

Washington Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA)

Governor's 23-25 Budget Proposals, As of January 5, 2022



Staffing Shortage Impact on Census in Homes

Significant direct care staffing shortages in all four of our State Veterans Homes are impacting the number of residents we are able to safely admit into our homes. Prior to the pandemic, our resident census averaged almost 96% across our four homes. In Fiscal Year 2021, our census averaged 88% for the year, and decreased to a 78% average in FY22. As of December 2023, the census averages 75.7% across the four homes. Each one percentage point in census averages around \$730,000 annually in federal and private/local revenue. The drop from pre-pandemic census of 96% to the current 75.7%, equates to an estimated drop in federal and local revenue of over \$15.5 million. WDVA is working to address the staffing shortage on numerous fronts to improve recruitment and retention of our staff. As we increase staffing, we will incrementally admit new residents to our Homes with the continued goal of maximizing census to serve the veterans and qualified family members that need our nursing care.

OPERATING BUDGET	23-25 Biennium
Maintenance-Level	\$ 718,000
1. Inflationary Adjustments-Food, Medical Supplies, Equipment (GF-State) - Addresses inflationary increase in costs of essential items for the care of our residents in our veterans homes.	
Policy -Level	
1. PACT Act (GF-State) - Provides WDVA additional resources to successfully execute the Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act to ensure we are able to effectively assist veterans with the imminent, significant influx of new disability claims.	\$1,267,000
2. State Veterans Cemetery Capacity (GF-State/GF-Federal) - Provides funding for three positions to address the significant increase in annual interments at the state veterans cemetery, support operations, and ensure continued compliance with Federal VA standards to ensure continued federal grant funding.	\$576,000
CAPITAL BUDGET	
1. VA ARPA State Match Funds - Provides additional state funding to complete over \$31 million in construction grants that are 65% funded by the federal VA, to address inflationary increases and cost increases related to new federal laws.	\$6,800,000
2. Veterans Home Fire Alarm Replacement - Addresses a safety issue related to the failing fire alarm system at the Washington Veterans Home in Port Orchard.	\$1,280,000
3. Burial and Columbarium Expansion Grant - Provides funding needed to ensure interment capacity that will be needed within the next three years for the Washington State Veterans Cemetery in Medical Lake. This will be 100% federally funded, but requires 10% seed money from the state, which will be refunded at the end of the project.	\$3,300,000
4. Raise, Realign, and Clean Grave Markers - Funds required work to be in compliance with federal veterans cemetery standards. Will make adjustments to headstones and markers that have been worn and adjusted within the ground over time.	\$1,250,000
5. Minor Works Projects - Includes money for safety issues such as sprinkler system replacement, elevator replacement, and roof replacement at Washington Soldiers Home. Also includes feasibility studies for replacement of our Spokane Veterans Home and for a new state veterans cemetery in northwestern Washington.	\$1,860,000

