



HOUSE COMMITTEE *on* APPROPRIATIONS

CHAIR ROSA DELAURO

Supporting Our Veterans

Veterans Provisions in the Fiscal Year 2022 Consolidated Appropriations Act

We have a moral responsibility to protect those who sacrificed so much to protect us. Democrats in Congress secured transformative federal investments in the 2022 federal spending package to support our Veterans and their families and ensure they can live healthy, successful lives.

Our government funding legislation includes significant investments to support our Veterans.

Below you will find a division-by-division summary of Veterans provisions included in this historic legislation.

Division A: Agriculture-Rural Development- FDA

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides Veterans with farming and ranching opportunities through employment, education, entrepreneurships, financing, and other assistance. USDA's Military Veterans Agricultural Liaison works to help connect Veterans interested in agriculture with groups inside and outside the Department. Programs specifically provided for Veterans include:

- \$5 million to provide grants to nonprofit organizations for programs and services to establish and enhance farming and ranching opportunities for military Veterans.
- \$2.5 million to support outreach and assistance to socially disadvantaged Veteran farmers and ranchers.
- In 2019, SNAP households included 22,000 active-duty service members, 213,000 members of the National Guard or reservists, and 1.1 million Veterans.

Division B: Commerce-Justice-Science

Includes \$29 million for Veterans Treatment Courts, an increase of \$4 million above fiscal year 2021 which are modeled after drug courts and seek to serve Veterans suffering from addiction, substance misuse, and/or mental health disorders. These special courts combine rigorous treatment and personal accountability to break the cycle of drug use and criminal behavior. The program promotes collaboration among the judiciary, community corrections agencies, drug treatment providers, and other community support groups.

Division E: Financial Services and General Government

Provides \$16 million for the Small Business Administration (SBA) Entrepreneurial Development Programs for Veterans Outreach, which supports business outreach and entrepreneurship training specifically for Veterans.

Division H: Labor-HHS-Education

Under the Department of Labor, the package provides \$60.5 million for the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program, an increase of \$3 million above the FY 2021 enacted level.

Division I: Legislative Branch

- Provides \$794.0 million, an increase of \$37 million above the FY 2021 level, for the Library of Congress, including the Copyright Office, Congressional Research Service, and National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled. This funding level will allow continued progress on urgent information technology needs and modernization of systems for copyright registration and recordation and support ongoing Library initiatives such as the Veterans' History Project.
- Includes \$9.3 million for the House Green and Gold Congressional Aide Program (formerly the Wounded Warrior Program and the Congressional Gold Star Family Fellowship Program).
- Supports the collection, preservation, and accessibility of American war Veterans' personal accounts with \$3.8 million for the Library of Congress Veterans History Project.

Division J: Military Construction & Veterans Affairs

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

The bill provides a total of \$112.2 billion in discretionary appropriations for VA, an increase of \$7.8 billion above the 2021 enacted level. These resources will serve to expand access to services for Veterans and will boost oversight and accountability across the department. Of this amount, the bill includes:

- \$97.5 billion for Veterans Medical Care, an increase of \$7.5 billion above FY 2021. This funding will provide care for 7.1 million patients expected to be treated by VA in FY 2022. This amount includes:
 - \$13.2 billion for Mental Healthcare, an increase of \$2.9 billion above FY 2021, including \$598 million for suicide prevention outreach. This will support the nearly 2 million Veterans who receive mental health services in a VA specialty mental health setting and support suicide prevention services like the Veterans Crisis Line, which saw an increase in demand by over 59 percent in the last year.

- \$840.4 million for Gender-specific Care and Programmatic Efforts for Women, an increase of \$111 million above the comparable FY 2021 enacted level. Women are the fastest-growing cohort within the Veteran community, with nearly 561,000 women Veterans using VA health services.
 - \$2.2 billion for Homeless Assistance Programs, an increase of \$246 million above FY 2021. This funding will enhance VA's ability to reach homeless Veterans, which is particularly crucial as the most recent homelessness survey showed that on a given night in January 2021, an estimated 19,750 Veterans were experiencing homelessness.
 - \$621 million for Opioid Abuse Prevention, an increase of \$149 million above FY 2021. This funding will allow more targeted funding for pain management and opioid safety programs, primarily at the facility level.
 - \$327.5 million for Rural Health Initiatives, an increase of \$27.5 million above FY 2021. This will build upon VA's success in serving 2.9 million Veterans at 600 rural serving sites.
 - \$84 million for Whole Health Initiatives, an increase of \$10 million above FY 2021. This funding will enable VA to build upon the success of this program that focuses on Veterans' overall health and well-being, which has already reached 346,629 Veterans, or 7.41 percent of active VA users.
- \$111.3 billion in advance FY 2023 funding for Veterans' medical care. This funding will provide for medical services, medical community care, medical support and compliance, and medical facilities, and ensure that our Veterans have continued, full access to their medical care needs.
 - \$882 million for Medical and Prosthetic Research, an increase of \$67 million above FY 2021. This funding will allow VA to fund approximately 2,563 total projects, support more than 1,700 researchers, and partner with over 200 medical schools and other academic institutions.
 - \$2.5 billion to continue implementing the VA Electronic Health Record Modernization initiative. These funds will allow VA to support the continued deployment of the new electronic health record (EHR) system at VA medical centers and allow for intensive staff training, which is critical to the success of the effort. The bill also continues robust oversight of this program, including the Government Accountability Office, to ensure that the EHR system is implemented in a timely and efficient manner.
 - \$2.2 billion for VA Construction, an increase of \$458 million above the FY 2021 enacted level. Within this amount, \$1.6 billion is for Major Construction, and \$553 million is for Minor Construction. This increase will support VA's highest priority projects, correct critical seismic and safety deficiencies, and address other performance gaps at VA facilities to ensure that Veterans can access care in modern facilities that is safe, secure, sustainable, and accessible facilities.

- \$3.5 billion for operating expenses of the Veterans Benefits Administration, an increase of \$274 million above FY 2021, to ensure the prompt processing of disability claims and efforts to continue reducing the disability claims backlog. These funds will allow VA to complete an estimated 1.7 million disability compensation claims in 2022 and support service-connected compensation payments to an estimated 5.5 million Veterans, 500,000 survivors, and dependents. In addition, pension payments will be funded for more than 350,000 Veterans and survivors. The bill also continues rigorous reporting requirements to track each regional office's performance on claims processing and appeals backlogs.
 - The funding provided above the budget request will help the VA address claims for benefits due to newly identified service-connected health conditions related to toxic exposures.
- \$161 billion in advance mandatory funding for VA benefit programs.

Division L: Transportation-Housing & Urban Development

- \$27.4 billion for Tenant-based Rental Assistance to continue to serve more than 2.3 million very low- and extremely low-income households nationwide. This level of funding includes:
 - \$200 million to expand housing assistance to up to 25,000 low-income families, including individuals and families experiencing or at risk of homelessness, including Veterans and survivors of domestic violence: and
 - a combined \$55 million for the HUD/VA Supportive Housing for Homeless Veterans and Native American Veterans programs.
- \$4 million for the Veterans Housing Rehabilitation and Modification Pilot Program to rehabilitate and modify the primary residences of low-income, disabled Veterans.
- \$3.2 billion for Homeless Assistance Grants. HUD's 2021 Annual Homelessness Assessment found that 19,750 Veterans were experiencing sheltered homelessness, a decrease of 10 percent since 2020. While an unsheltered homelessness count was not conducted in 2021 due to COVID-19, HUD's 2020 Annual Homelessness Assessment found that 15,204 Veterans were experiencing unsheltered homelessness.
- \$3.8 million for the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), which coordinates a multi-agency Federal response to homelessness. Directs USICH to update the Committees on interagency efforts to support the effective referral of transitioning service members to employment and housing services, and next steps targeted toward decreasing rates of Veteran homelessness.
- Directs HUD to work with the Department of the Treasury to develop policies to align the HOME Investment Partnerships Program and Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program guidelines to address the housing needs of low-income disabled Veterans.