

UTAH DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS & MILITARY AFFAIRS STRATEGIC PLAN 2023



Welcome to the Utah Department of Veterans & Military Affairs! This strategic planning document provides overall guidance and direction for the accomplishment of our current work and where we are going in the future as we continue to perform our mission and serve the citizens of Utah.

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

We are honored to be serving the men and women who have served our country! It is the fundamental reason that our Department exists, and I am proud that you are part of this effort.

In 2021, Governor Spencer Cox during his inauguration laid out his six major roadmap principles for the state such as economic opportunity, education, rural, health security, inclusion and efficiency. In 2023, Governor Cox put out a new focus called Utah Home which capitalizes on the successes over the past two years, which lays out the priorities of people, growth and good government. Each one of them resonates with what we do in our department.

We accomplish our mission in a variety of ways performing functions across our entire great State, in serving veterans, military members, their family members and supporting the military installations in Utah. At the same time, we need to ensure that we are good stewards of the funds and responsibilities that have been entrusted to us, and that we carry out our duties in a forthright, compassionate, responsible and efficient way.

We perform our mission through a number of guiding values that we coined as RESPECT, and with these values and the goals that we are focused on achieving, we will continue to be a high-performing team for those we serve. I challenge each one of us to be bold, innovative and responsible in all that we do and to foster a culture which is respectful, efficient and inclusive.

Again, thanks for being part of this Department and the service you render.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Utah Department of Veterans and Military Affairs enriches the lives of Veterans, service members, and their families and grows the military workload in Utah, by offering innovative programs and services, promoting military and veteran friendly communities and collaborating with partners.

VISION

Utah is the best state in the nation to perform military missions and the premier location for Veterans, service members and their families to live, work, and play.

VALUES

In the performance of our duties, we follow enduring values that are the watchwords for all we do. They are our beacons to what we do. They are organized around the word **RESPECT**.

Respect and honor for those we serve

We have the distinct privilege of serving veterans, service members, their families and working with military members, civilians and contractors who work on military installations and support those that do. We know freedom is not free, and we treat all who engage in maintaining that freedom with respect and honor.

Effectiveness of services

We owe it to those we serve and those we work with to ensure our programs and efforts are effective, both in terms of outcomes and cost. We strive to maintain them and improve them.

Solidarity and teamwork

What we do is a “team sport.” We are stronger as we work together, ensuring the team is performing at an extremely high level. We focus on the mission, vision and goals to guide us forward and we work in an environment that is positive and inclusive.

Proactive and innovative

We ensure we have the right effort, for the right challenge, at the right time. We are innovative and anticipate what needs to be in place, seemingly before it is needed. We are creative, responsive and cost-effective.

Excellence in everything

Whether it is a one-on-one contact or a large group, whether it is an internal or external, whether it is a claims submission or a meeting or a recognition event, whether it is engagement with a veteran, a resident in one of our homes, a member of the Congressional delegation, legislature or senior military leadership, whether it is a budget submission or committee hearing, whatever it is we want it to be excellent. And in the times when it is less than our standard, we take responsibility, learn from it and move forward.

Collaboration with partners, stakeholders and champions

We are proud to collaborate with partners, stakeholders and champions across the state and nation in the accomplishment of our duties. We grow and foster these relationships and eagerly welcome new opportunities.

Trust and transparency

Trust is earned by respect and truthfulness. We strive to be respected as a trusted organization both by those within the department and by those we serve. Transparency fosters that trust and enables us to be more effective.

GOALS

What we want to achieve throughout the department is captured by our overall goals, both internal to the department and external for those we interact with and serve. They are a guide for what we do every day and should provide an azimuth check to make decisions and what we do - does the activity support one of our goals? Our goals are:

1. Maintain Utah's reputation as a state that fully supports veterans, service members and their families.
2. Connect with veterans, military members and their families across the state
3. Have benefits, programs and initiatives that are responsive, timely and effective
4. Honor and recognize those we serve
5. Continue to position the state as a preferred location for military missions and operations.
6. Foster ongoing engagement with partners, stakeholders, and champions
7. Seek out new opportunities
8. Operate the Department efficiently and effectively
9. Foster a culture where department members are valued and respected

STRATEGIES

The following strategies are overall actions for the department at an operational level. Deputy directors and functional managers are encouraged to develop additional ones for their areas.

- Utilize the synergy between Veterans and military affairs to leverage resources and develop innovative solutions to benefit both communities.
- Continue to engage with military personnel and their families to support their needs and recognize their contributions.
- Adopt best practices, optimize resources, and improve processes.
- Foster additional partnerships and deeper relationships to leverage the strengths of all as we identify gaps, implement initiatives and seek new opportunities
- Work continually with military leaders across the state and in DC
- Have members of the department serving on appropriate boards, committees and associations both locally and nationally
- Ensure the department continues to be viewed as a welcoming, supportive and respectful place of employment for all
- Conduct regular reviews of the efforts outlined in this document both with the senior department team and all members of the department

OBJECTIVES & PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Knowing where we are going, how we are getting there and how we are doing are vital to us. The following elements combine objectives and performance measures together and they are presented in the same order as our goals . We do recognize that several of the objectives and measures could and do cross over into other goals, which supports the idea that we have a joint mission of veterans and military and one effort that supports one area could support another.

1. Maintain Utah's reputation as a state that fully supports veterans, service members and their families (Goal)

- a. Landing Zone Utah marketing campaign active (Objective)
 - i. PM: Increase the number of Veterans 25-45 years old in the state within two years
- b. Seamless transition from military to veteran status effort is responsive and effective
 - i. PM: Increase the number of separating service members choosing Utah
- c. Support employment efforts for Veterans, Military and their families
 - i. Continue partnership with DWS and business community
 - ii. PM: Maintain the Veteran unemployment rate in Utah below the state average
- d. Support military installation programs that encourage belonging
 - i. Support Hill Air Force Base's Project One

2. Connect with veterans, military members and their families across the state (Goal)

- a. Initiate a Military and Veteran family support program
- b. Ensure connection and stationing of Veterans Service Officers across the state
 - i. Leverage partnerships with organizations and agencies across Utah
 - ii. Deploy initiatives for reaching veterans in rural areas
 - iii. PM: Increase number of veterans in rural areas connected to services
 - iv. PM: Department Veterans Service Officers process an average of 400 claims per month

- c. Expand reach of digital communication platforms (e.g department website, social media, email campaigns).
 - i. PM: Achieve a 20% increase in monthly website traffic over the next six months
 - ii. PM: Increase social media followers by 20% and achieve a 10% increase in average engagement rate across all platforms within the next six months
- d. Increase the number of Current Conflict veterans aware/connected to benefits
 - i. PM: Increase Current Conflict veterans connected by 25%
- e. Grow VA compensation and pension to support the well-being of veterans

3. Have benefits, programs and initiatives that are responsive, timely and effective

- a. Efforts to support mental wellness and suicide prevention are identified and in-place (Governor's Challenge).
 - i. Access to services and programs are widespread
 - ii. Additional partners and relationships are in-place
- b. Utah Patriot Program is expanded (employment, education, communities)
- c. Support Veterans in business efforts
 - i. Work with the business community, SBA, chambers of commerce and others
 - ii. Institute Small Business Registry website to connect people with Veteran Owned Businesses
 - iii. Continue support for Veterans Business Resource Center
 - iv. Support Annual Veterans Business Summit
- d. State Approving Agency effectively coordinates with Utah institutions that receive GI Bill educational funding.
 - i. PM: Conduct over 3,000 program approvals, technical assistance visits and outreach visits per year
- e. Veterans nursing homes are operating efficiently and positioned for the future.
 - i. PM: Maintain a nursing home occupancy at 97% and secure five-star ratings for all homes
 - ii. Continue to prioritize efforts to replace the Salt Lake Veterans Home
- f. Support Utah State Parks in the administration of Utah State Parks Honor Passes

- g. Administer and promote the Veterans First Time Home-Buyer program in conjunction with Utah Housing Corporation
- h. Continue partnership with Attorney General's Office for Utah@Ease Pro-bono Legal Service
- i. Be responsive to military installation needs
 - i. Interact with military leadership to understand needs and opportunities
- j. Work with state agencies and legislature to implement appropriate programs

4. Honor and recognize those we serve

- a. The Bluffdale Veterans Cemetery continues to be a place of honor for those who have served in the military and their spouses
 - i. Bluffdale Veterans Cemetery has additional capacity to honor veterans
- b. The state is operating a Northern Utah Veterans Cemetery by 2027
- c. Support the Utah committee's efforts for the commissioning of the Navy's USS Utah submarine
 - i. Christening and commissioning by 2027
- d. Host and support events related to Veteran and Military holidays and recognitions (e.g Memorial Day, Veterans Day, Armed Forces Day, Service Member of the Year, Fallen Warrior, etc.,)...)...))
 - i. Hold successful recognition events that are respectful, well received by participants

5. Utah remains a preferred location for military missions and operations.

- a. Awareness and Implementation of Department of Defense priority efforts
 - i. Continuous involvement and interaction with senior military and defense civilian leadership
- b. Strategies developed for state support of growth at Hill AFB working with state, federal, business, local and academic partners
- c. Partner with military leaders to implement efforts focused on military families

- d. Work to minimize impact of development on military missions
 - i. Hire Installation Resiliency Program Director by July 2023
 - ii. Develop process for compatible use review and decision making of lands in proximity to military installations
 - iii. Lead efforts for creation of Great Salt Lake Sentinel Landscape
 - iv. Continue to explore methods to prevent encroachment on military missions
- e. Continue to engage with MIDA for support of military land development efforts
- f. Support efforts for Reserves to relocate into new operational space and the transfer of Fort Douglas to University of Utah
- g. Civilian workforce supporting military missions meets demand and is stable
- h. Continued support for organizations that support military missions in Utah

6. Foster ongoing engagement with partners, stakeholders, and champions

- a. Continue robust outreach to Legislative and Congressional partners
- b. Engage with Associations and Organizations that foster completion of our missions
- c. Ensure Department members serve on appropriate national and local association boards and committees that complement our mission
- d. Provide support as appropriate to veterans and military organizations
- e. Identify and implement additional relationships

7. Seek out new opportunities

- a. Transition Excellence Center operational
 - i. Discover what new programs are necessary for transition success
- b. Explore MIDA involvement at additional military installations
- c. Expand success of Military Children Education Specialist efforts
- d. Partner with federal, state and local organizations to engage in rural Utah
- e. Develop a new veterans cemetery in Northern Utah to better serve veterans in that geographic region
- f. Foster new partnerships and relationships where we haven't engaged before

8. Operate the Department efficiently and effectively

- a. Publish updated department policy letters each April
- b. Performance on audits and survey meet established standards
 - i. PM: Ensure any audit findings are within accepted limits
 - ii. Take effective corrective actions when we fall short
- c. Leverage technology for both internal and external operations
- d. Department is in new office space at Taylorsville State Office Building
- e. Meet budget submission deadlines as established by GOPB and LFA
 - i. PM: Operate within established appropriations and authorities
- f. Develop robust privacy policies for the department
- g. Conduct Quarterly financial, operational, risk and safety reviews
- h. Review strategic plan regularly with senior team and annually with entire department

9. Ensure department members are valued and respected

- a. Maintain a positive and respectful office environment
- b. Maintain an open-door policy
- c. Provide regular feedback and communications to team members

FY2024 ANNUAL WORK PLAN

- Update UVIS to include a CRM model
- Update department data card to reflect partnerships and programs
- Create webfacing dashboards with Veteran data for the public to increase transparency
- Develop, design and launch initial model of Transition Excellence Center
- Develop financial resiliency training for transitioning service members
- Submit Great Salt Lake Sentinel Landscape application
- Develop and implement Compatible Use review and approval process
 - Develop military family initiatives
 - Conduct and support commemoration, recognition and special events honoring and assisting Veterans, service members and their families:
 - Navy Week, Sep 2023
 - Korean War 70th Commemoration, Oct 2023
 - Centenarian Veterans event in Nov 2023
 - Veterans Day events
 - Military Day On the Hill, Feb 2024
 - Fallen Warriors Family Recognition, Feb 2024
 - Service Member of the Year on the Hill, Feb 2024
 - Womens' Veterans Recognition, March 2024
 - Vietnam Veterans Recognition Day, March 2024
 - Veterans Business Summit, May 2024
 - Armed Forces Day, May 2024
 - Memorial Day, May 2024
 - Utah Veteran Service Organization conferences
 - Hill AFB Warriors Over the Wasatch Air Show, June 2024

- Salt Lake Replacement Home
 - Continue to work with design team and DFCM to prepare for construction
- Future Northern Utah Veterans Cemetery (Washington Terrace)
 - Finalize the Veterans Cemetery Grant Program (VCGP) application.
 - Gain “conditional” status on the VCGP priority list.
- Current Utah Veterans Cemetery (Bluffdale)
 - Complete land survey (re-mapping) to improve operations and customer service.
 - Finalize the purchase of adjacent land for future expansion.
 - Support Burial Equity Guard and Reserves Act.
 - Extend the Honor Wall for future growth and improve the courtyard.
- Participate in regular engagement with military leaders in Utah and nationally
- Participate in appropriate conferences, meetings, associations and forums to foster the department's mission and State of Utah
- Conduct quarterly reviews