

# Minutes for Idaho Veterans Affairs Commission

## July 9, 2025

### Hybrid In-Person & Virtually

Call to Order – 9:00 AM PT

The Idaho Veterans Affairs Commission Meeting was held on Wednesday, July 9, 2025, at the Idaho Division of Veterans Services Central Support Office (351 N. Collins Road Boise, ID 83702) and virtually via Microsoft Teams.

#### Attendees

Commission Members in attendance: **Acting Chairman Art Gimpel, Jinny Cash, Eugene Brown, David Maxwell**

Commission Members absent: **Chairman Josh Callihan**

IDVS Staff Members in attendance: IDVS Chief Administrator **Mark Tschampl**, Deputy Chief Administrator **Tracy Schaner**, ISVH-Boise Administrator **Rick Holloway** (Virtual), ISVH-Lewiston Home Administrator **Mark High**, ISVH-Pocatello Home Administrator **Josiah Dahlstrom** (Virtual), ISVH-Post Falls Home Administrator **Amber Goodchild**, OVA Bureau Chief **Bill Heyob** (Virtual), Idaho State Veterans Cemeteries Bureau Chief **Jacob Faulkner** (Virtual), Business Support Bureau Chief **Paul Spannkebel**, Fiscal Officer **Sonya LaCasse** (Virtual), Community Resource Specialist **Jason Legler** (sitting in for VOCS Director **Mitzi Cheldelin**), and Management Assistant **Kevin Wallior**.

Guests from Partner Agencies: Budget and Policy Analyst **Frances Lippitt** (Idaho Legislative Services Office)

Number of Citizens in attendance: 1, Idaho Falls Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter President Mike Spencer.

#### Approval of Minutes

**Acting Chairman Gimpel** asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting on April 16, 2025. **Commissioner Brown** motioned for approval of the minutes. **Commissioner Cash** seconded. The motion was approved with unanimous assent.

#### Division Bureau Reports

**Boise Veterans Home Report** presented by **Rick Holloway**

	Census				
	Nursing Care			Medicare A	
	Days of Care	Avg Daily Census	Occupancy Rate	Days of Care	Avg Daily Census
April	2,314	77	96%	27	0.9
May	2,447	79	99%	0	0.0
June	2,364	79	99%	0	0.0
Total/Avg	7,125	78	64%	27	0.3

Census is capped at 80, and hovers between 77-80 depending on hospitalizations. The VA is full but not currently in a defer status.

Customer Satisfaction remains strong. An area identified for improvement is laundry services. There was one personal preference complaint related to food.

Surveys: The Annual State Fire Life Safety Survey was conducted April 8<sup>th</sup> and was deficiency free. The Federal CMS Fire Life Safety follow up survey was conducted in May. The facility was cited in two minor areas. Both citations were

corrected immediately. The first citation was due to no written plan of emergency egress. A new plan was written and placed into the emergency preparedness binder. The second citation was for not having proper emergency lighting in the generator area in the case of a power emergency. A battery powered emergency light was purchased and installed. The Annual State Survey was conducted May 12-16; 12 citations were issued with half of them attributed to medication errors and Pre-Admission Screening documentation. A Plan of Correction was completed and submitted, it was accepted as written.

Some fun events that occurred during the last quarter were a martial arts class for residents, Rick made some of his famous corn dogs for residents and staff, and the Korean Consulate visited in May to present Freedom Medals to Korean War Veterans as thanks from his nation.

The Boise Home continues to prepare the East Wing for demolition in anticipation of construction of the new State Veterans Home.

Questions/comments: none.

**Pocatello Veterans Home Report** presented by **Josiah Dahlstrom**

	Census				
	Nursing Care			Medicare A	
	Days of Care	Avg Daily Census	Occupancy Rate	Days of Care	Avg Daily Census
April	1,593	53	80%	70	2.3
May	1,656	53	81%	48	1.5
June	1,637	55	83%	30	1.0
<b>Total/Avg</b>	<b>4,886</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>1.6</b>

Pocatello Home Census continues to hover around 80%. Volunteer hours have increased; this particularly can be seen in the 2200 clinical hours. Customer satisfaction remains very positive with 100% satisfaction and an average score of 4.5/5.

The Boiler/Chiller project was completed in May, and the Generator Replacement project is ongoing.

The Pocatello Home was \$750,000 in the black at the end of the fiscal year.

Pocatello is still awaiting their State and Federal surveys but anticipate both soon.

Some activities and events highlighted from the past quarter included Museum Day for the residents (both in person and virtually), a T-shirt design day, and attending the Idaho Field of Heroes during Memorial Day which one of our residents began 21 years ago. That resident was honored for his contributions with a Life Flight helicopter tour over the Field during the closing ceremonies.

Showcased a slideshow video of the various activities and events Veterans participated in during the previous quarter.

Questions/comments: Acting Chairman Gimpel asked if a donated Green House is being utilized. Josiah confirmed that it is and has been popular.

**Lewiston Veterans Home Report** presented by **Mark High**

		Census				
		Nursing Care			Medicare A	
		Days of Care	Avg Daily Census	Occupancy Rate	Days of Care	Avg Daily Census
Apr		1,409	47	71%	60	2.0
May		1,473	48	72%	68	2.2
Jun		1,432	48	72%	58	1.9
<b>Total/Avg</b>		<b>4,314</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>2.0</b>

Census is steady. The admissions and discharges/death mirrored each other during the past quarter leading to no significant increase or decrease in the census.

Volunteer numbers have returned to pre-COVID era numbers. Lewiston Social Worker Tom Hoffman retired in June, and they are actively looking for a replacement.

Customer Satisfaction remains exceptional. The past quarter they received an average score of 5/5.

The VA Survey went very well, there were a few minor citations, and they are currently awaiting their official results.

DPW projects – the laundry boiler and the cooling towers were both repaired using deferred maintenance funds. Currently having to double wash in cold water. Trying to repair to avoid the cost of a replacement.

The Employee Association Employee Appreciation Week was the first week of June.

Showcased a slideshow video of the various activities and events Veterans participated in during the previous quarter.

Questions/comments: Acting Chairman Gimpel passed on the regards and thanks of the widow of a Veteran, who was a resident at the Lewiston Home.

**Post Falls Veterans Home Report** presented by **Amber Goodchild**

		Census				
		Nursing Care			Medicare A	
		Days of Care	Avg Daily Census	Occupancy Rate	Days of Care	Avg Daily Census
April		1,760	59	92%	60	2.0
May		1,813	58	91%	42	1.4
June		1,742	58	91%	0	0.0
<b>Total/Avg</b>		<b>5,315</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>1.1</b>

The Post Falls Census has been steady.

Clinical Hours are increasing. Volunteer hours continue to increase, as well, as snowbirds return.

Customer Satisfaction continues to remain high and averages 5/5.

The HVAC/DOAS issues continue. The system is slated to be replaced due to ongoing issues.

Post Falls continued their Cooking Around the World themed meals series and in June the Resident Council voted to shift it to Cooking Around the US. This is a popular program amongst Residents. The first stop in the US was Texas and

the kitchen was able to smoke brisket, ribs, and elote due to a generous donation of a smoker.

In May, Post Falls Residents began a Leather working Creative Aging art class, like one that was conducted at Lewiston previously. They are learning to make key chains, bookmarks, and similar leather goods.

In the past quarter the Coeur d'Alene/Post Falls Press published an article about the Post Falls facility and their team.

Questions/Comments: No questions or comments.

### **OVA Report presented by Bill Heyob**

OVA statistics comparing FY2025 YTD totals to FY2024:

	2025 YTD	2024 YTD	Increase/Decrease
Interviews YTD	11,180	10,134	+ 1,046
POAs Filed YTD	6,110	7,453	- 1,343
Claims Filed YTD	11,031	12,938	- 1,907
Appeals YTD	180	672	- 492
BVA Hearings YTD	108	51	+ 57

Veterans Seen by

OVA in Vet Courts	482	480	+ 2
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State Emergency

Grants Approved	10	4	+ 6
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To put the decrease in context, it is less than last year due to less PACT Act claims, but the claims being filed is still an increase over the pre-PACT Act levels.

Notable changes from 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2024 to 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2025:

2,898 Office Interviews (Increase of 305), 2,683 Claims filed (decrease of 259), and 28 VA hearings (increase of 14).

### **Noteworthy Issues Currently Happening with the VA**

- VA Secretary Doug Collins sent out a letter to all VA employees on July 7, 2025, announcing VA is on track for the staffing levels due to the Federal Hiring Freeze, deferred resignations, retirements and normal attrition and the need for a large-scale reduction in force has been eliminated.
- VA-Wide return to work is in place and the Boise VARO operates on a 50% in-office model due to limited space. They are working with the VA Central Office on a long-term remodel of the existing footprint to accommodate a full return to office plan, which will likely be a year-long process.
- Nationally, the VA claims backlog has dropped from 200,000 to 177,000 with an average claims processing time of 133 days. The VA continues to enforce mandatory overtime to reduce the backlog.

### **Significant Events within the OVA**

- Personnel Changes- Abel Silva (Caldwell Office) resigned, effective May 13, 2025, to move to a job within the City of Nampa. Abel has been with OVA since March 2022. Interviews were conducted and Arica Fox was hired to replace Abel. She onboarded on 24 June, 2025. Arica is an Army Military Police Veteran with a combat deployment to Iraq.
- The mission of approving the State's Emergency Grants has been shifted from the OVA to the IDVS Veterans Outreach and Community Services (VOCS) Bureau as of July 1<sup>st</sup>.

- VFW Proficiency Training Course was conducted in Annapolis, MD from April 27-30th. Frank Fabbi, JT Ramondetta and Traci Colton attended in person with Bill Heyob, Bob Smith and Iris Higgins attending remotely. The next VFW Skill and Basic Level Training will be held in Annapolis, MD from September 21-26.
- The 2025 County and Post Service Officer Training will be held on August 27-29<sup>th</sup> at the Riverside Hotel.
- Continuing to support Idaho National Guard Pre-Retirement Briefings, Yellow Ribbon Events for the Guard and Reserve, Veteran Appreciation Fair at the Boise VAMC, Transition Assistance Program briefs at Mountain Home AFB and scheduled outreaches throughout the State.

Questions/Comments: no comments.

**Veterans Cemetery Report** presented by **Jake Faulkner**

**DPW 20-606 Boise Cemetery Expansion**

1. Memorial Wall – Completed, punch list items remain, landscaping to be completed this spring.

**DPW 25-600 Shop Expansion-Secure Records**

1. Architectural/Design Team Selected
2. Est. Completion Summer of '26

**DPW 21-605 Admin Building Expansion (Blackfoot)**

1. Bid accepted
2. Expected completion winter of 2025

**FY2026 Approved Projects**

1. ADA Access to Memorial Monument
2. Concrete Curbing-Lower Cemetery/New Road for Additional Access

**Deferred Maintenance**

Scatter Garden Handrail; Upper Memorial Road/Concrete; Wash Bay; Admin Floors; Roof Seal; and Wash Bay

**ISVC Funded Improvements**

Idaho Women Veterans Memorial Monument placement; ADA Parking & stairway; Access Road

**Veteran Interments**

Apr	Cemetery Boise: 49	Cemetery Blackfoot: 3	
May	Cemetery Boise: 46	Cemetery Blackfoot: 5	
Jun	Cemetery Boise: 61	Cemetery Blackfoot: 11	
<b>YTD</b>	<b>Cemetery Boise: 533</b>	<b>Cemetery Blackfoot: 56</b>	<b>Total Cemetery Bureau: 589</b>

**Dependent Interments**

Apr	Cemetery Boise: 25	Cemetery Blackfoot: 1	
May	Cemetery Boise: 29	Cemetery Blackfoot: 1	
Jun	Cemetery Boise: 28	Cemetery Blackfoot: 0	
<b>YTD</b>	<b>Cemetery Boise: 275</b>	<b>Cemetery Blackfoot: 16</b>	<b>Total Cemetery Bureau: 291</b>

**Burial Equity Act Interments**

Apr	Cemetery Boise: 0	Cemetery Blackfoot: 0	
May	Cemetery Boise: 4	Cemetery Blackfoot: 0	
Jun	Cemetery Boise: 2	Cemetery Blackfoot: 0	
<b>YTD</b>	<b>Cemetery Boise: 16</b>	<b>Cemetery Blackfoot: 1</b>	<b>Total Cemetery Bureau: 17</b>

### Burial Equity Act Dependent Interments

Apr	Cemetery Boise: 1	Cemetery Blackfoot: 0	
May	Cemetery Boise: 1	Cemetery Blackfoot: 0	
Jun	Cemetery Boise: 0	Cemetery Blackfoot: 0	
<b>YTD</b>	<b>Cemetery Boise: 5</b>	<b>Cemetery Blackfoot: 0</b>	<b>Total Cemetery Bureau: 5</b>

**YTD Total Burials 902; Boise 829 Blackfoot 73**

### Volunteer Hours

Apr	195
May	232
Jun	241
<b>YTD</b>	<b>3,528</b>

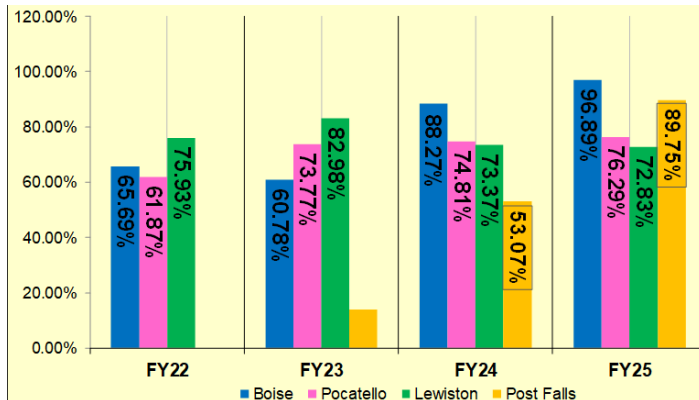
### Other Important Events/Information

In May, the Annual Memorial Day event was held at the Boise Cemetery. Governor Little attended.

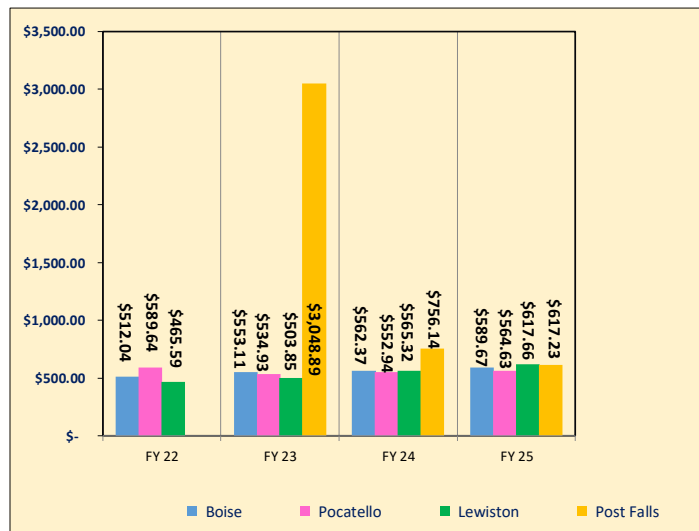
Questions/Comments: no comments.

### **Fiscal Report** – presented by **Debbie Spence**

Average Census YTD Comparisons between the Homes:



FY25 Nursing YTD Average Cost Per Resident Day was \$596.81.

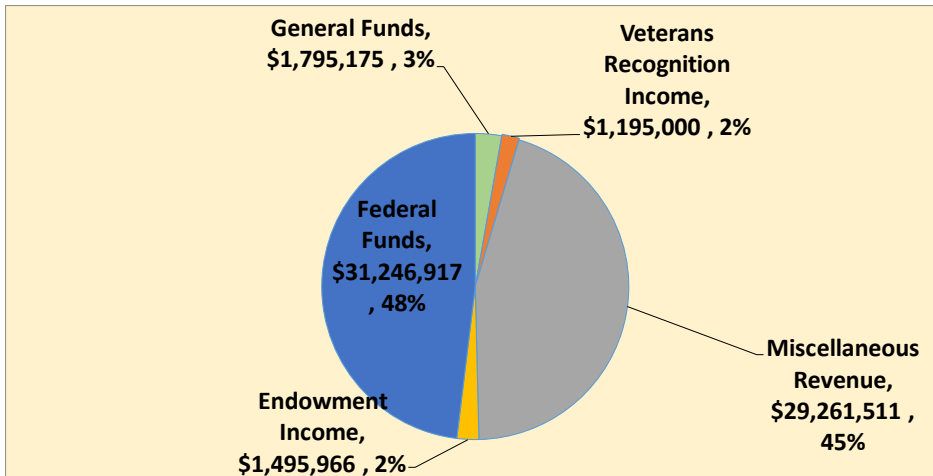


Year-End Closing Packages are being prepared for the State's Annual Financial Comprehensive Report

#### Audits in Progress

- FY24 Cost Report Audit (Myers & Stauffer)
- FY24 Single Audit (LSO)

FY 26 Budget Appropriation – \$69,994,569



General funds are 2.8% of the total budget.

FY 27 Budget Preparation – Conservative Spending

- Starting the FY 27 budget request process.
- All bureaus have submitted their budget request to Central Support.
- Central Support is compiling the Division budget request.
- Chief Administrator will meet with the Governor's Office Liaison and DFM to discuss necessity of request items.
- Division Budget will include:
  - The Veterans Recognition Fund Allocation Plan recommendation (no grants)
  - Our plan if there is a reduction of 10% or more in federal funds that we receive per Governor's Executive Order #2014-03
  - Internal 2%, 4% and 6% holdback scenarios
  - New Capital Outlay Items
  - Reappropriation for All VA Construction Grants (not completed)
  - Reviewing revenue sources and general fund needs

Questions/Comments: Mark Tschampl – Governor anticipates state income to decrease. Asking State Agencies to not ask for new budget items but only ask for what is necessary to maintain existing services. The impact on IDVS is small since most of our agency funding is from federal sources rather than state general funds. We will need additional funds for the new State Veterans Home Boise Replacement project, but we will be asking for funds from the Permanent Building Fund.

**Business Support and Education** – presented by **Paul Spannkebel**

#### **Business Support**

Sonya LaCasse and Debbie Spence are double filling the Fiscal Officer position as Debbie prepares for retirement.

Business Offices are fully staffed. Carlie Spence was promoted to Financial Specialist Senior and John Damoke was shifted from the Boise Home to fill Carlie's previous position.

## **HR**

CEC Implementation – IDVS was approved for increases of \$1.05 (100 employees); \$1.30 (213 employees); and \$1.55 (59 employees).

Continue to make progress on creating a Temp Pool of Nurses for our Veterans Homes.

## **Education Report**

Keeping Tabs on the Cooperative Contract Agreement with the VA:

FY25 Allocation + COLA is \$202,029.00

- Team will request VA's Quarter 3 reimbursement mid-July 2025
- Team received VA's Quarter 2 reimbursement in the amount of \$84,967.30
- Team received VA's Quarter 1 reimbursement in the amount of \$69,861.71
- The COLA adjustment increased the FY25 Allocation by \$4,928.00

FY24 Supplemental Request Submitted on December 3, 2024

- Amount requested and under review by VA: \$124,608.95
- The receipt of FY24 Supplemental will increase FY26 allocation
  - Education's total YTD expenditures are \$295,167.00 (reported the end of May)

Education's Work in FY2025

- Team focus on approval productivity, with and are on target to meet goal of completing 100% required full reapprovals by September 31st, 2025.
- The Education Team continue to increase program opportunities for Idaho Veterans and their families.
- Implement & work to increase CRM's functionality for all application and facility types.
- SAA's VA Contractual Focus
  - Assigned 1 RBS (aka Risk-Based Survey) [VA Target is 100%] Completed March 31, 2025
  - Assigned 10 Supervisory Visits [VA Target is 100%] Completed June 24, 2025
  - New facility inspection visits Requirement [VA Target is 100%] To Date: Meeting targets 100%
  - New approvals completed within 39 Days [VA Target is 90%] To Date: Exceeding targets at 100%
  - Complete all full reapproval packages within 36 months of prior full review [VA Target is 90%] To Date: Exceeding targets at 100%



Program Activities in VA FY25 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter

The Education Team oversees 161 active facilities and manages 275 inactive facilities for a total of 436 approved facilities.

At the end of Q3, we:

- Added 1 new facility to our active facility rosters.
- Approved an additional 431 programs since Q2 (at the new and existing facilities).
- Have 7 new facility applications in the que.

Each program approved by Idaho's SAA requires continuous oversight by the Education Team in way of:

- New program approvals
- Annual reapprovals
- Routine approval modifications
- Wage Scales updates
- Program suspensions and withdrawals

The change in active facilities reported (moving forward) will align with the number of beneficiaries utilizing benefits at active Idahoan facilities. The active facility count is the main mechanism the VA uses determines the Idaho SAA's contractual reimbursement amounts for each FY.

ACTIVE FACILITY TYPE	TOTAL NUMBER OF ACTIVE IDAHO FACILITIES APPROVED	NUMBER OF PROGRAMS APPROVED IN VA's Q3	TOTAL NUMBER OF PROGRAMS APPROVED (VA FYTD)
IHL	21	285	1297
NCD	45	119	449
Apprenticeships (APP)	60	23	26
On-The-Job (OJT)	17	0	5
License/Certification	14	0	0
Prep-Courses	4	4	10
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>1,787</b>

## Education Contribution to Idaho's Economy

Payment Type	Distinct Claim Number Count	AF3 Tot Amount
Books and Supplies	2,308	\$1,051,283.42
Housing	2,534	\$10,261,099.96
LAC	8	\$8,342.16
One-Time payment	19	\$9,371.84
Refund of CH30 Contributions	8	\$9,600.00
Tuition and Fees	2,211	\$12,229,455.31
Work Study	17	\$21,368.25
Yellow Ribbon	84	\$247,340.26
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2,775</b>	<b>\$23,837,861.20</b>

## Sectors Education Contributes to Idaho

VA'S FY25, QUARTER 3				
Type of Pursuit	Fry	TOE	VET / SM	Grand Total
Apprenticeship		1	68	69
College, non-degree		70	469	539
Flight			59	59
Graduate	1	44	198	243
Non-College Degree	3	31	133	167
OJT			48	48
Undergraduate	3	247	894	1144
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>1869</b>	<b>2269</b>

Questions/Comments: Commissioner Maxwell highlighted the outstanding job that Shannon and her team are doing to ensure education programs in the state of Idaho meet VA requirements and in turn ensure Veterans can maximize their benefits.

## **Veterans Outreach and Community Support (VOCS)** – presented by Jason Legler

### Events

- Memorial Day Ceremony at the Idaho State Veterans Cemetery – the Keynote Speaker was Brigadier General Cole Packwood.

### Engagement April 1 – June 30:

- Veterans – 784
- Civilians – 273
- Mixed Events – 6,625
- Events – 61
- Counties Visited – 17/44

### Highlighted Events hosted by Community Partners this quarter:

- USS Idaho Visit
- Veterans Outreach Roadshows - Central Idaho
- Benewah County Veterans Outreach Grand Opening
- North Idaho Stand Down
- SAMHSA/VA Community of Practice Governors Challenge Presentation

### Contributions through Outreach:

- Raised \$252,059.66 in direct Veteran Support thanks to Community Partners. Highlighted organized support from our community partners and volunteers:
  - We saw a lot of requests for help with rent, housing, utilities, repairs, and bills.
  - Many donations were made to support programs such as ASIST training and therapy.

### Ongoing Projects

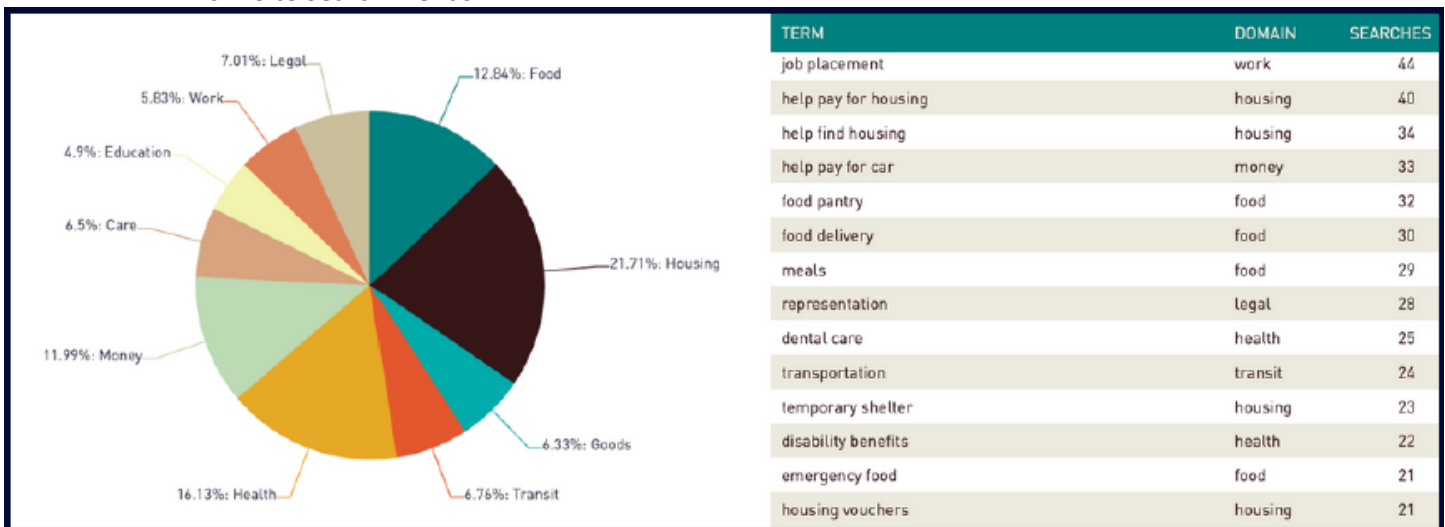
- **Joining Forces Idaho** – The 2 Annual conference held at the Idaho Outdoor Fieldhouse in Boise was a success. About 230 individuals were present representing 160 organizations. Panelists included Benefits & Eligibility, Employment & Entrepreneurship, Justice Outreach, and Veterans Talking to Veterans.
- **Governor's Challenge** – The pieces are falling into place as all 3 teams have moved forward. We added an additional team to the challenge called SMR, Suicide Mortality Review to know what's going on so we can

better understand why. Knowing details about the veteran will allow us to better target our outreach and work on our upstream approach in suicide prevention. Ask the Question continues to expand public education on the value of identifying veterans and connecting them resources available. Team 3 make great progress in Northern Idaho establishing a Boundary County Veterans Outreach Center.

- **Idaho Veterans Guide**

[Idaho Veterans Guide](#) – Report from April 1 – June 30, 2025

- 92 Programs Added (4,566 Total)
  - Local – 44 added, 2,507 total
  - State – 40 added, 1,165 total
  - National – 8 added, 894 total
- 37 Programs Claimed
- Top 5 Local Engaged Programs – IDVS Office of Veterans Advocacy; Idaho Dept of Labor Job Seeker; Wyakin Foundation Veteran Support Services; Center for Hope Recovery Services; Valley Regional Transit Ride 2 Wellness
- Site Activity: 2,606 sessions; 2,643 searches.
- Site Search Trends:



The VOCS team is hiring another position to primarily serve Eastern Idaho.

Questions/Comments: Acting Chairman Gimpel – praised Mitzi. She provided an hour briefing to the President of the American Legion Auxiliary when she visited Idaho. She was very impressed by Mitzi and all the work the VOCS team does.

### **Central Support Office Updates**

### **Deputy Chief Administrator's Remarks** presented by Tracy Schaner

Began her brief by congratulating Amber Goodchild. In 15 years of service to Idaho she has risen from the Boise Cemetery to the Post Falls Administrator.

### **Construction**

- Since our last Commission meeting, the VA SEC signed our final BABA Nonavailability Waiver for the Boise Replacement Home. It was signed on 5/27/25 and then posted to the VA's website on 6/20/25.
- The project also went out to bid on 6/6/2. Bids are due by 7/29. It'll then take approx. 30 days to review the bids and develop the construction GMP contract.
- Since we got out to bid about a week later than I had last reported (1<sup>st</sup> of June instead of end of May), our

construction schedule has shifted back a week. Based on the current schedule, we are looking at:

- Mobilization to the site by mid-September.
- Starting construction by the first full week in October 2025.
- 3-1/2 months for demo and abatement of the east wing – Phase 1 (ending January 2026)
- 27 months to complete the new 4-story building – Phase 2 (starting in December 2025 - April 2028)
- Resident Move-in (May 2028 - August 2028)
- Another 6-10 months to complete the project -demo existing bldg. and site work/parking lot – Phase 3 & 4
- Substantial Completion ~ May 2029
- Parking will be challenging for the next 4 years.
  - During the 1<sup>st</sup> Two Phases, there will be up to an average of 150 subcontractors on site working at any given day so our Construction Team has been looking at securing offsite parking which Paul has also been assisting us in finding alternative parking for our staff as we will need approx. 115 spaces during the afternoon hours. Initially, we were looking at maintaining the green space where the rose garden is located and next to the side of the building across from CSO through Phase 2; however, we've decided that we need to turn this space into temporary parking. With this space and our back parking, we can get close to 100 spaces but will likely need 15 additional spaces that we'll need to lease from the City of Boise located approx. 3-4 blocks down the street.
- VA SHCGP FY25 Priority List released last week.
  - It encompasses 103 total projects w/ 80 projects in Priority Group 1 – which have state matching funds – with an estimated VA cost share totaling over \$1.2B.
  - For FY24, the VA was appropriated \$171M and they had just over \$2.7M carryover from FY24 resulting in the FY25 budget being just under \$199M. Based on this, the VA anticipates funding the 1<sup>st</sup> 6 projects on the list with the 6<sup>th</sup> project being partially funded.
  - Lewiston and Pocatello are ranked #9 & 10, respectively, on the PL.
  - We do believe there is a high likelihood that 1 project, to be funded, will defer their opportunity and if a 2nd project should also defer, then Lewiston could see a grant opportunity from the FY25 PL funding.
  - If Lewiston does not receive a grant opportunity from this PL there is a high probability that both Lewiston and Pocatello will receive a grant opportunity in FY26. VA's FY26 budget begins October 1, 2025, and we should see the FY26 PL after the first of the new year.
  - These two projects staying on the PL will, however, depend on the additional state match funding needed based on increase BABAA cost and unprecedented inflationary factors to include tariffs – starting with where Boise's project come in at.

### **National SVH Update & Legislation**

- Tracy traveled to DC last month and had an in-person meeting with VA Secretary Collins. Walked away feeling like we were heard and felt it was a successful meeting overall.
  - Collins was very receptive and gave a member of his staff a few tasks to follow up on related to high-cost meds, duplicative surveys, outpatient therapy, and Geri-psych pilot program.
  - The following day Sec Collins had a hearing with the Senate Appropriations Committee which then confirmed our meeting was a step in the right direction. During this meeting Collins acknowledged that duplicative federal reviews were a problem and said he was working to streamline processes across VA programs. He also acknowledged he met with us the day prior and agreed SVHs are essential partners in LTC. He also agreed to revisit finical barriers that limit our operations and emphasized a renewed focus on states and local partnerships.

### **Chief Administrator's Remarks presented by Mark Tschamp**

- IDVS has worked hard these past few years to do more with less.

- Emphasized the creation of VOCS to leverage community resources to better serve Veterans throughout Idaho.
- Reiterated the advocacy efforts of Tracy Schaner as a past President and the current Executive Director of NASVH. Current/ongoing fights in Washington DC to get the VA to increase reimbursements to State Veterans Homes and lowering costly duplicative administrative burdens.

Questions/Comments: Commissioner Brown – is there any update regarding a dental program for Idaho? Mark responded that unfortunately that effort did not gain the traction we were expecting. We will continue to educate and try to build the necessary support within the Governor's office and the Legislature.

Kevin Wallior – This year, due to the generosity of donors, all five disabled Veterans selected for one of the Disabled Veterans Special Big Game Tags was gifted a \$500 gift card courtesy of Scheels and a brand-new set of Crossfire® HD 8x42 Binocular courtesy of Vortex Optics.

Commissioner Cash – asked if the Veterans Outreach Centers being set up in communities will be taken over by IDVS at some point? Mark said these will remain community owned but will work in close collaboration with our VOCS teams.

### **New Business**

The Next IVAC Meeting is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, October 15, 2025, at the Central Support Office (351 Collins Road Boise, ID 83702).

**Acting Chairman Gimpel** is open to a motion to adjourn. **Commissioner Cash** motioned to adjourn at 11:11 AM PT. **Commissioner Brown** seconded. The motion was approved with unanimous assent. Meeting was adjourned at 11:11 AM PT

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Kevin R. Wallior  
Management Assistant  
Idaho Division of Veteran Services