

STATE-TRIBAL COLLABORATION ACT 2020 AGENCY REPORT



New Mexico Department of Veterans Services
407 Galisteo St., Room 134
Santa Fe New Mexico 87501

July 31, 2020

Prepared by Beverly Charley

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

a. Summary of Report Focused on Accomplishments with Tribal Nations and Overview of Future Efforts

The New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services (the Department) participated in relevant aspects pertaining to the State Tribal Collaboration Act (NMSA 11-18-3 NMSA 2009) during the New Mexico State Government's fiscal year 2020. The Department participated in both formal and informal interaction with several Pueblos, Tribes and Indigenous Nations throughout the state and region.

The Department participated in:

- Collaboration with the NATI and the SWNAVA to host a Veterans Summit for Fall 2020
- Outreach and Education Programs
- Continued to participate in data sharing and information exchanges with Tribes and Pueblos
- Outreach events in tribal lands and near tribal lands
- During COVID 19, Assist New Mexico Veterans by teleworking, conducting State and Federal Claims.
- Participated in the Indian Day at Legislature
- VA Burial Benefits and State Veteran Memorial information was disbursed January 2020
- Coordination with the City of Gallup for New VSO hire
- Participated in the Annual Indian Day
- Became a Participant in the McKinley County Veteran Services Collaborative
- Provide Continuous on-going mentorship of 7 Native American VSO's
- Attended the City of Gallup Annual Veterans Stand Down and Hand-Up Project
- Participated in San Juan College Veterans Alliance Club Ball, Farmington, NM
- Presented NM Funeral Honors for the Navajo Code Talker-Joe Vandever
- Briefed the NM Legislative Senate Indian and Cultural Affairs Committee
- Participated in the 19th Annual Native American Veterans Health & Wellness Symposium
- Monthly Virtual Collaboration Meetings with the VA Tribal Government Relations & Healthcare System
- Military Honors Funeral Burial Conference – Training for Honor Guard Teams

II. AGENCY OVERVIEW/BACKGROUND

A. Mission Statement

The mission of The New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services is to assist veterans, their widows, and their children in establishing the privileges, which they are legally entitled.

B. Agency Overview

The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services is the state government agency statutorily created in 2003 to provide veterans with a cabinet-level agency to address their needs. Department services are partitioned into six (6) programs, aggregated by common statutory purpose and outcome:

Field Operations Division

There are 12 field offices of the New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services located throughout the state. Each is staffed by an accredited Veterans' Service Officer (VSO) to assist veterans and their dependents with filing for their federal and state benefits. All VSO's also have regularly-scheduled outreach visits to smaller and rural surrounding communities.

Administrative Services Division

Provide Administrative and Financial Services to the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services. Serves as Chief financial officer (CFO) for the agency. Responsible for establishing, monitoring and executing the Agency's budget.

Veterans State Benefits Division

Benefits Division ensure that veterans who have risked their lives and made other sacrifices to protect and serve our country receive their state and federal benefits along with their dependents.

State Approving Agency Bureau

The primary responsibility of the State Approving Agencies (SSAs) is to ensure the quality and integrity of programs of education and training for the use of GI Bill benefits. The scope of responsibility: high schools, adult education centers, employers providing on-the-job training and apprenticeship training, license and certification testing, vocational training and apprenticeship training, license and certification testing, vocational training, as well as all certificate and degree levels of post-secondary education. The SAA promotes and safeguards quality education and training for veterans, ensures greater educational and training opportunities to meet the changing needs of veterans and assists the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) in preventing fraud, waste, and abuse in the administration of the GI Bill. There are currently 136 GI Bill approved facilities in New Mexico, 103 are active.

Veterans Business Outreach Center Program

The New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services created the Veteran's Business Outreach Center (VBOC) to "assist veterans in achieving their entrepreneurial goals".

Healthcare Coordination Program

The Healthcare Coordination Program coordinates VA, state, and local healthcare alliances within the NMDVS. In this role, the division performs an advocacy role to ensure New Mexico's veterans are aware of their health benefits and how they can more easily navigate the New Mexico VA Healthcare system—as well as the El Paso VA Medical Center for veterans in the Las Cruces area, and the Big Spring (TX) VA Medical Center for veterans in the eastern/south east part of New Mexico. The division is also responsible for fostering partnerships with local healthcare entities that serve veterans and their families in our state.

Veterans State Cemeteries Program

The Veterans Cemetery Grants Program is to construct state veterans' cemeteries whenever the veteran burial needs are not being met by existing VA cemeteries. The New Mexico Veterans' Cemeteries are hallowed grounds that provide a final resting place, which honors and memorializes veterans and their families for their service and sacrifices made while serving in the Armed Forces of the United States. Currently, there are two State Veterans Cemeteries, one in Fort Stanton and the other in Gallup, NM. Completion of the 3rd cemetery in Angel Fire is underway with a projected date of opening in August 2020. The Carlsbad Veterans Cemetery is projected within the next 2-3years.

Women Veterans Program

The Women Veterans Program assesses the needs of New Mexico women veterans and makes recommendations regarding existing benefits and services for women veterans. Conducts statewide outreach strategies to enhance awareness to female veterans and agencies that provide services to female veterans. Enhances relations, ensuring all available services are relayed to female veterans. Provides guidance, technical assistance, and recommendations to the governmental agencies, legislators, veteran organizations, community organizations, and the general public on women veteran issues. Works with local veteran groups to advocate and educate on the unique issues facing women.

C. Any Department – Specific Tribal Collaboration / Consultation policy your agency might have adopted in addition to STCA (11-18-4.C (1))

III. AGENCY EFFORTS TO IMPLEMENT POLICY (11-18-4.c (1)(3))

In coordination with tribal authorities, the Department often assists tribal veterans with veterans' court issues.

Department staff members who regularly work with Pueblos, Tribes and Nations have been identified to attend the Cultural Competency training by the State Personnel Office (SPO). Other staff members are encouraged to participate.

IV. CURRENT AND PLANNED PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR COMMUNITIES (11-18-4.c (5))

- a. Provide a description of current and planned programs and services provided to or directly affecting Native communities and the funding for each program

The Department is committed to promoting fixable exchange between Department personnel, Department administration, and Pueblos, Native Nations and Tribes. However, the Department routinely collaborates with Native Nations, Tribes, and Pueblos in mutually beneficial projects for implementation of our respective veterans' programs. The Department's programs in which Native Americans participate and/or might have interests are shown below:

Programs and Services Potentially Affecting American Indians or Alaska Natives		
Programs	Description of Services	Funding
Cabinet Secretary's Office	Collaborating with the Navajo Nation Office of Veterans Affairs to provide guidance and best practices in the establishment of the NNOVA.	General Fund
Healthcare Coordination	Provide Veterans easier and faster health care	General Fund
State Veterans Benefits and Veterans State Cemeteries & Memorial	Statewide benefits for eligible veterans and their dependents. Create and administer four VA NCA standards, State operated veterans cemeteries	VA Funds/General Funds
Women Veterans' Coordinator	Provide guidance, technical assistance, and recommendations to the governmental agencies, legislators, veteran organizations, community organizations, and the public on women veteran issues.	General Fund

b. Main agency accomplishments and challenges regarding work with tribes and native organizations including significant state-tribal issues, recommendations and/or priorities addressed in FY20

The Department continues to work with the Tribes, Native Nations and Pueblos using a variety of outreach opportunities and will continue to develop ways to improve communications and provide medical treatment to veterans.

c. Goals for Fiscal year FY21 relating to tribes and native organizations

1. The Department is committed to working with and responding to all joint State Veterans' related concerns for the State, Tribes, Pueblos and Native Nations.
2. The Department will continue to seek out community and veterans outreach outlets to promote New Mexico Veterans within Native communities.
3. Collaborate with Federal VA partners (i.e. VBA and VAHCS) to capitalize on services to our veterans in rural communities.

V. TRAINING AND EMPLOYEE NOTIFICATION (11-18-4.C (2))

A. State Tribal Collaboration Act Training and Certification

Department field and supervisory employees from multiple Divisions received the STCA cultural awareness training and certification from SPO.

- B. Employee Notification about the STCA** Department managers, project leaders, and field employees are knowledgeable of the STCA policy that the Department abides by. Department employees also have access to the Tribal Liaison for consultations regarding the Act.

VI. KEY NAMES AND CONTACT INFORMATION (11-18-4.C (2))

CONTACT INFORMATION

Position / Program	Key Names
Cabinet Secretary	Judy M. Griego 406 Don Gaspar Santa Fe, NM 87501-2374 (505) 827-6334 judy.griego@state.nm.us
Deputy Secretary	Bryan Osterhage 407 Galisteo St, Rm. 142 Santa Fe, NM 87501 (505) 827-6311 Bryan.osterhage@state.nm.us
Benefits Division Director/ Cemetery and Memorial Programs Director	Edward Mendez Lew Wallace Building 495 Old Santa Fe Trail Santa Fe, NM 87505 (505) 827-6307 edwardl.mendez@state.nm.us
Field Operations Division Director	Larry Campos 5201 Eagle Rock Ave. NE Albuquerque, NM 87113 (505) 383-2417 larry.campos@state.nm.us
State Approving Agency Bureau Chief	Marilyn Dykman 5201 Eagle Rock Ave. NE Albuquerque, NM 87113 (505) 383-2418 marilyn.dykman@state.nm.us
Veterans Business Outreach Center Director	Richard Coffel 5201 Eagle Rock Ave. NE Albuquerque, NM 87113 (505) 383-2401 richardl.coffel@state.nm.us

<p>Administrative Services Director</p>	<p>Monica Maestas (CFO and Acting ASD Director) 407 Galisteo St, Room 134 Santa Fe, NM 87501 (505) 827-6303 monica.maestas@state.nm.us</p>
<p>Health Care Coordination Program Director</p>	<p>Jemia Warner 5201 Eagle Rock Ave. NE Albuquerque, NM 87113 (505) 383-2408 jemia.warner@state.nm.us</p>
<p>Women's Veterans Program Manager</p>	<p>Tracie Brasier 5201 Eagle Rock Ave. NE 2A Albuquerque, NM 87113 (505) 383-2431 tracie.brasier@state.nm.us</p>
<p>Tribal Liaison</p>	<p>Beverly A Charley 101 W. Animas St. Rm 104 Farmington, NM 87401 (505) 327-2861 beverly.charley@state.nm.us</p>

VII. RELEVANT STATUTES AND MANDATES

Appendix A

- Relevant Agency Regulations, State or Federal Statutes;
- Chapter 17 NMSA 1978;
- State-Tribal Consultation Act - (STCA) 11-18-3 NMSA 2009; and
- Governmental Dispute Prevention and Resolution Act (12-8A-1 NMSA) as amended 2007

Appendix B

Glossary or Definitions of Special Agency Terms and Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
NMDVS	New Mexico Department of Veterans Services
STCA	State Tribal Collaborative Act
NMSA	New Mexico Statute Administrative Code
CFR	Code of Federal Regulation
NCA	National Cemetery Administration
VAHCS	Veterans Affairs Healthcare System
SPO	State Personnel Office

VII. AGREEMENTS

- A. A list of any current or pending agreements with tribal nations, are at the site location.