

Prominent VSOs Issue Independent Budget Recommendations for the VA

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WASHINGTON – Leading veterans service organizations (VSOs) – the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), [DAV \(Disabled American Veterans\)](#), and [Paralyzed Veterans of America \(PVA\)](#) – released [**The Independent Budget Recommendations for the Department of Veterans Affairs \(VA\) FY 2023 and FY 2024**](#). The report serves as a roadmap to ensure VA is fully funded and capable of carrying out its mission to serve veterans and their families, both now and in the future.

The Independent Budget's (IB) recommendations, coupled with the Administration's FY 2023 budget proposal, will be used to guide Congress with its spending decisions for the coming year. Current law requires the President to submit a budget proposal to Congress no later than the first Monday in February, but that benchmark has been routinely missed over the past two decades. Media reports say this year's submission may not come until March.

“For over 30 years, the IBVSOs have co-authored the IB, offering substantive solutions and policy recommendations to ensure the timely delivery of specialized health care, as well as appropriate earned benefits for the men and women who served,” said Bob Wallace, executive director of VFW Washington Office. “While this year's report is now complete, it is now imperative Congress and VA work together, along with veterans service organizations and other veterans stakeholders to put veterans interests on the top of their list.”

“As we enter into 2022, COVID's impact remains a challenge for VA, with the spread of the virus and disruptions to health care systems continuing,” said Randy Reese, executive director of DAV Washington Headquarters. “In this environment, we made cautious recommendations based on historical trends to ensure the needs of our nation's ill and

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injured veterans are met.”

For fiscal year 2023, the IBVSOs is recommending \$121.2 billion for the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) to meet the full demand for care both within VA’s health care facilities and its Community Care Networks. The IB report details specific funding levels and targeted increases for VHA programs, including a \$490 million increase for the Caregiver Support Program, \$395 million boost for homeless veterans’ programs; \$288 million more for mental health services and suicide prevention efforts; \$160 million increase for health care for women veterans and minorities; and \$1.8 billion to close the gap in clinical care and support vacancies across VHA.

“This year’s IB recommendations also contain significant plus ups for VA’s Home and Community Based Services – something especially critical for our veterans with catastrophic disabilities,” said Carl Blake, executive director of PVA. “This includes additional funding to expand the Veteran Directed Care Program into every VA Medical Center and more money towards the expansion of Phase II of the Caregiver Program to ensure it begins on time.”

For the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), the IBVSOs recommend a total of \$3.9 billion for fiscal year 2023—an increase of approximately \$510 million over the estimated fiscal year 2022 appropriations level—and \$251 million for the Board of Veterans’ Appeals (BVA). The IB recommendations include expanding funding for the Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) veteran retraining programs and additional information technology (IT) funding for both VBA and BVA to modernize their IT infrastructure, reduce backlogs, and streamline the delivery of benefits to more than four million disabled veterans and their survivors.

The IBVSOs believe VA infrastructure projects, including those that present a safety risk to veterans and employees, must continue to be fully funded even as the Asset and Infrastructure (AIR) process plays out over the next several years. To accomplish this, the IB recommends Congress appropriate \$3.8 billion for VA’s major and minor construction programs in FY 2023 to fund new and existing major construction projects, begin advance planning and design development on VA’s highest-priority health care construction projects, and boost support for pending minor construction projects.

To view The IB’s full budget and policy recommendations, please visit independentbudget.org.

About the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW)

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. is the nation's largest and oldest major war veterans organization. Founded in 1899, the congressionally chartered VFW is comprised entirely of eligible veterans and military service members from the active, Guard and Reserve forces. With more than 1.5 million VFW and Auxiliary members located in nearly 6,000 Posts worldwide, the nonprofit veterans service organization is proud to proclaim “NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS” than the VFW, which is dedicated to veterans’ service, legislative advocacy, and military and community

service programs. For more information or to join, visit our website at [vfw.org](https://www.vfw.org).

About DAV (Disabled American Veterans)

DAV empowers veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity. It is dedicated to a single purpose: keeping our promises to America's veterans. DAV does this by ensuring that veterans and their families can access the full range of benefits available to them; fighting for the interests of America's injured heroes on Capitol Hill; linking veterans and their families to employment resources; and educating the public about the great sacrifices and needs of veterans transitioning back to civilian life. DAV, a non-profit organization with more than one million members, was founded in 1920 and chartered by the U. S. Congress in 1932. Learn more at [DAV.org](https://www.dav.org).

About Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA)

PVA, founded in 1946, is the only congressionally chartered veterans service organization dedicated solely for the benefit and representation of veterans with spinal cord injury or disease. For 75 years, the organization has ensured that veterans receive the benefits earned through their service to our nation; monitored their care in VA spinal cord injury centers; and funded research and education in the search for a cure and improved care for individuals with paralysis.

As a life-long partner and advocate for veterans and all people with disabilities, PVA also develops training and career services, works to ensure accessibility in public buildings and spaces, and provides health and rehabilitation opportunities through sports and recreation. With more than 70 offices and 33 chapters, PVA serves veterans, their families, and their caregivers in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Learn more at [PVA.org](https://www.pva.org).