

Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs FY2027 Operational Plan

Our Mission

To provide a continuum of services to Iowa's Veterans and their eligible family members to enhance their quality of life.

Our Vision

To fulfill the promise made to Iowa's Veterans who took the oath to defend the constitution of the United States.



Our Organizational Structure

The Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA) is structured into three divisions, each supporting the governor's priorities and the commitment to serving Iowa's Veterans and their families.

- Iowa Veterans Home (IVH) - Located in Marshalltown, IVH is a long-term care facility providing both nursing and residential care to Iowa's Veterans and their spouses. Emphasis is placed on individualized care to enhance quality of life.
- Iowa Veterans Benefits – Based at Camp Dodge, this office houses registered Iowa Veteran records and collaborates with state partner agencies on various benefit programs. These state benefits include:
 - Injured Veterans Grant
 - Homeownership Assistance
 - Property Tax Exemption
 - Disabled Veteran's Homestead Tax Credit
 - Iowa Military Retirement Tax Exemption

- Iowa Driver's Licenses & IDs with Veterans Designation
- Lifetime Hunting & Fishing Licenses
- Specialty Veteran License Plates
- Iowa Veterans Trust Fund
- Children of Fallen Iowa Service Member Scholarship
- Iowa Veterans Cemetery – A state-owned and operated cemetery serving Iowa's Veterans, service members who meet the requirements through an application process, and their eligible spouses and dependent children can be interred at the cemetery.
- Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs – While not part of the department's internal structure, the Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs supports the broader mission of serving Iowa's Veterans. The group consists of 12 members representing established Veterans service organizations, one at-large member, and one representative from the Iowa National Guard. Members are nominated by their organizations and approved by the Governor. The Commission provides guidance on Veteran issues, advocates for Veterans at the public and legislative levels, communicates with Veterans' organizations, and approves applications for the Iowa Veterans Trust Fund and Veterans Project Assistance Program.

Advocacy

- Supports governor's priorities:
 - Serving Iowans Who Served Us

Program: Veteran Support Programs (670_04100)

Provide a broad-based spectrum of programs to support Veterans and their dependents/survivors in Iowa. These programs include Operation Recognition High School, Branstad-Reynolds Scholarship Fund, lifetime hunting and fishing licenses, and the disabled Veteran's homestead tax credit.

- Goal – Improve communications among stakeholders
- Goal – Improve access to and delivery of benefits to Iowa Veterans

Actions for FY 2027	Measure	Target
Improve relationships with Iowa Association of County Commissioners and Veteran Service Officers to increase eligible benefits to Iowa Veterans. Invite Workforce Development to participate in county Veteran Service Officer trainings offered in the spring and fall to improve delivery of benefits (e.g.GI Bill) Track/trend survey results from biannual VSO meetings Inform the surviving spouse of the available benefits such as Aid & Attendance, Caretaker Compensation, Dependency and Indemnity Compensation. Provide education at the County Veteran Service Officer training. Ensure all VSOs within the state know who we are and what we have to offer so we are their first recommendation to Veterans for long term care. Organize VSO training regarding Veteran payment, expenses and services for IVH residents. In coordination with federal VA public contact rep to ensure the maximum number of credits offered by the state.	Percent of county VSO/administrator attending 1+ annual training	75%
Increase number of Iowa Veterans drawing military retirement Monitor percentage of Veterans receiving VA disability compensation Advocate for legislative changes and financial support.	Number of Veteran Outreach events hosted by Veterans Benefits.	110

Economic Supports

- Supports governor's priorities:
 - Serving Iowans Who Served Us

Program: Injured Veterans Grant Program (670_22100)

Provides immediate financial assistance from \$2,500 up to \$10,000 to eligible injured Veterans who are injured on active duty after 9/11/01 so that family members can be with the Veteran during recovery.

- Goal - Improve access to and delivery of benefits to Iowa Veterans

Actions for FY 2027	Measure	Target
County Veteran Service Officers will assist eligible injured Veterans in applying for and accessing grant funding through the Injured Veterans Grant Program.	Number of injured Veterans assisted with the injured Veterans' bonus	4

Program: Veterans Home Ownership Program (670_22200)

Purpose is to help eligible members of the armed forces to purchase qualified homes in Iowa. Provides up to \$5,000, subject to funding availability, on a one-time basis towards the purchase of a qualified Iowa home. Traditionally, funds for this program are exhausted well before fiscal year end. While IDVA receives the appropriation for this program, the funds are transferred to the Iowa Finance Authority (IFA) upon receipt. The only involvement IDVA has with this program is performing eligibility determinations and informing IFA.

- Goal - Improve access to and delivery of benefits to Iowa Veterans

Actions for FY 2027	Measure	Target
Ensure Veteran is eligible in cooperation with vendors and Iowa Financial Authority.	Number of Veterans receiving military homeownership grant	445

Program: War Orphans Educational Assistance Account (670_22300)

Separate account in the Iowa Veterans Trust Fund. Further segmented into two programs – one for orphans of service members who died before September 11, 2001 and one for orphans of servicemembers who died on or after September 11, 2001. Each with their distinct program requirements and benefits

- Goal – Provide financial support to families of Iowa Veterans by ensuring access to benefits for eligible children of deceased Veterans.

Actions for FY 2027	Measure	Target
Provide support to all eligible children of fallen service members.	Number of recipients	100%

Program: Iowa Veterans Trust Fund (670_22400)

The Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs reviews and approves individual applications submitted from county Veteran service officers for eligible Veterans, spouses, and dependents for a variety of emergency needs as outlined in 35A.13(7).

- Goal - Improve access to and delivery of benefits to Iowa Veterans

Actions for FY 2027	Measure	Target
Injured Veterans eligible to receive grants with the assistance of the county Veteran service officer (CVSO). Develop stakeholder consensus plan for IVTF funds once \$50M threshold is met, and propose supporting legislation. Legislation in place 12 months or more before IVT hits \$50M threshold.	Number of approvals to the Veterans Trust Fund	200

Program: Operate Iowa Veterans Benefits Bureau (670_22600)

Administer state funded Veteran's benefits, maintain service and grave records, conduct training for county Veterans' commissioners and county Veteran service officers, maintain and disseminate information to Veterans and the public regarding benefits and assist in obtaining them.

- Goal - Improve access to and delivery of benefits to Iowa Veterans

Actions for FY 2027	Measure	Target
Ensure all resources are optimized and focused on directly contributing to fulfilling the mission at IDVA.	Percent of applications for Veterans verification processed within 1 month	100%

Health and Support Services

- Supports governor's priorities:
 - Serving Iowans Who Served Us

Program: Nursing Services (671_34100)

Provides services to residents at skilled or intermediate level of nursing care. These individuals have a wide range of physical and/or mental disorders that prevent their return to independent living. In addition to nursing staff, it also includes dietitians, recreational staff and social workers.

- Goal - Increase satisfaction with Veteran services
- Goal - Improve access to and delivery of benefits to Iowa Veterans

Actions for FY 2027	Measure	Target
The Resident Satisfaction Survey will reflect an overall satisfaction rating of 85% or higher with organized activities.	Percent of residents satisfied with the number of organized activities	85%
Establish a vibrant “grow your own” nursing workforce strategy that offers a ladder of opportunity for nursing careers, starting with high school-aged students and continuing with employees interested in pursuing advanced nursing opportunities. This includes bonuses, flexible work schedules, and free housing for students on campus.	# of nursing employees that promote into advanced positions	30
The Resident Satisfaction Survey will reflect an overall satisfaction rating of 85% or higher with nursing. Track our medication errors through daily incident reports. Medication errors by type will be tracked and reported monthly at QAPI. A Vocera badge will be provided to all frontline caregivers, improving the call light system. Evaluate and if appropriate, care plan each resident to receive a Restorative Program that supports them in achieving or maintaining their highest level of functioning. Provide personalized feedback on prescribing practices to providers in regards to antibiotic stewardship and drug regiment reviews.	Percent of resident satisfaction with nursing	85%

Actions for FY 2027	Measure	Target
Develop and maintain an efficient process for resident room turnover by ensuring effective communication and collaboration among staff. Streamline the admissions process to increase the average occupancy rate to 94% of available VA certified beds. Reduce residential beds to 30 and increase nursing level of care beds by 30 in the Fox building, increasing reimbursement rates.	Percentage of resident occupancy in nursing level of care	90%

Program: Therapeutic Services (671_34101)

Provide services to residents in order for them to experience an optimal quality of life. Services include primary care physicians, psychology, psychiatry, substance abuse counseling, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech, audiology, recreation and activities.

- Goal - Increase satisfaction with Veteran services

Actions for FY 2027	Measure	Target
Optimize accuracy of medication dispensing through implementation of blister card system, routine monitoring, and staff education.	Percent of medication dispensing error rate within pharmacy	0.05%
Provide more opportunities for residents to meet their medical needs internally (e.g. dermatology, chiropractic, orthopedics, dental), reducing outside referrals. Medical Services will initiate improvements in their referral process, reducing unnecessary appointments and operationalizing communication with the VA. Decrease the number of specialty trips by residents to external providers. Educate, offer and track vaccinations for each resident based on the recommended adult immunization schedule by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), including pneumonia and annual flu vaccine.	Percent of residents' overall satisfaction with the care they receive	85%

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Actions for FY 2027	Measure	Target
Reach out to schools, churches, Veterans organizations and various local organizations in the community to increase volunteer hours at IVH. Monitor for a continual increase in the average number of volunteers monthly Consistently report prescribing practices in regard to antibiotic stewardship and drug regimen reviews, shared at QAA meetings. Prepare for changes in our delivery of mental health services by assessing the availability of nurse practitioners and the DAS pay grade for these positions and/or options for contracting services. Advocate for Federal VA buy-in for a higher VA reimbursement for treatment of chronic mental health care in long-term care.	Percent of residents' overall satisfaction with the care they receive	85%

Program: Domiciliary Services (671_34102)

Provides community-based group living services for residents who need nursing and medical care on an ambulatory, self-care basis. Services include 24-hour supervision and assistance, medication management, public health nursing services, recreational activities, social work services and day treatment programming.

- Goal - Improve access to and delivery of benefits to Iowa Veterans

Actions for FY 2027	Measure	Target
Develop and maintain an efficient process for resident room turnover by ensuring effective communication and collaboration among staff. Streamline the admissions process to increase the average occupancy rate	Average number of beds filled at the domiciliary level of care	30

Local Government Assistance

- Supports governor's priorities:
 - Serving Iowans Who Served Us

Program: County Grant Participants (670_43100)

Counties may apply for a grant to improve services to Veterans. Each county is eligible to apply for a \$10,000 grant if they show that they have spent at least \$10,000 on Veteran's services.

- Goal – Support county-level efforts to enhance services and outreach for Veterans through effective use of grant funds.

Actions for FY 2027	Measure	Target
Education provided to VSO's and county administrators related to the grant process. Ensure grant usage is in alignment with program guidelines and Veteran service improvement efforts.	Percentage of county allocation funds used as outlined in statute or recouped.	90%

Program: Veterans License Fee Fund (670_43101)

Provides resources to the Veterans Commission to fulfill responsibilities to educate, inspire, support, and remember. Organizations apply to the Commission for funding.

- Goal – Support Veteran-focused organizations in delivering services through access to funding provided by Veterans License Fee Fund.

Actions for FY 2027	Measure	Target
Promote Veterans License Fee Fund program among stakeholders	Percent of funding utilized each year	50%

Program: County Commissions of Veterans Affairs Fund (670_43102)

Annual appropriation \$990,000 (\$10,000 per county) to provide services to Veterans pursuant to 35B.6 and provide for and maintain accreditation in accordance with the policies and procedures of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. These funds must supplement and not supplant any existing funding. Beginning FY25, an additional \$3,000 per county will be available on a reimbursable basis to pay expenses for county Veterans service officers to attend national training. A deduction of \$300,000 of the annual \$2.5 million transfer from the Iowa Lottery to the Iowa Veterans Trust Fund is transferred to IDVA for this purpose, with any funds not claimed reverting to the Department for its training program.

- Goal – Promote professional development and service quality in county Veterans affairs offices through accreditation and training support.

Actions for FY 2027	Measure	Target
Ensure that all Veteran Service Officers are aware of funding to attend national training.	Percentage of counties earning/maintaining National Association of County Veterans Service Officers (NACVSO) accreditation	90%

Physical Assets Management

Program: Operate Iowa Veterans Cemetery (670_52100)

Operate and maintain Veteran's cemetery in Van Meter in accordance with federal standards.

- Goal – Achieve operational excellence in the operation and maintenance of the Iowa Veterans Cemetery, ensuring timely service and facilities that meet federal standards.

Actions for FY 2027	Measure	Target
Achieve NCA operational excellence standards by 2027. Update existing federal grant request to repair the cemetery irrigation system and build a new columbarium wall by 2027. IVC will offer temporary maintenance worker positions to learn skills and teach trades as needed	Percent of grave markers placed within 60 days of internment	90%

Program: Operate Iowa Veterans Home (671_34103)

Long-term health care facility providing nursing and residential levels of care for honorably discharged Veterans, their spouses, and Gold Star parents. IVH is located in Marshalltown on a 158-acre campus with a staff of 700 and 400 current residents.

- Goal – Optimize occupancy while enhancing resident satisfaction through efficient admissions and room turnover.

Actions for FY 2027	Measure	Target
Develop and maintain an efficient process for resident room turnover by ensuring effective communication and collaboration among staff. Streamline the admissions process to increase the average occupancy rate while ensuring that incoming residents are appropriately matched to the level of care required.	Occupancy rate of available VA certified beds	94%

Program: Capitals (671_52100)

Support sustainable operations and financial stewardship, ensuring that funds are managed effectively and in compliance with all standards.

- Goal - Modernize technology, processes, equipment & facilities
- Goal – Maintain fiscal health through efficient resource management and regulatory compliance to ensure long-term sustainability.

Actions for FY 2027	Measure	Target
Regular review of processes, regulations, staff education and system improvements.	Number of deficiencies noted at IDVA on audits	0

Program: Major Maintenance (671_52101)

Develop and maintain equipment, ensuring the security, reliability and accuracy of IVH systems and technology. Explore and implement emerging and existing technology.

- Goal - Modernize technology, processes, equipment & facilities.

Actions for FY 2027	Measure	Target
Review existing camera system to determine those of older operation and explore camera options. Complete project by 2027. Improve backbone of systems.	Ensure servers and software are on latest versions for secure environment	90%

Resource Management

Program: Business/Administration (671_67101)

Provide the oversight and business functions of IVH business operations including purchasing, budgeting, payroll, safety and security, laundry, building and grounds maintenance, banking and all fiduciary activities, admissions, information technology services, and quartermaster.

- Goal – Recruit & retain employees and volunteers.
- Goal – Ensure financial sustainability by managing resources efficiently, reducing turnover, controlling costs, and maintaining a well-trained workforce.

Actions for FY 2027	Measure	Target
Track completion of annual mandatory education for each employee to enhance workplace efficiency as well as employee confidence.	Percent of active employees who complete mandatory training	100%
Track turnover rates of nursing and food service to establish baseline measures. Offer and promote employee recognition programs through which the achievements and actions will be recognized with Champion, Daisy, and Poppy awards. Offer a variety of educational opportunities (CEs)-ongoing Strengthen the orientation and mentoring program and expand to all disciplines and classifications. Ongoing mentoring education program is scheduled. Refine and evaluate organizational strategies to effectively communicate to IVH employees: departmental staff meetings, Commandant C4 cards & Insight videos, quarterly employee forums & executive rounding, monthly senior team newsletter-ongoing Sustain and strengthen the Intentional Rounding initiative utilizing Studer Principles in healthcare-ongoing. Keep minutes of the Executive Rounding completed in all departments each quarter. Implement targeted strategies to reduce mandated overtime in nursing and food service departments, improving staff retention and morale while enhancing financial viability through decreased overtime expenditures.	Turnover rate of nursing and food service	2.2

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Actions for FY 2027	Measure	Target
Continue partnership with local IJAG programs to promote employment opportunities for students-ongoing Offer leadership development opportunities, e.g. LeadingAge Iowa (LAI) Leadership Webinar series, internal educational offerings and leadership forums- ongoing Provide PDS courses for new leaders and leadership forums for all supervisors and track completion rate- ongoing	Turnover rate of nursing and food service	2.2
Track and analyze work-related injuries/patterns for internal safety improvement.	Rate of lost work days due to injury on the job	4
Support state initiative to promote health careers by guiding current entry-level caregivers through a career ladder with tuition reimbursement to fulfill licensed nursing positions Promote health careers Continue to offer sign-on bonuses for LPN, RN, NS and active CNA positions- ongoing Provide continued growth educational opportunities for LPNs and RNs (educational reimbursement) by 2027. Offer increased advancement opportunities for nursing through scholarship and scheduling opportunities such as flexible scheduling for those enrolled in nursing program through 2026 (e.g. nurse to nurse clinician, CNAs to CMAs) Encourage new Student Learning/Internship opportunities at IDVA to promote future job opportunities through 2026	Percent of licensed nurse positions filled	80%
Offer 76-hour CNA class at IVH- ongoing	Percent of program completion	95%

Program: Business/Administration (670_67100)

Provide the oversight and business functions of Veterans Affairs business operations including purchasing, payroll etc.

- Goal - Recruit and retain employees and volunteers

Actions for FY 2027	Measure	Target
IVC will offer temporary maintenance worker positions as a pathway for skill-building and internal advancement, and explore internships for students in public policy programs to build a future talent pipeline and promote long-term employment opportunities.	Turnover rate of IVB and IVC employees	1.5

Program: Food Service (671_67102)

Provides food services to residents, staff and visitors. Activities include: preparation of meals to meet regular and modified diets as well as special textures either served cafeteria style or on prepared trays to nursing trays; preparation of food orders for resident activities; cleaning of cooking and eating utensils as well as all kitchen equipment, ordering of supplies and coordination of delivery to meet menu needs.

- Goal - Increase satisfaction with Veteran services

Actions for FY 2027	Measure	Target
Renovate the IVH kitchen and Atha dining room to enhance the delivery of resident-centered care by 2029.	Percent of residents satisfied with food services	85%
Maintain resident food committees and gather resident feedback from unit meetings.		

Program: Facilities Management (671_67103)

Provides a safe, clean, healthy, comfortable, accessible, and aesthetically pleasing environment for the residents, staff & visitors at the Iowa Veterans Home. The services include: Maintenance; Laundry; Transportation; Security and Safety.

- Goal – Ensure a safe and efficient environment by modernizing facilities and processes, with a focus on timely completion of routine maintenance tasks.

Actions for FY 2027	Measure	Target
Work orders initiated by staff for residents or employees will be prioritized and completed timely to promote satisfaction for customers.	Percent of routine work orders completed within three days	90%

Program: Housekeeping (671_67104)

Provides a range of services related to the cleanliness, functionality & aesthetic appearance of the facilities buildings, furnishings & equipment. Services include: cleaning of resident rooms, all halls & common areas; clean up spills as reported; scheduled floor maintenance & refinishing; delivery of beds, furniture & other items; and recycling.

- Goal - Increase satisfaction with Veteran services

Actions for FY 2027	Measure	Target
The Resident Satisfaction Survey will reflect an overall satisfaction rating of 85% or higher with housekeeping.	Percent of satisfaction with housekeeping	85%