

Minutes for Idaho Veterans Affairs Commission

April 16, 2025

Hybrid In-Person & Virtually

Call to Order – 8:30 AM MT

The Idaho Veterans Affairs Commission Meeting was held on Wednesday, April 16, 2025, at the Idaho Division of Veterans Services Central Support Office (351 N. Collins Road Boise, ID 83702) and virtually via Microsoft Teams.

Attendees

Commission Members in attendance: **Chairman Josh Callihan, Art Gimpel, Jinny Cash, Eugene Brown, David Maxwell**

IDVS Staff Members in attendance included: IDVS Chief Administrator **Mark Tschampl**, Deputy Chief Administrator **Tracy Schaner**, ISVH-Boise Administrator **Rick Holloway**, ISVH-Lewiston Home Administrator **Mark High**, ISVH-Pocatello Home Administrator **Josiah Dahlstrom** (Virtual). ISVH-Post Falls Home Administrator **Amber Goodchild** (Virtual), OVA Bureau Chief **Bill Heyob**, Idaho State Veterans Cemeteries Bureau Chief **Jacob Faulkner**, Business Support Bureau Chief **Paul Spannknobel**, Fiscal Officer **Debbie Spence**, Community Resource Specialist **Mitzi Cheldelin**, and Management Assistant **Kevin Wallior**.

Guests from Partner Agencies: Budget and Policy Analyst **Frances Lippitt** (Idaho Legislative Services Office)

Number of Citizens in attendance: 1, Idaho Falls Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter President Mike Spencer.

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Callihan asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting on January 9, 2025. **Commissioner Brown** motioned for approval of the minutes. **Commissioner Gimpel** seconded. The motion was approved with unanimous assent.

Division Bureau Reports

Boise Veterans Home Report presented by **Rick Holloway**

	Census								
	Nursing Care			Medicare A		Residential/Domiciliary Care			
	Days of Care	Avg Daily Census	Occupancy Rate	Days of Care	Avg Daily Census	Days of Care	Avg Daily Census	Occupancy Rate	
January	2,405	78	97%	9	0.3	0	0	0%	
February	2,189	78	98%	12	0.4	0	0	0%	
March	2,386	77	96%	14	0.5	0	0	0%	
Total/Avg	6,980	78	64%	35	0.4	0	0	0%	

Census is capped at 80, and hovers between 77-80 depending on hospitalizations. Admissions are currently focused on taking VA patients to alleviate/free up beds at the Boise VA when beds in the State Veterans Home are available.

The State Veterans Home has a partnership with Boise State University that brings social work interns into the Home for 9 months of the year.

Maintenance is focused on fixing all of the maintenance issues that crop up to keep the Home operating until the new Home is constructed and operational.

The Boise Home had their VA survey March 18 – March 21. They only received on citation, relating to paperwork.

Kirsten Murphy, Quality Improvement Director for our State Veterans Homes, started AIT and is being mentored by Rick Holloway in the Home Administrator Training program.

Hosting CNA, LPN, and RN students for clinical hours not just from in-state schools but also out-of-state schools. Able to recruit some of them for permanent positions once they graduate. This has helped reduce job vacancies, currently only 3 CNA vacancies.

Questions/comments: Chairman Callihan – Will the Home still have to survey during construction? Administrator Rick Holloway – Yes, throughout the construction the Home will still be required to go through both the VA and State Survey. After construction the new Home will have to go through a new home survey.

Mark Tschampl – Current staffing is based on the temporary 80-bed status of the Boise Home. Once the new facility is constructed we'll have to hire additional staff to meet the needs of a 122-bed facility.

Lewiston Veterans Home Report presented by **Mark High**

	Census				
	Nursing Care			Medicare A	
	Days of Care	Avg Daily Census	Occupancy Rate	Days of Care	Avg Daily Census
Jan	1,615	52	79%	69	2.2
Feb	1,300	46	70%	33	1.2
Mar	1,438	46	70%	39	1.3
Total/Avg	4,353	48	72%	141	1.5

Census – ticked up during January but then went down again. The Lewiston team does a fantastic job of helping our residents rehab/recuperate to allow them to return home.

Volunteer numbers are increasing again.

Pinnacle regularly interviews 6-7 residents and their families. Rare that they receive negative feedback. The past quarter they received an average score of 5/5.

DPW projects – the laundry boiler failed. Currently having to double wash in cold water. Trying to repair to avoid the cost of a replacement.

There was a significant COVID outbreak in January. Fortunately, we were able to clear the outbreak without the loss of any residents. The outbreak was in all three residence halls.

Lewiston staff recruitment has gone well. Only have 2 contract staff CNAs remaining. All the RN positions are filled.

Lewiston just completed internal surveys from our Quality Improvement Director and the Division Fiscal team.

Showcased a slideshow video of the various activities and events Veterans participated in during the previous quarter.

Questions/comments: Commissioner Gimpel reminded his fellow Commissioners to pass along any concerns or complaints they receive from Veterans to our leadership team. In Lewiston, a local hospital discharge planner was under the mistaken impression that the Lewiston Home's therapy services contractor was a defendant in a lawsuit, but that was a different facility and did not involve the Lewiston Home at all.

Pocatello Veterans Home Report presented by **Josiah Dahlstrom**

	Census				
	Nursing Care			Medicare A	
	Days of Care	Avg Daily Census	Occupancy Rate	Days of Care	Avg Daily Census
Jan	1,614	52	79%	34	1.1
Feb	1,435	51	78%	65	2.2
Mar	1,656	53	81%	31	1.0
Total/Avg	4,705	52	78%	130	1.4

Pocatello Home Census is the highest it's been since before the beginning of COVID. Admissions were higher than discharges for the past quarter.

Volunteer hours have been ramping up.

Customer satisfaction remains high, and Pocatello maintained its 100% satisfaction rating with an average rating of 4.7—4.9 on their Pinnacle customer satisfaction surveys.

The Boiler/Chiller Project is ongoing and has a projected completion of early June. The generator replacement project has a late spring target.

The Pocatello Home has a very active and engaged resident council, ensuring the residents have a voice.

The Blackfoot Elks donated a Greenhouse to allow Pocatello residents the ability to garden year-round.

Anticipate the VA Surveyors in June or July.

Showcased a slideshow video of the various activities and events Veterans participated in during the previous quarter.

Post Falls Veterans Home Report presented by **Amber Goodchild**

	Census				
	Nursing Care			Medicare A	
	Days of Care	Avg Daily Census	Occupancy Rate	Days of Care	Avg Daily Census
Jan	1,812	58	91%	55	1.8
Feb	1,618	58	90%	33	1.2
Mar	1,814	59	91%	26	0.8
Total/Avg	5,244	58	91%	114	1.3

The Post Falls Census has been steady, maintaining between 90-92%. The residents and staff were hit hard by the loss of a 103-year-old female WWII Veteran.

Volunteer hours continue to tick up as snowbirds return.

Received a Pinnacle Customer Satisfaction Award for being in the top 15% of the nation. (This award was achieved by all four of our State Veterans Homes.)

Food operations team are consistently praised by residents and their families.

Veterans Writing Corner – a new community program began helping residents write their memoirs.

The leadership team is working closely with our HR team to develop new recruiting strategies to help compete in a competitive job market.

Questions/Comments: No questions or comments.

OVA Report presented by **Bill Heyob**

Think that we may be underreporting the financial impact our services have on the state. Specifically think we might be under counting. Currently working with our admin staff to see if we can identify the disconnect.

Our statistics don't capture the true scope of the work being done by our Service Officers. Considering an update to more fully capture the totality.

OVA statistics comparing 2nd Quarter FY-2025 YTD totals to FY-2024:

	2025 YTD	2024 YTD	Increase/Decrease
Interviews YTD	8,282	7,541	+ 741
POAs Filed YTD	4,695	5,743	- 1,048
Claims Filed YTD	8,348	9,996	- 1,648
Appeals YTD	131	685	- 554
BVA Hearings YTD	80	37	+ 43

Veterans Seen by

OVA in Vet Courts	379	362	+ 17
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State Emergency

Grants Approved	9	2	+ 7
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Notable changes from March 2024 to March 2025:

March 2025 had 933 Office Interviews (-104), 907 Claims filed (-152).

Numbers are mostly down compared to last year due to most PACT Act claims having already been filed.

There has been an increase in emergency grants received but most do not meet the eligibility criteria. Those applicants are referred to the VOCS program to connect them to community resources that may be available.

Noteworthy Issues Currently Happening with the VA

- Kathy Malin (Boise VARO Director) Retired February 28, 2025. The Acting Director is Rashetta Smith who is currently the Reno VARO Director.
- VA Director- Doug Collins just sent out a letter to all VA employees on April 4, 2025; announcing VA will be reducing the size of their employees by 15%- from 470k to 398k. VA has implemented the Deferred Resignation Program (through April 30th) and the Voluntary Early Retirement Program. If enough Employees do not opt-in, VA will begin a Reduction in Force (RIF) Program.
- Employees who live within 50 miles of the VA Regional Office must return to the office full time on May 5, 2025.
- Employees outside of 50 miles must return to the office beginning July 7th.
- So far, there are no discussions of taking our workspaces from IDVS in the VARO though some VA Regional Office have had these discussions.

Significant Events within the OVA

- Personnel Changes- None

- The VFW Proficiency Training Course will be in Annapolis, MD from April 27-30th. Bill Heyob, Frank Fabbi, JT Ramondetta and Traci Colton will attend in person with three others attending remotely (Bob Smith, Iris Higgins, and Abel Silva)
- The 2025 County and Post Service Officer Training will be held on August 27-29th at the Riverside Hotel.
- Continuing to support Idaho National Guard Pre-Retirement Briefings, Yellow Ribbon Events for the Guard and Reserve, Vietnam Veteran Welcome Home Event, Veterans Resource Fair in Nampa, Community Information Resource Fair (IDOC) in Twin Falls, Veteran Appreciation Fair at the Boise VAMC, Transition Assistance Program briefs at Mountain Home AFB and scheduled outreaches throughout the State.

Questions/Comments: no comments.

Veterans Cemetery Report presented by **Jake Faulkner**

DPW 20-606 Boise Cemetery Expansion

1. Memorial Wall – Completed, punch list items remain, landscaping to be completed this spring.

DPW 25-600 Shop Expansion-Secure Records

1. Architectural/Design Team Selected
2. Est. Completion Summer of '26

DPW 21-605 Admin Building Expansion (Blackfoot)

1. Awaiting IDOPL Approval
2. Expected completion summer of 2025

FY2026 Approved Projects

1. ADA Access to Memorial Monument
2. Concrete Curbing-Lower Cemetery/New Road for Additional Access

Deferred Maintenance

Scatter Garden Handrail; Upper Memorial Road/Concrete; Wash Bay; Admin Floors; Roof Seal; and Wash Bay

ISVC Funded Improvements

Idaho Women Veterans Memorial Monument placement; ADA Parking; Irrigation Pond Reclamation

Veteran Interments

Jan	Cemetery Boise: 41	Cemetery Blackfoot: 8	
Feb	Cemetery Boise: 40	Cemetery Blackfoot: 3	
Mar	Cemetery Boise: 39	Cemetery Blackfoot: 2	
YTD	Cemetery Boise: 377	Cemetery Blackfoot: 28	Total Cemetery Bureau: 405

Dependent Interments

Jan	Cemetery Boise: 20	Cemetery Blackfoot: 2	
Feb	Cemetery Boise: 18	Cemetery Blackfoot: 0	
Mar	Cemetery Boise: 22	Cemetery Blackfoot: 0	
YTD	Cemetery Boise: 193	Cemetery Blackfoot: 10	Total Cemetery Bureau: 203

Burial Equity Act Interments

Jan	Cemetery Boise: 0	Cemetery Blackfoot: 0	
Feb	Cemetery Boise: 1	Cemetery Blackfoot: 0	
Mar	Cemetery Boise: 0	Cemetery Blackfoot: 1	
YTD	Cemetery Boise: 10	Cemetery Blackfoot: 1	Total Cemetery Bureau: 11

Burial Equity Act Dependent Interments

Jan	Cemetery Boise: 0	Cemetery Blackfoot: 0	
Feb	Cemetery Boise: 0	Cemetery Blackfoot: 0	
Mar	Cemetery Boise: 1	Cemetery Blackfoot: 0	
YTD	Cemetery Boise: 3	Cemetery Blackfoot: 0	Total Cemetery Bureau: 3

Volunteer Hours

Jan	206
Feb	150
Mar	143
YTD	2,860

Other Important Events/Information

In January, Idaho Veteran Wreath pick up was conducted. The Idaho Veteran Wreath Project was a success. Other communities have shown an interest in participating.

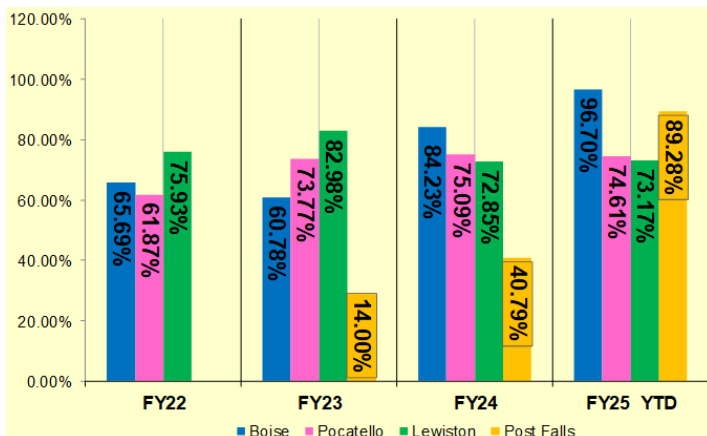
In March, IDVS completed the purchase of 15 acres of property from the adjacent Dry Creek Cemetery.

The Idaho State Veterans Cemetery in Blackfoot received a Stewardship Award from the National Cemetery Administration. This is a top award for maintaining National Cemetery standards.

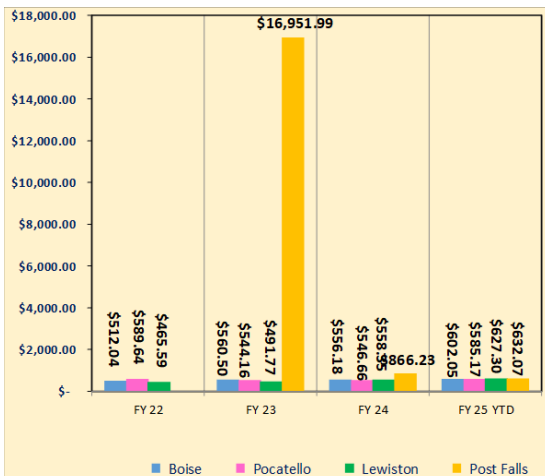
Questions/Comments: no comments.

Fiscal Report – presented by **Debbie Spence**

Average Census YTD Comparisons between the Homes:



FY25 Nursing YTD Average Cost Per Resident Day as of March 31, 2025 - \$611.12.



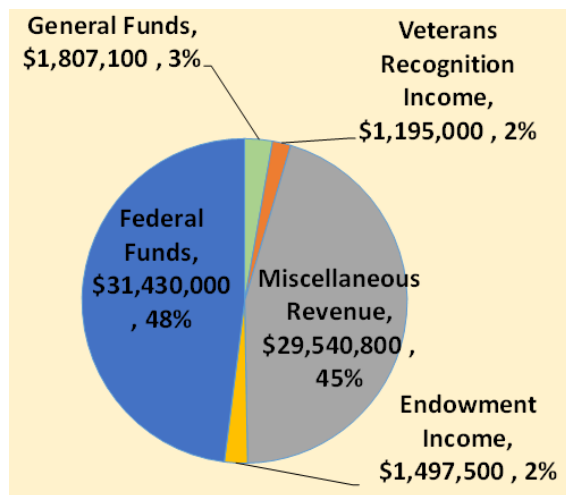
Audits

- FY 24 Single Audit
- FY24 Cost Report

FY25 Budget

- Fiscal year-end coming fast
- Continue to watch revenue and cash flow
- Using cash reserves due to lower census (decreased revenue) and increased expenditures
- Luma continues to be challenging

FY 26 Budget Appropriation – \$65,470,400



General funds are 1.6% of the total budget.

- \$479,300 Personnel Benefit Costs
- \$522,900 Statewide Cost Allocation (DAG, Risk Management, STO, SCO, ITS)
- \$1,735,300 Change in Employee Compensation
- \$6,400 Compensation Schedule Changes
- \$1,700 Compensation for Select Positions
- \$0 Temp Nursing Staff Pool (move \$ from operating to personnel)
- \$120,600 IT Maintenance & Licensing
- \$133,400 New Capital Outlay
- \$354,700 Replacement Items
- \$100,300 OITS Hardware
- Reappropriation Authority of any unexpended and unencumbered balances from the Federal Grant Fund (VA grant projects) for Boise Veterans Home replacement and Lewiston Home renovation

FY27 Budget Request

- Started budget training in April
- Address future requirements, objectives, and Veterans Recognition annual allocation plan
- Submit agency budget request by August 31, 2025

Questions/Comments: Citizen question – What percentage of funds are reimbursed by the federal government?

Debbie Spence responded: We do not receive reimbursement from the federal government. We received per diem from the VA as well as Medicaid. Approximately 70% of the Homes' revenue is federal.

Business Support and Education – presented by **Paul Spannknobel**

Business Support

LUMA is still a struggle to navigate. Consistent issues creating onerous administrative burdens that increase time spent on tasks and reporting compared to pre-LUMA.

ITS is an ongoing collaboration.

Sonya LaCasse is onboarding with Debbie as she will be replacing Debbie Spence as the Fiscal Officer when Debbie retires. Tsega Feleke was promoted to the Financial Principal.

CEC – state pay raises.

Previously agencies had flexibility and could adjust the pay raises to consider mid-range and compa-ratio as well as performance. This year the Legislature fixed the pay raise of \$1.55 instead of a percentage. Pay raises are \$1.05 for ratings of achieves, \$1.30 for ratings of solid sustains, and \$1.55 for ratings of exemplary.

The lone exception: all nursing staff will get a pay raise of \$1.55 or 3% whichever is greater.

Employees will see their pay raises in their first paycheck in July.

Temp Pool – using operations funds to create a pool of temporary nurses to fill staffing gaps. These nurses must work less than 20 hours per week, which is 1,385 hours per year.

Currently recruiting for a HR Business Partner 3 vacancy within IDVS.

Education Report

Keeping Tabs on the Cooperative Contract Agreement with the VA:

FY25 Allocation + COLA is \$202,029.00

- Team received Quarter 1 reimbursement in the amount of \$69,861.71
- Team will request Quarter 2 reimbursement mid-April 2025
- The COLA adjustment increased the FY25 Allocation to by \$4,928.00

FY24 Supplemental Request Submitted on December 3, 2024

- Amount requested and under review by VA: \$124,608.95

VA Education Benefits Contribute to Idaho's Economy

FY25 - VA QUARTER 1			
Beneficiary		Total Paid	Percentage of Utilization
Fry C	\$	60,566.48	0.42%
Fry S	\$	8,662.79	0.06%
SM	\$	254,916.69	1.77%
TOE C	\$	3,066,988.46	21.26%
TOE S	\$	585,670.62	4.06%
VET	\$	10,452,109.68	72.44%
Grand Total	\$	14,428,914.72	100.00%

FY25 - VA QUARTER 2			
Beneficiary		Total Paid	Percentage of Utilization
Fry C	\$	91,168.73	0.97%
SM	\$	159,059.05	1.70%
TOE C	\$	1,594,030.62	17.02%
TOE S	\$	394,573.37	4.21%
VET	\$	7,128,197.12	76.10%
Grand Total	\$	9,367,028.89	100.00%

2,340 Idahoan Beneficiaries
served in FY25, Q1



2,098 Idahoan Beneficiaries
served in FY25, Q2



1. VA's Q1 is October 1st through December 31st
2. VA's Q2 is January 1st through March 31st

KEY:

SM= Service Member

C=Child

S=Spouse

TOE=Transfer of Eligibility (*from veteran or service member to child or spouse*)

FRY=Scholarship for surviving spouses or children of an active-duty Service or Selected Reserve member who died after 9/11/2001

Program Activities in VA FY2025, Q1

ACTIVE FACILITY TYPE	TOTAL NUMBER OF ACTIVE IDAHO FACILITIES APPROVED	NUMBER OF PROGRAMS APPROVED IN VA's Q2	TOTAL NUMBER OF PROGRAMS APPROVED (VA FYTD)
IHL	21	514	1012
NCD	46	233	333
Apprenticeships (APP)	79	2	26
On-The-Job (OJT)	132	4	5
License/Certification	14	0	0
Prep-Courses	6	1	6
Totals:	298	754	1,382

The Education Team oversees 298 active facilities, adding 3 new facilities in VA's Q2 to our rosters.

Of the 298 active facilities, each program approved by the Idaho's SAA requires continuous oversight by the Education Team in way of:

- New program approvals
- Program yearly program reapprovals
- Program modifications
- Program withdrawals

In VA's Q2, the team approved an additional 754 programs since Q1 (at new and existing facilities).

Education FY2025 Focus:

IDVS Goals

- A team focus on increasing approval productivity in 2025, with the goal of completing 100% required full reapprovals by September 31st, 2025.
- The Education Team will continue to increase program opportunities for Idaho Veterans and their families.
- Implement CRM functionality for all facility types.

VA Goals

- Assigned 1 RBS (aka Risk-Based Survey) [VA Target is 100%] Completed March 31, 2025
- Assigned 10 Supervisory Visits [VA Target is 100%] 50% Completed
- New facility inspection visits Requirement [VA Target is 100%] Meeting targets 100%
- New approvals completed within 39 Days [VA Target is 90%] Meeting targets 100%
- Complete all full reapproval packages within 36 months of prior full review [VA Target is 90%] Meeting targets 100%

SAA Database Updates:

- Education's CRM and database PHASE 2 has begun: Phase 2 will allow new facilities to submit for an approval as well as existing facilities to add new programs.
- Education's CRM and database PHASE 1 is complete – the team went live on 10/4/2024 for existing NCD & IHL facilities.

Additional Implementation Phases for FY25: open existing CRM to (2) New Facility applications + added capacity for existing facilities to add new programs, (3)OJT/APP, (4)prep courses, and (5)testing facilities.

- CRM will enable the team to streamline the facility's upload process and retain facility-specific information in a secure database.
- Will allow facility SCOs a place to see the progress of their approval packet in real time and a portal to submit modification approvals.
- Will allow facility SCOs the ability to predict when their next full reapproval review is due.

Questions/Comments: none.

Veterans Outreach and Community Support (VOCS) – presented by **Mitzi Cheldelin**

Events

- Vietnam Veterans Day: While it tried to rain us out, local Vietnam Veterans still enjoyed coffee, hotdogs and music. It was our first Saturday holding the event and Scentsy Commons let us use their outdoor patio and even some indoor seating to escape the weather. Roughly 400 participants showed up, rain or shine.

Engagement January 1 – March 31:

- Veterans – 816
- Civilians – 118
- Mixed Events – 4,309
- Events – 66
- Counties Visited – 15/44

Highlighted Events hosted by Community Partners this quarter:

- Veterans Talking To Veterans

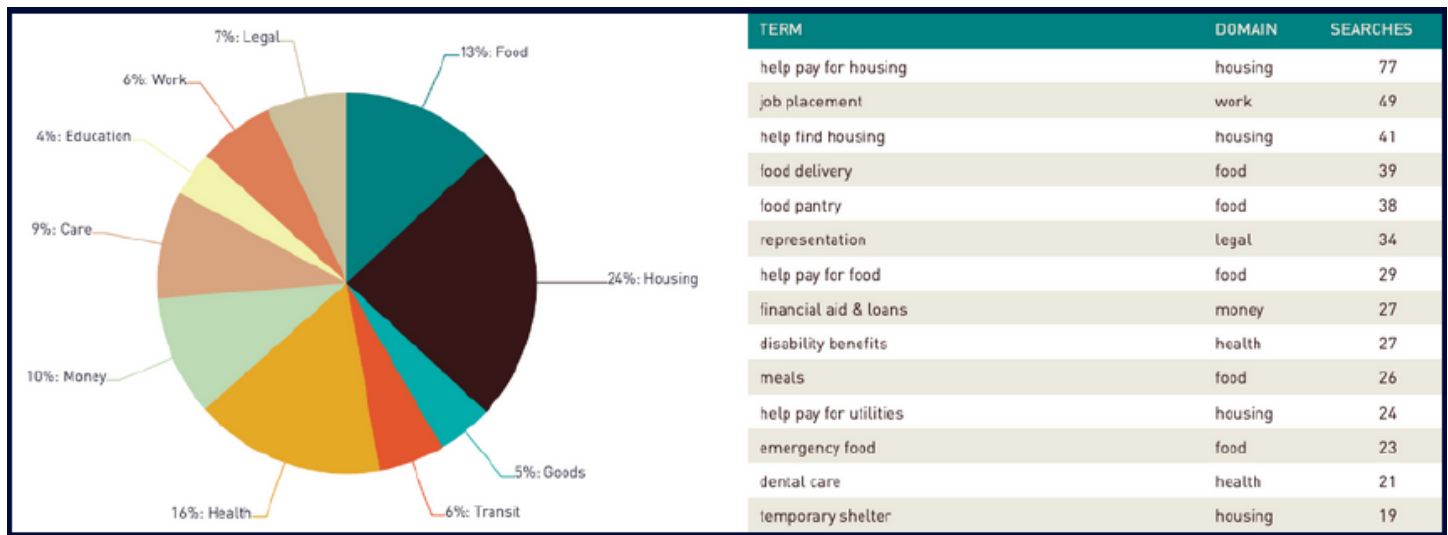
- Window to the River Statue Unveiling
- Boise VAMC Medal of Honor event with Britt Slabinski
- Twin Falls Resource Fair by Congressman Simpson
- Putts for Patriots Annual Gala

Contributions through Outreach:

- Raised \$262,220.87 in direct Veteran Support thanks to Community Partners. Highlighted organized support from our community partners and volunteers:
 - A major need: repairs to the Bannock County Memorial Hall that houses 14 veteran service organizations.
 - Hosts ~2 big events each month
 - Rents it out to other organizations to raise funds to serve the veterans community.
 - It was severely flooded and requires extensive repairs.
 - VOCS has helped raise over \$100,000 was raised in this quarter alone!
 - A Georgia Family Foundation donated after a social media post reached them. In addition to the \$100,000 they already donated, offered to donate an additional \$100,000 if the community could raise a \$100,000 to match by the end of August 2025.
 - Wheel chair ramps, car repairs, utility bills, rent, dentures, mental health referrals and services and cremation costs were again just some of the direct support tracked in 3 months.

Ongoing Projects

- **Joining Forces Idaho** – Treasure Valley, Magic Valley and Eastern Idaho continue to grow, and with Jason in Northern Idaho, the ground work is being laid to implement a Joining Forces Northern Idaho Coalition meeting.
- **Governor's Challenge**
 - The **Ask the Question** campaign continues slowly and steadily. Virginia Holmgren, from Idaho National Guard, and Travis Schmidt, of the Boise VA, have taken the lead on Health Care outreach. Terry Reilly Health Services have been supportive in providing data as proof of concept. Mitzi made a connection in Twin Falls St Luke's to implement, and Jason has made connections up North with local health care providers interested in better serving their veteran patients.
 - **Team 3 Safe Storage** has been making great strides in Northern Idaho working with local law enforcement and Veterans Outreach Centers. An Outreach Center Toolkit for counties and local law enforcement has been started as well as information on safe storage.
- **Idaho Veterans Guide**
 - We said goodbye to David Fisher at Idaho Veterans Network and welcomed John Hawbaker who will continue to support Idaho Veterans Guide and hopes to get more guide experts to promote and build our local data base of programs! There has been a steady increase in local and state programs added.
- [Idaho Veterans Guide](#) – Report from January 1 – March 31, 2025
 - 126 Programs Added (4,514 Total)
 - Local – 45 added, 2,476 total
 - State – 54 added, 1,131 total
 - National – 27 added, 907 total
 - 65 Programs Claimed
 - Top 5 Local Engaged Programs – IDVS Office of Veterans Advocacy; El-Ada Community Action Food Pantry; DAV Veterans Volunteer Assistance; El-Ada Community Action Support Services; Idaho Dept of Labor Job Seeker.
 - Site Activity: 2,352 sessions; 2,698 searches.
 - Site Search Trends:



Have added in-kind donations to our data tracking contributions.

The 3rd Annual Joining Forces Conference will be in Coeur d'Alene in April 2026.

Questions/Comments: Commissioner Cash – highlighted the Young Veterans Conference in her county. Jason Legler and Joe Riener from IDVS both attended. Backcountry Veterans and Farmer Veterans Coalition were also represented. Thinks it would be a good model to spread to other parts of the state potentially in collaboration with the VOCS team.

The National American Legion Auxiliary President will be visiting Idaho and Mitzi already has a meeting scheduled to brief them about VOCS and Joining Forces.

Central Support Office Updates

Legislative Update presented by **Kevin Wallior**

There were a handful of Veteran related bills in the 2025 Legislative Session. The one with the biggest impact was [H0040](#) and its trailer bill [H0479](#). These bills expanded the existing income tax exemption for military retirement pay beyond Veterans older than 64, or 62 and disabled, to all military retirees who earn sufficient income to owe federal taxes.

[S1080](#) was a claim shark bill intended to protect Veterans from unscrupulous actors exploiting military Veterans in Idaho trying to obtain their benefits. Unfortunately, while it made it out of committee with a "do pass" recommendation it never received a Vote on the Senate floor.

See the attachment at the end of the minutes for the remainder of the bills that were presented or enacted in the 2025 Legislative Session.

Deputy Chief Administrator's Remarks presented by **Tracy Schaner**

Construction

- Within this past quarter, the VA published the Boise Replacement Home BABA Nonavailability Waiver, and it was open for public comment from 2/20 to 3/7.
- There were no comments received so the final version was sent to the MIAO and signed off on and has since returned to the VA to be routed for final signature.
- As of last week, it was two steps away before it made it back to the desk of the VA SEC for signature.

- Also, in mid-March, the VA notified us that our conditional grant funding request had been approved on Feb. 10th. This conditional grant award gives 180 days (or until 8/8/25) complete the remaining application requirements.
- The only outstanding requirements include us signing a compliance document and our MOA with the VA, which cannot be done until the final BABA waiver is approved.
- With us receiving our condition grant approval and having our waiver almost finalized, we have resumed our design team meetings and documents are being prepared so we can go out to bid by the end of May.
- Based on the current schedule, we are looking at:
 - Starting construction by the end of September 2025.
 - 3-1/2 months for demo and abatement of the east wing.
 - 27 months to complete the new 4-story building.
- Move-in April 2028
 - Another 6-10 months to complete the project -demo existing and parking lot.
 - Substantial Completion ~ June 2029

National SVH Update & Legislation

- IDVS staff attended the NASVH Winter Conference in February. Another successful conference. I personally met with VA Acting Undersecretary for Healthcare, Dr. Lieberman, along with the current NASVH President and two other Past Presidents. As part of this discussion, we revisited the topic of Outpatient Therapy Services. VA Office of General Counsel reviewed the position paper I prepared on behalf of NASVH and identified no concerns that would disallow SVH the option to be a Veteran Network Community Care Provider of outpatient rehab services. We were informed that leaders from the VHA Office of Integrated Veterans Care would be meeting with NASVH leadership to discuss the next steps and logistics. I have a meeting with the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs tomorrow and will be inquiring again about this meeting.
- In late January Congresswoman Kiggans introduced H.R. 785 - Representing our Seniors at VA Act of 2025.
 - While I currently serve a four-year term in a non-voting capacity, this legislation would codify the appointment of a voting representative of NASVH.
 - The bill currently has ten co-sponsors including Congressman Fulcher and in conversation with Simpson's Office Congressman Simpson should also be signing.
- In March, Chairwoman Miller-Meek introduced H.R. 1970 - Providing Veterans Essential Medication Act.
 - This legislation is related to our previous discussions about high-cost medications and ensuring the VA properly reimburses our SVHs for costly medications needed by service-connected veterans.
 - The bill currently has 5 co-sponsors, and we believe Simpson and Fulcher will co-sponsor.
- We have also been in discussions with our congressional delegation regarding eliminating the duplicative survey process in State Veterans Homes with the VA survey being the preference since it makes the most logical sense over the CMS survey process.

- In 2019-2020, Senator Crapo introduced a bill concerning elimination of duplicative surveys. At the time, this bill was gaining traction and unfortunately momentum stalled in 2020 with the onset of COVID-19.
- The Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee (SVAC) has expressed support for this legislative priority, but has noted that the Finance Committee plays a key role in matters related to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), as CMS would need to deem this status to the VA.
- Senator Crapo now serves as Chair of the Senate Finance Committee. Senator Crapo's Office is reviewing, and this is currently under consideration by Senator Crapo to determine if he will reintroduce it or if another Senator will consider introducing it given his ranking on this committee.

Questions/Comments: Commissioner Gimpel asked if President Trump's tariffs would impact the costs of construction.

Tracy Schaner confirmed that it likely will increase the costs of materials and increase the total cost of the project.

Chief Administrator's Remarks presented by **Mark Tschampl**

- The budget is on the mind this time of year.
 - How do we navigate needs that are expanding at a greater rate than funding? VOCS is a primary example. IDVS leverages existing community resources to better serve Idaho's Veteran community.
 - Tracy's work with NASVH is another example. The work she does in her role as Executive Director, although a national organization, greatly impacts Idaho. If NASVH can convince legislators to require the VA to fully reimburse prescription costs for Veterans in SVH, there are real and significant cost savings. Those funds that were going to prescriptions can then go to other areas of need within the Homes. Similarly, reducing duplicative surveys will increase the efficiency of our Homes and will also lead to cost savings through a reduction in administrative burdens and potential monetary penalties.
 - Jake Faulkner's idea and work to move Idaho from the Wreaths Across America to establish the Idaho Wreaths Program keeps money in our communities that had been going out of state. Those additional funds help Idaho Veterans.
- NASDVA
 - Mark Tschampl was impressed with VA Secretary Collins. Secretary Collins was a military chaplain, spent his whole military career serving military members. Additionally, as a former Congressman he understands the system. While he has a goal to decrease VA staffing, he won't risk the quality of care for Veterans, he is primarily targeting "bureaucratic fluff."

New Business

The Next IVAC Meeting is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, July 9, 2025, at the Idaho State Veterans Home in Post Falls (590 S Pleasant View Rd, Post Falls, ID 83854).

Veterans Recognition Fund Committee

Due to the minimal balance and the funding needs for the State Veterans Home construction projects, IDVS recommends no allocations for Veterans Recognition Fund Grants.

Commissioner Brown makes a motion not to allocate funds for Veterans Recognition Grants. Commissioner Gimpel seconds. The Commissioners vote unanimous assent.

Chairman Callihan is open to a motion to adjourn. **Commissioner Brown** motioned to adjourn at 11:35 AM MT. **Commissioner Gimpel** seconded. The motion was approved with unanimous assent. Meeting was adjourned at 11:35 AM MT

Kevin R. Wallior
Management Assistant
Idaho Division of Veteran Services

2025 Legislative Session Roundup. Bills impacting Veterans or IDVS

Bill Number	Short Description	Passed/Failed	Date Signed into Law
H0040	This legislation has multiple pieces. First, it reduces Idaho's flat income tax rate on individuals and corporations from 5.695% to 5.3%. Second, it expands Idaho's income tax exemption on U.S. military pension income to include certain disabled veterans under age 62, all veterans aged 62-64, and undisable veterans under age 62 who are also employed and earn sufficient income to owe federal income taxes. And third, it removes capital gains and losses for both precious metal bullion and monetized bullion from the calculation of state income taxes.	Passed the House 63-7-0; Passed the Senate 27-8-0.	3/6/2025
H0479	This legislation is a trailer bill to H40 and H304 along with other changes to tax code. This was to correct some language errors in H40 and an implementation date in H304.	Passed the House 66-0-4; Passed the Senate 34-0-1.	4/5/2025
H0096	This bill amends Section 67-2303A, Idaho Code. It regards proper protocol for government entities in Idaho to display flags. This section of code authorizes the Division of Veterans Services to promulgate rules directing the proper protocol for the location and display of flags flown on state property. It does not explicit require our agency to do so.	Passes the House 53-17-0; Amendment Passed the Senate 20-11-4; Engrossment passed the House 54-13-3.	4/3/2025
HR013	This Resolution states all temporary and pending administrative rules for the Idaho Department of Labor, the Industrial Commission and the Division of Veteran Services were presented to the House Commerce and Human Resources Committee for review, and they were approved with the exception of IDAPA 17.01.01, Industrial Commission, Administrative Rules 24 Under the Worker's Compensation Law, Docket No. 17-0101-2301, Section 305., 25 Subsection 01.a., only, which was not approved.	Adopted Via Voice Vote	N/A
SR108	This Resolution reflects the Senate Judiciary & Rules Committee reviewed and approved all of the Pending and Temporary Rules for the 2025 Legislative Session relating to the Idaho State Police State Forensic Laboratory, Idaho State Police Peace Officer Standards and Training Council, the Division of Veterans Services, and the Commission of Pardons and Parole.	Adopted Via Voice Vote	N/A
S1037	Amends Section 66-906, Idaho Code, to reference Section 14-5-201(i), Idaho Code, instead of Section 14-513, and removes some obsolete sections of code. These changes are based on the amended Unclaimed Property Act, Title 14 Chapter 5, Idaho Code, passed during the previous legislative session.	Passed the Senate 35-0-0; Passed the House 66-0-4.	3/25/2025

S1080	This legislation will prevent claim sharks from exploiting Idaho military veterans who are attempting to file a claim for their veteran benefits. In recent history, veterans have been preyed upon by individuals claiming to be "consultants" or "service providers" using high-pressure tactics, dishonest promises, and unfair contracts to impose hidden or excessive fees in order to assist veterans in obtaining benefits owed them by the government. This bill will protect our Idaho veterans and outlaw these fraudulent practices.	Reported out of the State Affairs committee on 2/17 and sent to the 14th Order for Amendment. Reported out of the 14th Order without amendments on 2/20. Filed for a third reading on 2/21. The Senate retained it on its calendar repeatedly before recommitting it to the State Affairs Committee on 4/2/25.	N/A
S1109	FY2026 Maintenance Appropriation for Economic Development. This includes the appropriation for multiple agencies including the Idaho Division of Veterans Services.	Passed the Senate 34-0-1; Passed the House 62-6-2.	3/18/2025
S1137	This appropriation to the Division of Veterans Services provides enhancements to the FY 2026 maintenance budget that include a transfer of \$1,200,000 in operating expenditures to personnel costs to establish a temporary pool of nursing staff, IT maintenance and licensing, new capital outlay, replacement items, and IT hardware.	Passed the Senate 27-7-1; Passed the House 60-7-3.	3/19/2025
S1153	This amendment to the Idaho Code establishes a 5-year commemorative plate recognizing the commissioning of the 5th ship in the United States Navy's fleet named USS Idaho. This plate will be available only until July 1, 2030. Costs for this plate will be the same as the costs for a normal plate where all funds for the plate are collected and used by ITD.	Passed the Senate 31-3-1; Passed the House 63-0-7.	4/2/2025