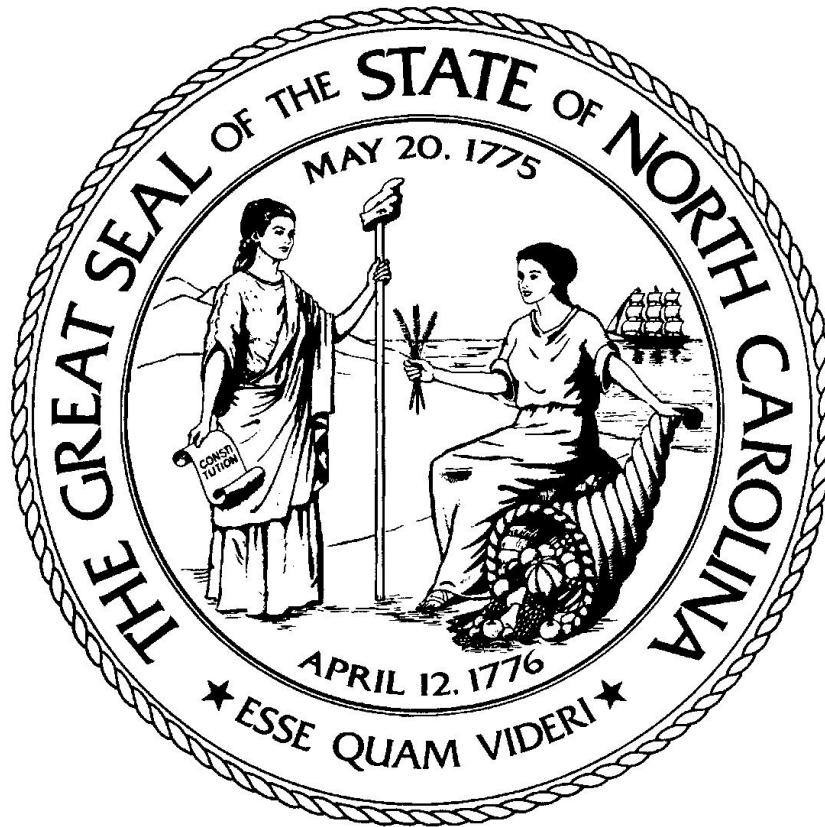


North Carolina Department of Military & Veterans Affairs

Strategic Plan

2023 – 2025



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1. Strategic Plan Executive Summary

The Department of Military & Veterans Affairs seeks to operationalize and professionalize the department by growing capacity and capability in order to provide world class services to our Veteran, Military, and Defense communities across the state. As one of the newest Cabinet level agencies in state government, the department was not adequately resourced to accomplish the 24 statutory requirements given to it in the legislation forming the department. Growing from the Office of the Governor, the Department has been forced to rely on other agencies and departments to perform many inherent support functions, creating significant roadblocks to functioning efficiently and effectively.

The Department's imperative in this biennium is to organize to be able to function as a stand-alone department. Transforming the Department to include Veterans Affairs, Military Affairs, Transition Affairs, as well as including a full range of support functions as department structure such as Human Resources, Facilities Management, etc., will allow the department to meet statutory requirements. As importantly, this transformation will allow the department to support Military members and their families while serving here in North Carolina, ensuring that transitioning Service members remain in NC, allow Veterans to access their earned benefits and services all the way through the end of life by providing a dignified resting place and burial.

Growing capacity and capability allows North Carolina to truly become the Nation's most military friendly state.

2. Mission, Vision, and Values

Agency Mission Statement

Our mission is to support the military community in North Carolina, including the personnel, installations, and their adjacent communities; and to support our state's veterans and their families. The Department provides access to a full spectrum of resources that further enhance North Carolina's military and veteran friendly environment. The Department will facilitate collaborative opportunities for business development, leveraging of technology, transportation and healthcare services, educational opportunities, and economic development, by engaging with Federal, State, and Local Government. The Department will continue collaborative and supporting efforts with non-profit and civic organizations that support an engaged military and veteran populace that is a fully vested participant in all facets of our state's life.

Agency Vision Statement

Our vision is a North Carolina that fully embraces, supports, and integrates military personnel, their families and veterans into North Carolina communities while building enduring capacity to holistically care for, support and advocate for those military personnel, their families and veterans residing in North Carolina. We will have the capacity to foster and promote business, technology, transportation, education, and economic development that enhances North Carolina's military-friendly environment.

Agency Values

Integrity: Acting with high moral principles. Adhering to the highest professional standards. Establishing trust and confidence with all whom I engage.

Commitment: Working diligently to serve Veterans and other beneficiaries. Being driven by an earnest belief in the VA's and this Department's statutory mission. Fulfilling my individual responsibilities and organizational responsibilities and increasing competency and professionalism.

Advocacy: Be truly Military and Veteran-centric by identifying, fully considering, and appropriately advancing the interests of Military, Veterans, and other beneficiaries.

Respect: Treating all those I serve and with whom I work with dignity and respect.

Excellence: Striving for the highest quality and continuous improvement. Being thoughtful and decisive in leadership, accountable for my actions, willing to admit mistakes, and rigorously correcting them through follow up training.

3. Goals, Objectives, and Performance Measures

Division of Veterans Affairs Goals, Objectives, and Measures of Success

Goal 1 – Increase Capacity to Deliver Veterans Services

1.1 Objective – Improve capability to assist veterans and their families with access to earned benefits, programs, and services.

1.1.1 Measures of Success – The ability to access earned benefits is simplified and streamlined by leveraging available technology and streamlining communications with service, benefit, and program providers.

Strategies/Initiatives – Review the current methods used to access and communicate information about earned benefits, programs, and services.

1.1.2 Measures of Success – Creation of two additional Veteran Service Centers (VSC) to align the current organization with North Carolina congressional districts.

Strategies/Initiatives – Evaluate the current congressional district map to determine where the additional VSCs should be established. Complete appropriate budget requirements to identify and procure the required resources to support the establishment of the new VSCs.

1.1.3 Measures of Success – Formalize and establish an outreach program at the VSCs to complement the Veteran Service Officers (VSO) as they interact with veterans, their families, and veteran service organizations in their catchment area.

Strategies/Initiatives – Complete appropriate budget requirements to procure resources required to establish a formal outreach capability at each VSC.

1.1.4 Measures of Success – Enhance the capacity of the County VSO program to deliver veteran services.

Strategies/Initiatives – Complete appropriate budget requirements to procure resources required to enhance the existing county grant program to support hiring additional VSOs at the counties.

1.2 Objective – Develop a comprehensive strategic growth plan for the Division.

1.2.1 Measures of Success – Defined taskings are identified, and specific staffing recommendations are formulated to support the taskings.

Strategies/Initiatives – Review the General Statute to ensure all taskings are documented and evaluate each task for appropriate staffing requirements.

1.3 Objective – Conduct a strategic assessment of the current and future status of the North Carolina (NC) Children of Wartime Veteran Scholarship program.

1.3.1 Measures of Success – An assessment is completed that helps to map future growth of the NC Children of Wartime Veteran Scholarship program.

Strategies/Initiatives – Contract to develop the strategic assessment based on state and VA demographics information in North Carolina.

1.4 Objective – Improve the application process for award of the NC Children of Wartime Veteran Scholarship.

1.4.1 Measures of Success – An automated application process is on-line and fully functional for submission of the application packet.

Strategies/Initiatives – Review the current application processes and determine where technology could be applied to improve the quality, timeliness, and accuracy of applications.

1.5 Objective – Develop an improved Public Awareness campaign for the NC Children of Wartime Veteran Scholarship program.

1.5.1 Measures of Success – The semi-annual application periods are announced on all social media platforms and the requirements are available for review by perspective applicants.

Strategies/Initiatives – Review the current methodology for announcing availability to apply for this scholarship and providing sufficient explanation of requirements.

Goal 2 – Enhance the capacity of the NC State Veterans’ Cemetery program.

2.1 Objective – Conduct a strategic assessment of the current and future status of the NC State Veterans’ Cemetery program.

2.1.1 Measures of Success – An assessment is completed that helps to map future growth of the NC State Veterans’ Cemetery program.

Strategies/Initiatives – Contract to develop the strategic assessment based on state and VA demographics information in North Carolina.

2.2 Objective – Improve the application process for internment at a NC State Veterans’ Cemetery.

2.2.1 Measures of Success – An automated application process is available on-line and fully functional for utilization by family members of perspective internments.

Strategies/Initiatives – Review the current application processes and determine where technology could be applied to improve the quality, timeliness, and accuracy of applications.

2.3 Objective – Develop an improved Public Awareness campaign for the NC State Veterans’ Cemetery program.

2.3.1 Measures of Success – Appropriate process is in place to ensure that appropriate public contact is established and maintained that posts notices about internments and other cemetery projects in a timely manner.

Strategies/Initiatives – Review the current methodology for announcing availability to apply for this scholarship and providing sufficient explanation of requirements.

Goal 3 – Enhance the capacity of the NC State Veterans’ Home program.

3.1 Objective – Conduct a strategic assessment of the current and future status of the NC State Veterans’ Home program.

3.1.1 Measures of Success – An assessment is completed that helps to map future growth of the NC State Veterans’ Home program.

Strategies/Initiatives – Contract to develop the strategic assessment based on state and VA demographics information in North Carolina.

3.2 Objective – Improve the application process for admission to a NC State Veterans’ Cemetery.

3.2.1 Measures of Success – An automated application process is available on-line and fully functional for utilization by family members of residents.

Strategies/Initiatives – Review the current application processes and determine where technology could be applied to improve the quality, timeliness, and accuracy of applications.

3.3 Objective – Formalize the interactions between the Nursing Home Management Services Provider’s Public Relations Department and the NC DMVA Director of Communications.

3.3.1 Measures of Success – Policy is in place that allows for formalized deployment of public information through a variety of communications media.

Strategies/Initiatives – Develop a Memorandum of Understanding about distribution of public information.

3.4 Objective – Enhance the capacity to house residents in the NC State Veterans’ Home Program.

3.4.1 Measures of Success – Complete construction of a new NC State Veterans Home in Wake County.

Strategies/Initiatives – Reviewed demographic information indicates that Wake County is a high-value location for the next NC State Veterans’ Home.

Goal 4 – Develop the capacity to deliver resources to Veteran Service Organizations.

4.1 Objective – Establish and resource a Community Grants program that can provide funds to vetted Veteran Service Organizations in North Carolina.

4.1.1 Measures of Success – Any Veteran Service Organizations that applies for a grant from this program is vetted as to effectiveness and availability of their program for Veterans and any grant awarded is managed to measure return of investment pertaining to delivered services.

Strategies/Initiatives – Resource a Grant Administrator position within the Department to oversee the community grant program. Work with the NC General Assembly to establish the Community Grant capability.

Goal 5 – Establish a common communication platform for all field offices to conduct supportive services internally and externally.

5.1 Objective – Improve functionality by contracting with a claims management system software provider to deliver a state-of-the-art claims management solution.

5.1.1 Measures of Success – Establish user accounts and performance measures on end-users that log and report on activities and case management.

Strategies/Initiatives – Build and maintain a knowledge-based database that serves as a resource repository for internal and external use and connect this database to the new claims management solution.

5.2 Objective – Provide an information and guidance path as a direct link to requested services and information in collaboration with service providers.

5.2.1 Measures of Success – Establish provider resource communication channels using web site links to the new claims management system solution.

Strategies/Initiatives – Dynamically link data tables to geo location functions with the new claims management system solution.

Division of Military Affairs Goals, Objectives, and Measures of Success

Goal 1 – Support and enhance North Carolina’s existing military installations and missions.

1.1 Objective – Analyze and make recommendations on how North Carolina State Agencies can best support and enhance our military/homeland security installations and missions.

1.1.1 Measures of Success – Preservation and/or expansion of force levels across the Services in North Carolina

1.1.2 Measures of Success – Service ability to train to Multi Domain Operations at Home Station

Strategies/Initiatives – Regularly scheduled coordination and collaboration engagements with Operational Commands to ensure synchronization across State, County, and Local Government Agencies and Stakeholders to ensure installations can support resilience, quality of life, and enhance training opportunities.

Goal 2 – Increase the economic impact of the military and defense industry in North Carolina.

2.1 Objective – Facilitate Federal and State-level investments and partnerships in defense sector opportunities, infrastructure, sustainment, construction, land use compatibility, and training as a commitment to our Armed Forces.

2.1.1 Measures of Success – Increase in the amount of Federal, State, and Private sector funding in support of Military/Homeland Security Installations, Programs, and interests.

Strategies/Initiatives – Engage CODEL, General Assembly, and Defense Sector to increase available funding in North Carolina.

2.2 Objective – Facilitate the increase of employment opportunities for Service Members, Veterans, and their Families.

2.2.1 Measures of Success – Increase in the number of employment opportunities for the military related community in North Carolina.

Strategies/Initiatives – Engage with Federal, State, and Local Agencies as well as the Defense Sector to publicize, promote and establish mechanisms for awareness for employment opportunities. Engage Transitioning Service Member and families to remain in North Carolina and become member of the workforce at the local levels.

Goal 3 – Improve the quality of life for the Uniformed Servicemembers, Veterans, and their families.

3.1 Objective – Promote and support quality K-12 education in and around our installations.

3.1.1 Measures of Success – Availability of quality education opportunities as measured by number of students and improvement of available programs while increasing test scores.

Strategies/Initiatives – Work within State and Local Government to bring Federal Level programs, best practices, and local successes to all military connected school districts.

3.2 Objective – Diversify and increase available and affordable housing at/around Military/Homeland Defense Installations.

3.2.1 Measures of Success – Service Members and Families do not have to wait beyond service policy time limits in temporary housing.

Strategies/Initiatives – Engage Federal, State, and Local Agencies and Programs to coordinate, collaborate, and synchronize efforts in expanding opportunity and programs.

Goal 4 – Provide legislative and state agency coordination for military-related issues.

4.1 Objective – Identify and maintain strategic communication, engagement, and messaging plans with installations for Federal, State, and Local Legislative Agendas.

4.1.1 Measures of Success – Legislative Agenda items passed.

Strategies/Initiatives – Work across Federal, State, and Local Government while being nested into the Department’s Legislative Affairs Division efforts to facilitate legislation.

4.2 Objective – Engage on Federal Legislative priorities and align with State resources.

4.2.1 Measures of Success – Refine legislative priorities and annually present to stakeholders maintaining our strategic plans to support and enhance NC Military missions and installations.

Strategies/Initiatives – Asses the changing national security strategy, political, and fiscal environment, and the impact on the military presence in North Carolina. Communicate information using efficient technology to decision makers on Federal, State, and Local levels.

4. Highlights, Collaborative Opportunities, and Priority Questions

Agency Highlights

There are several Department Highlights of note. As the Department continues to try to grow capacity in order to meet the statutory requirements called for in legislation forming it, our Transition Services Division has had several successes. Approximately 20,000 Service Members transition out of the Military on a yearly basis in North Carolina. Accessing those Service Members to educate and inform them of what opportunities the State can provide them if they remain here has been problematic in the past. Due to a concerted effort by the Department across all divisions, we have gained access to the DOD mandated Transition Programs and have an increasing number of those trained and educated separating Service Members and Families here in the state. While anecdotal at this point, the Department is tracking several metrics through other State Agencies (Commerce, UNC System to name a few) that indicate success.

Another highlight of note is the growing collaboration between the Department, the Governor's Institute and NC Serves which has led to both the identification of approximately 420 Veteran Service Organization across the state including cataloguing the services they provide to the Veteran Community. The work through NC Serves allows Veteran Service Officers the opportunity to tailor non-Federal Veterans Administration benefits and services to address Veteran needs quickly.

Collaborative Opportunities

The Department takes advantage of a range of collaborative opportunities at the Federal, State, and Local levels. DMVA is particularly focused on opportunities to work with Non-profit organizations across the state to support Veterans and their needs. Ensuring that both the Federal VA, Veterans Benefits Administration and Veterans Health Administration and our non-profit service providers are coordinated, synchronized and layered allows benefits and services to reach Veterans in the most efficient and effective way possible.

The Military Affairs Division focuses on collaborative opportunities with the Department of Defense, Defense installations, as well as state and local governments and communities to support Service Members and their families in North Carolina. Military Affairs collaborative engagements focus on providing installations with quality-of-life support ensuring access to adequate and affordable housing, healthcare, as well as employment and education opportunities for family members while providing depth to Operational Commanders.

Priority Questions

- 1) *How can DMVA best simplify the application process for Earned Benefits?*
- 2) *What is the current, and projected future demand of the NC Children of Wartime Vet Scholarship program?*
- 3) *How can DMVA support Operational and Installation Commanders to ensure they have the ability train their assigned forces in North Carolina and the surrounding areas in support of the National Security Strategy?*