



# The Guardian

The Newsletter of the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services

[www.nmdvs.org](http://www.nmdvs.org)

1-(866) 433-8387 toll-free

December, 2019

## Governor Lujan Grisham Honors Veterans at Veterans Day Ceremony in Santa Fe



Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham celebrated Veterans Day at the annual Veterans Day ceremony in Santa Fe on November 11.

The governor gave the keynote address at the city's annual Veterans Day ceremony at the Santa Fe Veterans Memorial presented by DVS (*left photo/at left, behind podium*), the city of Santa Fe, the Santa Fe Veterans Advisory Board, Vietnam Veterans of American Chapter 996, American Legion & Auxiliary Post 1, VFW Post 2951, and the New Mexico National Guard.

In her keynote address, the Governor thanked the men and women who have served in our nation's armed forces, and also thanked those in attendance for taking the time to honor our military veterans.

"Sometimes in every community around the country, it can be too easy...just for a moment...to forget about the sacrifice that the men and women and their families make," she said. "But today in communities all across New Mexico, these celebrations and recognitions of these sacrifices are taking place. New Mexicans will always be grateful for the service of those who have served our nation."

She also urged everyone to make it a point to try to help veterans and their families who are in need of help—financial, or otherwise.

"Of the families who should not struggle at any point, it should not be our veterans and military families in this state. So today, this is the message I want to leave you with," she said. "If there's any family who needs us, please...let me know...let anyone you can know...this is an opportunity for us to work better together. This is a state that should lead the nation in the best possible services for its veterans and their families."

She also acknowledged WWII veteran Conrad Rivera, seated in the front row. (*right photo/front & center, in black cap*).



"What an honor it is for me to say thank you for your incredible service and sacrifice. And but for you, I guarantee I wouldn't be standing here today. You have my deepest gratitude and my respect. I am so honored that I got to say Thank You directly. Thank you for being here today."

The ceremony concluded with a quilt presentation by *Quilts of Valor* to five Native American Women veterans in appreciation for their service to our country:

Navy veteran and New Mexico Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Mary Ann Bullhead...a Diné-Lakota from Rio Rancho...who served from 2004-2019. She was an electrician's mate in Operation Desert Storm...and a member of the U.S. Military police during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

...former Navy hospital corpsman Povi Cruz Threlkeld...originally from Ohkay Owingeh pueblo who served during the Korean war era...

...Marine Sgt. Marie Nickoli...a Koyukon-Athabascan from Farmington who served from 2001-2009. She's currently a member of the Upper Fruitland Color and Honor Guard on the Navajo Nation.

...New Mexico Army National Guard Sgt. Michelle Kemmeren...a Navajo now living in Albuquerque...who is currently a paralegal specialist in the Guard...

...and former New Mexico Army National Guard Specialist-4 Laris Manuelito...also a member of the Navajo nation living in Gallup...who served from 2006-2012...including a one-year tour in Iraq.

Also receiving quilts were two other distinguished women veterans: Dorothy Seaton...a retired U.A. Army Major who served from 1971 to 1992 in the National Guard in four states...and is currently a member of the Santa Fe Veterans Advisory Board....



*From L to R: Michelle Kemmeren, Patricia Forshaw/Quilts of Valor, Povi Cruz Threlkeld, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, Marie Nickoli, Mary Ann Bullhead, Dorothy Seaton, DVS Secretary Judy Griego, Laris Manuelito.*

...and DVS Secretary Judy Griego, who started in the enlisted ranks of the New Mexico Air National Guard... before retiring as a Brigadier General in 2016 after a distinguished 36-year career. Secretary Griego was the first woman promoted to the rank of general in the history of the New Mexico National Guard.

A six-minute highlight video of the ceremony can be found on the DVS YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i68COq3dHXE>



# Lt. Governor Morales Celebrates Veterans Day at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Angel Fire



Lt. Governor Howie Morales was the Veterans Day ceremony keynote speaker at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Angel Fire, which was moved indoors from the outdoor amphitheater due to near-freezing temperatures.

It was the first Veterans Day in his capacity as Lt. Governor, who along with Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham assumed office January 1. He said it was a day he was looking forward to—honoring those who, like his Vietnam War-veteran father who passed away a month earlier, took an oath to serve and protect our country.

“America has been and will always be the land of the free. But this ‘freedom does not come free. It is defended and preserved by the men and women who have sacrificed to fight for it on behalf of all Americans,” he said. “It is defended by preserved by our veterans—and for this, today is the day to honor these ultimate Patriots for this selfless sacrifice.”



# DVS Gives 4th/Final Quarterly Briefing of the Year



DVS presented its fourth and final quarterly briefing of the year on November 13 at the New Mexico Veterans Memorial in Albuquerque. These briefings allow DVS, the New Mexico VA Health Care System, the Albuquerque VA Regional Office, and selected veterans service agencies or community partner organizations to provide an update on veteran's news and events throughout the state.

The briefing began with a welcome from Lieutenant Governor Howie Morales, who made it a point to stop by the briefing in between other scheduled meetings.

"It's important for me to be here, to again pledge my commitment to serving you and all of New Mexico's veterans," he said. "Please do not hesitate to contact me or my staff for anything you need. I'll see what I can do to help."

DVS Secretary Judy Griego then introduced DVS Deputy Secretary Bryan Osterhage (*upper left photo*), who was appointed to the position by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham in September. It was the first public appearance on behalf of the agency by the former Army Major, who completed a nine-year service commitment earlier this year with the Army's Judge Advocate General Corps.

"I'm honored to be able to help veterans and families in New Mexico," he said. "I'm also looking forward to meeting veterans service organizations throughout the state, and see how we can work together."

Later in the briefing, Secretary Griego stressed the importance of outreach and service for veterans throughout the state—especially in rural areas...and outreach to women veterans (*see more info about women veterans in the VA Regional Office report later in this story*)

Secretary Griego also talked about the upcoming nationwide Census 2020 effort (*flyer at right*), which she said Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham is strongly urging all New Mexicans to take a couple of minutes to "be counted."

"DVS can't stress strongly enough that 'Veterans Count,'" she said. "There is data that shows for every one person not counted, it means \$3,000 not coming in to the state in federal funding. That's really \$30,000...since next census won't be for another ten years. We want to make sure that all of our veterans are counted/accounted for in the next census report."

(continued)

**VeteransCount!**

**Stand Up! Be counted for the 2020 U.S. Census!**

**Census data is confidential**

- Your personal information is protected by law, and is never released to any other local, state, or federal agency (Title 13 of the U.S. Code). Your individual census responses will not affect your tax status or insurance premiums.
- The Census Bureau will never ask for your Social Security number, bank account number, or money of any kind.

**Census data affects your community.**

- Census data determines federal funding to Medicare, Medicaid, and many other federally-funded programs which greatly assist families.
- The data collected by the U.S. Census will determine your political representation for the next 10-years...at the local, state, and federal levels.
- VA expenditures and other federally-funded veterans programs are directly affected by the military veteran population of a state.

**Responding to the Census is easy.**

- You can respond to the U.S. Census online, over the phone, or wait for the paperwork to be mailed to you.

For more information: [www.2020census.gov](http://www.2020census.gov)  
In cooperation with the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services

United States  
**Census 2020**



### New Mexico National Guard

New Mexico Adjutant General Ken Nava provided an update on the latest deployments of New Mexico National Guard personnel. Maj. Gen. Nava said 78 soldiers are currently in Poland in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve—part of the U.S. Army's ongoing rotational operation involving 6,000 soldiers throughout Europe. Additional Guard personnel, he said, have just reported for further training in Ft. Bliss in preparation for support operations in Djibouti, located on the eastern Horn of Africa. *(related story on page 7)*

Maj. Gen. Nava also extended an invitation to visit the newly remodeled New Mexico Military Museum in Santa Fe, at 1050 Old Pecos Trail. The museum re-dedicated last month after a temporary closure for a \$1.2 million renovation of what was formerly the World War II induction center for northern New Mexico, and the former headquarters for the New Mexico National Guard.

“We want to tell the New Mexico military story—not just the story of the National Guard,” he said. “It’s also not just about artifacts. There are a lot of important exhibits which tells our state’s military history. We want to show how and why New Mexicans served.”

### NM VA Health Care System

New Mexico VA Health Care System (NMVAHCS) Associate Director Sonja Brown talked about the VA’s MISSION Act, which said “is now in full force.” She urged veterans to learn everything about the VA’s new health care program, which was launched this summer to replace the Choice Act and which the VA says offers veterans and caregivers more support and services. She also apologized for the recent problems with elevators at the Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical Center in Albuquerque—saying that new contractors have been hired and that the elevators are now fully functional.



Ms. Brown also gave an update on the proposed new parking garage. She said the three-story structure is currently in the design phase, but that construction is still at least a year away. Once completed, she said it will only be for patients; VAMC staff will not be allowed to park there.

And she said the new Fisher House will be accepting families December 1—and that once this happens, public Open Houses and tours of the facility will stop.



### VA Regional Office

Scott Lajiness from the downtown Albuquerque VA Regional Office (VARO) filled in for VARO Director Sammie Quillin, who is still in Washington, DC working on the January 1 launch of the VA’s processing of claims filed by “Blue Water” Navy veterans. On this date, the VA is scheduled to begin processing Agent Orange exposure claims for veterans who served offshore of the Republic of Vietnam between Jan. 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975.

These veterans may also be eligible for presumption of herbicide exposure through Public Law 116-23, the *Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019*, which was signed into law June 25, 2019. Veterans may also qualify for a presumption of service connection if they have a disease that is recognized as being associated with herbicide exposure.

Mr. Lajiness also reported that his office has hired 30 claims processors—including 12 Ratings Specialists, and that veterans can expect even faster service once the new hires quickly settle in.

*(continued)*

He also said the VARO will focus on reaching out to women veterans, which he said are not receiving their fair share of benefits. He said that of the \$7 billion paid out in compensation so far for veterans in New Mexico, only about \$782 million have been paid to women veterans. Regarding pensions, he said \$230 million has been paid to male veterans; only \$11 million for women.

“This is something which needs to be corrected,” he said. “We realize there are more men than women—but these payouts are disproportionately out of line. We should all be looking for more women veterans, and make sure they’re getting their benefits.”



### VIC

New Mexico Veterans Integration Centers (VIC) Executive Director Bobby Ehrig reported that the VIC is moving its transitional housing services for homeless veterans to an apartment complex on Ortiz Drive—just a few blocks away from the Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical Center—a move which he says “is a huge plus for us and our residents.”

The VIC will initially occupy 50% of the complex, with the ultimate goal of 100%...and a permanent home there. The VIC is actively seeking donations of furniture and appliances for the new location—which will have an open house sometime next month

### Museum of the American Military Family & Learning Center

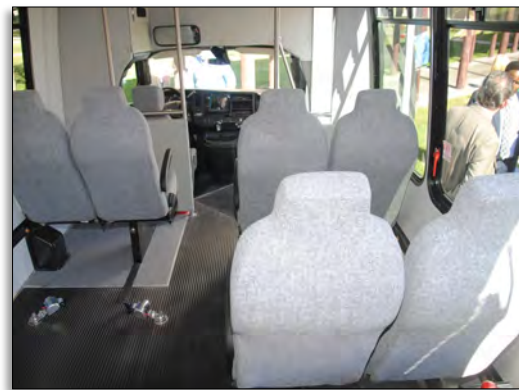
The Museum of the American Family Executive Director Dr. Circe Woessner showed a brief video about the Tijeras-based museum—which she said brings together people with shared experiences showcasing and honoring those who stood behind in support of those who served our country—our service members. It is the only museum in the country dedicated to honoring military families.

Dr. Woessner said the museum and learning center relies solely on grants and volunteer workers to maintain the more than 1,700 artifacts and books. She said the volunteer Board of Directors is actively seeking to raise \$350,000 to build a new and bigger facility.



### NMVAHCS Transportation Services

New Mexico VA Health Care System (NMVAHCS) Chief of Health Administration Services Maritza Pittore talked about the NMVAHCS' Veterans Transportation Program which provides transportation to and from a veterans residence....and the Murphy VA hospital, the Albuquerque Community-Based Outpatient Clinic, or the Albuquerque VetCenter.



Currently, she said there are six vans available for use in the Albuquerque metro area. Service is available on a first-come, first-served basis. The VAMC would like a three-day advance notice for pickup; reservations can be made by calling (505) 256-LIFT (5438). She said the VAMC continues to push for expansion to other

parts of the state—but the effort is reliant on funding from the VA. The NMVAHCS will be asking for an additional three vans to start.

### Rail Runner “Freedom to Ride” Program

The briefing concluded with a presentation by Rio Metro Regional Transit District Senior Designer & Special Services Supervisor Michael Jiron...about the new *Freedom to Ride* program offering free Rail Runner commuter train rides for veterans, active-duty personnel, and eligible dependents. (see page 12 for a separate story)

## Governor Meets NMNG Troops at Ft. Bliss (TX) Preparing to Deploy to Africa for Security Mission



Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham visited with New Mexico National Guard soldiers at the Fort Bliss Army post in El Paso, Texas, on November 5--ahead of their deployment to the African nation of Djibouti.

Almost 400 soldiers of the Guard's 1st Battalion, 200th Infantry will be supporting a Combined Joint Task Force in the Horn of Africa region to help protect key shipping lanes against pirates.

The governor was joined by Lt. Gov. Howie Morales in a pair of Yellow Ribbon ceremonies in October - one in Rio Rancho, another in Las Cruces - where officials thanked the departing soldiers, their families and

friends and employers for their service and sacrifice and assured them of the state's support for their needs during and after this deployment.

## Unclaimed Deceased Veteran Laid to Rest at the DVS Gallup State Veterans Cemetery

The cremated remains of former U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Timothy John Clark were laid to rest on November 14 at the DVS Gallup State Veterans Cemetery. He was unclaimed by family members after passing away at the age of 69 on September 14 in the Four Corners area.

A small gathering of local veterans attended the funeral, including State Representative Harry Garcia (D- Bernalillo, Cibola, McKinley, Socorro, San Juan & Valencia), and Medal of Honor Recipient and Gallup native Hiroshi Miyamura (*right photo*). The Tohatchi Veterans Organization Honor Guard provided a rifle volley and a bugle rendition of *Taps*.



The funeral was part of the DVS *Forgotten Heroes Funeral Program* which ensures that all honorably-discharged veterans who are unclaimed upon their deaths will be buried with military honors.

"Former Staff Sgt. Timothy John Clark should be thanked for serving and protecting our country through his service in the U.S. Army," said Secretary Griego in her Eulogy. "Although he is no longer with us...and though no one knew him personally...he is not forgotten...and not alone today."

Nothing else was known about Mr. Clark other than his name and Social Security number when this cremated remains were brought to the cemetery. DVS then contacted the Albuquerque VA Regional Office to request help in tracking down more information about Mr. Clark. The office was able to confirm that Mr. Clark was honorably discharged as a Staff Sgt. after serving in the Army from 1965-1970.

## Acting National SBA Director Featured Speaker at the 2019 Southwest Veterans Business Conference

One-hundred sixty veterans attended the two-day 2019 Southwest Veterans Business Conference on November 4-5 at the Albuquerque Marriott Hotel.

The conference was presented by the New Mexico Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC)—the business development division of DVS—along with the Small Business Administration (SBA) New Mexico Regional Office, SCORE, the Veterans Procurement Assistance Center, and the Small Business Development Center of New Mexico (SBDC).

Representatives from the partnering agencies presented valuable information for anyone looking to start or expand their own business—including information about free programs specifically for entrepreneurially-minded veterans.

Highlighting the conference was an appearance by SBA Acting Administrator Chris Pilkerton, Associate Administrator Larry Stubblefield, and Regional Administrator Justin Crossie.



“I’m very impressed by the turnout today,” said Mr. Pilkerton in his keynote address during conference’s opening segment. *(left photo)* “This is one of the better-attended conferences I’ve attended. It’s a testament to the strong interest of veterans here in New Mexico who want to succeed in their new careers—and to the excellent assistance available to them by the agencies here at this conference.”

VBOC Director Rich Coffel expressed gratitude to the SBA leadership for attending.

“This was the first of our four conferences we’ve presented attended by the most senior SBA leadership—their interest is indicative of a very successful program we have going here in New Mexico,” said Director Coffel. “The feedback I’ve received from attendees has been extremely positive. I want to thank the partnering agencies for helping make this a big success.”





## First Responders, Veterans Honored at Special Banquet in Roswell



New Mexico Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC) Veterans Business Advisor Jim Cassidy served as Co-Master of Ceremonies for the ninth annual Heroes Banquet honoring 36 veterans on November 2 at the Eastern New Mexico State Fair Event Building in Roswell.

More than 300 people attended the event, which was presented by the nonprofit service organization Homes for Heroes of Chaves County—of which Mr. Cassidy is vice president.

The theme of the evening was “Sacrifice in Service,” which was also the name of the award given posthumously to Roswell firefighter Jeff Stroble, who

passed away on July 21 from injuries sustained when he responded to a massive June 5 fireworks explosion in Roswell. Roswell Fire Department Chief Devin Graham presented the award to the Stroble family (*lower right photo*).

In addition to other first responders honored at the ceremony, ten members the Roswell Veteran’s Honor Guard were also honored for their service to the veteran community: John Taylor, Charlie Barela, Felix Sosa, Jake Trujillo, Robert Hazel, Louie Brady, Russ Martinson, Eulailo Contreras, John Stites and Henry Villareal. (*upper left photo: Mr. Cassidy presenting the service award to Dita Taylor and members of the Roswell Veterans Honor Guard.*

Proceeds from the event went to Homes for Heroes of Chaves County, which helps homeless veterans with assistance for home repair needs and the purchase of appliances and other household items.



DVS invites you to check out its new DVS YouTube channel for video stories of select DVS events.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSZICQx1eI3t0pCNck18QIQ/videos>

These events are videotaped and produced/edited by DVS Public Information Officer Ray Seva using professional video and audio equipment. The videos are shot and produced/edited at Ultra-High Definition (UHD), or “4K,” for the highest resolution possible, and can be viewed in 4K on any 4K-compatible television, computer, smartphone or other compatible device. The videos will otherwise be displayed on “regular” 1080p High Definition (HD) or Standard Definition (SD)—depending on your monitor’s settings.

## DVS Provides Assistance at Governor's Cabinet in Your Community Outreach Event in Roswell



**From L to R:** DVS Women Veterans Program Manager Tracie Brasier, DVS Veterans Service Officer Dagmar Youngberg, DVS Veterans Service Officer Danielle Thompson, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, DVS Secretary Judy Griego, DVS Veterans Service Officer Matt Barela.

DVS was among the nearly 20 state agencies providing assistance at Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham's "Cabinet in Your Community" outreach on November 2 at Eastern New Mexico University-Roswell campus.

The "one-stop shopping" event provided southeastern New Mexicans with information about services available from the state and local agencies. DVS Secretary Judy Griego, DVS Veterans Service Officers Danielle Thompson (DVS' Roswell office, Dagmar Youngberg (Carlsbad), Matt Barela (Clovis), and Women Veterans program manager Tracie Brasier were there to provide information about VA and state veterans benefits.

"Taking care of people is job number one in state government," Gov. Lujan Grisham said. "I mean business about 'transforming this state; a crucial part of that mission is improving how we provide state government resources to New Mexicans – and demonstrating we can do it better."

The first Governor's Cabinet in Your Community was in Albuquerque in August. The Governor said similar events will also take place in communities throughout the state.

## Christmas Holiday Season Office Closures

All DVS offices throughout the state will be closed on Christmas (Wednesday, Dec. 25) and New Year's Day (Jan. 1). The following DVS offices will be closed on the following dates due to vacations or outreach visits:

Carlsbad	Dec. 19 (outreach)
Clovis	Dec. 23-27 & Dec. 30-31 (vacation)
Santa Fe	Dec. 6, 9, 13 (vacation); Dec. 4, 10, 17, 24 (outreach)

### Outreach visits are scheduled for the following communities:

Anthony	Dec. 18
Las Vegas (NM)	Dec. 6 & 13
Raton	Dec. 18
Santa Rosa	Dec. 11
Silver City	Dec. 5 & 12
Taos	Dec. 4
TorC/State Veterans Home	Dec. 16

*\* note: Inclement weather may force the cancellation of outreach visits*

## DVS, Bernalillo County Assessor's Office Launches 3rd Annual State Property Tax Outreach Drive



The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (DVS) and the Bernalillo County Assessor's Office is kicking off the third annual Veterans State Property Tax Exemption Outreach drive on December 19.

A DVS Veterans Service Officer (VSO) will be at the county assessor's office, located near downtown Albuquerque at 501 Tijeras Blvd. NW, to assist veterans with filing for the Veterans State Property Tax Exemption—a \$4,000 reduction

in the taxable value of a veteran's primary residence. This benefit is also available to un-remarried surviving spouses of veterans who would have otherwise qualified for this benefit. Veterans rated at 100% service-connected disabled can have the total property tax liability waived.

The VSO can also help with filing for or updating VA or state veterans' benefits claims.

No appointment is necessary. Veterans must bring a copy of their DD-214 separation papers or any documents from the VA as proof of veteran status in order to receive the veterans' property tax exemption certificate or help expedite any on-site filing veterans' benefits processes. The DVS VSO can assist with filing for lost DD-214's.

This joint effort between DVS and the County Assessor's Office continues through next spring, with outreach stops at the office on January 16, February 20, March 19, April 16, and concluding on April 23.

## Rail Runner Launches Program Expanding Free Rides for Veterans, Active-Duty Personnel, & Dependents

The Rio Metro Regional Transit District has launched the *Freedom to Ride* program which expands the offering of free rides on the New Mexico Rail Runner commuter train. Anyone with the following federally-issued veteran or military photo ID card can simply show it to a New Mexico Rail Runner Express ticket agent when riding the train:

- VA medical card (VHIC)
- Veteran's ID (VIC)
- Department of Defense Active Duty (CAC Card)
- Dependent Military IDs
- Military Retiree ID's
- Driver's license with a veteran's designation
- NMRX Freedom Pass.

The following cards are not acceptable:

- DD214
- VA First Choice
- Non-Photo ID of any kind
- Photo IDs not listed above
- Medicare Card



For more information, go to <https://riometro.org/425/Veteran-Military-Ride-Free> or call toll-free

## Military & Veterans Day at the 2020 Legislature Set for January 25



Military & Veterans Day at the 2020 Legislature has been designated for Saturday, January 25 at the State Capitol in downtown Santa Fe.

This is the annual day during the legislative session presented by DVS and the New Mexico National Guard to honor active-duty service members and veterans. As is the case every year, there are a limited number of spaces available for veterans and community service organizations to set up tables in the west wing of the Capitol Rotunda.

On Monday, December 9 at noon, DVS will send an e-mail announcing the opening of an online application process “window” for table space reservations. ***This pre-registration window will be open for five days: From noon, December 9...until 5pm Friday, December 13.*** The email address to send applications will be found in that December 9 e-mail. Reservation requests can ONLY be sent to the email indicated in the upcoming December 9 notification e-mail. No requests will be accepted before this December 9 noon opening of the reservation period—or after the 5pm December 13 end date. No phone call reservations will be accepted. No exceptions will be made to these conditions.

Sometime after December 13, DVS will do a random selection of reservations based on all the received e-mail requests. Organizations that are selected will be notified. Unselected organizations will not be notified of their unselected status. Those not selected will be added to a waiting list. Should there be cancellations, replacements will be randomly drawn from this waiting list. More details about the 10am Rotunda ceremony on January 25, 2020 will be provided in future e-mails and news releases.

## DVS Seeking Spaghetti/Pasta Donations for Special Winter Food Drive



The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (DVS) is asking veterans who stop by any of its thirteen field offices this Christmas holiday season to bring canned tomato or spaghetti sauce, canned pasta products, or dried pasta. DVS is collecting these non-perishable items as part of a state government food drive initiated by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham’s *New Mexico Hunger Initiative* targeting food insecurity across the state. The Governor has tasked each of her 27 cabinet agencies to collect a specific non-perishable food item. Everything collected will be given to Hunger Initiative community feeding programs.

## Governor Lujan Grisham Announces a “Rapid Hire” Event to Fill State Agency Job Vacancies



Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham has announced a four-day “Rapid-Hire” event December 11-14 in Albuquerque at Tingley Coliseum at Expo New Mexico/the New Mexico State Fairgrounds aimed at fast-tracking hiring for hundreds of vacant state jobs throughout the state.

Rapid-hire events are designed to attract applicants and simplify the hiring process by providing on-site job interviews. Selected applicants can receive a conditional job offer the same day or shortly after. The state currently has about 17,000 employees across more than 65 executive agencies, boards and commissions. Full employment would bring that number to more than 20,000.

**Veterans, their spouses, and spouses of active-duty personnel are strongly encouraged to attend and apply for these job vacancies.**

Every state agency with vacancies will participate on designated dates. Screeners on-hand will review applicant resumes from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, and from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday. Interviews will continue as far into each afternoon as needed.

Job seekers outside the Albuquerque metro area and Santa Fe may also participate by going to their local New Mexico Workforce Connections office to set up interviews by video-conference. (See list of statewide office locations below.)

Available positions are listed and described on the State Personnel Office website, <http://www.spo.state.nm.us/rapid-hire.aspx>. If possible, applicants should identify positions for which they are applying ahead of time. However, human resources staff will be on hand to help guide candidates to openings that match their experience and interests.

Applicants should bring copies of an updated resume, three supervisory references, a school transcript and proof of right to work in the United States. Professional attire is recommended.

Gov. Lujan Grisham said she wants to spread the word that state government is a great place to work. She signed legislation this year giving 4 percent across-the-board raises to state employees and ordered state agencies to adopt policies to support worker health and alternative work schedules.

“We’re proud of the family-friendly workplace we’ve created in state government, and we want everyone to know this is a great place to work,” she said. “Come join us and help us build the best service-oriented state government in the country.”

Those efforts won New Mexico’s executive departments, agencies, boards and commissions a first-ever Platinum Seal, the highest honor offered by Family Friendly New Mexico, a nonprofit initiative that has been supporting and recognizing businesses that adopt family-friendly policies since 2015.

Job Fair Schedule and Workforce Connection Offices (for video-conference participation) are on the following pages:

*(continued)*

## JOB FAIR SCHEDULE

### WEDNESDAY, DEC. 11

- Dept. of Children, Youth, and Families,
- Corrections
- Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources
- Environment
- Game and Fish
- Health
- Public Safety
- Department of Tourism
- Livestock Board

### THURSDAY, DEC. 12

- Aging and Long Term Services
- Children, Youth, and Families
- General Services
- Health
- Homeland Security & Emergency Management
- Human Services
- Information Technology
- Military Affairs
- Taxation and Revenue
- Transportation
- Veteran Services
- Workers Compensation Administration

### FRIDAY, DEC. 13

- Health
- Human Services
- Regulation and Licensing
- State Personnel, Office of
- Taxation and Revenue
- Transportation
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Workforce Solutions
- Commission for the Blind
- Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Developmental Disabilities Planning Commission
- Miners' Colfax Medical Center

*(continued)*

**SATURDAY, DEC. 14**

- Cultural Affairs
- Economic Development
- Finance and Administration
- Health
- Higher Education
- Indian Affairs
- Public Education
- Transportation
- Office of the State Engineer

Job seekers outside the Albuquerque metro area and Santa Fe may interview for jobs remotely by going to **New Mexico Workforce Connections** offices at these locations:

**Alamogordo:** 901 Alaska Ave. Phone: 575-437-9210

**Artesia:** 704 W Main St. Phone: 575-748-1303

**Bernalillo:** 301 Rail Runner Ave. Phone: 505-771-2160

**Carlsbad:** 323 S. Halagueno. Phone: 575-887-1174

**Clovis:** 111 N. Main St. Phone: 575-762-4571

**Deming:** 322 E. Oak St. Phone: 575-546-0192

**Española:** 319 Paseo de Onate St. Phone: 505-753-2285

**Farmington:** 600 W. Arrington St. Phone: 505-327-6126

**Gallup:** 2918 E. Highway 66. Phone: 505-863-8181

**Hobbs:** 204 W. Park St. Phone: 575-393-5188

**Las Cruces:** 226 S. Alameda Blvd. Phone: 575-524-6250

**Las Vegas:** 833 Grand Ave. Phone: 505-425-6451

**Los Lunas:** 428 S. Los Lentos Road SE. Phone: 505-212-9115

**Moriarty:** 777 Old U.S. Route 66. Phone: 505-832-6774

**Roswell:** 2110 S. Main St. Phone: 575-624-6040

**Ruidoso:** 709 Mechem Drive. Phone: 575-258-1730

**Silver City:** 410 W. Broadway St. Phone: 575-538-3737

**Socorro:** 109 Faulkner Road. Phone: 575-835-0067

**Taos:** 1036 Salazar Road. Phone: 575-758-4219

**Truth or Consequences:** 601 Sunset St. Phone: 575-894-1263

# State Veterans Home Host Annual Car Show Fundraiser

Nearly 200 classic and custom cars were featured at the 23<sup>rd</sup> annual Veterans Day Car Show on November 9 at the State Veterans Home in Truth or Consequences.

The cars were from owners from throughout the southwest who proudly showed off their prized possessions. Attendance was free; several hundred car aficionados streamed onto the grounds throughout the day to get a glimpse of the pristine autos on display. All proceeds from the \$25 entry fee for car owners—along with proceeds from various food and snack booths—went directly to the home’s operating budget.





## DoD to Expand Commissary, Exchange/PX, and Morale/Welfare/Recreation (MWR) Privileges



**VA Secretary  
Robert Wilkie**

*For more news and benefits information from the VA, visit [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)*

*The VA has a regional office in Albuquerque. For more information: [www.benefits.va.gov/albuquerque](http://www.benefits.va.gov/albuquerque)*

*For information about VA health care, visit the New Mexico VA Health Care System website at: [www.albuquerque.va.gov](http://www.albuquerque.va.gov)*

Starting Jan. 1, 2020, the Department of Defense is expanding commissary, military exchange, and morale, welfare, and recreation (MWR) retail privileges on U.S. military installations as specified in the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018, included in the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019.

Access will expand to include all veterans with service-connected disabilities, veterans who are Purple Heart recipients, veterans who are former prisoners of war, and individuals approved and designated as the primary family caregivers of eligible veterans under the Department of Veterans Affairs Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers.

While this expansion will extend eligibility to over 4.1 million new patrons, the Department expects little to no impact on current patrons in most locations. There may be some impact in areas with a high cost of living, but the department is preparing to accommodate all new patrons.

"These new privileges recognize the service and sacrifice of these veterans and those that care for them," said A.T. Johnston, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy. "If you or someone you know might be eligible for these privileges, share the message. Please help us ensure these veterans and caregivers receive the privileges they've been granted."

New patrons eligible solely under this authority should be aware that the law requires the Defense Department charge them a small user fee to offset the increased expense incurred by the Department of the Treasury for processing commercial credit or debit cards used for purchases at commissary stores.

The Department of Defense is finalizing the details for these new privileges with the Departments of Veterans Affairs, Homeland Security and the Treasury. Information will be announced soon regarding installation access and the authentication process for these privileges.

To learn more about the commissary, military exchange and MWR expansion, visit <https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Factsheets/expanding-access-fact-sheet.pdf>

# VA Begins Processing GI Bill® Monthly Housing Claims



The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is excited to share that as of December 1, 2019, VA education claims processing systems are now processing Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) rates in accordance with the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Education Assistance Act of 2017, which enhances and expands the Post-9/11 GI Bill®.

For Section 107, VA began paying MHA based on the campus where GI Bill® students physically attend the majority of their classes. School Certifying Officials (SCOs) will continue certifying their students to their appropriate campus, whether that be the main, branch or extension campus.

For Section 501, Post-9/11 GI Bill® beneficiaries who first used their benefit after January 1, 2018, will begin receiving the Department of Defense E-5 with dependents Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) rate.

All students who have received an MHA since August 1, 2018 and are impacted by Section 501 will receive a letter informing them of whether they were overpaid, underpaid or not impacted. This retroactive work will continue through 2020, as VA will begin accepting updated records from schools in circumstances when the student was studying at a different campus than originally provided to VA from August 1, 2018 to November 30, 2019. More information on this process will be provided in early 2020.



State Certifying Officials have shared this information with both GI Bill® Students and SCOs. To support communication efforts, there is material available such as an updated GI Bill Monthly Housing Allowance Toolkit [https://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBill/docs/FGIB/MHA\\_comms\\_toolkit.pdf](https://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBill/docs/FGIB/MHA_comms_toolkit.pdf) which includes an MHA Rate Change Infographic [https://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBill/docs/FGIB/MHA\\_rate\\_change.pdf](https://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBill/docs/FGIB/MHA_rate_change.pdf)

If you have additional questions, go to [ForeverGIBill.vbavaco@va.gov](mailto:ForeverGIBill.vbavaco@va.gov).



# VA's Center for Women Veterans Celebrates 25th Anniversary

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Center for Women Veterans Center is celebrating 25 years of providing dedicated advocacy for America's women veterans.

Established by Congress in November of 1994, the Center monitors the VA's administration of benefits and services to women veterans to ensure they receive equal access to VA programs.



“The Center serves an important role in how the VA addresses the evolving needs of women veterans – from identifying ways that the VA can enhance its benefits and services – to creating initiatives that demonstrate the stellar contributions of women veterans,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “The Center has also shown great commitment honoring the legacy of the women who serve.”

The remarks were from Secretary's address at a ceremony last month at the Center, which acknowledged the Center's accomplishments and recognition of special guests including: Retired U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Irene Trowell-Harris, the center's longest serving former director; Retired U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 5, Phyllis Wilson, current president of the Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation; author and women Veterans rights advocate, Erin Miller; and Elizabeth Estabrooks, Oregon Women Veterans coordinator and pioneer of the “I Am Not Invisible” campaign.

Among the accomplishments of the Center are:

- Operationalizing and managing the VA's Women Veterans Program (WVP), comprised of representatives from the VA's administrations and staff offices, to enhance the delivery of VA benefits and services.
- Establishing public and non-profit partnerships, to improve understanding of VA benefits, services and processes.
- Creating national initiatives to promote cultural transformation in the VA and the public, and to encourage women veterans to self-identify as veterans.
- Providing support to the VA's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans, which was created to advise the VA's secretary on the needs of women Veterans.

For more information, go to <https://www.va.gov/womenvet/>.



**Tracie Brasier**  
DVS Women Veterans  
Program Manager

## The DVS Women Veterans Program

DVS has created a Women Veterans Program to plan, develop, implement, and coordinate helping women veterans here in New Mexico. Program Manager Tracie Brasier tirelessly works to improve the awareness of women veterans about their eligibility for VA and state veterans' benefits and services here in the state.

Ms. Brasier served 23-years with the New Mexico Air National Guard in aircraft maintenance, recruiting and retention at bases all around the globe—and is eager to help her fellow veterans. She can be contacted at (505) 383-2431 or [tracie.brasier2@state.nm.us](mailto:tracie.brasier2@state.nm.us).

# DVS FIELD OFFICES

The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services has thirteen field offices to assist veterans and their eligible dependents with filing for VA and state veterans benefits. Each office is managed by a nationally certified Veterans Service Officer (VSO)—who are also veterans themselves.

Below are the thirteen DVS field offices and the contact information for each managing VSO—followed on the next page with locations for outreach visits by each VSO. Walk-ins are welcome, but DVS encourages veterans to make an appointment to avoid long wait-times.

<b>ALAMOGORDO</b>	<b>ALBUQUERQUE #1</b>	<b>ALBUQUERQUE #2</b>
Larry Weatherwax 411 10th Street # 107 (575) 437-4635 <a href="mailto:larry.weatherwax@state.nm.us">larry.weatherwax@state.nm.us</a>	Karen Abeyta 500 Gold Ave. SW (505) 346-3986 <a href="mailto:karen.abeyta@state.nm.us">karen.abeyta@state.nm.us</a>	Gordon Schei 500 Gold Ave. SW (505) 346-4810 <a href="mailto:gordon.schei@state.nm.us">gordon.schei@state.nm.us</a>
<b>ALBUQUERQUE #3</b>	<b>ALBUQUERQUE #4</b>	<b>CARLSBAD</b>
Martín Marquez 5201 Eagle Rock Ave. NE (505) 383-2406 <a href="mailto:martinM.marquez@state.nm.us">martinM.marquez@state.nm.us</a>	5201 Eagle Rock Ave. NE <i>Temporarily vacant.</i> <i>Please contact Albuquerque #3 for assistance.</i>	Dagmar Youngberg 101 N. Halagueno (575) 885-4939 <a href="mailto:dagmar.youngberg@state.nm.us">dagmar.youngberg@state.nm.us</a>
<b>CLOVIS</b>	<b>FARMINGTON</b>	<b>GALLUP</b>
Matthew Barela 904 W. 6th Street (575) 762-6185 <a href="mailto:matthew.barela@state.nm.us">matthew.barela@state.nm.us</a>	Beverly Charley San Juan College VetCenter Rm.1715B (505) 327-2861 <a href="mailto:beverly.charley@state.nm.us">beverly.charley@state.nm.us</a>	Raymie Hurley 908 Buena Vista Ave./Room 1A (505) 863-7457 <a href="mailto:raymie.hurley@state.nm.us">raymie.hurley@state.nm.us</a>
<b>GRANTS</b>	<b>HOBBS</b>	<b>LAS CRUCES #1</b>
Patrick Aragon 515 West High St./Suite C (505) 287-8387 <a href="mailto:patrick.aragon@state.nm.us">patrick.aragon@state.nm.us</a>	Dalton Boyd 2120 N. Alto Street (575) 397-5290 <a href="mailto:dalton.boyd@state.nm.us">dalton.boyd@state.nm.us</a>	George Vargas 2024 E. Griggs Ave. (575) 524-6124 <a href="mailto:george.vargas@state.nm.us">george.vargas@state.nm.us</a>
<b>LAS CRUCES #2</b>	<b>LAS CRUCES #3</b>	<b>LAS VEGAS #1</b>
Rosa Bycenski 2024 E. Griggs Ave. (575) 524-6220 <a href="mailto:rosa.bycenski@state.nm.us">rosa.bycenski@state.nm.us</a>	2024 E. Griggs Ave. <i>Please contact Las Cruces offices 1 &amp; 2 for assistance</i>	917 Douglas Ave. <i>Please call toll-free 1-(866) 433-8387 for assistance</i>
<b>LAS VEGAS (NM) #2</b>	<b>ROSWELL</b>	<b>SANTA FE</b>
917 Douglas Ave. <i>Please call toll-free 1-(866) 433-8387 for assistance</i>	Danielle Thompson 1600 SE Main St./Suite A (575) 624-6086 <a href="mailto:danielle.thompson@state.nm.us">danielle.thompson@state.nm.us</a>	Jeff George 301 W. DeVargas St/Suite 2A (505) 476-7903 <a href="mailto:jeff.george@state.nm.us">jeff.george@state.nm.us</a>
<b>WOMEN VETERANS PROGRAM</b>	<i>Navajo Nation*</i>	<i>Pueblos Tribal Liaison*</i>
Tracie Brasier Albuquerque/5201 Eagle Rock Ave. NE (505) 383-2431 <a href="mailto:tracie.brasier@state.nm.us">tracie.brasier@state.nm.us</a>	Raymie Hurley    Beverly Charley (505) 863-7457    (505) 327-2861 <a href="mailto:raymie.hurley@state.nm.us">raymie.hurley@state.nm.us</a> <a href="mailto:beverly.charley@state.nm.us">beverly.charley@state.nm.us</a>	<i>(Farmington Office Outreach)</i>  Beverly Charley (505) 327-2861 <a href="mailto:beverly.charley@state.nm.us">beverly.charley@state.nm.us</a>

<p>DVS VSO's also make outreach visits to the following communities* on this page. Please contact them to make an appointment.</p>	<b>*Acoma Pueblo</b>	<b>Angel Fire*</b>
	<p>Raymie Hurley &amp; Patrick Aragon (505) 863-7457; (505) 287-8387 <a href="mailto:raymie.hurley@state.nm.us">raymie.hurley@state.nm.us</a> <a href="mailto:patrick.aragon@state.nm.us">patrick.aragon@state.nm.us</a></p>	<p>(Las Vegas Office Outreach) <i>Please call toll free 1-(866) 433-8387 for assistance</i></p>
<b>Anthony*</b>	<b>Artesia*</b>	<b>Capitan*</b>
<p>(Las Cruces #1 Outreach) Rosa Bycenski (575) 524-6220 <a href="mailto:rosa.bycenski@state.nm.us">rosa.bycenski@state.nm.us</a></p>	<p>(Carlsbad Office Outreach) Dagmar Youngberg (575) 885-4939 <a href="mailto:dagmar.youngberg@state.nm.us">dagmar.youngberg@state.nm.us</a></p>	<p>(Roswell Office Outreach) Danielle Thompson (575) 624-6086 <a href="mailto:danielle.thompson@state.nm.us">danielle.thompson@state.nm.us</a></p>
<b>Chaparral*</b>	<b>Crownpoint*</b>	<b>Deming*</b>
<p>(Las Cruces #1 Outreach) Rosa Bycenski (575) 524-6220 <a href="mailto:rosa.bycenski@state.nm.us">rosa.bycenski@state.nm.us</a></p>	<p>Raymie Hurley, Patrick Aragon (505) 863-7457; (505) 287-8387 <a href="mailto:raymie.hurley@state.nm.us">raymie.hurley@state.nm.us</a> <a href="mailto:patrick.aragon@state.nm.us">patrick.aragon@state.nm.us</a></p>	<p>(Las Cruces #1 Outreach) Rosa Bycenski (575) 524-6220 <a href="mailto:rosa.bycenski@state.nm.us">rosa.bycenski@state.nm.us</a></p>
<b>Española*</b>	<b>Kewa Pueblo*</b>	<b>Laguna Pueblo*</b>
<p>(Santa Fe Office Outreach) Jeff George (505) 476-7903 <a href="mailto:jeff.george@state.nm.us">jeff.george@state.nm.us</a></p>	<p>(Santa Fe Office Outreach) Jeff George (505) 476-7903 <a href="mailto:jeff.george@state.nm.us">jeff.george@state.nm.us</a></p>	<p>(Grants Office Outreach) Patrick Aragon 505) 287-8387 <a href="mailto:patrick.aragon@state.nm.us">patrick.aragon@state.nm.us</a></p>
<b>Los Alamos*</b>	<b>Mescalero*</b>	<b>Quemado*</b>
<p>(Santa Fe Office Outreach) Jeff George (505) 476-7903 <a href="mailto:jeff.george@state.nm.us">jeff.george@state.nm.us</a></p>	<p>(Alamogordo Office Outreach) Larry Weatherwax (575) 437-4635 <a href="mailto:larry.weatherwax@state.nm.us">larry.weatherwax@state.nm.us</a></p>	<p>(Gallup Office Outreach) Raymie Hurley (505) 863-7457 <a href="mailto:raymie.hurley@state.nm.us">raymie.hurley@state.nm.us</a></p>
<b>Raton*</b>	<b>Reserve*</b>	<b>Ruidoso</b>
<p>(Albuquerque #3 Office Outreach) Martín Marquez (505) 383-2406 <a href="mailto:martinM.marquez@state.nm.us">martinM.marquez@state.nm.us</a></p>	<p>(Gallup Office Outreach) Raymie Hurley (505) 863-7457 <a href="mailto:raymie.hurley@state.nm.us">raymie.hurley@state.nm.us</a></p>	<p>(Roswell Office Outreach) Danielle Thompson (575) 624-6086 <a href="mailto:danielle.thompson@state.nm.us">danielle.thompson@state.nm.us</a></p>
<b>Santa Clara (Grant County)*</b>	<b>Santa Rosa*</b>	<b>*Sunland Park</b>
<p>(Las Cruces #2 Outreach) Rosa Bycenski (575) 524-6220 <a href="mailto:rosa.bycenski@state.nm.us">rosa.bycenski@state.nm.us</a></p>	<p>(Albuquerque #3 Office Outreach) Martín Marquez (505) 383-2406 <a href="mailto:martinM.marquez@state.nm.us">martinM.marquez@state.nm.us</a></p>	<p>(Las Cruces #2 Outreach) Rosa Bycenski (575) 524-6220 <a href="mailto:rosa.bycenski@state.nm.us">rosa.bycenski@state.nm.us</a></p>
<b>Taos*</b>	<b>Truth or Consequences*</b>	<b>Zuni*</b>
<p>(Albuquerque #3 Office Outreach) Martín Marquez (505) 383-2406 <a href="mailto:martinM.marquez@state.nm.us">martinM.marquez@state.nm.us</a></p>	<p>(Las Cruces #1 Office Outreach) George Vargas (575) 524-6124 <a href="mailto:george.vargas@state.nm.us">george.vargas@state.nm.us</a></p>	<p>(Gallup Office Outreach) Raymie Hurley (505) 863-7457 <a href="mailto:raymie.hurley@state.nm.us">raymie.hurley@state.nm.us</a></p>