



# The Guardian

The monthly newsletter of the New Mexico Dept. of Veterans' Services  
April, 2024

•Website: [www.nmdvs.org](http://www.nmdvs.org)

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## Eric James Appointed as Department of Veterans' Services Deputy Secretary

The New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services (DVS) is pleased to announce the appointment by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham of Eric James as the agency's deputy secretary.

Deputy Secretary James comes to the agency from the New Mexico VA Health Care System, where he served for 17 years in various quality and process improvement roles—most recently serving as the NMVAHCS' high reliability officer and chief for the Office of Organizational Excellence.

The native of Miami, Florida, is also currently a colonel in the New Mexico Army National Guard, serving as commander of the 111<sup>th</sup> Sustainment Brigade based in Rio Rancho.

"I am pleased to welcome Colonel James to the New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services," said DVS Cabinet Secretary Jamison Herrera, who is also currently serving in the New Mexico Army National Guard as a brigadier general and as the state's deputy adjutant general. "His expertise with VA health care, combined with his proven ability to lead, will be a tremendous asset not only for the agency but also our state's veterans and their families."

During his 26 years of U.S. Army service, Deputy Secretary James has been deployed as a combat advisor during Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, and also for humanitarian operations in the aftermath of the powerful Category 5 Hurricane Maria that devastated Puerto Rico in 2017.

Deputy Secretary James earned a bachelor's degree in geography from Appalachian State University, an MBA from Augsburg University, and a master's degree in strategic studies from the U.S. Army War College. He, his wife Livia, and their two school-aged children live in Albuquerque.

"I am excited and extremely grateful for this opportunity to join the fantastic DVS Team," said Deputy Secretary James. "Serving my fellow veterans is very personal for me. I'm looking forward to broadening my ability and the ability of DVS to serve New Mexico's veterans and their families."



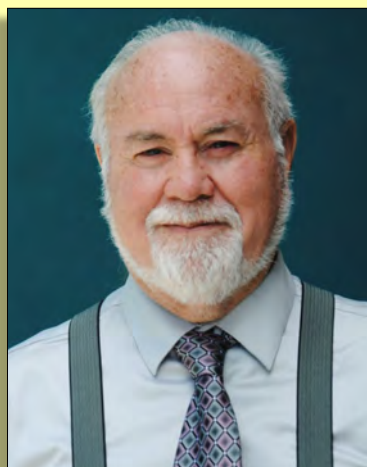
**Eric James**  
DVS Deputy  
Cabinet Secretary

## DVS to Expand Business Hours at Its Downtown Albuquerque Office

Beginning May 1, the DVS office in downtown Albuquerque will be open Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

The office is on the third floor of the Dennis Chavez Federal Building, at 500 Gold Ave. SW. (between 5th and 6th streets). Veterans and eligible dependents are encouraged to make an appointment with DVS Veterans' Service Officer Ronn Saavedra at [ronn.saavedra@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:ronn.saavedra@dvs.nm.gov) or (505) 525-3331.

Ronn can help file VA claims, apply for lost or misplaced DD-214 separation of service forms, apply for state veterans' benefits, or refer veterans or their eligible dependents to federal, state, or county/city agencies or programs that offer a multitude of services and help for veterans.



### Former DVS Veterans' Service Officer Martín Márquez Laid to Rest With Military Honors

Former DVS Veterans' Service Officer Martín Márquez was laid to rest on April 12 at the Angel Fire State Veterans Cemetery after passing away on March 8 at his home in Belen. He was 71 years old.

Martín was a beloved VSO who came to DVS in May of 2018 and initially worked in the DVS Albuquerque office. He moved to the agency's Las Vegas (NM) office a year later, before retiring in February of 2023.

**Martín Márquez**  
*DVS VSO from 2018-2023*

Born and raised in Anton Chico in Guadalupe County, Martín served nine years in the U.S. Army during the latter stages of the Vietnam War—seeing combat action in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia as a member of the 25th Infantry Division, and later with the 100th Maneuver Training Command, completing his service at the rank of sergeant.

After his service, Martín earned bachelor's degrees in history and business administration, a master's degree in counseling, and then worked for 20-years as a teacher and football coach in the El Paso, TX, area.

“It was a pleasure and honor to work with Martín. He had the amazing gift of compassion--always making veterans feel heard and feel important,” said DVS Field Services Director Robin Wilson. “Martín could talk to anyone about anything. He had a positive outlook on life and in his daily work and was always seen with a smile. I will forever remember Martín as a lover of life, a proud veteran and a genuinely nice person.”

Martín is survived by his wife Kendra Morison de Márquez, five children, four grandchildren, and five siblings.

## DVS Veterans' Service Officer Spotlight



**Freddy Solis-Littlejohn**  
*DVS Hobbs-Based VSO*

DVS Hobbs-based Veterans' Service Officer (VSO) Freddy Solis-Littlejohn recently helped a widow of a Vietnam War Army veteran successfully re-file a VA dependency & indemnity Compensation (DIC) claim that resulted in a \$301,000 payout.

The veteran passed away in 2003 from coronary artery disease, which he and his wife had always thought was tied to his exposure to the Agent Orange herbicide during his service in southeast Asia. After the veteran's death, his widow soon filed a VA DIC claim stating this exposure as a cause of death. But VA denied the claim because at the time coronary artery disease was not at VA-recognized health issue tied to Agent Orange exposure.

Years later, the widow contacted Solis-Littlejohn shortly after the PACT Act was signed into law in August of 2022. She had learned that coronary artery disease was among the many presumptive health condition that were now eligible for filing VA health care and DIC claims. After doing some research, Solis-Littlejohn found information relating to her original DIC claim, and re-filed a new one...all the while keeping in touch with her, encouraging her to "have faith—this will get done."

A year-and-a-half later, that claim payout of \$301,000 finally arrived—which included back-pay retroactive to the original unsuccessful claim filed 21-years ago.

"It's a tremendous feeling finally getting the approval of this well-deserved claim," said Solis-Littlejohn. "Though we were confident it was going to be approved, neither of us was expecting such a substantial amount. This is truly life-changing for her—and I am so happy!"

### Dependency & Indemnity Compensation

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) is a tax-free monthly benefit paid to eligible survivors of military service members who died in the line of duty-- or eligible survivors of veterans whose death resulted from a service-related injury or disease.

If VA previously denied a DIC claim for a condition that now qualifies under the new PACT Act law, widows or eligible dependents can apply to collect benefits as far back as the date of their original application. If VA owed the veteran money or benefits they never received, survivors may also be eligible for a one-time accrued benefits payment.

For more information about DIC, the PACT Act, or previously denied VA DIC claims, please contact any DVS VSO listed on the last two pages of this newsletter. They will also be readily available to help you file a claim.

## Upcoming DVS Benefits/Assistance Outreaches

DVS is scheduled to make the following April and May outreach visits at the locations listed below. Veterans and/or their eligible dependents are encouraged to visit the locations listed below for information regarding the filing VA claims for VA medical care, mental health counseling, disability benefits and payments, retiree pensions, burials, and many other VA benefits.

DVS staff can also help with applying for state veterans' benefits such as the veterans' \$4,000 property tax exemption, waiving the property tax assessment for veterans rated 100% permanent and total disabled, disabled veteran fishing and hunting licenses, veterans' license plates, and many more state veterans' benefits.

Staff will also help with any other issues a veteran or eligible dependent may need help with. Please remember to bring a copy of your Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty (DD-214), as it is a necessary document for filing all veterans' benefits claims. DVS can help assist veterans file for lost or misplaced forms.

City/Town	Date	Venue/Address	Hours
Albuquerque	Apr. 29	North Valley Sr. Ctr/3825 4th St. NW	9am-1pm
Artesia	Apr. 18	United Veterans Center/W. Hermosa Dr.	9am-3:30pm
Deming	Apr. 24	Deming Senior Center/800 S. Granite	10am-12:30pm
Santa Rosa	Apr. 17	David Flores Veterans Ctr/720 Lake Dr.	10am-2pm
Albuquerque	(May 2)	Bear Canyon Senior Center/4645 Pitt St. NE	9am-1pm
Albuquerque	(May 7)	Highland Senior Center/131 Monroe St.	10am-2pm
Deming	(May 8)	Veterans' Food Bank/4045 Overhill Dr. NW	10am-2pm
Deming	(May 22)	Deming Senior Center/800 South Granite	10am-1230pm
Fort Bayard	(May 15)	Ft. Bayard Medical Center/41 Ft. Bayard Rd.	10am-2pm
Ruidoso	(May 8)	Ruidoso Community Ctr./501 Sudderth Dr.	10am-2pm
Truth or Consequences	(May 9)	State Veterans Home/992 S. Broadway	9am-4pm

The following are weekly outreach stops:

Albuquerque	M & W	VA Regional Office/500 Gold Ave SW	9am-4pm
Santa Fe	T & Th	Santa Fe Vet Center/2209 Brothers Rd.	8am-2pm
Truth or Consequences	Wed.	State Veterans Home/992 S. Broadway	9am-4pm

Throughout the year, veterans or their eligible dependents can always make an appointment with any DVS veterans' service officer—regardless of location—for in-person, phone, or email assistance.

Office locations, contact information for DVS VSOs, the woman veterans program manager (for women veterans who would feel more comfortable with a woman), and the DVS Native American liaison (for Native American veterans who would feel more comfortable work with a fellow Native American) can be found on the last two pages of this newsletter.



## DVS Provides Assistance for Veterans at the “Cabinet in Your Community” Event in the Four Corners Area

DVS Cabinet Secretary Jamison Herrera (right photo) spoke to veterans at Shiprock High School who attended day two of the two-day “Cabinet In Your Community” outreach in the Four Corners area April 11-12. Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren (*second from the right*) was on hand to hear about concerns from Navajo Nation residents.



The outreach event was presented by New Mexico Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham as an opportunity for residents in the area to meet and get assistance from state agency cabinet secretaries and staff.

The bottom two photos show day one of the outreach even in Farmington, at Animas Elementary School. In the lower left photo, DVS Farmington-based Veterans’ Service Officer Leo Esquibel (*in black shirt*), and DVS NW Region VSO Supervisor Robert Guinn (*standing at far left*) answered questions about veterans’ benefits. The lower-right photo shows Robert (*standing at left*) and DVS Tribal Liaison Beverly Charley (*2nd from the right*)



## DVS Outreach in Southeast New Mexico

DVS sent a large contingent to help veterans at the March 28 Chaves County Veterans Symposium at the Carlsbad National Guard Armory. Standing in front of cadets from the New Mexico Military Institute are: (far left, from L to R: Clovis-based Veterans’ Service Officer Ben Padilla, Hobbs-based VSO Freddy Solis-Littlejohn, Women Veterans’ Program Manager Theresa Figueroa, Field Services Division Director Robin Wilson, Las Cruces-based VSO Vince Tellez, and Roswell-based VSO Danielle Thompson and her service dog Maddox. Also from DVS (*far right, in black*), is Eastern Region VSO Supervisor Matt Barela. (*present at the event but not in the photo were State Benefits Bureau Chief Jeff George, and Business Operations Specialist Michael Saiz*)





The New Mexico Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC)—the veterans business development division of the New Mexico Department of Veterans’ Services— will present free “Boots to Business” training classes listed below in April and May.

The first two classes on the list are for current and former members of the New Mexico National Guard who are interested in starting their own business or growing an existing operation. Spouses are also welcome to enroll. The next three classes are for active-duty personnel on the air bases who are thinking of starting their own business once they complete their military services, and veterans with on-base privileges. Spouses are also welcome.

<b>City</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Venue/Address</b>	<b>Hours</b>
Farmington	Apr. 25-26	San Juan College-Zia room/4601 College Blvd. <i>(for all veterans, current &amp; former New Mexico National Guard members, &amp; spouses)</i>	8am-4pm
Albuquerque	Apr. 29-30	DVS ABQ Office/4801 Indian School Rd. NE  <i>(for all veterans, current &amp; former New Mexico</i>	8am-4pm
Clovis	May 2-3	Cannon AFB <i>(only for active-duty personnel, veterans (with on-base privileges, and spouses)</i>	8am-4pm
Alamogordo	May 9-10	Holloman AFB <i>(only for active-duty personnel, veterans (with on-base privileges, and spouses)</i>	8am-4pm
Albuquerque	May 13-14	Kirtland AFB <i>(only for active-duty personnel, veterans (with on-base privileges, and spouses)</i>	8am-4pm

### **Boots to Business Program**

These free two-day introduction to entrepreneurship courses are a great way for entrepreneurial-minded former service members to learn about key elements of small business ownership and expansion, techniques for evaluating the feasibility of business concepts, and the steps needed to develop an all-important business plan—a “must” for anyone looking to start or expand a business.

There will also be an introduction to a broad spectrum of entrepreneurial business concepts, how to access resources available for obtaining start-up or expansion capital, technical assistance, and how to pursue federal contracting opportunities. To register for this class, please go to the national Boots to Business calendar at <https://sba.my.site.com/s/reboot-course-information> and click on the desired class.

## DVS, Doña Ana County Assessor's Office to Host Veterans Property Tax Exemption/Waiver Service Day Apr. 25



DVS and the Doña Ana County Assessor's office are hosting a veterans property tax exemption/waiver service day on Thursday, April 25, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the assessor's office (845 North Motel Blvd.)

Veterans and unmarried widows of veterans can stop by to file on-the-spot for the veterans' property tax exemption, which is a \$4,000 reduction off the taxable value of a veteran's New Mexico property assessment.

Veterans rated by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) at 100% permanent-and-total, service-connected disabled can file to waive their property tax payment. Unmarried widows of these eligible service-connected disabled veterans can also apply for this waiver.

Applicants for the exemption or waiver must bring a copy of one of the following documents to show proof of veteran status: DD-214, NOAA form 56-16, or U.S. Public Health Service PHG form 1867. Applicants for the 100% waiver must also bring their VA proof of permanent & total service-connected disability letter.

Additionally, one of the following must also be presented to show proof of residency: a valid NM driver's license, voter registration card, or your latest income tax return. You will not be able to file for the exemption or waiver without proof of veteran status or residency at your home.

DVS staff can also answer questions about or help file VA health care claims or apply for state veterans' benefits. You can also file for lost or misplaced DD-214 forms.

Throughout the year, veterans and unmarried widows of veterans can also contact any DVS field office to apply for the exemption or waiver by mail. Please contact DVS at (505) 827-6300 or [nmdvs.info@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:nmdvs.info@dvs.nm.gov) to find the nearest DVS office.



## Spring Honor Guard Conference to be Presented in Las Cruces Apr. 26

DVS, the New Mexico National Guard, and AARP New Mexico will present the 2023 Military Honors Spring Training Conference & Competition on **April 26** in Las Cruces.

The conference will be from 8am-4pm at the Sonoma Ranch Golf Course, located at 1274 Golf Club Road. Breakfast and lunch will be served on-site to all attendees.

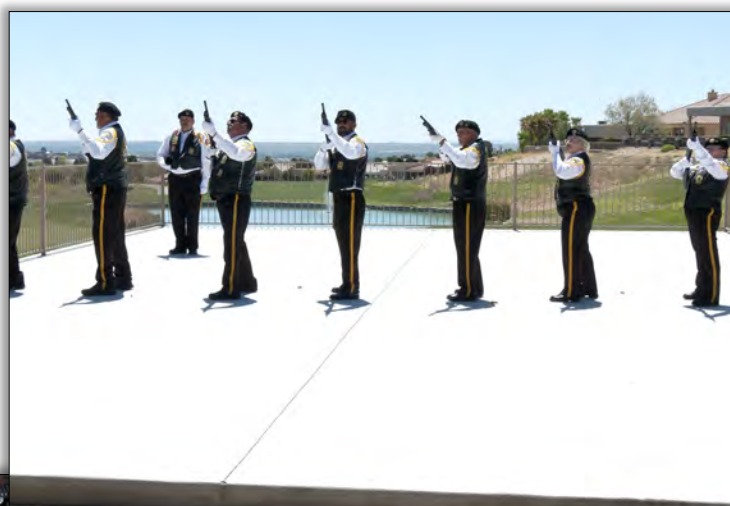
New Mexico's Honor Guards are all-volunteer units that perform the flag-fold, rifle volley, and bugle rendition of *Taps* at most funerals of honorably discharged veterans in the state.

The conference is presented as a learning and training opportunity for these volunteer units. Instruction and coaching will be provided by New Mexico National Guard Honor Guards. The highlight of the day is a performance competition between willing large and small-size honor guards that will be judged by a panel of judges.

Veterans service groups interested in forming an all-volunteer honor guard are encouraged to attend. This will be the first of two honor guard conferences scheduled this year and is an opportunity for southern New Mexico honor guards to attend a conference more convenient for them than the annual summer training conference held in



*All photos on this page are from previous years spring training conferences.*





# Native American Training Institute Veterans Symposium



Friday, April 19 and Saturday, April 20, 2024  
Isleta Resort & Casino Conference Center • Albuquerque, NM

## Honoring Our Veterans *To A Journey for a Healthy and Quality Life*

Veterans, Service Members and Dependents are invited and encouraged to attend this two-day symposium to ensure veterans have access to the many benefits, entitlements and services provided by NM Department of Veterans Services, Veterans Administration and Indian Health Services. Veterans will have the opportunity to voice their issues, concerns and needs directly to government officials, agencies and service providers to make certain their questions are adequately addressed, including:

1. Medical and Healthcare Services: COMPACT ACT, PACT ACT, PTSD, Suicide, Opioid Overdose
2. On-site assistance in filing for VA and State benefits;
3. Entrepreneurship: Business start ups, government contracting, etc.;
4. Vocational training, on-the-job training and other higher education opportunities;
5. Employment services and initiative;
6. Training and certification information for Veteran Service Officers;
7. Program and service opportunities exclusive to Women Veterans;
8. Promote and provide adequate healthcare needs and transportation services in rural communities.

### Registration

FREE registration for Veterans, their spouses, and service providers. Complimentary information tables are available for veteran related services.

Register or reserve your information table by scanning the QR code on the right with your smart phone's camera to open the registration site or visit our website at:  
[www.nati-nm.org/veterans-1](http://www.nati-nm.org/veterans-1)



### Lodging & Venue

Isleta Resort & Casino  
11000 Broadway SE  
Albuquerque, NM 87005  
**Rate:** \$141 plus tax  
**Code:** NAT0424  
**Phone:** (877) 747-5382  
**Deadline:** April 1, 2024

### Symposium Information

**Ramus Suina**      **Larry Archuleta**  
(505) 920-5047      (505) 907-8699



DVS Tribal Liaison Beverly Charley (2<sup>nd</sup> row/far right, olive-green shirt) attended the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Navajo Women Veterans Recognition Day & Benefits Conference March 30 in Farmington at San Juan College. DVS encourages women veterans to attend its annual women veterans conference on June 8 in Albuquerque (details on next page)



# SAVE THE DATE

Department of Veterans' Services

**SATURDAY, JUNE 8, 2024**

Sheraton Albuquerque Uptown



# 2024



# WOMEN VETERANS'

# CONFERENCE

**"YOUR VOICE MATTERS"**

RSVP early and reserve your seat today!

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2024-department-of-veterans-services-women-veterans-conference-tickets-797077429047?aff=oddtcreator>

Email: [theresa.figueroa@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:theresa.figueroa@dvs.nm.gov)

## Bataan Remembrance Day Commemorated in Santa Fe

DVS Cabinet Secretary Jamison Herrera was among the special guests commemorating Bataan Remembrance Day at an April 9 ceremony in Santa Fe.

The annual ceremony is presented by the New Mexico National Guard to honor the 1,800 New Mexico National Guardsmen who suddenly found themselves—and our country—entering World War II on December 8, 1941, when Japan launched a surprise attack on the Philippines. That attack came just hours after Japan launched the infamous attack on the U.S. Navy base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The guardsmen had deployed to the Philippines earlier that spring in reaction to increasing hostile actions by Japan throughout Asia.

The ceremony in Santa Fe honors those National Guard members, for being part of the 75,000 American and Filipino soldiers who were surrendered by their own commanding general to the Japanese.



DVS Cabinet Secretary Jamison Herrera (*center/left, standing at podium*) paid tribute to the “Battling Bastards of Bataan” ...calling them “true heroes who will forever be remembered for the incredible sacrifice they made for our country, the Philippines, and the free world.”

PHOTOS BELOW: The ceremonial raising of the White Flag of Surrender by a four-member New Mexico Army and Air National Guard Color Guard. The flag raising commemorates the events of April 9, 1942. On this date, the commanding officer of the Allied troops Luzon Force, Maj. Gen. Edward P. King, Jr., disobeyed non-surrender orders from his superiors—Gen. Douglas MacArthur and Gen. Jonathan Wainwright—and did indeed surrender his troops. King, noting that his ammunition, food, and medicine was depleted, sensed an imminent defeat. The 75,000 American and Filipino soldiers were then forced to make the torturous 60-mile *Bataan Death March* to prison camps. Many perished or were killed along the way by their Japanese captors. By the time Japan surrendered 3-1/2 years later, only 900 of the 1,800 surrendered New Mexicans were alive. Today, the only surviving New Mexican Bataan defender is 104-year-old Valdemar de Herrera.







ABOVE PHOTO: Nancy de Herrera Crochet, daughter of Bataan Death March survivor Valdemar de Herrera, is comforted by Agapito Silva, Jr., whose father Agapito was also a Bataan Death March survivor. Valdemar de Herrera splits his time living with family in Colorado Springs, CO, and in his northern New Mexico hometown of Costilla in Taos County. Silva's father Agapito Sr. passed away in 2007.



New Mexico Army National Guard Maj. Gen. Miguel Aguilar, who is the adjutant general of New Mexico, is assisted by Santa Fe Mayor Alan Webber in laying a wreath at the base of the Eternal Flame Monument outside the Bataan Memorial Building.

## DVS Helps With Restoration of the Historic Albuquerque Cemetery

DVS Cabinet Secretary Jamison Herrera helped dedicate the completion of a renovation project of veterans' headstones at the Albuquerque Historic Fairview Cemetery on April 2.

More than 200 new veterans' headstones are in place in two American Legion plots at the cemetery, which opened as the city's first cemetery in 1881 and where an estimated 550 veterans are buried—many in unmarked graves. Veterans from as far back as our nation's Civil War are buried at the cemetery, which had become overgrown with weeds ever since it closed in the early 2000s. Many of the 12,000 gravesites have eroded.



Two years ago, DVS received funding from Bernalillo County, partnering with the county and the cemetery board to restore the cemetery's veteran sections. Headstones were removed, cleaned, raised, and realigned to national and state veterans' cemetery standards.

In his remarks at the ceremony, Secretary Herrera praised county officials, the cemetery board, and the countless number of volunteers who have worked together to bring dignity back to the cemetery.

"DVS is not in charge of anything, other than to synchronize the efforts of our community engagements like this one, to bring together community service organizations and volunteer groups," said Secretary Herrera. "This is Team New Mexico coming together in every community in the state to serve and honor our veterans.

Renovating other veterans' sites at the cemetery will continue, as will the volunteer-driven cleanup and renovation of the entire cemetery. Historic Fairview Cemetery Board President Gail Rubin welcomes veterans and the public to join in this ongoing cleanup, which happens on the first Saturday of each month. For more information, contact Gail at (505) 363-7514 or [gail@agoodgoodbye.com](mailto:gail@agoodgoodbye.com).







## National Vietnam War Veterans Day Observed in Santa Fe

DVS Cabinet Secretary Jamison Herrera joined Santa Fe National Cemetery Director Victor Vasquez for a Vietnam War Veterans Memorial Day ceremony on March 29 hosted by the cemetery staff.

The ceremony honored the service and sacrifice of the more than nine million American service members who served in the United States military during the Vietnam War era. The March 29 date commemorates the date in 1973 when the last American service members were called home from service in

Vietnam. Congress passed the Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Act in 2017 to establish the date as a National Day of Observance to honor all who served during the Vietnam War.

Speaking at the ceremony, Secretary Herrera described the war as one unlike any America had previously fought— noting that women nurses were, for the first time, sent to combat zones. He also noted that it was the first war that Americans at home, through the media’s access to the front lines, were now able to actually see the effects and realities of war.

He also said many Americans treated returning soldiers differently than today’s returning service members. “Many of the combat veterans who returned home following their tour came back to no homecoming ... no thank you...as the country's attitude toward the war changed over time,” he said. “But times have changed. Various veterans' agencies are working now to do their best to help all veterans, including those from the Vietnam era. You were there for our country, and we are here for you now,” he said.

According to VA, there are about 48,500 Vietnam War era veterans living in New Mexico. Of the 58,200 service members who lost their lives in the war, 398 were from our state. There are still 12 New Mexicans currently listed as missing-in-action.

## DVS VSO Helps With Groundbreaking of New Santa Fe Vet Center

DVS Las Vegas-based Veterans’ Service Officer Jimmy Saiz (*far right*) was one of several local dignitaries and veterans invited to participate in the March 22 groundbreaking of a new Santa Fe Vet Center.

The center, located in the city’s south side across from the Santa Fe Country Club, will be twice as large as the existing 2,400 square-foot building across town...and is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

There are four Vet Centers in the state (others are in Farmington, Albuquerque, and Las Cruces). These VA-managed facilities offer free counseling for veterans dealing with emotional and mental issues. Sais was invited to take part as a thank you gesture for his work helping veterans filing for their VA or state veterans’ benefits.





# Veterans Community Bulletin Board

The following pages 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 government agencies and non-profit service organizations to send flyers for publication in *The Guardian* announcing an upcoming or ongoing veteran-related event. DVS will run these flyers as a public service courtesy to the veteran community.

Please note:

- 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 to publish any flyer.



## Gold Star Memorial Marker Dedication



**Saturday, April 27, 2024**

**10:00 am**

**New Mexico Veterans Memorial Park**

1100 Louisiana Blvd SE, Albuquerque, NM 87108

**A SYMBOL FOR ALL TO SEE LEST WE FORGET  
THOSE WHO HELP TO KEEP US SAFE & FREE**

The National Garden Clubs, Inc., the New Mexico Albuquerque Gold Star Mothers, Kirtland Spouses Club, High Desert Design Club, and the New Mexico Garden Clubs, Inc. wish to thank everyone for attending the dedication of this Gold Star Memorial Marker at the New Mexico Veterans Memorial Park.

**RSVP: Shirley Tetreault (505) 259-2263**

Refreshments immediately following the ceremony.

Hosted by the New Mexico Garden Clubs, Inc. and the NM Albuquerque Gold Star Mothers.





# Are you a Veteran ready to begin living your best life?

Experience a complimentary week full of mindful education, body rejuvenation and uplifting comradery with fellow veterans and their partners in the mountains of New Mexico. Learn valuable therapeutic and holistic tools while leaning in to Post Traumatic Growth.



**APPLY TODAY!**  
Download an application on our website.

Serving veterans and their families since 2009.  
**YOU ARE NOT ALONE!**

## 2024 RETREAT SCHEDULE

April 28- May 5

June 2-9

August 18-25

October 20-27



Retreats include FREE lodging, meals, and activities like massage therapy, acupuncture, yoga, horseback riding and more!  
\*Travel is participants responsibility.

Eligibility for attendance:  
1) Veterans diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress  
2) Must bring a support partner  
3) Must be free from drug/alcohol abuse for at least 12 months  
\*Note: New Mexico veterans have first priority. Veterans from other states will be accepted as funds allow.



## OUR CONTACT

📞 505-501-8337

📧 [retreats@vethealingcenter.org](mailto:retreats@vethealingcenter.org)

🌐 [www.veteranswellnessandhealing.org](http://www.veteranswellnessandhealing.org)

📍 P.O. Box 805, Angel Fire, NM 87710





Blue Star  
**Connect  
Outdoors**

## **Petroglyph National Monument**



**Saturday, 27 April | 10am-2pm  
6510 Western Trail NW, 87120**

**Military connected families are invited to join Park Rangers during Junior Park Ranger Day activities or a light hike through Riconada Canyon Trail to sketch more than 300 petroglyphs. Water, snacks, and sketchbooks will be provided. Register using the QR code early as space is limited.**

**VA**

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration  
Amarillo VA Health Care System

Lubbock VA Clinic Presents

# WELCOME HOME

## 2nd Annual Veterans Event

Saturday, May 4, 2024

11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Lubbock Memorial Civic Center Exhibit Hall

1501 Mac Davis Ln, Lubbock, TX 79401



- **Delicious food**
- **Family Fun**
- **Music**
- **Activities**
- **Door Prizes**
- **Resources**
- **And more!**

**United** **VCS**  
supermarkets VETERANS CANTEEN SERVICE



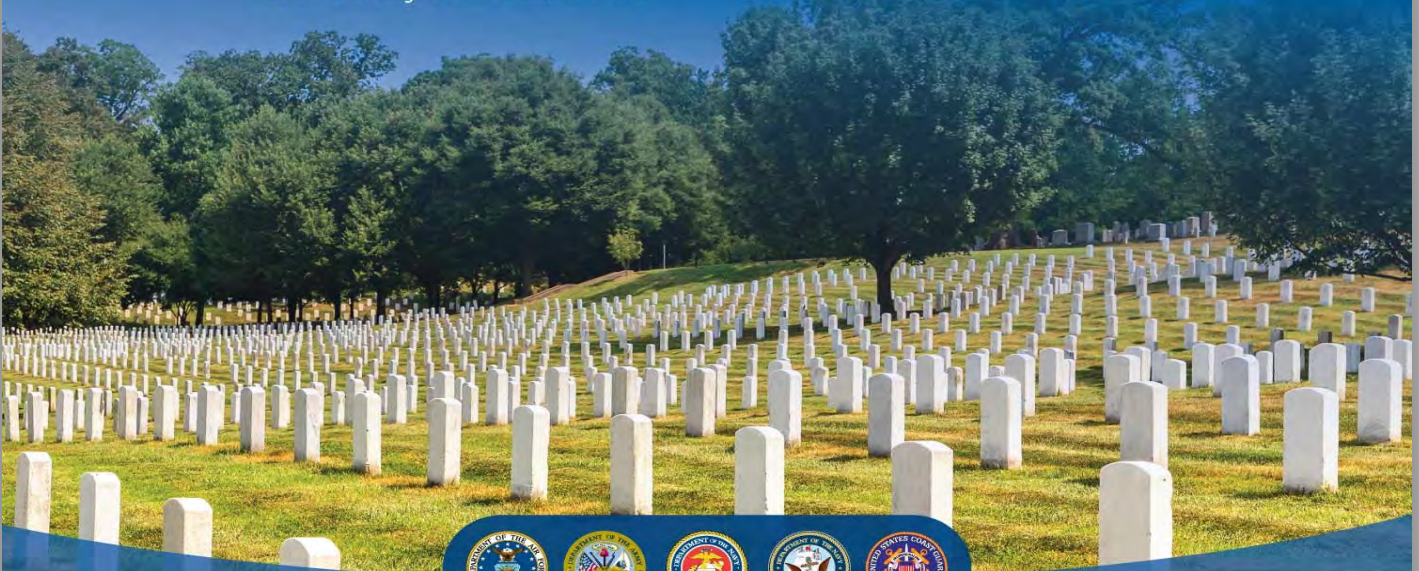
# Need a Ride to Visit Your Loved One?

## 2024 *Santa Fe National Cemetery Visitation Opportunity*

### Three Trips Available On The Following Dates

Wednesday April 10, 2024  
Wednesday May 15, 2024  
Wednesday June 12, 2024

**Deadline – April 1, 2024**  
**Deadline – May 6, 2024**  
**Deadline – June 3, 2024**



### Please sign up at the front desk

Participation is **limited to the first 5 that sign up.**  
Seniors must be registered members of their senior center



*The New Mexico Rail Runner Express along with local organizations is providing a limited number of seniors from each of our senior centers a round-trip to the cemetery.*

**Your ride begins in Albuquerque and takes you there and back.**

 [riometro.org](http://riometro.org)





**MAY  
18th  
2024**



**ATTENTION VETERANS, ACTIVE  
MILITARY, AND FAMILIES**

**WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEARN THE BASICS OF FLY  
FISHING?**

**THE BOSQUE CHAPTER OF TROUT UNLIMITED  
INVITES YOU TO**

**A FLY FISHING CLINIC FOR BEGINNERS**

**THIS FREE ONE-DAY CLINIC MEETS FROM  
8:30-4:00 AT THE**

**NORTHWEST AREA GAME AND FISH OFFICE**

**7816 ALAMO ROAD NW, ALBUQUERQUE**

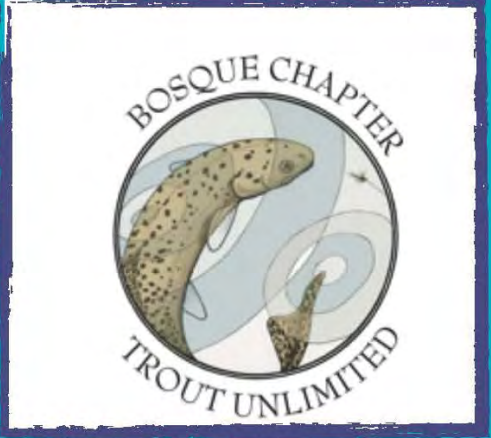
**THIS CLINIC IS BYOL (BRING YOUR OWN  
LUNCH) AND DOES NOT REQUIRE A TROUT  
UNLIMITED MEMBERSHIP TO ATTEND**

**LIMITED TO 25 PARTICIPANTS**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, OR TO REGISTER,  
CONTACT**

**JEFF HARRELL**

**[flynangler@gmail.com](mailto:flynangler@gmail.com)**



# HORSIN' AROUND THERAPEUTIC RIDING CENTER

## ABOUT US

Horsin' Around Therapeutic Riding Center is a PATH certified, 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that provides therapeutic activities centered around horses. We provide equine assisted services to children and adults with physical, cognitive, and emotional challenges in Valencia, Bernalillo and Socorro Counties.

## OUR MISSION

Our mission is to improve the wellbeing of individuals through equine-assisted Therapy. We believe that horses and the therapy they provide make a difference by creating strong and healthy individuals, families and communities.



## WHAT WE DO

### Therapeutic/adaptive horsemanship

A horsemanship program that focuses on teaching riding and horsemanship skills on and off the horse to those with physical, cognitive, social, and developmental disabilities.

**CHANGING LIVES ONE RIDE AT A TIME!**

## GET INVOLVED

### Volunteer

- |              |                        |
|--------------|------------------------|
| Side Walker  | Administration         |
| Horse Leader | Public Relations       |
| Barn help    | Information Technology |

### Monetary Donation

Your donation will contribute to the care of our horses, facility maintenance, and provide scholarships for our participants.

@R0bin-Thomas-304



**venmo**

Scan this code to **pay**





**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS  
DEPARTMENT OF NEW MEXICO  
2511 UTAH STREET NE  
ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87110  
[WWW.DAVNEWMEXICO.ORG](http://WWW.DAVNEWMEXICO.ORG)**

**2024  
PROGRAM & EVENT  
INFORMATION SHEET**



**DAV FELLOWSHIP DINNER**

LAST WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH 5-7PM  
FRIENDS AND FAMILY WELCOME

DAV DEPARTMENT OF NEW MEXICO  
2511 UTAH STREET NE  
ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87110  
**PLEASE RSVP AT:**  
[WWW.DAVNEWMEXICO.ORG](http://WWW.DAVNEWMEXICO.ORG)  
**(505) 294-6193**



**CROCHET & TEA**

TUESDAYS, 1:30-3:00PM  
FRIENDS AND FAMILY WELCOME

DAV DEPARTMENT OF NEW MEXICO  
2511 UTAH STREET NE  
ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87110  
**PLEASE RSVP AT:**  
[WWW.DAVNEWMEXICO.ORG](http://WWW.DAVNEWMEXICO.ORG)  
**(505) 294-6193**



**SUPPORT GROUP & SOCIAL HOUR**

MONDAYS, 2-3PM  
FRIENDS AND FAMILY WELCOME

DAV DEPARTMENT OF NEW MEXICO  
2511 UTAH STREET NE  
ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87110  
**PLEASE RSVP AT:**  
[WWW.DAVNEWMEXICO.ORG](http://WWW.DAVNEWMEXICO.ORG)  
**(505) 294-6193**



**CLOTHING CLOSET**

FREE CLOTHING FOR VETERANS

DAV DEPARTMENT OF NEW MEXICO  
2511 UTAH STREET NE  
ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87110  
**PLEASE VISIT:**  
[WWW.DAVNEWMEXICO.ORG](http://WWW.DAVNEWMEXICO.ORG)  
**(505) 294-6193**



**FOOD PANTRY**

FREE FOOD FOR VETERANS

DAV DEPARTMENT OF NEW MEXICO  
2511 UTAH STREET NE  
ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87110  
**PLEASE VISIT:**  
[WWW.DAVNEWMEXICO.ORG](http://WWW.DAVNEWMEXICO.ORG)  
**(505) 294-6193**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT OUR ASSISTANT CHAPLAIN, ALLISON VAZQUEZ @ [ALLISONNMDAV@GMAIL.COM](mailto:ALLISONNMDAV@GMAIL.COM)**



# Free Behavioral Health Counseling Now Available for Veterans in the Gallup Area



Free counseling is available for veterans residing in the Gallup area at Synergy Behavioral Health Center.

Treatment can help with a range of life issues and challenges, through different therapeutic approaches including Mindfulness-Based Somatic Experiencing, eye Movement Desensitization & Reprocessing (EMDR), as well as traditional approaches of solution-focused, addictions treatment, couples counseling, and psycho-dynamic psychotherapy.

Counseling is offered with Bill Pearson, MS LPCC LADAC ; more information is available at <https://synergycentergallup.com/>. These services are available to veterans and their families.

Bill and Noreen Kelly, from the Dine Council of Elders for Peace, are also available for outreach and suicide prevention activities to veterans and families in Tohatchi/Navajo to Zuni/Ramah, and Manuelito to Crownpoint/Thoreau.

The above services are provided in partnership with the DVS Health Care Coordination Division, and in conjunction with the [Governor’s Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families](#)—a coordinated nationwide effort to end veteran & military suicide. DVS is leading this effort here in New Mexico, forming partnerships with organizations and agencies throughout the state to eliminate veteran suicide here in the state.



The above counseling is 100% private and confidential.





## News from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)



### Big Increase in Number of Women Veterans Receiving VA Benefits

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is delivering disability compensation benefits to a record number of women Veterans. According to VA, 702,557 women veterans are receiving [disability compensation benefits](#) from VA — an all-time record and an increase of 180,959 women Veterans (or 26%) over five years ago.

The average woman veteran who receives disability compensation benefits from VA has a 68% combined disability rating, and they receive an average of \$26,809 in

earned disability compensation benefits per year from VA.

The average grant rate for women veterans is 89.2%, meaning that 89% of women veterans who have applied for disability benefits with VA have received benefits for at least one condition.

Women veterans are the fastest growing cohort at VA, and — in addition to delivering record levels of disability compensation benefits — VA is now serving more women veterans in its health care system than ever before. The sharp increase in women veteran benefits in recent years is largely due to the PACT Act, which has empowered VA to expand health care and benefits to millions of veterans who were exposed to toxins and other hazards while serving the country.

“Women veterans have fought in every war since the American Revolution, but they have not always been able to access the care and benefits they’ve earned and deserved. But now, at VA, we’re making sure that those days are over,” said VA Deputy Secretary Tanya Bradsher, the first woman veteran VA deputy secretary. “These record numbers demonstrate that we’ve made tremendous progress in recent years, but they are still just the beginning — we won’t rest until every woman veteran is coming to VA.”

“We want women veterans to come to VA for their health care and benefits, which is why we’re hosting women veteran outreach events across the country throughout this month and throughout this year,” said VA Under Secretary for Benefits Josh Jacobs. “To all the women Veterans out there, we encourage you to visit [VA.gov](#) or call 1-800-MYVA411 to apply for your earned benefits today. We will do everything in our power to serve you, just like you’ve served our country.”

In recognition of Women’s History Month, VA’s regional offices are hosting or participating in 139 outreach efforts specifically focused on women veterans. In addition to disability compensation benefits, VA’s concerted efforts to reach out to women veterans are helping them get education benefits and well-paying jobs: despite only making up 11.3% of the Veteran population, women Veterans received 27.5% of [Post 9/11 education benefits](#) and 26.4% of [Veteran Readiness and Employment benefits](#) in 2023.

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Over the past two years, VA has also dramatically expanded health care for women veterans. Specifically, VA expanded [breast cancer screenings and mammograms](#) for Veterans with potential toxic exposures; [supported access to reproductive health services](#), including contraception, [in vitro fertilization](#), [abortion counseling and – in certain cases – abortion care](#) for veterans and VA beneficiaries; and [dramatically expanded one-on-one maternity care coordination](#) for women veterans.

Women veterans are also enrolling in VA health care at higher rates under the PACT Act, and VA recently hosted its [first Women Veterans Experience Action Center](#), helping more than 340 women veterans apply for the care and benefits they deserve.

Additionally, [as announced by the White House this week](#), VA and the Department of Defense are launching a new Women’s Health Research collaborative to explore opportunities to promote joint efforts to advance women’s health research and improve evidence-based care for veterans and service members.

## VA to Launch Program to Help Veterans Avoid Foreclosure on Their Homes

On May 31, VA will launch a new program — the [Veterans Affairs Servicing Purchase \(VASP\) program](#) — to help more than 40,000 veterans experiencing severe financial hardship avoid foreclosure and stay in their homes.

VASP is a new, last-resort tool in VA’s [comprehensive suite](#) of home retention options for eligible veterans, active-duty service members, and surviving spouses with VA-guaranteed home loans who are experiencing severe financial hardship.

Through VASP, VA will purchase defaulted VA loans from mortgage servicers, modify the loans, and then place them in the VA-owned portfolio as direct loans. This will empower VA to work directly with eligible veterans to adjust their loans — and their monthly payments — so they can keep their homes. With VASP, these borrowers will have a fixed 2.5% interest rate, which will provide a consistent, affordable payment for the remainder of their loan.

VA is committed to doing everything possible to prevent foreclosures for veterans and their families. Over the past several months, VA has strongly encouraged a foreclosure moratorium through May 31, 2024, extended its COVID-19 modification program through May 31, 2024, and worked with veterans directly to help them retain their homes. In total, VA helped more than 145,000 veterans and their families avoid foreclosure in 2023 alone.

“This new program will help more than 40,000 Veterans and their families stay in their homes, and there’s nothing more important than that,” said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. “We at VA are committed to doing everything in our power to help veterans avoid foreclosure, and that’s exactly why we’re launching VASP – to help the veterans who need it most.”

“When a veteran falls on hard times, we work with them and their loan servicers every step of the way to help prevent foreclosure — including offering repayment plans, loan modifications, and more,” said Under Secretary for Benefits Josh Jacobs. “But some veterans still need additional support after those steps, and that’s what VASP is all about. This program will help ensure that when a veteran goes into default, there is an additional affordable payment option that will work in a higher interest rate environment — so they can keep their homes.”

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Veterans will not apply directly for VASP. Instead, beginning May 31, mortgage servicers will identify qualified borrowers and submit requests on behalf of Veterans based on a review of all home retention options available and qualifying criteria. Veterans facing financial hardship should work with their mortgage servicers to explore available options.

VA anticipates that VASP will result in a government subsidy spending reduction of approximately \$1.5 billion from 2024 to 2033, making it beneficial for veterans, taxpayers, servicers, and loan holders alike. This is because the savings associated with avoiding foreclosures outweighs the cost of purchasing these homes. VA has existing authority to establish and implement VASP under 38 U.S.C. § 3732 and § 3720.

VA is proud to help veterans get access to — and retain — the homes they deserve by guarantying home loans with no down payment requirements and competitively low interest rates. In total, VA has helped veterans, service members, and survivors obtain more than [28 million homes](#). Currently, more than 3.7 million veterans have active home loans guaranteed by VA, and VA guaranteed 400,695 home loans in 2023 alone.

Veterans who are having difficulty reaching a resolution with their mortgage servicer can contact VA at (877) 827-3702, option 4. [Learn more about the policy](#) and the VASP program. For more information on VA home loans, visit the [VA home loans](#) website.

## VA Health Care Copayment Exemption for Native American Veterans

If you are an American Indian/Alaska Native veteran, you may no longer have to make copayments for health care and urgent care received through VA. You can also get reimbursed for copayments paid.

### How to apply

You can apply for the copayment exemption by completing these three steps:

1. Make a copy of only one of the following official Tribal documents, including, but not limited to a Tribal Enrollment or Citizenship/Membership ID Card; Certificate of Degree of Indian or Alaska Native Blood issued by the Bureau of Indian Affairs; or documentation issued by a tribe on official letterhead indicating individual affiliation
2. Fill out VA Form 10-334 and make a copy. Find the form [on the VA forms website](#).
3. Mail both documents to:  
VHA Tribal Documentation  
PO Box 5100  
Janesville, WI 53547-5100

Go to [this VA link](#) to learn more about this copayment. Or for local help, contact [DVS Tribal Liaison Beverly Charley](#) at (575) 241-3322.







## DVS Field Offices in New Mexico

DVS has field offices throughout the state that are staffed with nationally accredited veterans service officers. DVS VSOs are dedicated to helping veterans with filing VA claims, applying for state veterans benefits, or with helping with anything else a veteran or their family needs with.

Office hours are Monday-Friday from 8am-5pm, (excluding holidays). Though this service is free, appointments are required and can be made by contacting the VSOs below. **Please note: VSOs can also provide help by phone or email to any veteran or eligible dependent calling or emailing from anywhere in New Mexico.**

### Alamogordo/Southeast NM

**David Henley**

411 10th Street #107

(575) 937-5620

[david.henley@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:david.henley@dvs.nm.gov)

### Albuquerque Metro Area

**May Chavez** (ABQ metro supervisor)

Pinetree Corporate Center/Bldg. 2

4801 Indian School Rd. NE/2nd floor

(505) 527-2302

[helen.chavez@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:helen.chavez@dvs.nm.gov)

### Albuquerque Metro Area

**Ronn Saavedra** (until April 30)

Pinetree Corporate Center/Bldg. 2

4801 Indian School Rd. NE/2nd flr

(505) 525-3331

[ronald.saavedra@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:ronald.saavedra@dvs.nm.gov)

### Albuquerque Metro Area

**Diana Powers**

Pinetree Corporate Center/Bldg. 2

4801 Indian School Rd. NE/2nd flr

(505) 274-0393

[diana.powers@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:diana.powers@dvs.nm.gov)

### Albuquerque Metro Area

**Mathew Zamora**

Pinetree Corporate Center/Bldg. 2

4801 Indian School Rd. NE/2nd flr

(505) 525-3331

[mathew.zamora@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:mathew.zamora@dvs.nm.gov)

### Albuquerque (Downtown)

**Ronn Saavedra** (beginning May 1)

Dennis Chavez Federal Bldg.

500 Gold Ave. SW/3rd floor

(505) 525-3331

[ronald.saavedra@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:ronald.saavedra@dvs.nm.gov)

### Albuquerque (VA Hospital)

**DVS staff Mon., Wed., Thu. (9am-4pm)**

Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical Ctr.

1501 San Pedro Dr. SE

(no appointments needed)

(505) 383-2400

### Belen/ABQ Metro & Central NM

**Rob Miller**

Belen Business Center

719 South Main St.

(505) 537-9339

[rob.miller@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:rob.miller@dvs.nm.gov)

### Carlsbad/Southeast NM

**Dagmar Youngberg**

101 N. Halagueno

(505) 988-5900

[dagmar.youngberg@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:dagmar.youngberg@dvs.nm.gov)

### Clovis/Southeast NM

**Matt Barela** (SE region supervisor)

904 W. Sixth St.

(575) 825-9602

[matthew.barela@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:matthew.barela@dvs.nm.gov)

### Clovis/Southeast NM

**Ben Padilla**

904 W. Sixth St.

(505) 537-1445

[ben.padilla@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:ben.padilla@dvs.nm.gov)

### Farmington/Northwest NM

**Robert Guinn** (NW region supervisor)

San Juan College Vet Center

4601 College Blvd./Room 1715-B

(505) 327-2861

[robert.guinn@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:robert.guinn@dvs.nm.gov)

### Farmington/Northwest NM

**Leo Esquibel**

San Juan College Vet Center 4601

College Blvd./Room 1715-B

(505) 916-4835

[leo.esquibel@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:leo.esquibel@dvs.nm.gov)

### Gallup/Northwest NM

**John Livingston**

908 E. Buena Vista Ave/Room 1A

(505) 389-8731

[john.livingston@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:john.livingston@dvs.nm.gov)

### Grants/Northwest NM

**April Ball**

551 Washington Ave.

(505) 521-8132

[april.ball@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:april.ball@dvs.nm.gov)

**Hobbs/Southeast NM****Fred Solis-Littlejohn**

2120 North Alto St.

(575) 241-0714

[fred.solis-little@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:fred.solis-little@dvs.nm.gov)**Las Cruces/Southwest NM****Miguel Martinez** (*supervisor*)

2024 E. Griggs Ave.

(575) 644-6869

[miguel.martinez@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:miguel.martinez@dvs.nm.gov)**Las Cruces/Southwest NM****Vincent Tellez**

2024 E. Griggs Ave.

(505) 361-5298

[vincent.tellez@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:vincent.tellez@dvs.nm.gov)**Las Cruces/Southwest NM****Clint Anderson**

2024 E. Griggs Ave.

(505) 216-8782

[clint.anderson@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:clint.anderson@dvs.nm.gov)**Las Vegas, NM/Northeast NM****Arturo Marlow** (*supervisor*)

917 Douglas Ave.

(505) 331-8838

[arturo.marlow@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:arturo.marlow@dvs.nm.gov)**Las Vegas/Northeast NM****Jimmy Saiz**

917 Douglas Ave.

(505) 520-5079

[jimmy.saiz@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:jimmy.saiz@dvs.nm.gov)**Rio Rancho/Northeast NM****Dustin Newsom**

Sandoval County Admin. Bldg.

1500 Idalia Rd./Bldg. D/room 2041

(505) 221-7190

[dustin.newsom@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:dustin.newsom@dvs.nm.gov)**Roswell/Southeast NM****Danielle Thompson**

1600 SE Main Street /Suite A

(575) 416-2284

[danielle.thompson@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:danielle.thompson@dvs.nm.gov)**Santa Fe/Northeast NM****Phillip Hernandez**

Bataan Memorial Bldg.

407 Galisteo St./1st Floor, Room 134

(505) 218-3125

[phillip.hernandez@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:phillip.hernandez@dvs.nm.gov)**Silver City/Southwest NM****Clarissa Sierra**

Western New Mexico University

1000 West College Ave.

Juan Chacon Bldg./Rm. 138A

(575) 313-5627

[clarissa.sierra@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:clarissa.sierra@dvs.nm.gov)**Taos/Northeast NM****Leticia "Lety" Cano**

Health &amp; Human Service Bldg.

145 Roy Rd.

(505) 709-5263

[leticia.cano@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:leticia.cano@dvs.nm.gov)**Women Veterans Program (ABQ)****Theresa Figueroa**

Pinetree Corporate Center/Bldg. 2

4801 Indian School Rd. NE/2nd floor

(505) 372-9106

[theresa.figueroa@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:theresa.figueroa@dvs.nm.gov)**DVS Tribal Liaison (Farmington)****Beverly Charley**

San Juan College Veterans Center

4601 College Blvd./Room 1715-B

(575) 241-3322

[beverly.charley@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:beverly.charley@dvs.nm.gov)