
For the State Administration and Veterans' Affairs Interim Committee

Board of Veterans' Affairs:

The Board of Veterans' Affairs is an independent state entity that oversees the Montana Veterans' Affairs Division (MVAD), which is administratively attached to the Department of Military Affairs (DMA). DMA has no role in providing veteran services other than to provide administrative support to the Board and MVAD.

Board members are appointed by the governor to 4-year staggered terms. Board members are limited to 2 terms.

Overview:

- 20 members (11 voting, 9 nonvoting)
- Not compensated, except for travel, meals, and lodging expenses.
- Meets at least 3 times a year.
- Hires its own staff, including an administrator who serves as the board secretary and represents the board in all communications with the governor. (See Section 2-15-1205, MCA.)

Voting members:

- 5 regional representatives, must be honorably discharged veterans;
- 1 member at large, must be honorably discharged veteran;
- 1 tribal member, who must be an honorably discharged veteran; and
- 3 members with training, education, or experience related to veterans' issues, including but not limited to health and medical care, mental health care, chemical or drug dependency, homelessness, or job training and placement.

Nonvoting members:

- 1 representative of the Office of State Director of Indian affairs;
- 1 representative from the Department of Public Health and Human Services;
- 1 representative of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs;
- 1 representative of the Veterans' Employment and Training Service Office in the United States department of labor;
- 1 representative of the State Administration and Veterans' Affairs Interim Committee;
- 3 members, each representing a member of Montana's congressional delegation; and
- the director of the Department of Military Affairs.

For the State Administration and Veterans' Affairs Interim Committee

Montana Veterans' Affairs Division (MVAD):
Administrator, Joseph Foster, (406) 324-3741, jofoster@mt.gov.

Website: <http://montanadma.org/montana-veterans-affairs>

MVAD's Responsibilities:

Benefit Claims Assistance

- Operates 10 statewide service offices: Belgrade, Billings, Butte, Great Falls, Havre, Helena, Kalispell, Lewistown, Miles City, and Missoula.
- Prepares and file benefit claims for veterans and their families.
- Represents veterans and their families in the claims and appeals process of the Federal Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Provides regularly scheduled veterans outreach services throughout the state.
- Advises veterans and their families on veterans benefits, and assist in obtaining legal and medical documentation to support claims.
- Obtains military service records and awards.
- Coordinates assistance with other veterans service organizations and government agencies.
- Educates, advises and assists the general public and government agencies on veterans affairs and issues.

State Cemetery Program

- Administers, operates and maintains 3 State Veterans' Cemeteries: Ft. Harrison, Miles City, and Missoula
- Receives donations for State Veterans Cemeteries.
- Represents the State of Montana as a member of the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs.

Optional Duties under section 10-2-102(1)(e), MCA):

- development and distribution of a services and benefits directory;
- regular public service announcements through various media;
- information to assist veterans and their family members in obtaining federal benefits and treatment services related to depleted uranium exposure
- an internet website with information and links relevant to veterans and their families and including information about board meetings and activities related to veterans' affairs; and
- a quarterly newsletter, which may be printed or electronically distributed by e-mail or by posting it to an appropriate website.

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Programs, FTE, and Budgeted Funding - 2015 Biennium:

Source: Legislative Fiscal Division

Programs	FTE	General Fund	State Special	Federal Revenue	Proprietary	Total Funding	% General Fund
Veteran's Affairs	26.00	\$2,081,615	\$1,442,045	\$0	\$0	\$3,523,686	59%

Budget Highlights

- Legislature approved 2 new veterans' service officer FTE
- Based on a higher level of special revenue from special license plate sales and motor vehicle registration fees earmarked for veterans services, the legislature approved a one-time-only funding switch of \$50,000 each year of the biennium, reducing the general fund appropriation and increasing the appropriation from the veterans' services special revenue account. The one-time-only designation was included in case future special revenue deposited to the veterans' special services account was insufficient to support the ongoing higher appropriations from the account.

Statutory Advisory Councils

- None.

Most Recent Legislative Audits:

- None.

Board Bills During 2013 Session:

- None

Committee Areas of Interest Previous Interim:

- Outreach to veterans who may not be members of traditional veteran organizations - panel presentations and discussion of ideas to improve outreach veterans with mental health needs.
- SAVA composed a letter to the House Appropriations Committee recommending funding for an MVAD service office in Glasgow. The Legislature approved 2 new veterans' service officer FTE.

Hot Topics of 2013 Session:

- None.

Statutorily Required Reports:

- Biennial report.

ATTACHMENT

MVAD Organizational Chart
MVAD Directory

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