

Welcome Package for the Deputy Minister

Nancy Gardiner
Deputy Minister of Veterans Affairs Canada
March 2026

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Nancy Gardiner
Deputy Minister of Veterans Affairs Canada
66 Slater Street
Ottawa, ON

Dear Deputy Gardiner,

On behalf of the entire Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) team, I would like to welcome you as Deputy Minister. As your Associate Deputy Minister, I look forward to working with you to advance our important [mandate](#) of supporting Canada's Veterans, their families and stakeholders and recognizing their service to our country.

We achieve our mandate through two core responsibilities; Benefits, Services and Support, and Commemoration. These responsibilities are delivered through a comprehensive suite of programs and services, and our [2026-27 Departmental Plan](#) lays out how we will meet our commitments to improve the well-being and recognition for those we serve.

VAC serves a highly diverse group of Veterans, family members and stakeholders, reflecting the remarkable breadth of Canada's contributions towards world peace. According to the 2021 Census, there are over 461,000 Veterans in Canada. VAC directly supports approximately 127,000 Veterans, as well as serving members of the Canadian Armed Forces, retired and serving members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and their families and survivors. In total, VAC serves approximately 187,000 clients.

Over 90% of VAC's budget represents benefits or services provided to Veterans, their families and other program recipients. Veteran benefits represent a direct and significant contribution to achieving Canada's NATO defence pledge. In fact, VAC is currently the second largest contributor to the NATO spending target. Planned spending for these programs for the current fiscal year is \$7.8B, with a trend of contributions rising as more Veterans access benefits and services.

VAC has a workforce of approximately 3,600 FTEs, of which, 1,500 are located in the Charlottetown, PE Head Office. The main headquarters location, the Daniel J. MacDonald Building, is currently undergoing a major modernization effort, and re-occupancy is planned for early 2027. VAC provides direct Veteran Service Team support to our clients at approximately 90 different locations throughout the country, including VAC Area Offices, Canadian Armed Forces Transition Centres, and Operational Stress Injury clinics.

Budget 2025 announced investments for VAC of \$184.9M over four years, and \$40.1M ongoing. The proposed investments will stabilize processing capacity for disability benefits applications and enable the department to modernize operational processes and IT infrastructure. These actions will allow VAC to stabilize service delivery and support efforts to maintain and improve quality service for Veterans, including meeting service standards consistently and sustainably. The Department is focused on the implementation of these investments. We are taking action to reduce the backlog of disability benefits applications, meet service standards and get results faster for Veterans and their families.

In the coming days you will have the opportunity to meet with departmental officials, who will provide you with comprehensive briefings on our current priorities, and key challenges. The entire VAC team and I look forward to supporting you and working together on our mandate to support the well-being of Canadian Veterans and their families and to promote recognition and remembrance of the achievements and sacrifices of those who served Canada in times of war, military conflict and peace.

Sincerely,

Christine McDowell
Associate Deputy Minister



Veterans Affairs
Canada

Anciens Combattants
Canada

Canada

Welcome to Veterans Affairs Canada

March 2026



Our Mandate and Mission

Mandate

- To support the well-being of Veterans and their families, and to promote recognition and remembrance of the achievements and sacrifices of those who served Canada in times of war, military conflict and peace.

Mission

- To provide exemplary, client-centered services and benefits that respond to the needs of Veterans, our other clients and their families, in recognition of their services to Canada; and to keep the memory of their achievements and sacrifices alive for all Canadians.

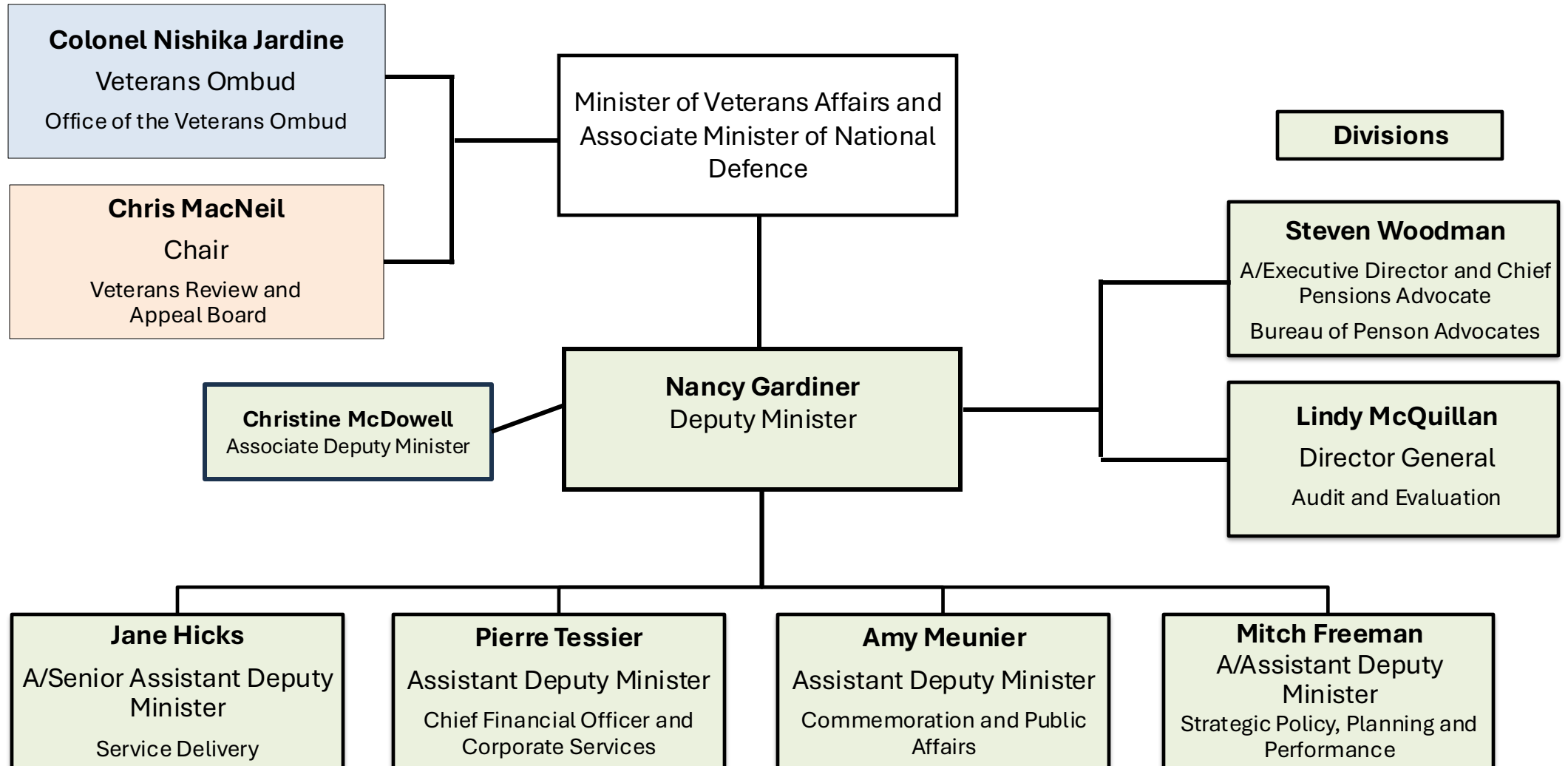
Minister's Authority

Canada's development as an independent country with a unique identity stems partly from its achievements in times of war and conflict.

Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) exists to assist and help those whose courageous efforts gave us this legacy and contributed to our growth as a nation.

The *Department of Veterans Affairs Act* provides authority to the Minister of Veterans Affairs to administer Acts of Parliament and orders in council as are not by law assigned to any other federal department or any Minister for the care, treatment and re-establishment in civil life of Veterans and the care of their dependents and survivors, and such other matters as the Governor in Council may assign.

Portfolio – Minister of Veterans Affairs



Core Responsibilities

1. Benefits, Services and Support

- Support the care and well-being of Veterans and their dependents or survivors through a range of benefits, services, research, partnerships and advocacy.

2. Commemoration

- Pay tribute to the sacrifices and achievements of Canadian Veterans' military efforts through education, commemorative and recognition programming and memorials in Canada and overseas.

3. Internal Services

- Services that support Program delivery within the organization or are required to meet corporate obligations of an organization.

4. Veterans Ombud

- Provide an independent and impartial review of complaints and issues related to programs and services and uphold the *Veterans Bill of Rights*.

5. Veterans Review and Appeal Board

- Provide Veterans, Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) members, and their families with timely, respectful hearings and fair, plain-language decisions.

2025-2026 Departmental Budget

As of October 2025

- Departmental Budget is **\$7.8B***
 - Benefits, Services and Support: **\$7.6B**
 - Internal Services: **\$133M**
 - Commemoration: **\$47M**
 - Veterans Ombud: **\$5M**
- Currently, there are approximately **3,729** Full-Time Equivalents at VAC, with over **41%** working from the Charlottetown Head Office.
- Over **90%** of Veterans Affairs Canada's annual departmental budget flows directly to Veterans, their families, and other eligible recipients.
- VAC is currently the second largest contributor to the NATO spending target.

**Budget is as of Main Estimates 2025-2026*

Points of Service for Veterans and their Families

701 Points of Service across Canada

- **38** Veterans Affairs Canada service locations
- **32** Transition Centres and satellites on or near CAF bases (VAC generally co-located)
- **10** Operational Stress Injury (OSI) outpatient clinics and **11** OSI Satellite Service Sites
- **611** Service Canada locations
- Toll-free 1-800 National Contact Centre Network
- VAC Assistance Service—24 hours a day, 365 days a year
- My VAC Account online service channel **195,203** registered users as of July 2025.
- Field Operations employees in **7** areas:

- North Atlantic
- Nova Scotia
- Québec
- South and Central Ontario

- National Capital and Northern Ontario (NCNO)
- Prairie
- British Columbia and the North

Potential VAC clients and Transition to Civilian Life

CAF Release:

7,800 – average # of Veterans releasing from the CAF each year ⁺

- **2,000** are medical releases
- **5,800** are non-medical releases

CAF Transition to Civilian Life:

- **17.7%** of Veterans report difficulties adjusting to post-service life ^{*}
- **5,569** – # of transition interviews finalized in 2024/25.

^{*}2024 Canadian Veteran Health Survey

⁺Canadian Armed Forces Release Statistics



The Honourable Jill McKnight

Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence



The Honourable Jill McKnight is the Member of Parliament for Delta. She was first elected to the House of Commons on April 28, 2025, to represent Delta in British Columbia. As the Minister, she is responsible for the Veterans Affairs Portfolio, which consists of; the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Veterans Review and Appeal Board, and the Veterans Ombudsman.

Before her political career, Ms. McKnight obtained her Bachelor of Commerce in Entrepreneurial Business from the University of Victoria. She was a small business owner for over 20 years, and then served as Executive Director of the Delta Chamber of Commerce, where she advocated for supports for local business and residents during economic challenges. She also held leadership in local business groups, including five years as president of the Ladner Business Association and volunteers in her community for local causes, such as the Delta Hospital and Community Health Foundation, the B.C. Cancer Foundation, and Dress for Success.

Minister McKnight has received several honors, including the King Charles III Coronation Medal and the Volunteer of the Year Award from the Delta Chamber of Commerce in recognition for her service.



Sean Casey

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence



Sean Casey currently serves as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence. He was first elected as the Member of Parliament for Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island in 2011.

MP Casey has held multiple parliamentary roles, including Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General, to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, and to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard. He has been actively involved in veterans' issues, and as Parliamentary Secretary, he now works closely with the veterans portfolio in support of the Minister.

Before entering politics, Mr. Casey practiced law, becoming a partner in the firm Stewart McKelvey. He also took leadership roles in his family's business, Paderno, and served as president of the Greater Charlottetown Area Chamber of Commerce.

MP Casey was born May 16, 1963, in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, grew up in Fredericton, New Brunswick, and holds a Bachelor of Business Administration from Saint Francis Xavier University and a law degree from Dalhousie University.



Christine McDowell

Associate Deputy Minister, Veterans Affairs Canada



Christine McDowell was appointed Associate Deputy Minister of Veterans Affairs Canada in May 2024 and has been acting Deputy Minister since November 2025. She brings leadership experience especially in front-line operations, program and service delivery, client service, partnerships, and organizational strategy.

Ms. McDowell was the Senior Assistant Deputy Minister of the Citizen Service Branch at Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) since May 2023. She has held various senior leadership positions at ESDC since 2007, in corporate and operational areas, at both the national and regional level.

Christine has led significant transformation initiatives during her leadership career including the current Passport Modernization Initiative and has worked across government departments to implement significant services and benefits for clients including the Ukraine benefits, the Passport program and the recently launched Canadian Dental Program Benefit.

As Champion for the Building Black Leaders program as well as a former Atlantic Regional Mental Health and Wellness Co-Champion, Christine has a passion for mental health, as well as for diversity and inclusion.



Amy Meunier

Assistant Deputy Minister, Commemoration and Public Affairs



Appointed Assistant Deputy Minister in early 2022, Amy leads the Commemorations and Public Affairs Branch at Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC), overseeing the integration of all public-facing efforts into a cohesive and strategic portfolio. With more than 20 years of experience in the federal government, she brings a record of strong leadership, innovation, and service delivery excellence across policy, communications, and operations.

Amy began her public service career supporting both the Minister of Environment and the Minister of Veterans Affairs, where she played a significant role in advancing significant policy milestones, including the New Veterans Charter. Early at VAC, she was instrumental in completing the department's Independent Assessment, which set the stage for improved funding and service delivery for Veterans. She then helped guide VAC's ambitious five-year transformation agenda and went on to serve as Senior Advisor to the Deputy Minister, providing strategic advice on delivering the department's mandate.

Over the years, Amy has held several senior executive roles, including in Access to Information and Privacy, Communications, Program Operations, and Policy. Her leadership has driven major departmental improvements—from launching a nationally recognized communications renewal strategy to developing the “Wait Time Strategic Direction Plan,” which remains the foundation for ongoing efforts to reduce disability benefit processing times. Under her guidance, the backlog of claims exceeding service standards was cut nearly in half.

As Assistant Deputy Minister, Amy also has responsibility for the Office of Women Veterans and 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans, reinforcing her commitment to honouring the diversity of Canada's military community. She is a passionate advocate for inclusive



recognition and representation and continues to advance efforts that reflect the unique experiences and contributions of all who served.

Amy also serves as the Departmental Champion of Indigenous Peoples, where she advocates for reconciliation, encourages reflection on Indigenous military contributions, and leads initiatives to dismantle systemic barriers. She established VAC's Indigenous Veteran Engagement Team to deepen relationships with Indigenous Veterans through respectful, ongoing dialogue, events, and engagement.

Born and raised in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Amy studied in Iowa, USA, before relocating to Ottawa and later settling in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, where she works at VAC's Head Office. A proud and devoted mom, she can often be found in the local arena, enthusiastically cheering on her son at hockey games.



Pierre Tessier

Assistant Deputy Minister, Chief Financial Officer and Corporate Services



Appointed as Assistant Deputy Minister of the Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance Branch in August 2022, and serving as Assistant Deputy Minister, Chief Financial Officer and Corporate Services since December 2024, Pierre brings over 20 years of experience in various roles across Government. This experience varies from guiding business transformation, leading planning, data analytics and reporting, governance at the departmental level, and working with partners across government.

In 2021, Pierre led the creation of the Enterprise Project Management Office at Public Services and Procurement Canada, working across branches to standardize project management and reporting practices.

From 2017 to 2021, he oversaw major judicial, security, and infrastructure projects, including the Department of National Defence's Carling Campus, and served as Acting Associate Assistant Deputy Minister of Real Property Services during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Earlier in his career, Pierre held senior roles at Shared Services Canada, leading contract consolidation, project oversight, and the development of its Transformation Plan. He served in the Royal Canadian Navy and the Department of National Defence in roles focused on materiel assurance, risk management, process optimization, and business planning. He also supported the Department of National Defence's strategic review and received a commendation from the Commander of the Royal Canadian Navy in 2012 for his contributions.



Pierre holds a Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering (Honours) from the Royal Military College of Canada and completed his Masters Certificate in Project Management from Saint Mary's University.



Mitch Freeman

A/Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Policy, Planning and
Performance & Commemoration and Public Affairs



Mitch started his career with the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency in 1998 as a Computer Network Technologist and transitioned to Veterans Affairs Canada in the winter of 2001. Since that time Mitch has held various positions at Veterans Affairs Canada, such as the Chief Information Officer, Chief Data Officer, and Director General of Service Delivery and Program Management. Mitch has most recently served as Director General Policy and Research where he was responsible for the evolution of Veteran policy and supporting research.

Mitch is also an avid volunteer within the Kin Canada organization and recently finished a four-year term on the National Board of Directors. He has also held various local positions including the role of Governor for Atlantic Canada.



Jane Hicks

A/Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Service Delivery



Jane Hicks is currently the Acting Senior Assistant Deputy Minister for the Service Delivery Branch. She recently joined this team from her previous role as Director General of Service Delivery and Program Management (SDPM), where she led a dedicated team responsible for the Rehabilitation, Financial, Wellness, and Health Care programs, as well as Transition and Veteran Employment and My VAC Account.

Prior to her work in SDPM, Jane worked in the Centralized Operations Division, where she served as Senior Director of Strategic Wait Time Initiatives. In this role, she was responsible for planning and implementing a series of initiatives to reduce disability benefit wait times. Before that, she was Senior Director and subsequently Acting Director General, responsible for the implementation of the Pension for Life Project, one of the Department's most significant projects in recent years.

Jane has over 30 years of experience with the Department, having worked at the local, regional, national, and international levels across a number of disciplines. She has a particular interest in the delivery of benefits and services to Veterans, Canadian Armed Forces members, and their families. Jane is a graduate of the Canadian Forces College National Security Program in Toronto.



Chris McNeil

Chair, Veterans Review and Appeal Board



Christopher (Chris) McNeil was first appointed to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board in April 2015. He was appointed as Chairperson in July 2018 and reappointed in July 2023.

Mr. McNeil spent more than 30 years serving with the Halifax Regional Police before retiring in 2013 as Deputy Chief. Mr. McNeil has extensive public sector leadership experience. In the course of his career, he also acted as a workplace rights coordinator and adjudicator in discipline matters. In addition to his policing career, Mr. McNeil worked as a solicitor for the Nova Scotia Department of Justice.

Mr. McNeil holds a Bachelor of Commerce from Saint Mary's University and a Law Degree from Dalhousie University.



Colonel (Ret'd) Nishika Jardine

Veterans Ombud



Colonel (Ret'd) Nishika Jardine served almost 37 years as an officer in the Corps of Royal Canadian Electrical & Mechanical Engineers (RCEME). She enrolled in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, in 1982 and graduated from the Royal Military College of Canada with a Bachelor of Science in Math and Physics.

She has served and led in Maintenance organizations with the Army in Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Gagetown, the Navy in CFB Esquimalt, and the Air Force at 19 Wing

Comox. She commanded the RCEME School in 2008-2010. She was promoted to Colonel in 2014 and served one year as Director Armament Sustainment Program Management before her final posting as Deputy Commandant at Canadian Forces College. She completed her service in May 2019.

She has completed several important professional development courses including both the Army and the Canadian Forces Staff College programs. She also holds a Master's Degree in Defence Studies from the Royal Military College, and most recently earned the Chartered Director designation.

Other notable staff appointments include RCEME Officers Career Manager, Staff Officer to the Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, Program Officer National Security Studies Program, Deputy Project Manager Medium Support Vehicle System, and the senior staff officer responsible for the strategic sustainment of the Joint Task Force for Operation ATHENA in Afghanistan.

Since leaving the CAF, she has served on the Board of Directors of the Stevenson Memorial Hospital in Alliston, the Board of Governors of the Air Cadet League Ontario Provincial Committee, the Board of Directors of the Order of St. George, and the Board of Directors for the RCEME Museum and Heritage Foundation.



VAC Key Metrics Q3: Key Facts & Figures (Pocket Card)

Summary of Demographic Facts and Figures as of Dec. 31, 2025

Population Breakdown				
	War Service	CAF	RCMP	Total
Estimated Veteran Population ¹	N/A	461,240	N/A	461,240
Total VAC Clients	15,812	143,329	27,550	186,691
Veteran Clients	1,375	124,547	1,374	127,296
Family Clients	14,434	17,400	1,797	33,631
Caregiver Clients	0	1,373	0	1,373
RCMP Clients	3	9	24,379	24,391
Employment				
Veterans employed at VAC ²				155
Afghanistan				
Recipient Information				Recipients
Afghanistan Deployed Members (Unique) ³				40,026
Veterans in receipt of disability benefits related to Afghanistan service				17,943
Afghanistan Veterans in Receipt of Disability Benefits for Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)				14,272
Mental Health				
Veterans in receipt of disability benefits with a Psychiatric diagnosis (incl. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder [PTSD])				71,948
Veterans in receipt of disability benefits with a PTSD diagnosis				51,452
VAC Programs & Services Facts and Figures April December 2025				
Program (YTD expenditures in millions)	Clients		YTD Expenditures (in \$millions)	
Disability Pensions (Veterans and Survivors, excludes RCMP) ^a	64,861		\$731.7	
Disability Pensions - RCMP only ^a	24,291		Not applicable	
Disability Awards ^{4a}	36		\$0.5	
Disability Award and Pension (Dual Recipient, excluding RCMP) ^{5a}	7,744		N/A	
Pain and Suffering Compensation ^a	47,982		\$1,766.8	
Additional Pain and Suffering Compensation ^a	39,169		\$281.3	
Critical Injury Benefit ^b	21		\$1.9	
Income Replacement Benefit ^{6a}	33,945		\$1,164.5	
Canadian Forces Income Support ^a	169		\$3.1	
Veteran Emergency Fund ⁷	666		\$1.3	
War Veterans Allowance ^a	449		\$1.4	
Caregiver Recognition Benefit ^a	1,991		\$22.5	
Career Transition Services ⁸	743		\$3.1	
Education Training Benefit ⁹	2,414		\$21.2	
Long Term Care ^{10a}	1,743		\$103.7	
Rehabilitation ^{11a} – Veterans 11,969 Survivor/Spouse 73	12,042		\$87.7	
Treatment Benefits (POC 1-14) ^{12a}	95,922		\$695.7	
Veteran and Family Well-being Fund ¹³	48		\$4.2	
Veterans Independence Program ^b : Veterans 60,026; Survivors 19,618	79,644		\$296.1	
Other Program Expenditures ¹⁴	N/A		\$40.2	

^a Clients as of December 31, 2025

^b Clients who received a payment in Fiscal Year 2025-2026 (April 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025)

¹ Estimated Veteran population figures are based on the 2021 Statistics Canada Census of Population

² As of December 14, 2025, there were 155 VAC employees who have self-identified as being current or former Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members. Figure includes, FTE's, casuals and students.

³ Source: Canadian Armed Forces - Strategic Joint Staff, Deployment Data 2001 - 2013, March 31, 2014.

⁴ April 1, 2019, Pain and Suffering Compensation was introduced and replaced Disability Awards (DA). As of April 1, 2019, Disability Award recipients are Pain and Suffering Compensation recipients. DA client total include only clients still in pay for DA as of March 31. These clients may appear in other programs. Expenditures include one-time DA additional amount as well as DA max rate adjustments and outstanding periodic payments.

⁵ Please note that expenditures for dual clients are reported under Disability Pension and the Pain and Suffering Compensation.

⁶ Includes Career Impact Allowance Supplement (CIAS) clients who transitioned to IRB who either were not in receipt of Earnings Loss Benefit (ELB)/Retirement Income Support Benefit (RISB) or have offsets from other income sources that offset their remaining IRB portion to \$0.

⁷ VEF Clients who received at least one payment in fiscal year 2025-2026. A client can apply, and be approved for, this fund more than once in a fiscal year.

⁸ This number represents clients who have a favorable eligibility decision. However, they may not currently have an active plan with the National Service Provider. Full data is not yet available for this program as it involved the launch of a new case management system and data and reporting packages are still in development.

⁹ ETB clients who received payment for short course within 2025-26 fiscal year or anyone with an active formal program as of December 31, 2025.

¹⁰ Includes 1,299 Veterans in Community Beds (VIP funded).

¹¹ Only includes Medical Psycho/Social Rehabilitation and Vocational Rehabilitation.

¹² Includes \$148.5 million Other Health Purchased Services (OHPS) expenditures and excludes Long Term Care.

¹³ Recipients refer to organizations approved for funding.

¹⁴ Includes Other Grants & Contributions such as the Last Post Fund, Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Commemorative Partnership Program, Flying Accidents Compensation and Gallantry Awards, etc.

VAC Contribution to Canada's NATO Targets

Context

Veteran benefits represent a direct and significant contribution to achieving Canada's NATO target. NATO countries had previously committed to spending 2% of GDP on defence. At the 2025 NATO Summit, Canada agreed to a new NATO defence investment pledge to spend 5% of its GDP on defence by 2035. VAC's contribution is based on the number of clients receiving VAC benefits and VAC production levels. As these fluctuate, so too will VAC's contribution to the NATO commitment.

Key Data

Under NATO accounting methodology, all of VAC's Budget is included as eligible defence spending. This includes programs such as Pain and Suffering Compensation, Income Replacement Benefit, Veterans Independence Program, Research program, cemetery/grave maintenance, as well as operational costs including salaries and operating. Planned spending for the current fiscal year is \$7.8B, with a trend of contributions rising as more Veterans access benefits and services.

VAC's contribution to NATO spending has increased rapidly due to the growing volume of benefits and services provided to Veterans, combined with the expansion of programs that now qualify as NATO spending.

Summary of VAC's contributions by year:

2021–22	\$3.8B
2022–23	\$3.8B
2023–24	\$4.2B
2024–25	\$5.5B
2025–26 (forecast)	\$7.8B

Budget 2025 & *Budget Implementation Act*

Issue

Budget 2025 (B25) announced \$184.9M over four years, and \$40.1M ongoing for Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC). The proposed investments will stabilize processing capacity for disability benefits applications and enable the department to modernize operational processes and IT infrastructure.

Context

- In preparing for the annual Budget process, VAC senior leadership and the Office of the Minister of Veterans Affairs (OMVA) work together to determine urgent priorities to be submitted for possible Budget inclusion.
- The formal B25 drafting process occurred over a five week period with deposit on August 1, 2025 and the Budget formally presented in Parliament on November 4, 2025.
- Bill C-15, the *Budget Implementation Act* (referred to as the BIA) is the act of Parliament aiming to implement provisions announced in B25. The BIA passed second reading in the House of Commons and currently awaits study before the Standing Committee on Finance.
- Bill C-15 contains both funding measures announced in the Budget as well as measures related to the Comprehensive Expenditure Review (CER) exercise.

Key Data

- There has been more than \$11B invested in Veterans' programs since 2019.
- Through B25, \$40.1M annually is provided on an ongoing basis to stabilize the disability benefits workforce and ensure they can provide disability benefits within service standards to Veterans.
- \$12.2M is provided for each of the next two years to modernize operational processes and implement technological improvements to the IT infrastructure for the disability benefits program.
- B25 directs amendments to legislation to clarify VAC's annual calculations of benefit amounts.

Budget 2025

- With the permanent funding (\$40.1M annually), the Department will be able to stabilize, streamline, and enhance the delivery of our disability benefits program so that Veterans and their families will get the support they need sooner and more easily
- The Department is taking action to reduce the backlog of disability benefits applications, meet service standards and get results faster for Veterans and their families. This work includes expanding automation of routine tasks, exploring the integration of technology to assist decision-makers in reviewing large volumes of materials, and redesigning workflows and internal processes to eliminate inefficiencies.
- The ongoing investment in stabilization is a particular success after multiple temporary investments over the past decade. Implementation plans are currently being finalized.
- The Budget also includes a change in the reimbursement rate for Cannabis for Medical Purposes (CMP) and amendments to legislation administered by VAC for clarification purposes.

Cannabis for Medical Purposes

- B25 outlined a change in the reimbursement rate for Cannabis for Medical Purposes from \$8.50 per gram to \$6.00 per gram to better reflect fair market prices.
- This change will result in an annual cash savings of \$129M (\$4.23B in accrual).
- There is no change to Veterans' access to cannabis for medical purposes.

Budget Implementation Act (BIA)

BIA Clarifying Amendments

- B25 directs amendments to legislation administered by VAC to clarify its annual calculations of benefit amounts. Specific changes include:
 - Legislative amendments to the *Department of Veterans Affairs Act* and the *Veterans Health Care Regulations* will clarify VAC's methodology used to calculate the maximum monthly Accommodation and Meals charge in the long term care program on a retroactive and go-forward basis.
 - Legislative Amendments to the *Pension Act* and the *Pension and Allowances Adjustment Regulations* will clarify the methodology used to escalate annual adjustments to the disability pensions and other related amounts.
 - Legislative amendments to the *Veterans Well-being Regulations* will clarify how the Earnings Loss Benefit was calculated between April 1, 2006 and April 1, 2019.
- These amendments will not change the amount of benefits that Canadian Armed Forces

Veterans receive.

- The legislative amendments are consistent with VAC's well-established policies and practices and will avoid ambiguity going forward.
- Veterans and their families can be confident that their benefits are being calculated transparently and fairly.
- For ongoing legal cases it is up to the court to decide how these legislative changes might affect the litigation.

Stabilizing and Modernizing Disability Benefits Delivery to Veterans

Issue

Budget 2025 provides \$184.9 million over four years starting in 2026–27, along with \$40.1 million in ongoing funding. This investment will establish permanent funding for approximately 300 employees enabling the Department to stabilize disability benefit processing capacity, invest in modernizing its IT infrastructure, and enhance the efficiency of our Disability Benefits program to better serve Veterans. This is the starting point for broader service modernization, with Disability Benefits at the centre, and the lessons, tools, and improvements applied across other programs – supported by IT and client experience improvements.

Context

redacted

Between 2015–16 and 2024–25, VAC experienced a 92% increase in disability benefit applications. Temporary funding in 2023 allowed the Department to retain trained disability benefits staff until March 2026. Although the number of applications completed increased by 6% in 2024–25, a 7% rise in applications received outpaced productivity gains, negatively affecting service standard results and backlog levels. So far this fiscal year, application intake has stabilized at last year's levels.

The growth in demand outpaced our internal productivity gains, creating delivery pressures. With sustained overtime from September to the present (March 10, 2026), we have improved program performance. The following results demonstrate these improvements:

- reduced the backlog of files (i.e. individual claims¹) from 19,641 to 12,202;
- lowered the total number of files in progress (file inventory) from 44,877 to 35,113 and
- improved month-over-month service standard results from 24.9% to 56.9%.

Key Data and Milestones

VAC's service standard target is for 80% of disability benefit first-application decisions to be made within 16 weeks, recognizing that a small portion will exceed this due to complexity. In 2024–25, the service standard was met 47% of the time, down from 69% in 2023–24. This decline reflects a 7% increase in applications and the loss of some trained decision-makers. With increased overtime, early signs of service standard improvement are now emerging.

¹ A single application can contain multiple claims. The average is approximately 2 claims per application. Each claim requires a decision and affords the applicant appeal rights.

Phased implementation of the Claim Summary Tool (CST), an artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled tool developed by VAC to support the review of Disability Benefit applications and help Veterans receive decisions sooner, began on February 17, 2026. CST helps organize large volumes of medical records and service documents and highlights key details so decision makers can review applications more efficiently and consistently. Rollout to all remaining users is scheduled to be completed by the end of April 2026.

With B25 funding, we plan to modernize through a variety of means, such as expanding automation of routine tasks, exploring additional AI efficiencies, and redesigned workflows and internal processes. These actions are part of VAC's Service Modernization Strategy, which focuses on building a resilient, future-ready service model through process improvements, automation, and technology upgrades to meet service standards consistently and sustainably.

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Veteran Employment (including the National Veterans Employment Strategy)

Issue

Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) provides assistance to Veterans during their transition from military service to civilian employment. VAC's support system is comprehensive; encompassing personalized career counseling, skill translation services, and networking opportunities that are specifically designed to facilitate Veterans' integration into the civilian job market.

Context

Beyond the existing supports and programs in place to support Veteran employment, VAC launched the National Veterans Employment Strategy (NVES) in June 2024. This strategy and comprehensive approach sets out to improve employment opportunities for Veterans in Canada. The goal is to provide the tools and resources needed to help Veterans find meaningful work after their release from the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), leveraging the skills and qualifications acquired while in service. The strategy is centered on four foundational objectives that assist in supporting a robust Veterans employment ecosystem:

- Improving services and expanding programs for Veterans such as Career Transition Services and Vocational Rehabilitation;
- Creating and recognizing Veteran ready employers by establishing relationships with hundreds of employers and supporting them in recruiting, hiring and retaining Veterans;
- Positioning the public service as a leader for Veteran employment by strengthening tools and coaching to assist Veterans seeking to enter public service employment; and
- Building trusted partnerships with dozens of not-for-profit and community based organizations with a core mission of supporting Veterans' transition into civilian careers.

Since its launch, more than 50% of the NVES roadmap actions have been completed and the rest are all advancing. VAC continues to engage Veterans, employers, and partners. As a living framework, the Strategy adapts to labour market changes and Veterans' needs.

Key Data and Milestones

The 2021 Census showed Veterans had a slightly lower unemployment rate (8.6%) compared to the general population (10%). VAC is committed to ensuring CAF members and Veterans are supported in their transition to life after service, and recognizes that employment is a critical component to overall well-being, providing stability, a renewed sense of purpose, and social connection.

VAC facilitates the provision of information, training materials, and resources for Veterans, VAC staff, employers and other external partners and organizations, including the Department of National Defence (DND), to help ensure a seamless transition. As of March 9, 2026, there were 667 individuals (Veterans and CAF members) supported on a Career Transition plan. VAC is reviewing all NVES deliverables to identify what can be measured, including the Employer Recognition program and Veterans' participation in various services, offerings and forums.

Key milestones :

- **National Outreach:** VAC participated in major events such as the National Defence Indigenous Conference (2026), the Canadian Military, Veteran and Family Connected Campus Consortium (CMVF3C) Symposium, Cannexus, Scotiabank Vision & Valour Expo, and CANSEC, engaging hundreds of employers.
- **Veteran Employment Symposium (Invictus Games 2025):** VAC joined senior officials, including the Minister of Veterans Affairs, to promote Veteran recruitment and showcase best practices.
- **Enhanced Veteran Job Bank:** New features include employer-tagged listings, a Military-to-Civilian Job Translator, resume builder, career quizzes, and a mobile app. An employer engagement guide was also introduced.
- **Entrepreneurship Partnerships:** VAC partnered with seven organizations to expand resources, mentorship, and business opportunities for Veteran entrepreneurs.
- **ACVA Study on *Barriers to Entrepreneurship Among Veterans*:** Study began December 2025. Its purpose is to identify and understand the challenges Veterans face when pursuing entrepreneurship. This includes examining obstacles such as access to resources, training, mentorship, funding, and support networks.
- **Hire a Veteran Day:** 2025 was the third successful year with the theme "Strengthen Our Workforce". Planning for 2026 has begun.

Key Initiatives and Policies supporting Veteran Employment:

- **Veteran Employer Recognition Initiative:** As outlined in Objective 2 of the National Veteran Employment Strategy: Creating and recognizing Veteran Ready employers, VAC is developing a Veteran Employer Recognition Initiative to acknowledge private-sector employers who create workplaces supportive of Veterans and demonstrate leadership in hiring and retaining Veterans. Eligible employers who apply and meet the criteria will receive a digital badge—either "Veteran Friendly" or "Veteran Ready"—as a public designation and "seal of recognition" for their commitment. This visible badge allows employers to proudly demonstrate their commitment to hiring and retaining Veterans, while helping Veterans easily identify organizations that actively support their employment.

- **Veterans' Hiring Act (2015):** Amended the *Public Service Employment Act* to provide Priority Entitlement, Preference, and Mobility for CAF Veterans joining the Federal Public Service. From the 2019 Life After Service Study, 33% of respondents identified transition into Federal Public Service as their preferred career transition pathway. In 2023-2024, 293 Veterans self-identified as new hires into the Federal Public Service under one of the provisions available (mobility, preference, priority).
- **Career Transition Services (CTS):** Since 2018, CTS offers coaching, resume/interview prep, and labour market support for Veterans, survivors, and spouses. 90–100 new candidates monthly, 667 active candidates as of March 9, 2026. Contractor: Agilec (Oshawa).
- **Career Webinars:** Since inception, these sessions have seen approximately 7,100 Veteran registrations, featured 400 employer presentations, and included ongoing LinkedIn promotion. Webinars are held three times per year.
- **Hire a Veteran LinkedIn Group:** Created in 2021, now 6,800+ members which includes over 600 employer representatives actively posting employment opportunities (as of March 11, 2026).
- **Veteran Job Bank:** Online hub for employers to post Veteran jobs, launched with ESDC in 2020.
- **Skills Translation and Accreditation:** Work with certifying bodies and groups like Helmets to Hardhats, True Patriot Love, Treble Victor, Coding for Veterans, and Soldiers in Tech to recognize military training and connect Veterans to jobs.
- **Partnerships:** Ongoing collaboration with organizations such as Helmets to Hardhats, True Patriot Love Foundation, Treble Victor Group, Coding for Veterans, and Soldiers in Tech.
- **Veterans at VAC:** Developing recruitment and retention strategies for Veterans at VAC in consultation with the Public Service Commission.

Commemoration: Recognition and Remembrance

Issue

Commemoration serves a dual purpose: to recognize living Veterans and members of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and to remember those who have died. While VAC has a strong record of achievement in remembrance, modern-day Veterans have expressed that recognition of their contributions could be strengthened. Addressing this opportunity would further strengthen VAC's ability to fulfill its mandate and reinforce Veterans' sense of belonging and value.

The commemorative landscape is evolving. The declining number of Second World War and Korean War Veterans means traditional approaches must adapt. While VAC's commitment to overseas memorials and major military anniversaries remains strong, future initiatives will increasingly focus on Canada-based and digitally accessible programming. This shift is essential to ensure that commemoration remains relevant and inclusive for today's Veterans and Canadians.

Modern-day Veterans—including those who served in the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan, and peacekeeping missions—represent a diverse and changing population. Many do not self-identify as Veterans, and traditional commemorative practices can fail to resonate with their experiences. Targeted initiatives that reflect this diversity would help strengthen connections with modern-day Veterans, support their well-being, and enhance public engagement.

Context

Commemoration is a core responsibility of VAC; encompassing ceremonies, educational resources, maintenance of memorials and cemeteries, and funding for grassroots initiatives. Through both recognition and remembrance, VAC's programming reinforces the social value of military service, inspires youth engagement, and promotes diversity—helping to build a modern, inclusive commemorative landscape. Given the changing landscape of our Veteran population, our traditional commemorative practices must evolve in order to resonate with modern-day Veterans and the diverse Canadian population.

Recognition is not only symbolic; it has tangible impacts. By affirming the value of military service, VAC supports Veterans' sense of belonging and contributes to CAF recruitment and retention. Commemorative initiatives further serve as strategic platforms for cultural diplomacy, deepening allied security cooperation and enhancing Canada's global credibility through the projection of soft power.

In 2024, VAC published the Commemoration Strategic Plan, informed by extensive consultations. The plan calls for a greater emphasis on recognition, while maintaining a strong commitment to remembrance. This approach aligns commemoration with broader government

priorities related to identity, culture, and national pride, while addressing the evolving needs of a diverse Veteran population, including those who served in the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan, and peacekeeping missions. Upcoming milestones, such as the 35th anniversary of the Gulf War in 2026 and the 15th anniversary of the end of Canada's mission in Afghanistan in 2029.

Key Update

VAC is implementing a series of initiatives to strengthen recognition for modern-day Veterans. These include consultations, new commemorative observances, and major projects:

- Consultation of Persian Gulf and other modern-day Veterans – VAC will launch a consultation in 2026 to gather input on meaningful ways to honour Gulf War Veterans and other modern-day Veterans to help shape future commemorative initiatives. The questions will inform decisions related to commemoration of Canada's participation in the Gulf War and explore options for enhancing the inclusive nature of the National War Memorial. Questions will also focus on areas like the future of commemoration and post-centennial programming.
- National Monument to Canada's Mission in Afghanistan – VAC is working with partners toward a sod-turning ceremony in 2026 and a dedication and unveiling ceremony in 2028. This monument will honour the service, commitment, and sacrifice of Canadians who served in Afghanistan, as well as the support provided by their families and communities.
- Canadian Armed Forces around the world framework – VAC will continue its five-year cycle of thematic programming, focusing on service in the Middle East in 2026, Europe in 2027, Asia in 2028, Africa in 2029, and the Americas in 2030. This framework ensures that both traditional and modern-day Veterans are recognized.
- Broad suite of programming – VAC is prioritizing domestic programming to create meaningful opportunities for Veterans to connect with Canadians at home. In addition to planning and delivering commemorative ceremonies across the country, the department is developing educational resources and issuing Commemorative Partnership Program call-outs for projects that focus on recognition. These initiatives include efforts to highlight Persian Gulf service for instance among other significant contributions, ensuring that Canadians of all ages can learn about and honour the diverse experiences of Veterans.

Service Modernization

Issue

Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC)'s service delivery model faces rising pressures: outdated systems, fragmented processes, increasing demand, and high manual workload. Veterans expect modern, accessible, bilingual services, and employees need tools and data to support faster decisions. Modernization responds to these challenges and positions VAC for long-term sustainability, as mandated by Missions 5 and 7 of the Prime Minister's Mandate Letter.

Context

VAC is undertaking a multi-year Service Modernization initiative to transform how the Department delivers benefits and services to Veterans, families, survivors, and caregivers. The goal is simple: make services easier to use, faster, more consistent, and sustainable for the long term while strengthening Veteran trust and ensuring the organization is well-equipped to meet future needs.

Key Update

VAC's Service Modernization initiative is a department-wide effort to improve how Veterans apply for, receive, and understand their benefits and services. The initiative is structured around four key transformation themes that guide coordinated delivery and ensure long-term, sustainable improvements. These themes—Intake Modernization, Operations Management, Automation and AI, and IT Infrastructure—work together to strengthen service delivery today while building a modern foundation for the future.

The intended outcomes of modernization include easier-to-navigate services, faster and more predictable decisions, clearer communication at each step, and greater transparency for Veterans. Modern tools and strengthened governance will support employees, while improved system stability will contribute to a more reliable and user-friendly experience for everyone who depends on VAC services.

Modernization is being delivered across the entire department, with several initiatives already underway. Through the project, VAC is examining opportunities to adopt new technologies to support staff and streamline routine elements of the process. This includes the Bureau of Pension Advocates (BPA) standardizing business processes and developing guided forms to better support Veterans as they navigate appeals. These collective improvements are designed to help manage intake more effectively and avoid future backlogs.

Modernization is supported by an oversight framework that promotes clear accountability, department-wide alignment, and transparency in planning, risk management, and performance tracking. The Chief Digital Service Transformation Officer (CDSTO) leads this coordination and oversight. Progress will be monitored through a results framework focused on service delivery

and Veteran experience, with regular reporting and dashboards providing leadership with visibility into progress and risks.

Canada, United States & Other International Relationships

Issue

Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) collaborates with partners from a variety of nations across the globe to commemorate and recognize Veterans and to advance our research and knowledge of issues of important to the Veteran community.

Context

The United States of America changed administrations effective January 20, 2025 impacting Canada – US relations. VAC and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USVA) have a long history of collaboration to research and share information to better support and meet the needs of Veterans and their families.

VAC does not have any lines of business that depend on the US. However, VAC and the USVA work together through a reciprocal agreement (details below).

Both VAC and USVA participate in the Five Eyes Veteran Research Committee, which is chaired by VAC and involves six working groups conducting international comparisons of available research. USVA leads on the topic of Veteran suicide and VAC leads the topics of Military exposures and measures of Veteran well-being.

Senior VAC and USVA officials participate in the Five Eyes Ministerial and Deputy level meetings. Recent topics discussed include homelessness, employment and mental health. The most recent Deputy Heads Five Eyes meeting was held virtually on February 20, 2024. The last in-person Ministerial Five Eyes meeting was held on October 20-21, 2018.

A reciprocal agreement between the Veteran administration of the United States and the Department of Veterans Affairs Canada was signed in 1956.

The purpose of the Agreement was to facilitate access to health care benefits for Canadian Veterans living outside Canada and allied Veterans living in Canada following the Boer War and First and Second World Wars. The agreement was last reviewed in 2024 to ensure it continues to meet current needs. At this time, there are no planned changes to the agreement.

As of March 12, 2026 there were an estimated **409** Canadian Veteran clients residing in over **sixty-three** countries worldwide, with the majority living in the US. This is the number of Veterans who have received a VAC approved treatment benefit within the last 365 days.

Key Update

- On February 5, 2025, Doug Collins, an Air Force Veteran and former Congressman, was sworn in as the Secretary of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Secretary Collins has emphasized that the challenges facing the department have evolved in recent years, with a younger generation of Veterans bringing new health challenges from their service in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.
- Under the current administration, the USVA is undergoing a reorganization. A July 2025 press release announced the department is on pace to reduce total VA staff by nearly 30,000 employees by the end of fiscal year 2025, eliminating the need for a large-scale reduction-in-force. This has been accomplished by employee reductions through the federal hiring freeze, deferred resignations, retirements and normal attrition.
- On November 10, 2025, Doug Collins [issued a statement](#) highlighting what he described as major accomplishments under the new administration, including reducing the benefits backlog, processing a record number of disability claims, opening new health clinics, expanding appointment availability, increasing infrastructure spending, and improving access to both VA and non-VA care. He also emphasized reforms related to survivor benefits, electronic health records, billing recovery, homelessness efforts, workforce changes, union contract terminations, the elimination of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives, and the phaseout of gender dysphoria treatment.

Other International Relationships

Ukraine

- Canada is among Ukraine's staunchest supporters on the world stage, and our two countries have deep and long-standing bilateral ties. Canada has provided strong support for Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence, and reform efforts.
- The Government of Canada signed the Agreement on Security Cooperation between Canada and Ukraine with the Government of Ukraine in February 2024.
- VAC contributed to this agreement and is responsible for two of the objectives:
 - sharing strategies, standards, frameworks, and best practices for supporting Veterans; and,
 - sharing expertise, evidence, and guidance in the implementation of programs and services for Veterans of war and family members.
- A subsequent Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was created to support these objectives. The signing of this MoU took place on February 11, 2025 at the 2025 Invictus

Games in Vancouver, BC and was signed by the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence and the Minister of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine.

- VAC has established an internal Working Group to coordinate this cooperation and is actively engaging with the Ministry of Veterans Affairs (MVA) of Ukraine to identify and support their priority areas. VAC and the MVA have already held meetings, and collaboration is ongoing to ensure targeted, practical support aligned with Ukraine's veteran-system reform priorities.
- VAC continues sustained engagement with Ukrainian partners, building on 2024 meetings with senior officials and a Ukrainian women's delegation by hosting two significant 2025 knowledge-exchange sessions: a CIMVHR-linked visit to the Ottawa OSI Clinic involving Ukrainian, Australian, and Canadian clinician-scientists, and a Veterans' Week meeting with leaders from the Superhumans Trauma Centre focused on rehabilitation, mental health, and Veteran reintegration needs.
- Ukraine has identified mental health as one of their top priorities. They formalized an MoU with the Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families in September of 2023 which allows cooperation in research, knowledge exchange and capacity- building in the sphere of mental health. The Atlas Institute was established as the Centre of Excellence on PTSD and Related Mental Health Conditions through the Minister of Veterans Affairs' 2015 mandate letter and was renamed the Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families in 2022.
- In October 2024, a Ukrainian delegation came to Canada to spend a half day at the Atlas Institute and Atlas has identified that it has significant opportunities to support the long-term mental health needs in Ukraine. While in Ottawa, the delegation visited:
 - The Mental Health Commission of Canada;
 - The Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre (The Atlas Institute is located at the Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre); and
 - Red Cross Ottawa.
- Saskatchewan Polytechnic is leading a Women Veteran Reintegration Project in Ukraine (funded by Global Affairs Canada) to strengthen support for women transitioning to civilian life, and together with VAC is planning a spring 2026 study mission to Canada for Ukrainian officials to learn from Canadian government and community Veteran-support models to inform reforms in Ukraine.
- Global Affairs Canada (GAC) is funding two other projects to assist MVA of Ukraine. The Ministry of Veterans Affairs Institutional Strengthening (Vet-IS) Project will strengthen institutional leadership and coordination capacity to support a unified, national veterans support system for veterans and their families. The Joint Donor Veterans Support Platform – Design & Advisory Support project is a platform to reduce duplication, strengthen

national ownership, and coordinate donor support through a unified project pipeline and standardized administration.

- GAC has reached out to VAC for assistance to review and provide expertise and strategic input on these projects; advise on governance models, standards, and system-level coordination based on VAC experience; and participate in stakeholder engagement as needed.
- The Minister of Veterans Affairs in Ukraine has expressed interest in a working visit to Canada for bilateral meetings with senior leadership at VAC and GAC, as well as site visits to rehabilitation centers/clinics and the National Military Cemetery (Beechwood). This planned visit is currently on hold.

Australia

- Canada and Australia are like-minded partners across nearly all sectors of the relationship. Canada works closely in the Five Eyes defence, security and intelligence partnership, and the defence relationship with Australia is the most important in the Asia/Oceania region. Close links are further strengthened by Canada-Australia-New Zealand (CANZ) co-operation within the United Nations, and joint membership in the Commonwealth.
- VAC and the Australian Department of Veterans' Affairs work closely together as we actively participate in the Five Eyes group.
- VAC and Australia continue to collaborate on areas of mutual interest such as Veteran homelessness and mental health.
- VAC and Australian Veterans' Affairs officials met in June 2025. The main topics discussed were the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automated decision making, the development of a Women's Veterans' Strategy and engaging with women Veterans, engagement between government and ex-service organizations and, the use of medicinal cannabis for mental and physical health treatment.
- Australian Veterans' Affairs officials attended the Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research (CIMVHR) Forum in Ottawa in October 2025.
- Australian Veterans' Affairs Chief Psychiatrist appeared as a witness at the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs in November 2025, as part of the Suicide Prevention Among Veterans study.
- Australia has recently introduced the use and medical coverage of MDMA therapy and Psilocybin-assisted psychotherapy as treatments for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Treatment Resistant Depression (TRD). They are first Five Eye's country to do so, as a widely available treatment.

- On February 9, 2026, The Hon Matt Keogh MP, Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Minister for Defence Personnel issued a press release with information on the \$739.2 million investment to improve the provision of the treatment and rehabilitation for veterans to reduce the impact of injury on them and improve their lifetime wellbeing.
- Both VAC and Australia participate in the Five Eyes Veteran Research Committee, which is chaired by VAC and involves six working groups conducting international comparisons of available research. Australia leads on the topic of Veteran Demographics.

United Kingdom

- Canada and the United Kingdom (UK) have a long standing, positive relationship. This relationship continues a long tradition of strategic partnership. Canada and the UK work closely together as we actively participate in the Five Eyes group.
- VAC and the UK continue to collaborate on areas of mutual interest such as Veteran homelessness, employment for Veterans and women Veterans.
- UK and VAC officials met in February 2-25 during the Invictus Games. The main topic of discussion included the Invictus Games as 2027 iterations of the Games are to be held in Birmingham, England. The UK commended VAC on how we commemorate our Veterans. The UK also advised that they have changed their approach to incorporate Veterans employment and women Veterans into a single new strategy that is more outcome based.
- In September 2025, Louise Sandher-Jones was named the new Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State in the Ministry of Defence (Minister for Veterans and People). She is a Veteran with service in Afghanistan.
- Both VAC and the UK participate in the Five Eyes Veteran Research Committee, which is chaired by VAC and involves six working groups conducting international comparisons of available research. The UK leads on the topic of Veteran Employment.

New Zealand

- New Zealand is an important partner for Canada on a broad range of issues, including security and defence, multilateral trade negotiations, regional cooperation, counterterrorism, the environment, peace support operations, Indigenous issues, international fisheries, and oceans governance, education, and culture.
- VAC and Veterans' Affairs New Zealand work closely together as we actively participate in the Five Eyes group.
- Both VAC and New Zealand participate in the Five Eyes Veteran Research Committee, which is chaired by VAC and involves six working groups conducting international comparisons of available research. New Zealand is leads on the topic of Public Perceptions.

Women Veterans

Issue

Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) recognizes the impacts of gender and sexual identity on the military and Veteran experience, and are committed to ensuring that Veterans are not experiencing inequities in systems, policies, programs, services and commemorations

Context

Since 2019, the Women and 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans Team has been dedicated to addressing women Veterans' priorities by working collaboratively with Veterans, various government and community partners and subject matter experts to identify and address systemic issues specific to sex, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation of under-represented groups within the Veteran population.

According to the 2021 census, nearly one in six Veterans are women (16.2%) and almost one-fifth (19.3%) of those serving in the Canadian military are women. Women represent approximately 13% of the Veteran population VAC serves.

Women Veterans Forums:

On March 6th and 7th, 2025, the Department hosted the *Honouring Her Service: 2025 Women's Forum* in Ottawa. Approximately 75 women attended in person and approximately 113 attended virtually. Representatives from the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), and Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) provided updates on the progress made since the 2024 Forum to support service women and Veterans.

Participants attended three breakout sessions: Menopause and Pelvic Floor Health: Empowering women through education; The Power of Connection: Women experiencing isolation; and, Shaping the Future: A Collaborative Workshop on VAC's Women Veterans Research Plan. Various optional wellness activities were offered on March 6th for in-person participants.

Consideration is underway for a forum event in 2026.

Women Veterans Council:

In December 2024 VAC established a Women Veterans Council. The Council, guided by its members' lived experiences and expertise, offers advice to the Minister of Veterans Affairs on matters as requested by the Minister. Members are appointed by the Minister. The inaugural meeting of the Council was held on January 29th, 2025 and council has since had 4 Official Meetings, 5 ad-hoc meetings, and participated in 5 engagements and/or events in their first year. Council meets virtually next on March 18, 2026.

Women, Peace and Security:

In 2023 VAC became an implementation partner of Canada's third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (CNAP-WPS). This partnership strengthened VAC's relationship with the Department of National Defence (DND)/Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), our Implementation Plan was officially launched on March 28, 2024.

Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs (ACVA) – *Invisible No More* Recommendations:

VAC participated in the ACVA comprehensive study on the experience of women Veterans in an effort to continue to strengthen the treatment, transition supports, recognition, and care of women Veterans from all backgrounds. The Government Response to the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs' Fifteenth Report entitled *Invisible No More. The Experiences of Canadian Women Veterans* was tabled in the House of Commons in Fall 2024. The study concluded with 42 recommendations and VAC is now working on implementing the Committee's recommendations, one being the successful establishment of the Women Veterans Council.

Persian Gulf Veterans – Wartime Service

Issue

For several years, Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members and Veterans that served during the Persian Gulf conflict have been calling for greater recognition in the form of commemoration and financial compensation. The main request is that their service in the Persian Gulf be recognized as “Wartime Service” given its similarity to operations undertaken during wartime.

Context

Since the end of the Korean War, service in high risk conflicts, operations, and deployments, such as the Persian Gulf conflict, the Balkans and Afghanistan, are designated by the Minister of National Defence as Special Duty Service.

The Special Duty Service designation does not signal lesser respect for the service of modern-era members and Veterans, nor is it indicative of a lesser degree of risk on the part of those deployed.

The term “Wartime Service” is not defined or used in either the [Pension Act](#) or the [Veterans Well-being Act](#). Wartime Service terminology has been used internally by VAC for ease of reference when referring to service in World War I, World War II, the Korean War in the “[Disability Benefits in Respect of Wartime and Special Duty Service – The Insurance Principle](#)” (Insurance Principle) policy. There are no provisions within current legislation that provide authority to designate a period of service as Wartime Service.

In addition to the request from Persian Gulf Veterans to have their service recognized as Wartime Service, they have also been calling for greater recognition of their service in this conflict. Ensuring meaningful recognition of modern Veterans is essential. As military service continues to evolve, commemoration, including recognition efforts, must appropriately reflect the contributions and sacrifices of those who have served in more recent conflicts and operations.

In 2014, “In Service to Canada” was inscribed on the National War Memorial to recognize all Canadians who have served, are serving, and will serve in uniform—whether in large-scale conflicts, peacekeeping and peace support missions, humanitarian efforts, or domestic operations.

In addition to “In Service to Canada,” the dates of these military engagements appear on the National War Memorial:

1914 – 1918: the First World War

1939 – 1945: the Second World War

1899 – 1902: the South African War

1950 – 1953: the Korean War

2001 – 2014: Canada's Mission in Afghanistan

The Persian Gulf Veterans of Canada (PGVC) is an advocacy, social and support association which also works to increase knowledge of Canada's contributions in the Persian Gulf to the Canadian public.

PGVC have requested that the Gulf War 1990-1991 be recognized with a new inscription on the National War Memorial.

Key Update

In 2024, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs (ACVA) held meetings on the subject of the Recognition of Persian Gulf Veterans and Wartime Service. On December 16, 2024, and again on June 20, 2025, ACVA released their report entitled, "[The Persian Gulf War Was a War](#)", which made five recommendations to address the requests from Persian Gulf Veterans for greater recognition of their roles during this conflict, both in terms of commemorating their efforts and of receiving financial compensation.

VAC and the Department of National Defence worked closely to prepare a Government Response to ACVA's Report, which carefully considered and responded to each of the five recommendations. The Government Response was presented to the House on Friday, October 10, 2025.

In addition, in 2026, VAC will launch a consultation to gather input on meaningful ways to honour Gulf War Veterans and other modern-day Veterans to help shape future commemorative initiatives.

Commemorative programming was planned with the Persian Gulf Veterans of Canada organization and the Canadian Armed Forces to commemorate the 35th anniversary of Operation Friction and the End of the Persian Gulf Conflict in February 2026. Events in Halifax included a delegation of Persian Gulf Veterans and Stakeholders who participated in a wreath laying ceremony at the RCL Branch 142, a signature ceremony at Jetty NJ, HMC Dockyard and HMCS Scotian including a sail past and fly past, as well as various museum visits and an acknowledgement in the provincial legislature. Programming included a delegation of more than 30 Persian Gulf Veterans as well as numerous local Persian Gulf Veterans.

Events also took place in Ottawa at the National War Memorial, Beechwood National Military Cemetery and the Canadian War Museum.

Overall, the events and programming were well received by Veterans. PGVC sentiment was very happy and grateful for being recognized in such a manner.

Events received coverage from CBC, Radio-Canada, Global News, CTV, Eastlink, The Canadian Press, Legion Magazine, and the Province of NS covered the events.

Overall, media coverage was positive and focused on the anniversary; however, many outlets referenced Persian Gulf Veterans' ongoing efforts to have the conflict designated as "wartime service."

Gulf War Illness

Gulf War Illness, also known as Gulf War Syndrome or Chronic Multi-symptom Illness—is a chronic condition affecting many Veterans of the 1990–1991 Persian Gulf War. Symptoms include fatigue, cognitive impairment, chronic pain, gastrointestinal issues, and mood disorders, often linked to environmental and chemical exposures such as nerve agents, pesticides, pyridostigmine bromide, oil well fire smoke, and experimental vaccines.

On October 1, 2025, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention assigned Gulf War Illness a dedicated diagnostic code to the version International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD) used in the US.. This formal recognition enables standardized diagnosis, reporting, and research. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs already recognizes Gulf War Illness as a presumptive condition, facilitating access to disability benefits for related conditions such as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Fibromyalgia, and Functional Gastrointestinal Disorders.

VAC has recognized the illness and injuries *related to* Gulf War Illness for several years. Effective December 2, 2025, VAC now recognizes Gulf War Illness itself as a valid medical diagnosis for disability benefits applications and Veterans with such diagnoses are encouraged to apply for a disability benefit.. This recognition validates the lived experiences of Gulf War Veterans and highlights the importance of continuing to provide clear, accessible pathways to benefits.

Last Post Fund National Field of Honour

Issue

In March 2020, the Last Post Fund (LPF) asked the Government of Canada to take over the LPF owned National Field of Honour in Pointe Claire, Quebec.

Context

The LPF was established in 1909 to ensure all military Veterans receive a dignified funeral and burial. The non-profit organization delivers VAC's Funeral and Burial Program. In 1930, the organization created its own cemetery dedicated to Veteran burials, called the LPF National Field of Honour, in Pointe Claire, Quebec. In March 2020, the LPF wrote to the Minister of Veterans Affairs requesting that VAC "take steps to add the National Field of Honour to the other military cemeteries in Canada which it already owns and operates."

As part of its due diligence, VAC worked with Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) from 2021 to 2025 to assess the site, including operations and management, health and safety, accessibility, heritage, and environmental considerations; with the completion of Phase 3 assessments in December 2025, VAC now has a full understanding of the investment required to bring the property into compliance with federal real property regulations, consistent with the Treasury Board Directive on the Management of Real Property.

VAC is not presently involved in operating or funding the LPF's National Field of Honour; however, the Department invested approximately \$1.57M in grave marker maintenance at the cemetery from 2018-19 to 2022-23. This was part of the five-year, \$24.4M commitment announced in Budget 2018 for Veteran grave marker maintenance.

Key Update

VAC is working with the Last Post Fund to ensure that the National Field of Honour remains a solemn place of commemoration.

The Department has completed its due diligence requirements and is now considering next steps, including seeking the direction, authorities, and funding required to advance this commemorative initiative.

National Monument to Canada's Mission in Afghanistan

Issue

Ensuring the National Monument to Canada's Mission in Afghanistan (NMCMA) is completed by 2028, while continuing to keep stakeholders and clients informed of progress. More than 40,000 Canadians served in Afghanistan, and VAC has a duty to recognize and commemorate the sacrifices of these modern-day Veterans.

Context

On May 8, 2014, the Government of Canada announced that a monument would be built to commemorate this mission. VAC is the project proponent funding this initiative, Canadian Heritage is the project manager and the National Capital Commission (NCC) is responsible for project implementation and will assume ownership of the monument when completed.

Stakeholder consultations and site feasibility studies were completed to determine the most appropriate site for the Monument. In June 2019, the National Capital Commission Board of Directors approved the site located across from the Canadian War Museum on LeBreton Flats.

In August 2019, Canadian Heritage launched Phase one of the design competition, inviting teams of professional artists, architects, landscape architects, and other urban design professionals to submit their qualifications. In May 2020, five finalist design teams were selected by the seven-member independent jury established for the design competition process.

In early 2020, VAC consulted with stakeholders on design considerations for the Monument. Over 4,000 people responded to an online survey, with 72% having a connection to Canada's military and/or the mission in Afghanistan. Two in-person consultations were held. The first meeting included members of the VAC Ministerial Commemoration Advisory Group as well as representatives of organizations that took part in the whole-of-government mission. The second meeting included representatives of the Algonquin of Pikwakanagan First Nation and the Algonquin of Kitigan Zibi Anishinaabe First Nation. Their feedback influenced the development of design guidelines. Results of these consultations were made public on VAC's website on June 4, 2020.

From May 20 to June 9, 2021, Canadian Heritage coordinated an online viewing and public opinion exercise on the finalist design concepts. More than 12,000 responses were received and results were published on the Canadian Heritage website.

On June 19, 2023, the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, and the Minister of International Development and Minister responsible for the Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada, announced the chosen design for the National Monument to Canada's Mission in Afghanistan.

In Budget 2014, a total of \$5,000,000 was allocated to this project. Of that amount, \$4,743,250 was earmarked for the construction of the monument. That amount includes various expenses such as construction elements, design competition, design development contract, site surveys, maintenance fees, and management fees. Based on a strong partnership, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) has agreed to provide the necessary funding for expenses related to the monument. A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the two parties.

Key Update

- The National Capital Commission (NCC) granted final approval for the Team Stimson Monument design on June 19, 2025, clearing the way for the final construction and unveiling steps in the project. The concept for the NMCMA is complex with significant details in terms of symbolism, text and design. Tariffs, material availability and specialized skill set for the construction will impact timelines.
- On September 23, 2025, project authority to proceed with tendering for the construction phase of the project was granted during the NCC Board of Directors meeting. The Pre-qualification Request for Proposals was posted on December 12, 2025. A contract is expected to be awarded in Spring 2026.
- A Sod Turning event is expected to take place in 2026 marking the official start of the construction phase of this initiative.
- Currently, unveiling of the Monument is anticipated in 2028.

Commemorative Partnership Program

Issue

The Commemorative Partnership Program (CPP) is a grants and contributions program that provides funding to organizations undertaking remembrance initiatives. The 2026-27 CPP budget is \$3,460,000, which includes the program's regular budget of \$2,210,000 plus temporary funding of \$750,000 to support the Juno Beach Centre and \$500,000 to support No. 2 Construction Battalion projects.

Context

Funding is available for two types of projects:

Community Engagement: This funding supports remembrance initiatives such as commemorative events and activities, and the development of learning resources.

Community War Memorial: This funding supports the construction, restoration or expansion of community war memorials.

Eligible recipients are non-profit or for-profit organizations, and Canadian provinces, territories and municipalities. Individuals and federal organizations are not eligible for funding.

Key Data and timelines

Calls for applications	Funding limits	Deadline
Community Engagement – local and regional initiatives	\$5K local / \$10K regional	Accepted year-round
Community War Memorials – small restoration projects	\$10K	Accepted year-round
No. 2 Construction Battalion – community engagement and community war memorial projects	\$50K	13 February 2026
Persian Gulf Veterans – community engagement and community war memorial projects	\$25K	31 March 2026
100 th anniversary of The Royal Canadian Legion – community engagement projects	\$25K	1 May 2026
Community War Memorials – new construction or large restoration projects	\$25K (\$50K for Indigenous projects)	1 December 2026

2025-26 (as of 11 March 2026): 230 approved projects totaling \$2,039,639

2024-25: 283 approved projects totaling \$3,39,219

Transition Services

Issue

On average, 7,860 military members release from the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) each year. Of those, approximately 1,970 are medical releases and 5,890 are non-medical releases. According to 2024 Canadian Veteran Health Survey, 17.7% of Veterans described the transition to life after service as difficult, while responses in the 2024 Veteran Affairs Canada National Client Survey (VNCS) indicated 33% of Veterans experienced difficulties transitioning to civilian life. Successful transition is linked to better long-term outcomes for Veterans and their families and therefore remains a key focus for both Veterans Affairs and the Canadian Armed Forces.

Context

VAC is committed to working with the retired CAF members and retired Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) members and their families to ensure the transition to life after service is as smooth as possible. The objective is to deliver a standardized, personalized, and professional transition process that supports and empowers CAF members, Veterans, and their families before, during and after their transition to life after service.

Key Update

The CAF-VAC Joint Steering Committee created the Seamless Transition Task Force as a joint working group. The primary focus is the collaboration on transition – the processes, programs, tools and services of a new member/Veteran-centric transition system, supporting CAF members and their families as they shift into post-service life.

The Closing the Seam Project, funded through Budget 2019, delivered improved online capabilities including increased capacity for My VAC Account and online tools such as the Member's Transition Task List and My Well-Being Check-in. The project also delivered improved data sharing through direct access to the CAF Health Information System (CFHIS) and release notifications. A new transition process for non-medically releasing CAF members and their families, *Military to Civilian Transition (MCT)*, was developed and implemented nationwide as of March 2024.

Next steps include establishing a process for better, more stable data exchange between the departments, as well as improved interoperability of tools and resources available in the various systems. MCT will continue to be improved on through the development of a quality control process and a performance measurement framework. Enhanced Transition Services, which has provided transition support to medically releasing CAF members since 2015, is being renewed to incorporate lessons learned and operational changes, including better alignment with MCT. The post-release follow-up process will be expanded to contact Veterans who are not actively supported by VAC after their transition, reminding them of VAC programs and services and

encouraging them to reach out if they have unmet or unexpected needs. The CAF is projected to expand in size, which is expected to proportionally increase the volume of transitions. VAC will continue to collaborate with CAF to jointly plan and implement transition supports to address this anticipated demand.

Mental Health Benefits and Support for Veterans

Issue

VAC is committed to ensuring eligible Veterans have access to the mental health benefits and supports they need, when they need them.

Context

Since April 1, 2022, CAF Veterans who apply for a disability benefit for certain mental health conditions – as well as those who had already applied and were awaiting a decision – are automatically qualified for the Mental Health Benefits coverage.

This coverage starts immediately following their application for a disability entitlement as long as the application indicates they are experiencing a mental health problem, they have CAF Service and they have signed attesting to the truth of the information provided. Coverage under the Mental Health Benefits could last up to two years, or until their disability entitlement decision is granted.

Mental Health Benefits provide coverage for prescription drugs as well as treatments and examinations provided by psychologists, counsellors, social workers, or other mental health professionals approved by the Minister.

Since implementation, 29,982 Veterans were made eligible for Mental Health Benefits. Of those, 10,687 have made at least one claim to Medavie Blue Cross.

- For the 2022-23 fiscal year, 8,558 clients received Mental Health Benefits.
- In the 2023-24 fiscal year, 7,767 clients received Mental Health Benefits.
- In the 2024-25 fiscal year, 8,504 clients received Mental Health Benefits.
- Since April 1, 2025, until February 28, 2026, 7520 clients were eligible for Mental Health Benefits.

In addition to Mental Health Benefits, Veterans may be eligible for the following Mental Health Supports:

- Ten outpatient Operational Stress Injury (OSI) Clinics and eleven satellite service sites, located across the country, provide specialized mental health services closer to where Veterans live.
- Veterans have access to the VAC Assistance Service (1-800-268-7708) or TDD (1-800-567-5803) that includes a 24-hour toll-free help line, face-to-face or virtual psychological support and referral services close to where they live. The option to contact the service via online chat is now also available to schedule an appointment with a mental health professional at www.canada.ca/eap-chat (Password: canada). Additionally, bereavement

support is available to Veterans and their families when a Veteran's death is related to their service, and the Pastoral Outreach program offers spiritual counselling to CAF Veterans and their families.

- The Operational Stress Injury Social Support Service (OSISS) offers confidential peer support to Veterans impacted by an operational stress injury. Trained peer support coordinators and family peer support coordinators provide this support. These individuals generally have first-hand experience with operational stress injuries and are familiar with VAC services. Toll-free number: 1-800-883-6094.
- The Peer Support Program (PSP) offers confidential peer support to Veterans that have experienced sexual misconduct and/or military sexual trauma (MST) during their service. Trained peer supporters and mental health professionals provide the support. The peer supporters have lived experience of sexual misconduct and/or MST. Sexual Misconduct Support and Resource Centre (SMSRC) 24/7 Toll-free number: 1-844-750-1648.
- [Mental Health First Aid](#) for the Veteran community is mental health literacy training that was developed in partnership with the Mental Health Commission of Canada. This training focuses on the Veteran experience and is available both virtually and in-person to Veterans, their families and caregivers, and anyone who comes in contact with Veterans.
- Veterans have access to free online and mobile mental health applications, including:
 - [PTSD Coach Canada](#) – A mobile application providing information on operational stress injuries such as PTSD, guidance on where to find support, and tools to help manage symptoms and stress;
 - [OSI Connect](#) – A mental health learning and self-management app that helps Veterans understand operational stress injuries and learn about available support through OSI Clinics; and
 - [LifeSpeak](#) – An online self-help platform offering short videos and podcasts by subject-matter experts on topics such as depression, stress management, sleep, nutrition, and more. (Password: canada).

Key Updates

In March 2024, VAC approached the end of the two-year Mental Health Benefits eligibility period for those who were made eligible in April 2022. As the Mental Health Benefits eligibility period begins on the day the department receives a disability benefits application for an eligible mental health condition, Mental Health Benefits coverage will end after two years for those who do not receive a favorable disability benefit decision.

To assist Veterans in planning ahead, the department provides advance notifications to ensure they have time to prepare for the end of their Mental Health Benefit coverage.

Veterans receive a notification (via an information sheet) three months before their Mental Health Benefits coverage ends. This advance notice ensures Veterans have sufficient time to prepare and explore alternative treatment options before their two-year eligibility period concludes. The National Contact Centre Network questions and answers have been updated to address inquiries about coverage ending.

Support for Families and Caregivers

Issue

Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) recognizes the essential role that families and caregivers play in supporting the well-being of Veterans. To reduce strain and ensure families receive the support they need, VAC provides a wide range of mental health, social, practical, and financial supports.

Context

Family members and survivors who qualify can access mental health treatments, health care benefits, vocational assistance, and financial support, including the Caregiver Recognition Benefit. Many of these supports provide access to counselling and peer support networks to help Veterans and their families through recovery and rehabilitation.

Key Updates

Policy and Program Guidance

To support a Veteran's treatment plan or rehabilitation goals, VAC may fund mental health services for family members. These services may include family, group, or couples counselling (with or without the Veteran present), delivered by licensed mental health professionals such as psychologists and social workers. Coverage is provided when the Veteran's treating health professional confirms that family involvement will positively impact the Veteran's mental health or help achieve rehabilitation goals.

Mental Health Supports for Families and Caregivers:

- VAC operates a network of 10 Operational Stress Injury (OSI) Clinics and 11 OSI Satellite Service Sites, which deliver mental health assessments and treatment for Veterans, with a family-friendly approach. This includes educational meetings for all and counselling sessions for couples and families of OSI Clinic clients when it is clinically required for the Veteran's treatment.
- The Operational Stress Injury Social Support (OSISS) Program provides confidential peer support to CAF members, Veterans, and their families who are impacted by operational stress injuries. Support is delivered by trained peer support coordinators and volunteers who are knowledgeable about VAC services and community resources. For support, participants can call toll-free at 1-800-883-6094 or visit osiss.ca.
- Mental Health First Aid for the Veteran Community: a mental health literacy training available virtually and in person to Veterans, their family members and caregivers, as well as those who are in regular contact with Veterans.

- Digital and mobile tools: families can access online supports such as PTSD Coach Canada, OSI Connect, and LifeSpeak.
- The VAC Assistance Service (1-800-268-7708; TDD 1-800-567-5803) offers 24/7 confidential psychological support, face-to-face and virtual counselling, bereavement support, referral services, and Pastoral Outreach for spiritual counselling for CAF Veterans and their families.

Family and Caregiver Support Programs:

- Caregiver Recognition Benefit: a monthly tax-free payment of \$1,264.25 paid directly to an eligible Veteran's designated informal caregiver.
- Veteran Family Program (VFP): provides access to all 32 Military Family Resource Centres across Canada, including the Family Information Line and CAFconnection.ca.
- Veteran Family Telemedicine Service: provides one year of virtual health care access post-release, including prescriptions and renewals, lab requisitions, doctor's notes, and referrals.
- Group Health Insurance: provides coverage under the Public Service Health Care Plan (PSHCP) through VAC. The plan reimburses 80 percent of most eligible health care expenses. Members of the PSHCP through VAC are responsible to pay monthly contributions.

Employment, Education, and Independence Supports:

- Career Transition Services (CTS): offers career counselling and coaching.
- Vocational Assistance: available to spouses when the Veteran cannot participate in vocational rehabilitation.
- Veterans Independence Program (VIP): provides housekeeping and grounds maintenance services to support the independence of survivors and dependents.

Rehabilitation Services and Vocational Assistance Program

Issue

The mission of the Rehabilitation Services and Vocational Assistance Program (RSVP) is to reduce barriers to re-establishment in life after service for RSVP participants by providing timely access to medical, psychosocial, and vocational rehabilitation services. The goal is for participants to experience improvement in their overall health and well-being.

Context

In November 2022, a national contract with Partners in Canadian Veterans Rehabilitation Services (PCVRS) was implemented to provide all medical, psychosocial, and vocational services for RSVP participants. This contract, implemented in a phased approach, became operational in October 2023. The contractor has a national network of more than 14,000 Rehabilitation Services Professionals who are trained in areas such as Trauma Informed Care, Mental Health and Culturally-Sensitive Care as well as Understanding Military Culture. The contract includes quality management of the provider and program, improved reporting and performance measurement, access to timely services for participants, and supports strong connections between VAC case managers and the contractor's rehabilitation service specialists (RSS) and health professionals. VAC Case Managers remain responsible for the approval of rehabilitation plans, monitoring of rehabilitation progress and overall coordination of Veterans' and family members' case management needs.

Key Data and Next Steps

As of Q2 2025-26, 11,790 participants were engaged in the program. On average, VAC referred 360 program participants to PCVRS monthly for rehabilitation assessments and services. Approximately 6,600 referrals to Rehabilitation Service Professionals were made in Q2, with assessments completed within 29 days and rehabilitation services started within 21 days. Service delivery timelines continue to improve with new clinic acquisitions and ongoing monitoring of Rehabilitation Service Professional and clinic capacity. Year-to-date 2025-26, approximately 340 participants leave the program monthly, therefore the number of program participants remains relatively consistent.

The implementation and operationalization of the new national contract and associated service delivery model has been challenging. With a change in program service delivery of this scope and magnitude, and with numerous stakeholders including Veterans, their families, health care providers, and staff, the acceptance of the change continues to be managed.

Implementation brought to light misconceptions and lack of program understanding among front-line employees and participants. Front-line employees' comprehension and application of the program requires direct ongoing support to ensure Veterans and their families are well-

guided through the eligibility process and their participation in the program. This, coupled with varying severity, chronicity, and increasing complexity of participants' health problems, has caused an increased need for communication, training, and incremental quality assurance.

With the national contract, a comprehensive performance measurement and quality assurance framework supports the program to monitor effectiveness and provide the opportunity to implement program improvements. This increased focus on performance, quality assurance, communications, and training, aims to improve knowledge of the program's true scope, intent, and parameters, while ensuring Veteran-centric rehabilitation with services are tailored to the unique needs of all participants, including women and Indigenous Veterans.

Support for Military Sexual Misconduct Survivors

Issue

In Canada, sexual misconduct and/or military sexual trauma (MST) is described as conduct of a sexual nature that can cause or causes harm to others and takes place within the military. Sexual misconduct and/or MST can occur in the physical work location or in the greater work environment where work-related activities take place and working relationships exist. It can also occur while one is on or off duty, on or off-base, deployed or not deployed.

Sexual misconduct and/or MST are not clinical diagnoses but rather terms used to describe the physiological, physical, and social impacts or 'wounds' that people who experience or witness sexual misconduct and/or MST may feel. It is an event or an accumulation of events that may lead to illnesses or injuries that meet the criteria for diagnosable mental health conditions. People who have experienced sexual misconduct and/or MST are at an increased risk of developing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

An identified need for culture change within Department of National Defence (DND)-Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and support for those affected by sexual misconduct and/or MST led to an increased focus by the Government of Canada. A funding allocation of \$44.7M was made in Budget 2021 to address sexual misconduct and gender-based violence within the CAF/DND and to support survivors. Budget 2021 funding also directed joint collaboration between DND and VAC to develop and establish a Peer Support Program specific to current and former CAF members (Veterans) who were impacted by sexual trauma or sexual misconduct during their service.

Context

The Peer Support Program is jointly delivered by the Sexual Misconduct Support and Resource Centre (SMSRC) and VAC. The program offers peer support services to people affected by sexual misconduct and/or MST during their service or in their workplace. These include CAF members, Veterans/former CAF members, Cadets and Junior Canadian Rangers, current and former DND public service employees, and Canadian Coast Guard personnel 18 years of age and older.

VAC and the SMSRC have co-developed peer support programming using a human-centred design approach. Consultations held with people with lived experience indicated that the program needed to be flexible, well communicated, safe and inclusive, and have choices in the service delivery format.

The first Formal Peer Support Groups began in June 2023. Since then, the program has introduced Informal Peer Support Groups in May 2024 and launched a variety of Peer Support Activities starting in July 2024, with new events added over time. These events include *Zentangle* art therapy, Remembrance Day and Veterans' Week peer support events, holiday peer support

events, virtual coffee chats, and trauma-informed yoga. These peer support program services continue today with over 230 sessions completed since the launch in June 2023.

Key Data and Milestones

- Established Peer Support Program Model – February 2022
- Published [What We Heard Consultation Report](#) – March 2022
- Program Development:
 - Mental Health Professional (MHP) hired by VAC in Fall 2022: involved in the development and facilitation of the Formal Peer Support Group program since that time.
 - Recruitment and training of Peer Supporters – Winter 2023 and Ongoing
 - Development of educational material completed for Formal Peer Support Group Initial Launch – Spring 2023
 - Recruitment and training of part-time MHPs from within SMSRC to support group facilitation – Spring 2025 and ongoing.
- Between June 2023 and November 2025, a series of 14 Formal Peer Support Groups (12 in English and two in French) were held, engaging over 80 registered participants. All sessions were held virtually. New groups are scheduled to start in May 2026.
 - Formal Peer Support Groups are educational peer support groups led by a trained peer supporter with lived experience and a MHP.
 - Two of the 10 formal peer support groups were men's groups, the first of which was launched in March 2024.
 - According to the [SMSRC Annual Report 2023-2024](#), 94% of survey respondents found the Formal Group discussions helpful, 91% felt supported throughout the sessions, and 86% would recommend the sessions to future participants.
- Between May 2024 and November 2025, a series of six Informal Peer Support Groups (five in English and one in French) were held, with over 50 registered participants. All sessions were held virtually.
 - The informal groups allow for ongoing connection and support among peers in a less formal setting. They offer up to eight sessions and are led by two trained peer supporters, with a MHP available for additional support if needed.
 - Once registered, peers have the flexibility to attend as many sessions as they'd like. As a result, participation levels may fluctuate weekly based on the drop-in style format.

- Since July 2024, Peer Support Activities continued to be enhanced and made available, including Remembrance Day and Veterans' Week peer support events, as well as Virtual Coffee Chats and Trauma-Informed Yoga, which will continue into 2026.
 - Activities are led by a variety of facilitators, such as trained peer supporters, certified yoga instructors, visual artists, and MHPs, depending on the activity.
- Community Consultations led by the SMSRC Partnerships Team were completed in May 2024. These consultations provided an opportunity to discuss the Informal Peer Support Group service and gather feedback on additional peer support services that could benefit the community. The insights from these discussions were compiled into a summary report, a draft of which was shared with the Peer Support Program leads in November 2024, and continue to inform and guide program improvements. SMSRC is working on a final version of the report.
- Long Term funding for the MST Peer Support Program (PSP) has been confirmed as of Fall 2025. With confirmed ongoing funding in place, VAC and SMSRC/DND-CAF are working closely to evaluate future program requirements and staffing needs.

Income Replacement Benefit

Issue

The Income Replacement Benefit (IRB) provides income support to Veterans participating in the Rehabilitation Services and Vocational Assistance Program (RSVP) and may be paid for life if Veterans are determined to have a diminished earnings capacity (DEC). The IRB experienced steady growth since implementation and is VAC's largest financial benefit program, soon to be the largest by expenditures. One of the department's main objectives is to ensure IRB payments are accurate and paid in a timely manner. Although IRB recipients are reminded to advise VAC of any changes to their financial situation, this remains an ongoing challenge for the program. Discrepancies can contribute to inaccurate monthly payments. Improvements to the Annual Income Verification process, using automation, will help to ensure Veterans are consistently receiving accurate IRB payments.

Context

IRB came into effect on April 1, 2019, and consolidated previous financial benefits into one. Veterans who were in receipt of financial benefits prior to the transition to the IRB had the amount of their previous benefit protected to ensure that they would not receive less.

The IRB is a taxable monthly benefit that ensures a Veteran's total income while participating in the Rehabilitation Program (up to their 65th birthday) will be at least 90 percent of their adjusted gross pre-release military salary (less income sources). It allows Veterans to earn up to \$20,000 per year from employment without affecting their benefit amount. Any employment and self-employment income above \$20,000 will then be offset dollar-for-dollar.

Veterans determined to have a DEC prior to age 65 may continue to receive the benefit for life as long as they remain eligible for IRB and continue to meet the criteria for a diminished earnings capacity determination. Their benefit also includes recognition for loss of career progression – their adjusted monthly military salary is increased by 1% for each year of lost service, and continues to be added to the earlier of 20 years of service or to the age of 60. After a Veteran reaches the age of 65, which is considered retirement age, the benefit will reduce to 70 percent of the pre-65 benefit amount payable (less incomes sources).

Key Data

As of November 2025, there are approximately 35,050 IRB clients.

Veterans: 34,118

Survivors/Orphans: 932

Education and Training Benefit

Issue

VAC created the Education and Training Benefit (ETB) in 2018 to help Veterans successfully transition to post-military life, achieve their education and future employment goals, and better position them to be more competitive in the civilian workforce.

Context

As of January 1, 2026, the ETB can provide eligible Veterans up to \$101,139.94 (annually indexed by CPI) in Formal Program funding for post-secondary education or training that leads to a degree, diploma, certificate, or certification. This funding is intended to cover the costs of education, such as tuition, required course materials, and other program fees.

Short Course funding is also available to eligible Veterans where up to \$6,321.24 (annually indexed by CPI) may be used to fund shorter career and personal development courses.

The ETB has continually evolved since 2018, as VAC has responded to stakeholder requests and implemented benefit improvements.

Key Data

VAC has rendered decisions for 1,816 ETB Eligibility applications in 2025-26, and 98% of them were completed within the 4-week service standard. 2,461 Veterans have received ETB funding in 2025-26, equalling expenditures of \$28.1M.

Critical Injury Benefit

Issue

The Critical Injury Benefit (CIB) was introduced in 2015 as an enhancement to the programs and services provided by the *Veterans Well-being Act*. The CIB provides a one-time, tax-free lump-sum payment of \$90,368.09 (2025 rate) to Canadian Armed Forces members and Veterans. It is intended to recognize those who have sustained the most serious injuries by compensating for the immediate impact of severe and traumatic service-related physical and mental health injuries or diseases, regardless of whether the condition resulted in a permanent disability.

In 2022, the Veterans Review and Appeal Board overturned a CIB decision related to a psychological injury. Following this, VAC reviewed the decision and took the opportunity to review the CIB criteria to determine whether additional clarity was needed for decision-makers.

Context

The CIB addresses a very specific need and is one of several benefits and services VAC provides to support ill and injured Veterans. It is not intended to duplicate the Pain and Suffering Compensation, which compensates for permanent disabilities.

To qualify for the CIB, a member or Veteran must have one or more severe and traumatic injuries (physical or psychological) or have developed an acute disease. The injury or disease must be service-related and the result of a sudden and single incident that occurred after March 31, 2006. The incident must have immediately caused a severe impairment and severe interference in their quality of life.

The CIB policy was updated on December 21, 2023, to clarify the language that describes benefit eligibility, paying particular attention to descriptions of psychological injuries. The update clarified that a “sudden and single incident” may include an incident of sexual assault.

The CIB is not awarded for the incident alone but rather for the immediate and severe impacts the incident has on an individual. Two people may experience a similar incident but have different impacts, so one individual might qualify for the benefit while the other may not.

Key Data

From July 1, 2015, to September 30, 2025, the CIB has been granted to 279 individuals. Between fiscal years 2021-22 and 2024-25, expenditures for the CIB were approximately \$1.2M per year.

Veteran Homelessness

Issue

Veteran Homelessness is a complex issue whose solution will require cooperation from all levels of government as well as community-based organizations.

Context

Currently, the Government of Canada estimates that there are approximately 1,800 Veterans who experience homelessness across Canada over the course of a year. This estimate is based on the most recent shelter information and the national Point-in-Time counts.

Outreach and communications from VAC have focused on encouraging referrals, including self-referrals, and educating and partnering with local and national organizations. These include Veteran-serving organizations, police services, shelters and other homeless-serving organizations to identify and coordinate supports for Veterans.

VAC has various supports available to Veterans at risk of or experiencing homelessness including access to Case Managers. Case managers and other front-line staff assist Veterans apply for VAC benefits and services and connect them to Provincial/Territorial programs and community resources where appropriate.

VAC's Veterans Emergency Fund delivers prompt, non-taxable financial assistance to eligible Veterans who are facing a financial emergency that is threatening their health and well-being. This support covers essentials, such as food, clothing, and rent. Currently, VAC does not have a dedicated homelessness program.

The Veteran Homelessness Program was launched in April 2023, and is led by Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada (HICC) with support from VAC. This five-year transfer payment program, with a total budget of \$106.8M, is providing \$79.1M in funding to 34 organizations in two streams:

- Services and Supports (\$72.9M) – to provide rent supplements and wrap around supports (28 organizations)
- Capacity Building (\$6.2M) – to focus on research and improved data collection and increased capacity (6 organizations)
- Administrative Costs for HICC (\$27.7M) – no administrative funding for VAC

This program is assisting Veterans and has made an impact so far on reducing chronic Veteran homelessness.

Key Data and Milestones

In the first year of the program, based on 29 of 31 (93.5%) of projects, FY 2024-25, the Veteran Homelessness Program has served 1,460 Veterans.

Of those, 233 Veterans experiencing homelessness attained stable housing.

- *redacted*
- The Veteran Homelessness Program is set to end on March 31, 2028. It is expected that there will be an ongoing need for a homelessness program for Veterans. Analysis is currently underway and next steps will be considered in advance of March 31, 2028.

Veterans Survivor Fund

Issue

Survivors of Veterans who married or entered into a common-law relationship on or after the Veteran's 60th birthday are affected by the restriction on "Marriage after 60" in the *Canadian Forces Superannuation Act (CFSA)*.

In Budget 2019, \$150M over 5 years was committed for VAC to establish the Veterans Survivor Fund (VSF) to better support spouses who marry Veterans age 60 years or older. The Veterans Survivors Fund has not yet been established, and the funding announced in Budget 2019 has not been utilized.

Context

Both the *CFSA* and the *RCMP Superannuation Act (RCMPSA)* specify that spouses and common-law partners of Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) Veterans and former RCMP members who are recipients of their respective pensions are not automatically entitled to survivor benefits when the common-law status or marriage occurred after the plan participant had reached the age of 60 or over.

This also means that these survivors do not receive coverage under the Public Service Health Care Plan and Pensioners Dental Care Plan.¹

Other legislative instruments contain similar provisions limiting entitlement to survivor pensions based on when the relationship began.

- The *Public Service Superannuation Act* disqualifies survivors if the relationship began after the contributing member retired.
- The *Judges Act* disqualifies survivors if the relationship began after the contributing member ceased to hold office.

Veteran groups and Parliamentarians have been critical of the "Marriage After 60" clause for many years.

In 2022, the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs (ACVA) undertook a study to review restrictions in survivor pension benefits, including those in the "Marriage after 60" provisions and made recommendations concerning the implementation of the VSF.

¹ Although Veterans can obtain coverage for an otherwise ineligible survivor through the Canadian Armed Forces Optional Survivor Benefit, less than 1% of Canadian Armed Forces superannuation pensioners choose this option. Under this arrangement, the Veteran opts to reduce their Canadian Forces superannuation pension payments (by 30% – 50%) in exchange for a future survivor pension.

- Report: [Committee Report No. 9 - ACVA \(44-1\) - House of Commons of Canada \(ourcommons.ca\)](#)
- Response: [Government Response - 8512-441-179 - House of Commons of Canada \(ourcommons.ca\)](#)

Ultimately, any changes to “Marriage after 60” legislation would be the responsibility of other Departments:

- Responsibility for the *Canadian Forces Superannuation Act* lies with the Minister of National Defence.
- Responsibility for the *RCMP Superannuation Act* lies with the Minister of Public Safety.
- Responsibility for the *Public Service Superannuation Act* lies with the President of the Treasury Board.
- Responsibility for the *Judges Act* lies with the Minister of Justice.

Key Data and Milestones

Research conducted in 2020 in collaboration with Statistics Canada revealed the following data about this Veteran group:

- A total of 4,490 living survivors entered into a relationship (married/common-law) with a Veteran (CAF Superannuate) after the Veteran’s 60th birthday:
 - Virtually all were female
 - Most (90%) were 70 or older
 - Overall, their incomes were higher than other similarly aged Canadian females (i.e., median income of \$34,900 -vs- \$25,600)
- Of these 4,490 VSF survivors:
 - 850 (19%) had incomes below the Low Income Measure (\$24,890 before-tax); and
 - 1,220 (27%) were in receipt of the Guaranteed Income Supplement.

Based on what the 2020 research revealed about this group, the 10% increase to the Old Age Security in July 2022 for those 75 years and older was anticipated to address income issues for most survivors (about 75%).

- Fewer than 250 survivors were expected to be below the Low Income Measure after the increase was applied.

Aging in the Right Place

Context

According to the 2021 Census, more than 25% of Canadian Veterans are between the ages of 55 and 64. VAC anticipates a surge in age-related health challenges among this group and is examining program and policy options to meet the evolving needs of Veterans.

VAC's Aging in the Right Place initiative aims to support eligible Veterans to age with dignity in their homes and community, by financially contributing toward health supports along the continuum of care.

This initiative recognizes VAC's obligation and mandate to provide support for service-related illnesses and injuries. It will determine how to modernize the Veterans Independence Program (VIP) and the Long Term Care Program in order to (i) better meet the diverse care needs of CAF Veterans into the future; (ii) better integrate VAC health care programs with the supports available through other government and community supports; (iii) improve consistency in the application of health care decisions to ensure equitable access to benefits; and (iv) ensure VAC has the requisite authorities in place to support its programming.

Key Data Update

As of December 2025:

- VAC is supporting more than 73,000 clients through the VIP program, including more than 56,000 Veterans and close to 17,000 Primary Caregivers, and 650 Survivors.
- VAC is providing financial support to 1,770 Veterans in long term care across Canada. This total includes 472 War Service Veterans and 1,278 Canadian Armed Forces Veterans.

VAC has engaged with participating provincial and territorial ministries responsible for seniors and persons with disabilities in relation to home care and long-term care to gather information on their current and planned supports for aging populations, including aging Veterans. The focus was on understanding home care and long-term care services, including eligibility, application process, funding models and waiting periods in each jurisdiction. Through a collaborative approach, pan-Canadian scans on home care and long-term care were created. The outcome of these engagements will assist in identifying opportunities for integration and alignment between VAC programs and provincial and territorial supports for Veterans.

The Aging in the Right Place initiative will occur in phases, beginning with exploring how best to modernize VAC's approach to long-term care. Future phases will focus on the Veterans Independence Program and addressing identified gaps in health care programming.

Veteran and Family Well-being Fund

Context

The Veteran and Family Well-being Fund (VFWF) is one of 5 components of VAC's Research and Innovation Program. Established in 2018, it provides grants or contributions to organizations creating new and innovative ways to improve the well-being of Veterans and their families. The Fund enables VAC to support, build capacity and engage organizations while generating goodwill within communities.

Key Update

Between 2018 and 2025, the department received 839 applications and awarded \$57M to 150 projects.

Budget 2024 provided an additional \$6M over three years, starting in 2024-2025, for the VFWF. A portion of this funding is focused on projects for Indigenous, women, and 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans.

The 2024-2025 Call for Applications for the VFWF occurred in summer 2024, and resulted in twenty seven organizations being funded for a total of \$14.4M over four years.

These organizations strive to improve the lives of Veterans and their families in areas such as homelessness, retraining, employment, mental health, and research. They also place emphasis on supporting women, Indigenous and 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans, as well as Veteran families.

On March 12, 2026, the Treasury Board approved a reallocation of \$17M to provide extended funding to organizations currently funded, to a limited number of projects that scored highly in 2024 but were not funded because of funding limitations, and a small number of high-value unsolicited proposals. The grant and contribution limit has been raised to 1.5M each, and the Terms and Conditions now permit departmental or minister proposals.

Overview of Litigation

Issue

VAC recognizes and supports the right of all Canadians, including Veterans and their families, to pursue legal proceedings against the Crown in right of Canada or the Government of Canada.

The Department of Justice ensures that the federal government is supported by high-quality legal services, and the justice system is fair, relevant, accessible, and reflective of Canadian values.

Context

VAC has been subject to an increasing number of legal proceedings over the past decade. This increase is consistent with the trend across the Government of Canada. Although VAC is not a large department, it manages a high number of litigation files in comparison to other federal departments and agencies of its size, especially class action litigation files. These class actions are high profile with the potential for significant financial, public perception and reputational risks, along with benefit, program and service impacts.

Key Update

VAC is involved in over 60 legal proceedings at various stages, including six (6) class actions. VAC is also an interested party in 15 class actions/mass torts involving CAF-DND, RCMP, and the Government of Canada.

The other legal proceedings in which VAC is involved are court actions, judicial reviews and human rights complaints. These are mostly about the merits of a particular client's case and generally have low financial, public perception and reputational risk.

Daniel J. MacDonald (DJM) Building Modernization

Issue

The Daniel J. MacDonald Building is located in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island and has served as the national headquarters for Veterans Affairs Canada since it opened in 1984.

Analysis by Public Service and Procurement Canada (PSPC) determined that the Daniel J. MacDonald Building required a multi-million dollar renovation to address the operational needs and aging building systems.

Context

Renovation began in July 2023 with completion planned for 2026. PSPC is responsible for the majority of the costs for the project.

Throughout the renovation, the delivery of programs and services for Veterans and their families have not been impacted.

VAC's employees have not worked in the building during the renovation. Keeping the building empty of employees eliminated construction-related disruptions to operations, and any health and safety risks to staff. Our existing buildings adopted unassigned seating to provide the most flexibility for employees and efficient use of space.

During the renovation, VAC has occupied space in 9 facilities including new temporary facilities that were acquired for the department's use during the renovation period. This ensured that VAC maintained a strong presence in Charlottetown during the renovation.

Key Updates

- Upon completion, there will be approximately 1,400 employees assigned to the DJM building.
- Construction is ongoing and PSPC continues to assess the schedule with the construction team. The current timeline for completion is summer 2026, and subsequent move-in would start in winter 2026-2027.
- Change management and communications activities are progressing, with planned town halls, targeted communications, Q&As, information sessions, tours and post-move feedback.
- Tools for staff are centralized on an internal Sharepoint page with Q&As, videos and details on design and furniture. Toolkits for managers and employees are being developed and activities are consistently being reviewed based on staff feedback.

Nancy Gardiner
Deputy Minister

Jane Hicks

A/Assistant Deputy Minister
Service Delivery (SD)

Pamela Harrison (A/DG Service Delivery and Program Management (SDPM))

1. Education and Training Benefit
2. Caregiver Recognition Benefit
3. Veterans Emergency Fund
4. Cannabis for Medical Purposes (CMP)
5. Long Term Care
6. My VAC Account
7. Data
8. AI/Automation (i.e. CST) (joint with COD)
9. Canadian Forces Income Support (CFIS)
10. Diminished Earning Capacity (DEC)
11. Income Replacement Benefits (IRB)
12. Public Service Health Care Plan
13. Rehabilitation Services and Vocational Assistance Program (RSVP)
14. Trust Funds Administered by VAC
15. War Veterans Allowance (WVA)
16. Treatment Benefits
17. Client IT System Ownership
18. Mental Health Benefit
19. Veteran Independence Program (VIP)

Nathalie Pham (DG Field Ops)

1. Case Management
2. Continuum of services
3. Presence across Canada
4. National Client Contact Centre (NCCN)

Mitch Freeman

A/Assistant Deputy Minister
Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance (SPPP)

Julie Drury (A/DG Policy and Research (PRD))

1. Legal Secretariat
2. OVO Secretariat
3. Aging in Place (Long Term Care (LTC) Strategy)
4. Research
5. Marriage after 60 (Veterans Survivor Fund)
6. Right of First Refusal (RFR) Policy
7. GBA + Policy
8. Cannabis for Medical Purposes (CMP) Policy

Nigel Bruce (A/DG Strategic Policy, Results and Cabinet Business (SPRCB))

1. Cabinet Business
2. Planning and Reporting
 - Mandate Commitment tracking and reporting
 - Strategic and Operational planning and Reporting
 - Annual federal Budget
 - MAF Coordination
3. Departmental Reports
 - Departmental Plan (DP)
 - Departmental Results report (DRR)
 - Investment Plan
4. Performance Measurement & Results
 - Service Standards
 - Departmental Results Framework (DRF)
 - Departmental Coordination and implementation – Policy on results
5. Key Facts and Figures

Pierre Tessier

Assistant Deputy Minister
Chief Financial Officer and Corporate Services (CFOCS)

Nancy Pike (DG HR)

1. Diversity and Inclusion
2. Value & Ethics, including Conflict of Interest (COI) and Code of Conduct
3. People and Culture
4. Hybrid Work Model (Lead)
5. Staffing Modernization
6. Labour Relations/Safe workplace
7. Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)
8. Pay Stabilization
9. Staffing & Classification
10. Learning
11. HR Data and Systems
12. Talent Management
13. Recognition
14. Wellness
15. Official Languages

Jonathan Adams (DG Finance / DCFO)

1. Financial Planning, Budgeting, Forecasting and Reporting
2. NATO Contributions
3. Contracting
4. Costing

Chris Clissold (DG ITIMAP / CIO)

1. Information Technology (AI/Automation and Digital)
2. Accession to Information Management and Privacy
3. Information Management (link to data)
4. Cyber Security
5. Project Portfolio Management
6. Security Services (CSO, Greg Urier)
7. Business Continuity Planning and Emergency Management
8. Real Property, Asset and Material Management
9. Future of Work – Integrated workplace services (Co-lead)

Mitch Freeman

A/Assistant Deputy Minister
Commemoration and Public Affairs (CPA)

Richard Perreault (DG Communications)

1. Speeches
2. Media Interviews
3. Website Content
4. Social Media

Sylvie Thibodeau-Sealy (A/DG Commemoration)

1. Commemoration Modernization
2. Last Post Fund
3. Grave Maintenance/Commonwealth War Grave Commission
4. International Operations (15 sites, 2 education centres)
5. Commemorative Partnership Programs
6. Commemorative Programming, Learning and Outreach

Moussa Dramé (A/DG Community Engagement)

1. Stakeholder Engagement and Outreach
2. Indigenous Veterans
3. Women Veterans
4. 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans
5. Events
6. Ministerial Events
7. Ministerial Advisory Groups
8. DM Coffee Group

Cyd Courchesne (DG Health Professionals)

1. Chief Medical Officer
2. All Health Professionals
3. Mental Health
4. Operational Stress Injury (OSI)

David Keedwell (DG Intergovernmental Programs)

1. Homelessness
2. Intergovernmental relationships

Tabitha Stubbs (DG Veterans Services and Branch Management (VSBM))

1. Transition Services
2. Employment/Career Fairs
3. VAC-Canadian Armed Forces (CA) Liaison Office
4. Operational Litigation Support
5. Specialized Support Unit (In development)
6. SD Corporate Functions (In Development)
7. Quality Improvement Unit
8. National Learning Unit

Paul Thomson (DG Centralized Operations Division (COD))

1. Stabilizing and Modernizing Benefits Delivery to Veterans
2. AI-Enabled Initiatives
 - e.g. Claim Summary Tool
3. System Modernization Initiatives
 - e.g. Automated Document Processing Initiative
4. Disability Benefits (DB)
 - Program Management
 - Disability Pension (*Pension Act*)
 - Pain and Suffering Compensation (*Veterans Well-Being Act*)
 - Training Unit
 - Disability Consultants
 - Learning Advisors
 - Entitlement Eligibility Guidelines (EEGs) and Table of Disabilities (TOD) Modernization
 - Data Reporting and Analysis
 - Payment Processing
 - Workload Management
 - Client Records and Services
 - Service Verification, etc.
5. Financial Benefits Operations
6. Well-Being Benefits Operations
7. Appeals
 - National First Level Appeals (N1LA)
 - Diminished Earning Capacity (DEC)

DEPARTMENTAL CONTACT LIST

Role	Name	Location	Mobile
Deputy Minister's Office			
Associate Deputy Minister	McDowell, Christine	Halifax	*redacted*
Chief of Staff	Stevens, April	Halifax	*redacted*
Departmental Assistant	Lord, Justin (A)	Charlottetown	*redacted*
Assistant Deputy Ministers			
Commemoration & Public Affairs	Freeman, Mitch (A)	Charlottetown	*redacted*
Strategic Policy, Planning & Performance	Freeman, Mitch (A)	Charlottetown	*redacted*
Service Delivery	Hicks, Jane (A)	Ottawa	*redacted*
Chief Financial Officer & Corp. Services	Tessier, Pierre	Ottawa	*redacted*
Corporate Services			
Director General, Finance	Adams, Jonathan	Charlottetown	*redacted*
Director General, Human Resources	Pike, Nancy	Charlottetown	*redacted*
Director General, Information Technology & Information Management	Clissold, Christopher	Charlottetown	*redacted*
Communications			
Director General	Perreault, Rick	Ottawa	*redacted*