



MONTANA VETERANS AFFAIRS 2024

Biennial Report

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Introduction

Montana Veteran Affairs Mission:

Promote the general welfare of Montana Veterans and their Families

THRU:

Establishing a statewide network of service for military veterans and their families.

Provide services and assistance for all Montana veterans and surviving spouses and dependents, in coordination with associated federal and state agencies, veteran's service organization, private organizations and individuals.

Management, operations, and maintenance of Montana's state veteran's cemetery program.

Assist and advise the public, governmental agencies, and elected officials regarding veteran's services, programs, initiatives, and policy.

Major Program Initiatives

Administration:

Board of Veterans Affairs – In FY23 & FY24, the Montana Board of Veteran Affairs conducted six meetings. Four of the meetings were conducted in Fort Harrison, and the other two via teleconference.

Financial Staff – Recruited an Accountant in FY24 to assist the Budget Analyst in the headquarters office and improve internal controls.

State Veterans Cemetery Program:

Eastern Montana State Veterans Cemetery (Miles City): A VA expansion construction grant completed in the 2023 Biennium added more than 800 burial plots.

Montana State Veterans Cemetery (Fort Harrison): A VA expansion and improvement grant was awarded in FY24. MVAD hopes to break ground in Spring 2025, adding more than 800 burial plots.

Western State Veterans Cemetery (Missoula): A VA expansion and improvement grant is expected to be awarded in FY25. The National Cemetery Administration (NCA) inspection concluded in July 2024 with an excellent score.



Major Program Initiatives

Veteran Services Operations:

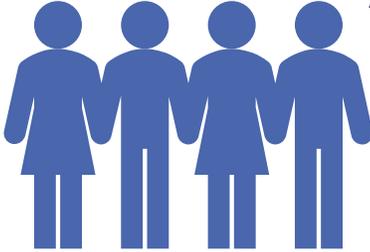
Electronic—MVAD contracted with Qualtrics, a software company, for data collection and analytics. This software allows MVAD to collect valuable data from veterans and increase our previously unattainable services.

Great Falls – Great Falls VSO office relocated to new office space in Summer 2024. MVAD received multiple safety concerns through the Governor’s office which prompted this move.

Administrative Staff – Recruited six Administrative Assistants in the Veteran Service Offices across the state to assist VSOs with administrative tasks.

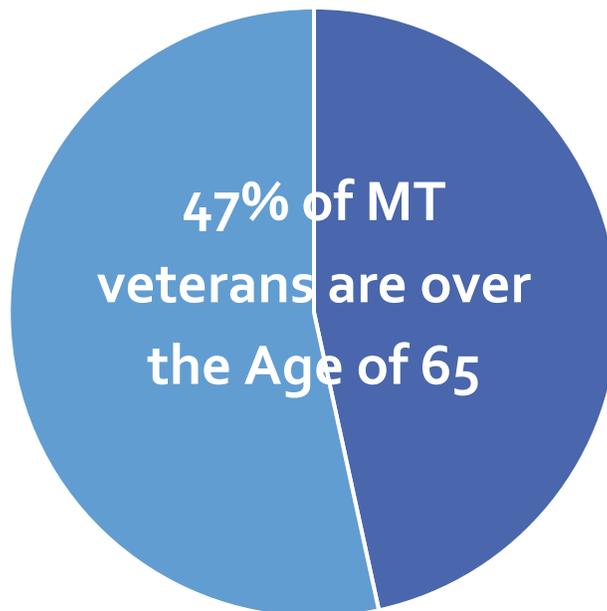


Montana Veteran Demographic Data



As of 30 September 2023, there are approximately 85,000 veterans in the state of Montana. Of the 85,000 veterans, approximately 75,800 veterans are male, and 9,200 are female. More than 89% of the veterans in the state of Montana are males (National Center for Veteran Analysis and Statistics).

Approximately 39,600 veterans in the state of Montana are 65 years of age or older. That translates to roughly 47% of Montana veterans are over the age of 65. Roughly 32,800 veterans are between the ages of 40 and 64 years old. That means, only 12,600 Montana veterans are under the age of 40, roughly 15% (National Center for Veteran Analysis and Statistics).



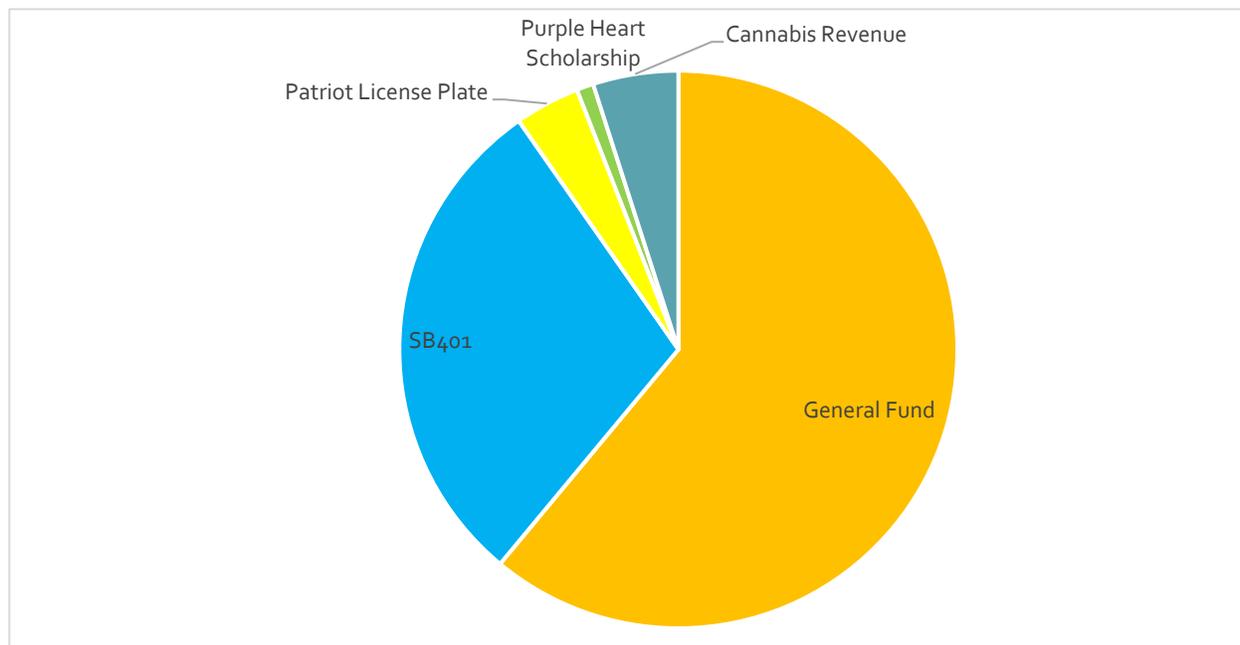
Due to Montana being a vast and rural state, Montana Veterans Affairs works to expand its outreach program. Currently, service officers travel to more than 41 counties and reservations across Montana, making themselves more available to veterans.

Financial Report

Montana Veterans Affairs is responsible for the funding of two organizational levels. First is the Veterans Services being the funding of MVAD's Veteran Service Officers and operations. The Veteran Service Officers (VSOs) offices are in Belgrade, Billings, Butte, Great Falls, Havre, Helena, Kalispell, Miles City and Missoula. Montana Veterans Services are primarily funded by General Fund, a fraction of a percent of Montana License Plate Revenue, Patriotic License Plate revenues, and recreational cannabis tax revenue.

General Fund	\$3,122,729
SB401	\$1,497,416
Patriotic License Plate	\$193,163
Purple Heart Scholarship	\$50,000
VA Recreational Cannabis Revenue	\$252,848

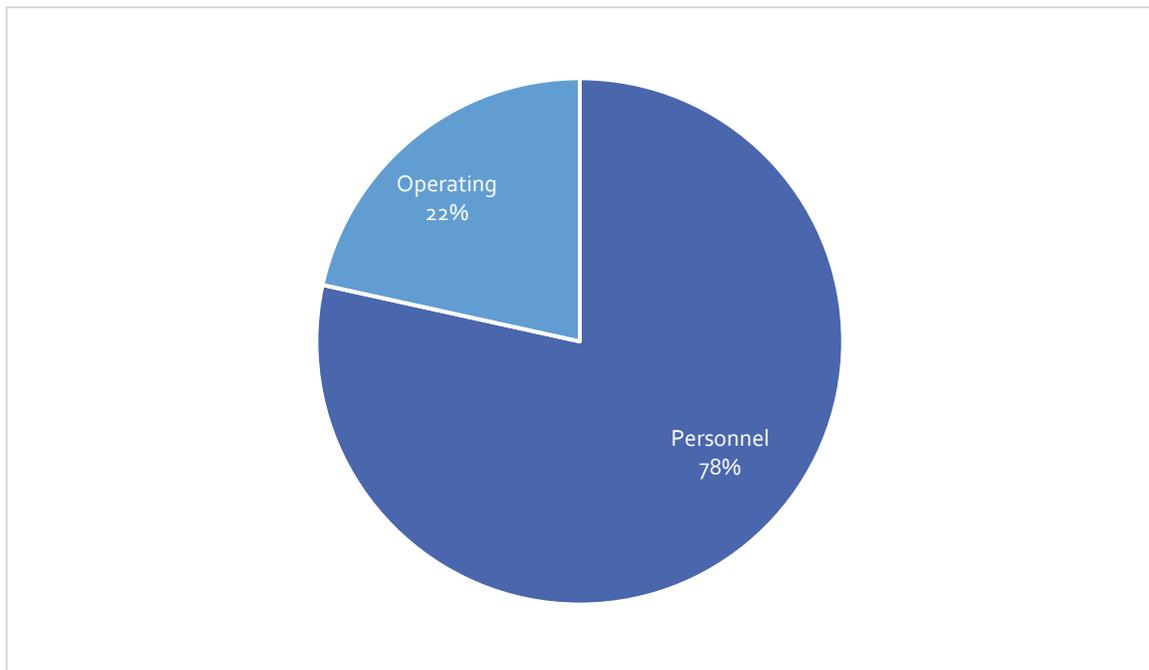
The other funds the Montana Veterans Affairs Division are responsible for are the Purple Heart Scholarship fund, HB172-the County Veteran Services fund (which is included in General Funds), the Honor and Remember Medallion fund.



Financial Report

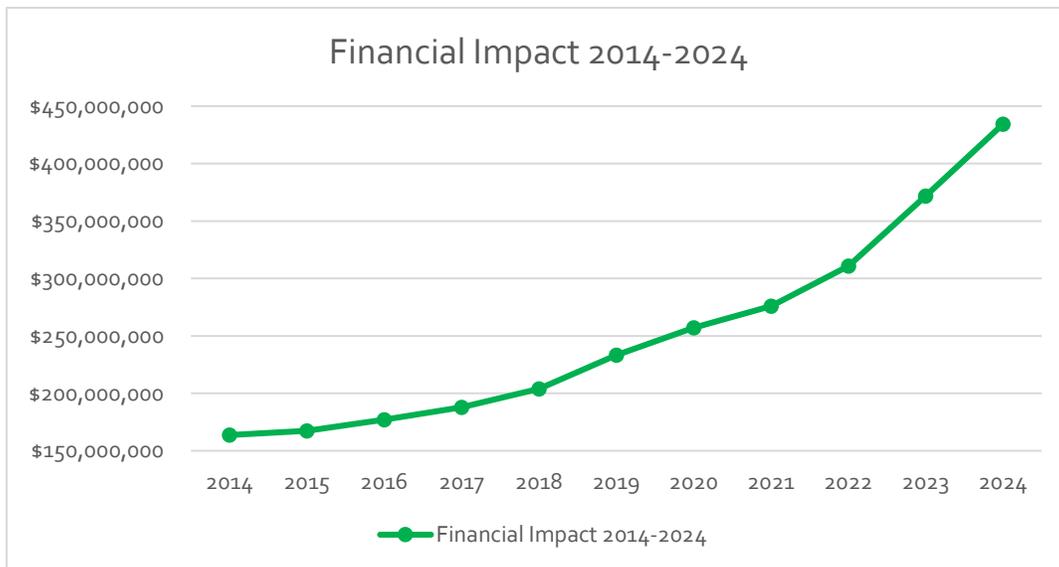
The Montana Veterans Affairs Division is also responsible for three Montana State Veterans Cemeteries located in Ft. Harrison, Miles City, and Missoula. Funding for the Montana State Veterans Cemeteries comes from a fraction of a percent of Montana License Plate Revenue, federal VA plot allowance, and donations. Because the Montana State Veterans Cemetery (MSVC) Program is a Special Revenue fund, MVAD must have cash in the fund before spending authority. Therefore, the most effective way to look at the cemetery budget, is to look at the expenses coming out of MSVC's revenue, in contrast with looking at authority.

MSVC Expenditures for FY23 and FY24	
Personnel Expenses	\$1,003,066
Operating Expenses	\$275,608
Total Expenses	\$1,278,674



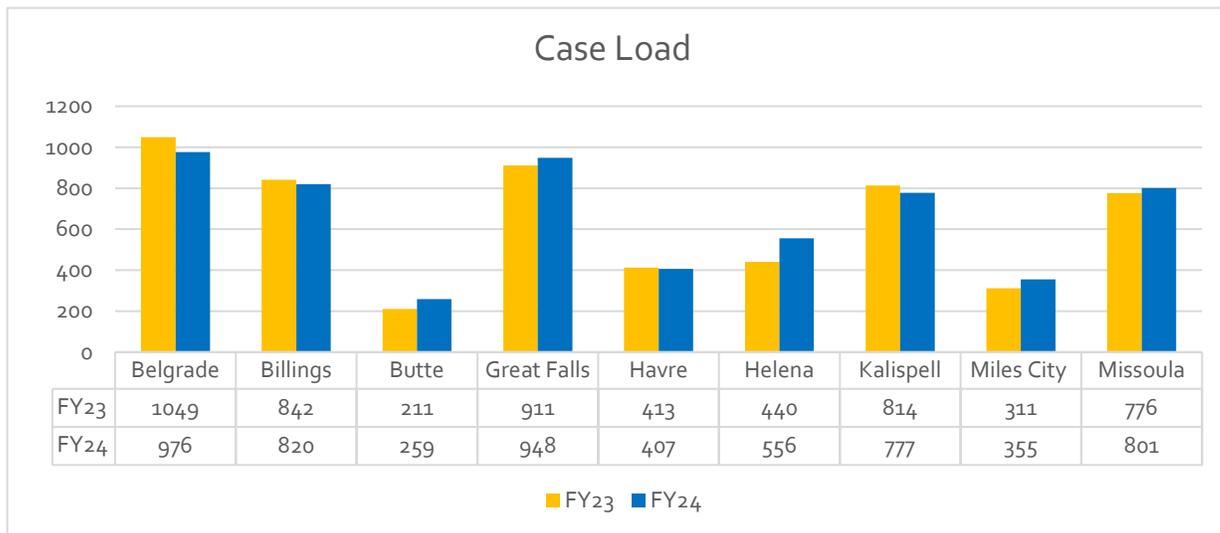
Financial Impact

One metric MVAD uses to measure success is the financial impact produced by VSO's claims. In FY2023, MVAD brought in over \$370 million to veterans in the state of Montana. In fiscal year 2024, MVAD brought in over \$434 million to veterans in the state of Montana.



The passage of the PACT Act has dramatically increased MVAD's financial impact these past few fiscal years.

Case Load



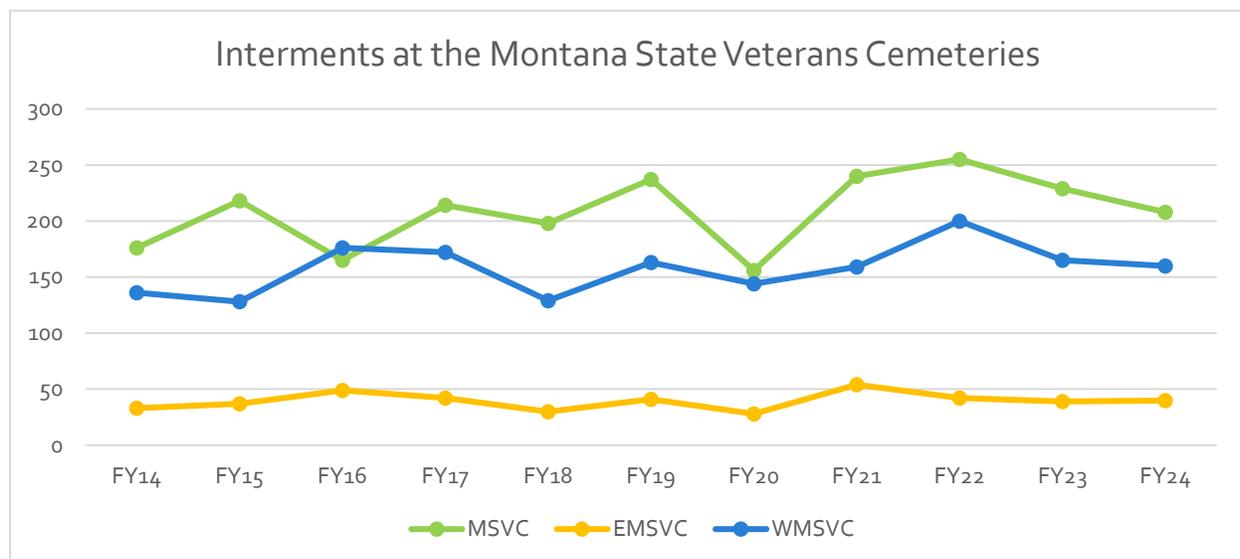
Montana State Veterans Cemeteries

To be interred at one of the Montana State Veterans Cemeteries, a person must be a veteran with an honorable discharge, and if they joined the service after 1980, the servicemember must have twenty-four consecutive months of service. An eligible veteran's spouse as well as dependent child are also eligible to be interred at any of the Montana State Veterans Cemeteries.

The Montana State Veterans Cemetery (MSVC) in Ft. Harrison, Montana, was founded in 1988. Currently, over 5,500 veterans and spouses are interred there. In FY23 and FY24, MSVC interred 437 people.

Eastern Montana State Veterans Cemetery (EMSVC) in Miles City, Montana, was built in 2002. Currently, about 865 veterans and spouses are interred there. In FY23 and FY24, EMSVC interred 79 people.

Western Montana State Veterans Cemetery (WMSVC) was created in 2008. Located in Missoula, Montana, it currently houses almost 2,400 veterans and spouses. In FY23 and FY24, WMSVC interred 325 people.

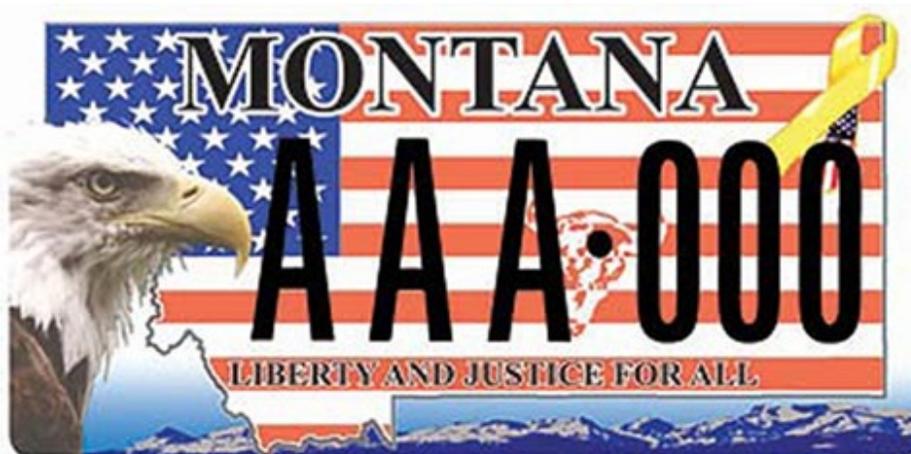


Montana Board of Veterans Affairs

The Montana Board of Veterans Affairs is comprised of 6 voting members and 8 non-voting members. Following MCA 2-15-1205, the board's primary responsibilities are cooperating with all levels of government and agencies that support veterans and advocating for veterans and their families. During the 2023 legislative session, HB298 was passed to reduce the board from 20 members to 14 members appointed by the Governor. This allows the board to participate more in veteran outreach efforts and events.

The 6 voting members are 5 appointed by the Governor of Montana, and Montana's eight Tribal Councils appoint the final voting member. Five of the voting members represent geographic regions of the state, and one is Montana's Tribal Council's consensus appointee.

The 8 non-voting members include representatives from the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs, the Department of Military Affairs, the Department of Public Health and Human Services, the Department of Veterans Affairs, two congressional representatives, and two Senator representatives.



MVAD Office Information:

Belgrade

350 Airport Rd.
Belgrade, MT 59714
(406) 388-4601

Billings

1500 University Dr.
College of Education, Rm 114
Billings, MT 59102
(406) 656-0584

Butte

600 Gilman Ave
Butte, MT 59701
(406) 533-0910

Great Falls

104 2nd St S, Ste 200
Great Falls, MT 59401
(406) 452-2501

Havre

232 st St W
Havre, MT 59501
(406) 265-4225

Helena

Veterans Dr. BLDG 3633 RM 110E
Ft. Harrison, MT 59636
(406) 495-2080

Kalispell

2989 Hwy 93 N
Kalispell, MT 59901
(406) 755-3795

Miles City

1020 N Hayes
Miles City, MT 59301
(406) 232-1203

Missoula

1911 Tower St
Missoula, MT 59804
(406) 542-2501

Administration

1956 Mt Majo St, PO Box 4789
Fort Harrison, MT 59636
(406)324-3742

Montana State Veteran Cemeteries Information:

Montana State Veterans Cemetery

3550 Heroes Rd.

Fort Harrison, MT 59636

(406)324-4793

Eastern Montana State Veterans Cemetery

Highway 59 & Cemetery Rd.

Miles City, MT 59301

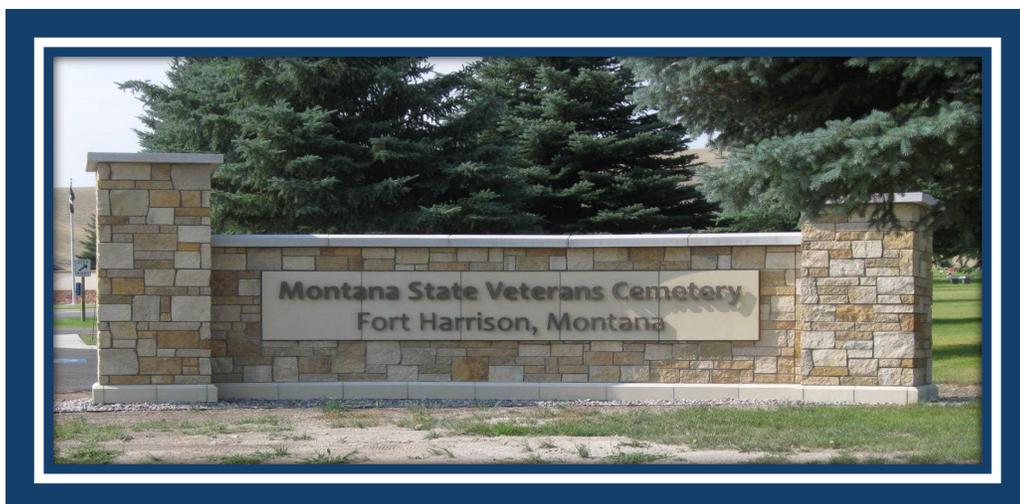
(406)218-2945

Western Montana State Veterans Cemetery

1911 Tower St.

Missoula, MT 59804

(406) 721-2995



Works Cited

National Center for Veteran Analysis and Statistics. "Veterans Affairs." VA.gov, US Department of Veterans Affairs, 5 Aug. 2024, www.va.gov/vetdata/Veteran_Population.asp.

