

**Department of Veterans' Affairs
Budget No. 321
Senate Bill Nos. 2025 and 2345**

	FTE Positions	General Fund	Other Funds	Total
2021-23 legislative appropriation	8.00	\$1,570,624	\$2,450,650	\$4,021,274
2019-21 legislative appropriation	7.00	1,416,430	1,380,017	2,796,447
2021-23 appropriation increase (decrease) to 2019-21 appropriation	1.00	\$154,194	\$1,070,633	\$1,224,827

Item Description

FTE position changes - The Legislative Assembly approved 8 FTE positions for the Department of Veterans' Affairs for the 2021-23 biennium, an increase of 1 FTE position from the 2019-21 biennium level of 7 FTE positions. The Legislative Assembly added 1 FTE loan and grant officer position.

The Legislative Assembly also appropriated \$70,000 from the general fund for a temporary half-time training and information officer position.

One-time funding - The Legislative Assembly appropriated \$938,500 of one-time funding from federal funds to the Department of Veterans' Affairs for the 2021-23 biennium, of which \$647,000 was appropriated from the federal State Fiscal Recovery Fund during the November 2021 special legislative session. A summary of the department's one-time funding is as follows:

Program	Federal Funds
Veterans' Home cemetery grant	\$291,500
Fisher House	500,000
Veterans' medical transportation	147,000
Total	\$938,500

Federal COVID-19 funding - 2019-21 biennium - In House Bill No. 1395 (2021), the Legislative Assembly appropriated \$2,860 from the federal Coronavirus Relief Fund to the Department of Veterans' Affairs for the 2019-21 biennium to purchase ultraviolet sanitizers and telework equipment as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Veterans' service dog training - In Senate Bill No. 2025, the Legislative Assembly appropriated \$50,000 from the general fund to the Department of Veterans' Affairs for the posttraumatic stress disorder service dog program, the same amount provided for the 2017-19 and 2019-21 bienniums. The funding is for training up to four service dogs to assist North Dakota veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder during the 2021-23 biennium. Funding

Status/Result

The individual employed as a part-time temporary employee during the 2019-21 biennium accepted the loan and grant officer position in July 2021. The temporary training and information officer position was filled in July 2021, but the individual resigned in October 2021. Through April 2022, the department has been unable to find a qualified applicant to fill the temporary position.

The following is a summary of the status of the department's one-time funding items:

Veterans' Home cemetery grant	This funding is for a program to repair and maintain the cemetery located on the Veterans' Home campus. Through March 2022, the department has not received funding from the federal government for this program. It is unknown if funding will be received during the 2021-23 biennium.
Fisher House	This funding is for a grant to assist in the construction of the Fisher House at the Fargo Veterans' Affairs Medical Center. Through April 2022, the department has not awarded any grant funding but anticipates spending the entire appropriation by the end of the biennium. As of April 2022, the 2022 Minnesota State Legislature is considering providing a \$500,000 appropriation to match North Dakota's appropriation.
Veterans' medical transportation	Through March 2022, the department has spent \$1,340 and anticipates spending the entire appropriation by the end of the biennium.

The department spent the entire appropriation prior to December 31, 2020, pursuant to spending authority provided by the Emergency Commission and Budget Section during the 2019-20 interim.

The department continued \$50,000 into the 2021-23 biennium for the program. Through March 2022 the department spent \$12,500 on the program. The department anticipates spending a total of \$62,500 during the 2021-23 biennium and anticipates requesting authority from the 2023 Legislative Assembly to continue \$37,500 from the 2021-23 biennium appropriation into the 2023-25 biennium.

provided for training each service dog is \$12,500, or approximately 50 percent of the total cost of training.

In Section 3 of Senate Bill No. 2025, the Legislative Assembly authorized the department to continue the \$50,000 of funding received during the 2019-21 biennium for the posttraumatic stress disorder service dogs program into the 2021-23 biennium.

Nonhighly rural transport van replacement program - The Legislative Assembly appropriated \$18,800 from the general fund to the Department of Veterans' Affairs for the purchase of one nonhighly rural transport van to transport veterans to medical appointments at the Veterans' Hospital in Fargo during the 2021-23 biennium, the same as provided for the 2019-21 biennium.

Highly rural transportation grants program - The 2021 Legislative Assembly appropriated \$1,220,000 of federal funds to the Department of Veterans' Affairs for the highly rural transportation grant program for the 2021-23 biennium, an increase of \$420,000 from the 2019-21 biennium authorized level of \$800,000.

Through March 2022, the department has not spent any funding on the program. The department anticipates purchasing one transport van and spending the entire appropriation by the end of the 2021-23 biennium.

The department was awarded \$587,740 from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs for the highly rural transportation grants program for federal fiscal year 2022. It is unknown how much federal funding will be awarded to the department for federal fiscal year 2023.

Through March 2022, the department has spent \$280,614 on the transportation grants program for maintenance and travel of existing transportation vans and the purchase of three new transportation vans. The new vans are expected to be delivered in the summer of 2022. The department anticipates spending nearly all of the \$1.22 million appropriation, pending the actual amount awarded for federal fiscal year 2023.