOC’s are not managed by the NMVAHCS: Clovis (under the jurisdiction of the Amarillo, TX VA Medical Center), Hobbs (Big Spring, TX), and Las Cruces (El Paso VA Medical Center). Veterans who call the main NMVAHCS number will be referred to these VA health care systems.

Veterans who are not enrolled in VA health care can enroll ahead of registering for a vaccine by also calling the above phone number. For more information about VA health care eligibility—and for online registration:

https://www.va.gov/health-care/eligibility/?fbclid=IwARIPDKybCEaj_fDc6J28-4NklhY2ZzaL_ollbxwT-gpK9HvsVYOxGhkMyqk



SBA Officially Opens Portal Offering Financial Assistance to Performing Arts, Organizations, Theaters, and Other Live Venues Businesses

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) has officially opened its Shuttered Venue Operators Grant (SVOG) application portal for operators of live venues, live performing arts organizations, museums and movie theatres, as well as live venue promoters, theatrical producers and talent representatives to apply for critical economic relief, as those eligible entities are some of the first that had to shutter their doors a year ago in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

More information can be found at <https://www.svograntportal.sba.gov/s/>.

The SVOG program has appropriated more than \$16.2 billion for grants via the Economic Aid to Hard-Hit Small Businesses, Nonprofits and Venues Act and the American Rescue Plan Act. Of these funds, at least \$2 billion is reserved for eligible SVOG applications with up to 50 full-time employees. Eligible applicants may qualify for grants equal to 45% of their gross earned revenue up to a maximum amount of \$10 million for a single grant.

The SBA is accepting SVOG applications on a first-in, first-out basis and allocating applicants to respective priority periods as it receives applications. The first 14 days of SVOG awards, which are expected to begin in late April, will be dedicated to entities that suffered a 90% or greater revenue loss between April and December 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The second 14-day period (days 15-28) will include entities that suffered a 70% or greater revenue loss between April and December 2020. Following those periods, SVOG awards will include entities that suffered a 25% or greater revenue loss between one quarter of 2019 and the corresponding quarter of 2020.

The SBA has hosted a national informational webinars (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CNWsgR9ESUs>) to highlight the application process for potential eligible entities. The agency also provides recurrent program updates and information via frequently asked questions, additional video tutorials, an application checklist, and eligibility requirements through SBA's dedicated SVOG website - www.sba.gov/svogrant - and targeted outreach to potential applicants.

In addition, SBA's resource partners, including SCORE Mentors, Small Business Development Centers, Women's Business Centers and Veterans Business Outreach Centers, are available to provide entities with individual guidance on their applications. Applicants can find a local resource partner via SBA's website at www.sba.gov/local-assistance or via a zip code at www.sba.gov/localassistance.

Per federal grant program guidelines that the same and equal information needs to be provided to each applicant, SBA's team members are limited on responses they can provide to individual, specific questions regarding SVOG eligibility, potential grant amount, or other detailed information.

The New Mexico Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC)—the business development division of DVS—may also answer questions. You can contact VBOC Director Rich Coffel at richardL.coffel@state.nm.us or (505) 220-9932.

Gadsden High School NJROTC Unit Wins Top National Honor

The Gadsden High School Navy Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (NJROTC) unit from Anthony (Doña Ana County) has been named the Area 9 Most Outstanding Unit for the 2019-2020 School year.

The prestigious award honors the top 11 NJROTC units from the more than 600 units worldwide. Area 9 is one of 11 NJROTC areas in the U.S. which encompasses New Mexico, West Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, Tennessee, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Italy, Spain, Guam, and Japan.



The Gadsden High School NJROTC program was established in 1982. Currently, the program and its 115 cadets is led by Lt. Cmdr. Mark Morrell (USN/Ret) and GSMC (SW) Jesus Escudero (USN/Ret). Both men originally met on active duty while working together on the USS Pinckney (DDG 91) as part of the ship's commissioning crew from 1992-94. Lt. Cmdr. Morrell was the Pinckney's first Chief Engineer, and GSMC Escudero served as his main space leading petty officer.

The two were reunited in 2014 following their respective retirements when they took over the Gadsden High School's NJROTC program. After the unit's first year, it was awarded the Most Improved Unit in Area 9, followed by selection as Distinguished Unit five years in a row.

The NJROTC Program

The mission of the Navy Junior Reserve Officer Training Program is to instill in students in United States secondary educational institutions the values of citizenship, service to the United States, personal responsibility and a sense of accomplishment.

The program is conducted at accredited secondary schools throughout the nation, and taught by instructors who are retired Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard officers and enlisted personnel. The NJROTC accredited curriculum emphasizes citizenship and leadership development, as well as our nation's maritime heritage, the significance of sea power, and naval topics such as the fundamentals of naval operations, seamanship, navigation and meteorology.

Classroom instruction is augmented throughout the year by extra-curricular activities of community service, academic, athletic, drill and orienteering competitions, field meets, flights, visits to naval or other activities, marksmanship sports training, and physical fitness training. Electronic classroom equipment, textbooks, uniforms, educational training aids, travel allowance, and a cost-share of instructors' salaries are provided by the Navy.

Veterans Community Bulletin Board

NOTICE: The following page(s) feature event and informational flyers provided to DVS by veterans and community service agencies. These flyers are published for the convenience of New Mexico's veteran community. Inclusion in The Guardian does not constitute an endorsement by DVS of the organization, content, products, or services contained therein.

DVS invites service agencies and non-profit service organizations to send flyers or news releases announcing an upcoming or ongoing veteran-related event. DVS will post these flyers as a public service courtesy to the veteran community. However:

- Flyers must have the name of a point-of-contact from the organization...along with the contact's phone number or email address. Flyers without this information will not be published.
- DVS is not responsible for the accuracy of the content, products, or services in these flyers.
- Views expressed in these flyers are the independent views of the authors/owners of the third-party entity that created the flyer—and does not necessarily reflect the views of DVS.
- To the maximum extent permitted by law, DVS expressly denies liability for any and all losses suffered by any persons or organizations who, in their independent discretion and reliance, either directly or indirectly rely on content, products, services or information offered by these independent third-party organizations.
- DVS reserves the right to edit or decline publishing of any flyer.



WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21, 2021 FROM 8:00 AM TO 5:00 PM
OPERATION HIRING HEROES
EMPLOYMENT EVENT – DAY 1

GOING STATEWIDE AND VIRTUAL IN 2021
CLICK HERE TO REGISTER OR SCAN QRC



8:00 AM - INTRODUCTIONS

8:30 AM - GI BILL EDUCATION

9:00 AM – UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

9:30 AM – AMENTUM

10:00 AM – CURRY COUNTY

10:30 AM – UNITED RENTALS

11:00 AM – LOWE’S HOME IMPROVEMENT

11:30 AM – STATE PERSONNEL OFFICE

12:00 PM - XCEL ENERGY

1:00 PM – VET CENTER

1:30 PM – VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

2:00 PM – GRACELAND CASITAS

2:30 PM – STAMPEDE MEATS

3:00 PM – TLC ASSOCIATES

3:30 PM – SIERRA VISTA HOSPITAL

4:00 PM – LUNA CO. DETENTION CTR.

4:30 PM – OLAM SPICES

LIMITED IN PERSON VIEWING AVAILABLE AT THE AMERICAN LEGION POST 13 IN ALBUQUERQUE, NM
CALL 505-243-1901 MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY 8 AM – 12 PM TO RESERVE A SPOT
(ALL COVID-19 GUIDELINES WILL BE FOLLOWED/FACE MASKS REQUIRED)

THIS IS SO BIG WE NEED TWO DAYS.

BE SURE TO CHECK OUT THE PARTICIPATING PROVIDERS AND
BUSINESSES SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 28, 2021.



New Mexico
Workforce Connection

A Proud Partner of the American Job Center Network



“Equal opportunity program in which auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities”



WEDNESDAY, APRIL 28, 2021 FROM 8:00 AM TO 5:00 PM
OPERATION HIRING HEROES
EMPLOYMENT EVENT – DAY 2

GOING STATEWIDE AND VIRTUAL IN 2021
CLICK HERE TO REGISTER OR SCAN QRC



8:00 AM - INTRODUCTIONS

8:30 AM – DEPT. OF VETERAN SERVICES

9:00 AM – GOODWILL INDUSTRIES OF NM

9:30 AM –ALBUQUERQUE POLICE DEPT.

10:00 AM – PRESBYTERIAN HEALTHCARE

10:30 AM – TTEC

11:00 AM – NM STATE CORRECTIONS

11:30 AM – BOSQUE BREWING CO.

12:00 PM - AMAZON

1:00 PM – GI BILL EDUCATION

1:30 PM – CHRISTUS ST. VINCENT

2:00 PM – LOS ALAMOS NATIONAL LABORATORY

2:30 PM – ALTA VISTA REGIONAL HOSPITAL

3:00 PM – HIGH PLAINS PROCESSING, LLC

3:30 PM – US TRANSPORT

4:00 PM – CITY OF FARMINGTON

4:30 PM – BUFFALO THUNDER

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Frequently Asked Questions

In 2020, the U.S. Congress appropriated funding to the U.S. Department of Treasury to provide emergency rental assistance to households experiencing financial hardship as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. Funding was allocated to states, Indian tribes or their Tribally Designated Housing Entities, and territories to provide Emergency Rental Assistance in the form of rental, utilities, and home energy costs assistance to eligible renters. The Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) will administer approximately \$170 million appropriated for the Emergency Rental Assistance program for both the State of New Mexico and the City of Albuquerque.

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What type of assistance is available?

This assistance is available for those in a lease agreement with a landlord or those who have entered into a lease-purchase agreement. Funding is also available for utility assistance and other expenses related to housing costs (i.e. hotel/motel costs) incurred directly or indirectly, due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Am I eligible to apply for Rental Assistance?

To be eligible, a household must be obligated to pay rent on a residential dwelling; and

- Households paying rent under a lease agreement. This includes tenants making lease payments under a lease-purchase agreement;
- Households, where one or more individuals have either: a) qualified for unemployment benefits; or b) experienced a decrease in household income, incurred significant costs, or experienced other financial hardship due to the COVID-19 outbreak, which include:
 - Job loss;
 - Job furlough;
 - Closure of place of employment;
 - Reduction in self-employment compensation;
 - Job loss and/or wage reduction due to requirement to be quarantined based on a diagnosis of COVID-19; or
 - Other pertinent circumstances leading to financial hardship;
- Households where one or more individuals within the household can demonstrate a risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability;
- A household income at or below 80% of area median income as defined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development provided in this link: http://housingnm.org/assets/content/Income_Limits.pdf;
- Have a current primary residence in a housing unit in New Mexico;
- Have documentation to demonstrate delinquency on rental housing costs, utilities and other costs; and
- Have made their housing cost payments through March 31, 2020.

Where do I apply for Rental Assistance?

You can apply at www.RentHelpNM.org, beginning April 5th, 2021. Renters across the state are eligible for this program -- except for residents of Bernalillo County (outside of Albuquerque city limits), Dona Ana County, and those who live in a pueblo or tribal area. Those two counties, as well as tribal governments, will administer their own Rental Assistance Programs.

- [Bernalillo County Emergency Rental and Utility Assistance Program](#)
- [Dona Ana County Emergency Rental and Utility Assistance Program](#)



How do I apply for rental and or utility assistance?

You can apply through the following method beginning April 5th, 2021:

1. Web portal at www.RentHelpNM.org; or
2. Download and submit the application by mail to:

DFA Attention: ERAP
 407 Galisteo
 Santa Fe, NM 87501

3. You can also call 1-833-485-1334 to speak to a representative.

Is there a cap or maximum amount of Rental Assistance I can receive?

Rental Assistance is capped at 15 months of assistance, which is dependent on the individual's situation. Rental Assistance may be dispersed in 3-month increments and depending on the individual's situation, an opportunity to receive additional assistance after submission of updated documents and further review. Priority will be placed on paying past-due or rent in arrears before any other assistance. Restrictions are dependent on the individual's request and personal situation.

Payments will be made directly to the landlord.

What is Utility assistance?

Utility assistance is defined as assistance to renters to pay past-due bills for electricity, gas, water and sewer, trash removal, fuel oil, wood, and pellets.

Utility Assistance is capped at 15 months which is dependent on the individual's situation and rental past-due amounts. Utility Assistance is only available to renters, not homeowners.

Payments will be made directly to the utility provider.

What are the documents required to be submitted for Rental and/or Utility Assistance?

In order to validate eligibility and application information, supporting documentation is required to be submitted. Documentation may include but is not limited to:

- o paycheck stubs, earning statements
- o most recent filed federal income tax return
- o profit and loss statement showing the net amount after business expenses
- o bank statements
- o utility invoices
- o receipts for expenses such as wood, pellets, hotel/motel costs etc.
- o attestations from landlords, employer, caseworkers, or others with knowledge of the household's circumstances
- o IRS form 1099-G
- o mortgage or deed or title to the property being rented for lease-purchase situations
- o unemployment award letter
- o any other documentation as requested by DFA.



Photocopies or digital photographs of documents can be mailed in along with the application, uploaded to the web application portal, or emailed to DFA.

When will the Rental Assistance Program be available?

The program will be open to applicants beginning April 5th, 2021

How long will the application process take?

Upon submission of the application and supporting documentation, DFA will conduct a review within 24 to 48 hours. If additional information is needed, a representative will contact you as soon as possible. After a review of the application, you will be notified of the decision via email or mail. If the application is approved, payment will be made within 10 business working days.

Will I receive the financial assistance payment?

The State of New Mexico will either pay the landlord and/or the utility provider directly depending on the financial assistance request. Requests for other financial assistance such as wood, pellets, hotel/motel costs etc., will be reimbursed directly to the applicant with evidence of receipts.



**NEW MEXICO,
DO YOU NEED HELP PAYING
YOUR UTILITY BILLS?**

WE CAN HELP.

LEARN MORE AT
RENTHelpNM.ORG





Veteran Family Services



Goodwillit.org

Provides job development services, job training and comprehensive case management to veterans and their family members.

Program Components

- Classroom training*
- Subsidized trial employment
- On-the-job training
- Resume building
- Interview prep
- Job leads
- Placement follow-up
- Vocational counseling
- Case management
- Referrals

Program Locations By
County

ALBUQUERQUE AREA
Bernalillo
5000 San Mateo Blvd. NE
Albuquerque, NM 87109 (505)
881-6401 ext.1874

* Class availability varies by location. Ask your Career Specialist for details on your location.

OPERATION RAPID RESPONSE

Helping All Veterans and their families leave homelessness regardless of where they live in New Mexico.



Eligible Veterans include:

1. Veterans that have served at least one day on active duty
2. Veterans who are or have served in the National Guard or Reserve Forces
3. Unremarried Surviving Spouses of a Veteran that would have been eligible if alive today

The program is designed to help any eligible Veteran or Surviving Spouse in the state by either providing direct assistance from one of our staff who will meet the Veteran where they live, OR, assisting another care coordinator already providing services to our Veterans with financial support to meet their needs.

- All discharges except DISHONORABLE will be considered for eligibility purposes
- Any Veteran or Surviving Spouse without a DD214 or NGB22 can still be supported if we can verify their Veteran status or that of their loved one (please talk to our team)
- Funds and services available anywhere in New Mexico
- Care Coordinators do not need to be licensed professionals

For more information please contact our Outreach Specialist, Alyssa Bond at: alyssa.bond@nmvic.org or (505) 355-9869.

If You Know A Veteran In Need

Call us at 505-296-0800



www.nmvic.org



News from the VA

VA Creates Suicide Prevention Tool Offering Step-By-Step Lifesaving Guidance

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) released a mobile app that offers step-by-step guidance for those who are trying to support someone they care about and for those who are concerned about their own emotional wellbeing.

Developed by the VAs PREVENTS office (<https://www.va.gov/PREVENTS/>), the How We R.E.A.C.H. coaching tool (<https://www.reach.gov/resources/tool/>) includes five actions to take when REACHing out to someone in need, or when you are REACHing out for help for yourself. The tool provides additional resource information and suggested language to use when starting what are often very difficult conversations.

When we REACH to those in need, we:

- R** – Reach out and ask, “How are you...really?” Listen and offer hope.
- E** – Engage them about possible risk factors and changes in their life to better understand their pain.
- A** – Attend to their safety. Unless you are concerned about your safety, stay with them.
- C** – Connect them to resources such as supportive friends and family, professionals or a crisis line.
- H** – Help them make and maintain a plan to stay safe. Encourage them to share it with others.

When we REACH because we are hurting, we:

- R** – Reach to a loved one or someone we trust. Don’t be afraid to reach out — now.
- E** – Engage those we trust and discuss life changes and risk factors that are contributing to our pain.
- A** – Attend to our safety. Contact someone who can be with us and help us stay safe.
- C** – Connect with family, friends or appropriate professionals. Contact a crisis line and be honest so they can help.
- H** – Help others understand how they can help us stay safe. Share a safety plan if we have one.

“The How We R.E.A.C.H. coaching tool empowers everyone with basic information so they can take the necessary critical steps to provide – or receive – help and hope,” said PREVENTS Executive Director Barbara Van Dahlen, Ph.D. “It puts this important information at our fingertips, on our phones, giving people the confidence to reach out for themselves, to friends and loved ones, to ensure they get the support they deserve.”

The tool is a key component of REACH, the first ever national public health campaign focused on suicide prevention. Established in July 2020, REACH aims to engage everyone with the goal of changing the culture of mental health and preventing suicide among Veterans and all Americans.

It was developed with the help of military and Veterans Service Organizations, and in collaboration with other organizations that have pledged to assist with the dissemination of this potentially life-saving app.

VA Modernizes Its GI Bill® Platform to Offer Veterans Easier Access

VA has awarded a contract to transform the operations of the GI Bill® to a digital platform, which VA said will improve education benefits and customer service delivery to nearly one million students served each year.

Referred to as the Digital GI Bill®, this platform will enable VA to call, email, text and chat with GI Bill® beneficiaries, grant the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) immediate access to beneficiary records, and respond to questions from colleges and universities instantaneously.

“We are in the beginning stage of implementing a multi-year, joint undertaking with select vendors working together to deliver a modern, integrated solution for our GI Bill students,” said Acting VA Under Secretary for benefits Thomas Murphy. “Throughout implementation, VA will seek feedback from students, schools and partners to ensure we are meeting their needs effectively as they pursue their academic and vocational goals



The Digital GI Bill® developed by Veterans Benefits Administration and VA’s Office of Information and Technology (OIT) features:

Improved customer and financial services, allowing for timely and accurate delivery of payments and real-time eligibility and benefit information.

The ability for GI Bill® students to engage with VA through electronic outreach, intake and upgraded communication tools for on-the-spot service.

An end-to-end systems management perspective to ensure proper compliance and oversight of GI Bill® programs, and the use of data and business intelligence tools to track, monitor and measure school and student outcomes.

Support for new program and policy requirements to keep up with the ever-evolving changes within the academic community and job market.

VA is using \$243 million received under the CARES Act to support the Digital GI Bill® modernization overhaul. For more information on the GI Bill®, go to <https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/>

