

# Minutes for Idaho Veterans Affairs Commission

## April 15, 2026

### Hybrid In-Person & Virtually

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Call to Order – 8:30 AM MT

The Idaho Veterans Affairs Commission Meeting was held on Thursday, January 8, 2026, 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: **Chairman Josh Callihan** (virtual), **Art Gimpel**, **Jinny Cash**, **Eugene Brown**, **David Maxwell**

Commission Members absent: **None**

IDVS Staff Members in attendance: Chief Administrator **Mark Tschamp**, Deputy Chief Administrator **Tracy Schaner**, ISVH-Pocatello Home Administrator **Josiah Dahlstrom** (virtual), ISVH-Post Falls Home Administrator **Amber Goodchild** (virtual), OVA Bureau Chief **Bill Heyob**, Idaho State Veterans Cemeteries Bureau Chief **Jacob Faulkner**, Business Support Bureau Chief **Paul Spannkebel**, Fiscal Officer **Sonya LaCasse**, VOCS Director **Mitzi Cheldelin**, and Management Assistant **Kevin Wallior**.

Guests from Partner Agencies: 1

Number of Citizens in attendance: 0

#### Introduction

Melissa Price, our new CSO admin assistant, was introduced.

#### Approval of Minutes

**Chairman Callihan** asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting on January 8, 2026. **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 **Tracy Schaner**

	Census				
	Nursing Care			Medicare A	
	Days of Care	Avg Daily Census	Occupancy Rate	Days of Care	Avg Daily Census
January	2,280	74	92%	0	0.0
February	2,156	77	96%	0	0.0
March	2,405	78	97%	23	0.7
<b>Total/Avg</b>	6,841	76	95%	23	0.3

As of today, the Boise Home's Census is 79. Customer satisfaction is high. The Boise Home, as well as the other three state Veterans Homes, received Top 100 Customer Service Satisfaction awards.

The Boise Home had their Life Safety Survey on March 11. They received only two minor tags: one for filters in the range hood not fitting properly and one for manual emergency generator tests. A plan of correction was submitted

and accepted. They also had their VA survey in the last week of March, which also only resulted in minor tags.

Questions/comments: Chairman Callihan asked how morale is at the Boise Home. Deputy Administrator Schaner commented that morale is high and that both staff and residents are excited about the ongoing construction of the new Boise Veterans Home.

**Lewiston Veterans Home Report** presented by **Tracy Schaner**

Census					
Nursing Care			Medicare A		
Days of Care	Avg Daily Census	Occupancy Rate	Days of Care	Avg Daily Census	
January	1,544	50	75%	37	1.2
February	1,337	48	72%	26	0.9
March	1,505	49	74%	91	2.9
<b>Total/Avg</b>	4,386	49	74%	154	1.7

The current Home Administrator is out on prolonged medical leave. Deputy Chief Administrator Schaner and Post Falls Home Administrator are filling in as needed.

There were more admissions than discharges in the past quarter. We anticipate that the Lewiston Home Renovation construction will begin soon. The max census during construction will be reduced to 52 beds.

The Lewiston Veterans Home rose from a 2-star facility to a 5-star facility. An old survey from more than six years ago finally no longer counted toward the calculation.

Pocatello is sending their old generator to Lewiston, since they recently got a replacement. Current waitlists for procurement of new generators is greater than a year.

Last Annual Surveys:

State: 07/17/2025; follow up w/substantial compliance 09/04/25

Life Safety: 08/26/2025; POC was accepted 9/9/25; found to be in substantial compliance 11/13/25

VA: 06/16/2025; CAP accepted; found to be in substantial compliance 10/9/25

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

Questions/comments: Chairman Callihan and the other Commissioners offered their thoughts and prayers for Lewiston Home Administrator Mark High.

**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	
January	1,648	53	81%	46	1.5
February	1,469	52	79%	20	0.7
March	1,611	54	81%	30	1.0
<b>Total/Avg</b>	4,728	53	80%	96	1.1

The Pocatello Veterans Home are wrapping up their generator replacement project this week. Their new generator is a full facility generator as opposed to a "red outlet" generator.

Their admissions mirrored their discharges this past quarter.

The Pocatello Home is in the process of hiring a new Activities and Volunteer Services Coordinator, and should be announcing the new hire soon.

They have submitted their application for an AHCA National Bronze Award. The Pocatello Home was ranked #55 in 2026 Activated Insights and was recognized as best in service by the US News & World Report.

This past quarter one of their World War II Veterans celebrated their 100<sup>th</sup> birthday!

The Pocatello Home releases an internal newsletter where they share information about quality assurance, longevity certificates for staff, and notice of upcoming projects. Longevity is unusual for the Long-Term Nursing Care industry. Staff longevity is one of the starkest differences between our state Veterans Homes and the private sector facilities.

Last Annual Surveys:

State: 08/07/25; follow up with substantial compliance 09/22/25

Life Safety: 09/25/25; follow up with substantial compliance 12/8/25 (stalled due to the federal government shutdown).

VA: 07/29/25; follow up with substantial compliance after January's QAPI meeting.

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

Questions/comments: None

**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
January	1,893	61	95%	0	0.0
February	1,711	61	95%	0	0.0
March	1,912	64	100%	0	0.0
<b>Total/Avg</b>	5,516	62	97%	0	0.0

The Post Falls Census was between 95-98% in the past quarter and is currently 63. The Home has been ramping up the number of clinical students and expects an increase in volunteers as the community's "snowbirds" begin to return to the area.

The Post Falls Home is still awaiting the final HVAC system redesign and implementation.

The past quarter saw a lot of fun and unique social activities and community events including a bird of prey presentation with live animals and a Heroes Mac & Cheese event held in conjunction with the Coeur d'Alene Mac & Cheese Festival.

The Post Falls Home received a 2026 Activated Insights Top 100 Customer Experience Award – Out of more than 1,800 care and senior living organizations nationwide, only approximately the top 5% achieve the distinguished Top 100 recognition placing us among the nation’s elite providers reflecting exceptional satisfaction results, a strong culture

of listening, accountability, and a commitment to continuous improvement that sets us apart in a highly competitive industry. Based on a 12-month average, the Post Falls Home scored in the top 15% out of more than 1,800 care and senior living organizations nationwide.

2026 U.S. News & World Report Best Nursing Home in Long-Term Care – Out of nearly 15,000 nursing homes across the United States, fewer than 19% earned this distinction which reflects a commitment to excellence, more total staffing and therapy per resident per day, lower hospitalization and emergency room rates.

The Post Falls Veterans Home Life Safety Survey was conducted on February 23. They received two minor citations and are back in compliance.

Last Annual Surveys:

State: 7/28/2025 – 8/1/2025; follow up with substantial compliance 9/24/2025

Life Safety: 2/23/2026; follow up with substantial compliance 3/13/2026

VA: 12/9/25 – 12/12/25; substantial compliance anticipated 7/15/2026

Questions/Comments: None.

**OVA Report presented by Bill Heyob**

OVA statistics comparing 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter FY2026 totals to 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter FY2025:

	2026 YTD	2025 YTD	Increase/Decrease
Interviews YTD	8,707	8,282	+ 425
POAs Filed YTD	4,496	4,695	- 199
Claims Filed YTD	8,204	8,348	- 144
Appeals YTD	147	131	+ 16
BVA Hearings YTD	70	80	- 10

Veterans Seen by

OVA in Vet Courts	239	379	- 140
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Notable Changes

March 2026 had 1,087 Office Interviews (+154), 1,035 Claims filed (+128) and 7 VA Hearings (+7).

**Noteworthy Issues Currently Happening with the VA**

- Kristina (Tina) Tallerico is the new Acting Director of the Boise VARO. She currently works for the Pacific District of VBA. This is a temporary assignment, but she is hoping to stay until the permanent Director is named. Tina works out of the Phoenix, AZ VARO.
- VBA has some initiatives under the America 250 campaign (celebrating America's 250th Birthday). Some of these initiatives include:
  - Reducing Backlog Claims (125 days or older) to 64,782 by June 30th
  - Working with contract examiners to stay within the 30-day limit for exams to be completed and returned as many exams are being held up at the Contractor's QA Teams
  - Improvements to Automation. If multiple contentions are on a claim but 1 or 2 contentions are something that can be approved quickly with automation, grant a partial decision and defer the contentions that cannot be sped up through automation.
- VR&E- (which was impacted greatly by being sent home during the last Government Shutdown)- allowing further education through a plan called Positive Outcome.
- Goal to have 9,050 cases completed by June 30th
- Nationwide, VR&E to hire an additional 328 Counselors and Specialists to work VR&E cases.

- VBA wants to expand Automation for BDD Claims
- Service Members will not have to provide STRs (like they do now) or DD-214s to complete claims as Automation will pull all STRs and DD-214s into VBMS
- VA and TSA are supposed to announce a new program soon called VetSafe Travel Act which will provide Veterans with a free TSA Pre-Check Program.
- On Friday, January 9, 2026, VA posted a final rule in the Federal Register that discontinues the authority for VA to make need-based apportionment awards. **This means that effective February 9, 2026, veterans and family members can no longer request apportionments unless the veteran or surviving spouse is incarcerated, or the veteran is incompetent without a fiduciary and institutionalized at government expense.** VA will not process apportionments for other situations such as child or spousal support after February 8, 2026.
- Senator Risch introduced a Bill to increase the VA Service-Connected Burial award from the current \$2,000 to \$3,000 with increases for COLA.
- VHA is currently broken down into 18 current VISNs. Under the VA Reorganization Program, the 18 VISNs will be streamlined down to 5 VISNs and each VISN will have 3 Health Service Areas (HSAs) under them. Idaho will be under VISN 5, Health Service Area 51 (Each VISN will have a 1, 2 or 3 listed after the VISN to represent the HSA) David Wood, the current Director of the Boise VAMC has been designated the HSA-51 Director and when this move happens, he will be working on the 2d floor of the Boise VA Regional Office. If this turns into a permanent change of duty, Boise VAMC will hire a new Director.

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

- Michael Regan was hired as the new AA-1 in Lewiston, replacing Anita Smith. Michael is a Coast Guard Veteran.
- Jennifer Dreadfulwater was hired to replace Stay Whitmore as a VSO in Lewiston and her first day was 13 April. Jennifer is a Sergeant First Class in the Utah Army National Guard, Counterintelligence Field with deployments to Afghanistan and Kuwait.
- Job Announcement was released on April 10th for a new VSO position in Caldwell to replace Kelly McCartney who retires May 1st.
- Bob Smith (VSO Twin Falls) is retiring May 30<sup>th</sup>, and we will be announcing a job opening for his replacement a few weeks prior to that.
- Informed by the Boise VARO that the VARO will be closed for approximately one full week, sometime Mid-May to Mid-June for new flooring to be installed. We will have to work remotely during the VARO closure.
- 2026 VFW Proficiency Training Course will be in Annapolis, MD April 26-29, 2026. Frank Fabbi and Bill Heyob will be attending with five VSOs taking the Virtual Training.
- The 2026 County and Post Service Officer Training will be held on August 5-7<sup>th</sup>.
- Continuing to support the VAMC TRC Program, 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: Chairman Callihan asked about a claim shark bill in the Idaho State Legislature. This bill would allow individuals to charge a Veteran up to 5x any increase in benefits. Does require them to notify the Veteran that they can get the same service for free from a state or county VSO.

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

##### DPW 20-606 Boise Cemetery Expansion

- Memorial Wall- landscaping to be completed spring 2026.

##### DPW 25-600 Boise Shop Expansion-Secure Records

- Est. completion Fall of 2026

DPW 21-605 Blackfoot Admin Building Expansion

- Est. completion spring of 2026

FY26 DPW Approved Projects

- ADA Access to Memorial Monument/ Concrete Curbing-Lower Cemetery in design

ISVC Funded Improvements

- Access Road between Sections 1 and 5 (lower casket area)

Veteran Interments

Jan	Cemetery Boise: 35	Cemetery Blackfoot: 1	
Feb	Cemetery Boise: 28	Cemetery Blackfoot: 3	
Mar	Cemetery Boise: 41	Cemetery Blackfoot: 6	
<b>YTD</b>	<b>Cemetery Boise: 397</b>	<b>Cemetery Blackfoot: 46</b>	<b>Total Cemetery Bureau: 443</b>

Dependent Interments

Jan	Cemetery Boise: 22	Cemetery Blackfoot: 4	
Feb	Cemetery Boise: 17	Cemetery Blackfoot: 0	
Mar	Cemetery Boise: 19	Cemetery Blackfoot: 3	
<b>YTD</b>	<b>Cemetery Boise: 215</b>	<b>Cemetery Blackfoot: 18</b>	<b>Total Cemetery Bureau: 233</b>

Burial Equity Act Interments

Jan	Cemetery Boise: 2	Cemetery Blackfoot: 0	
Feb	Cemetery Boise: 0	Cemetery Blackfoot: 0	
Mar	Cemetery Boise: 0	Cemetery Blackfoot: 0	
<b>YTD</b>	<b>Cemetery Boise: 4</b>	<b>Cemetery Blackfoot: 0</b>	<b>Total Cemetery Bureau: 4</b>

Burial Equity Act Dependent Interments

Jan	Cemetery Boise: 0	Cemetery Blackfoot: 0	
Feb	Cemetery Boise: 0	Cemetery Blackfoot: 0	
Mar	Cemetery Boise: 0	Cemetery Blackfoot: 0	
<b>YTD</b>	<b>Cemetery Boise: 0</b>	<b>Cemetery Blackfoot: 0</b>	<b>Total Cemetery Bureau: 0</b>

**YTD Total Burials – 680; Boise – 616; Blackfoot – 64**

Volunteer Hours

Jan	156
Feb	138
Mar	163
<b>YTD</b>	<b>1666</b>

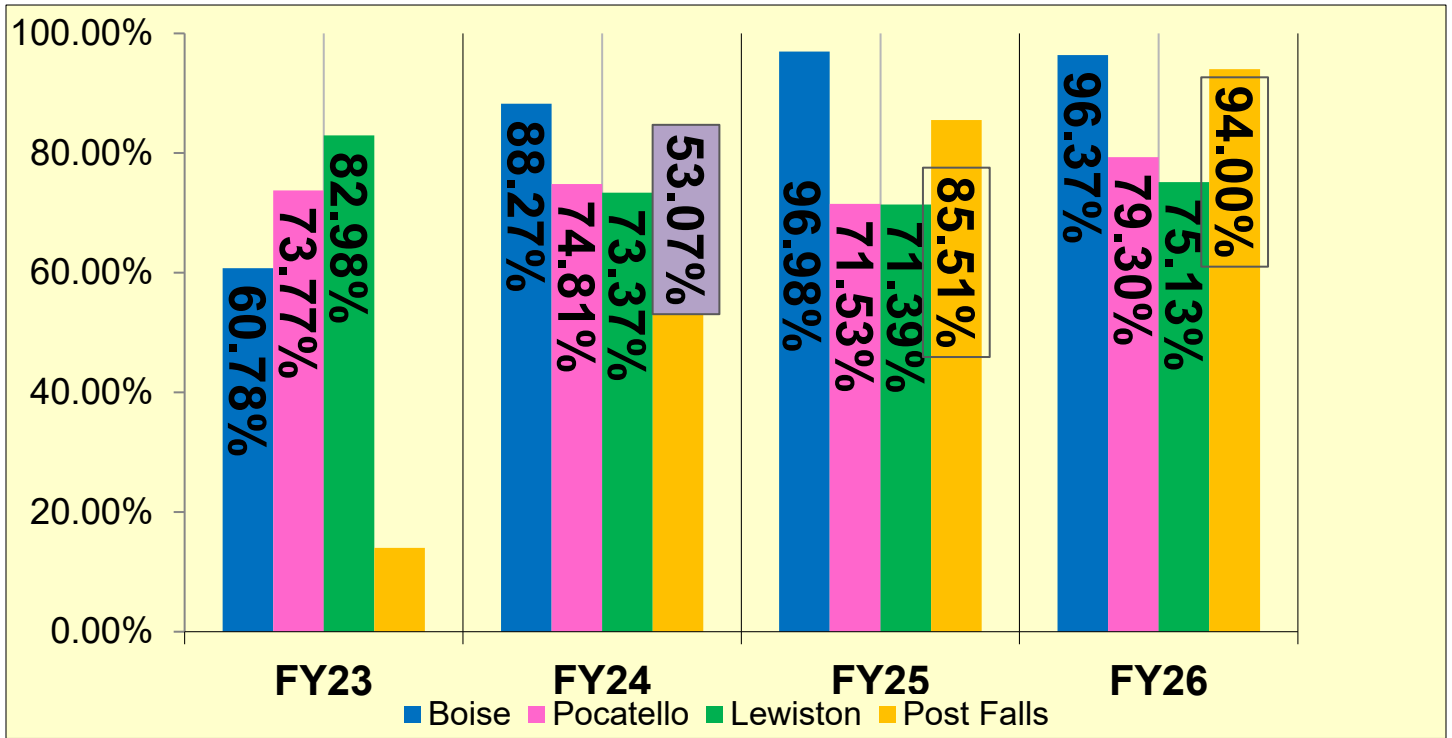
Other Important Events/Information

- Jan Idaho Veteran Wreath's pick up-400 community members present.
- Feb Students from Compass Honors High School presented on two interred Marines.

Questions/Comments: None.

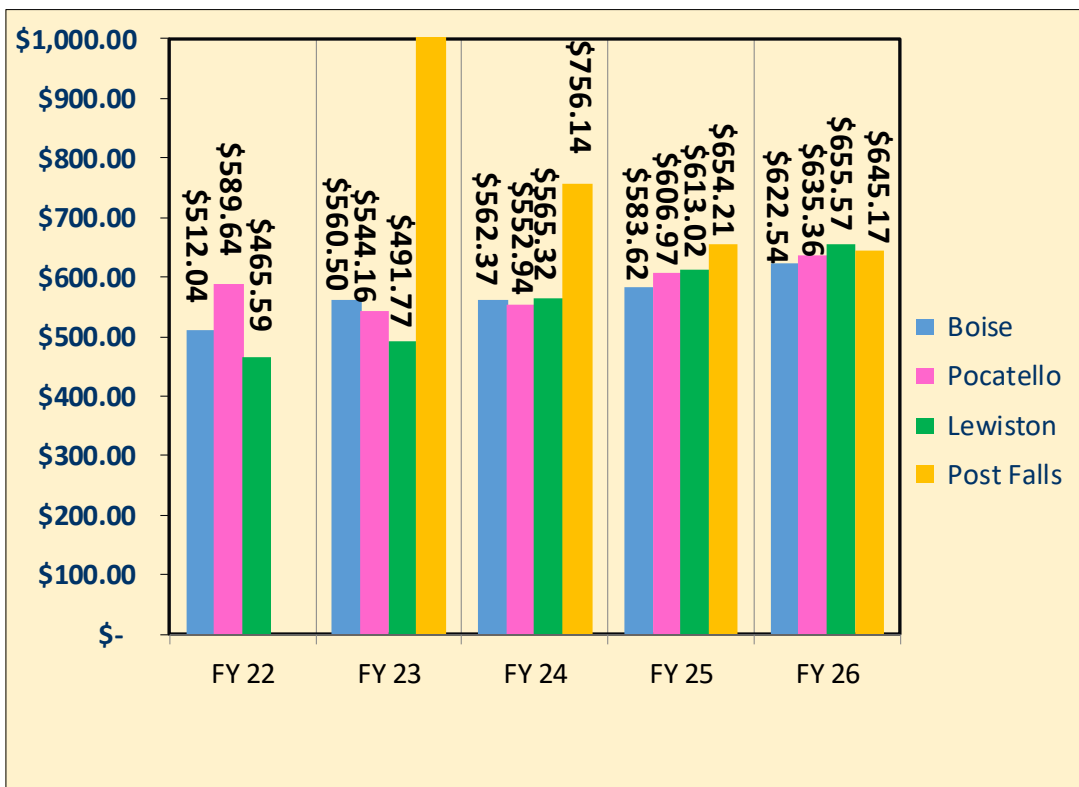
**Fiscal Report** – presented by **Sonya LaCasse**

Average Census YTD Comparisons between the Homes:



FY26 Nursing YTD Average Cost Per Resident Day was \$637.88.

Nursing Yearly Costs Comparison by Home per Resident Day



## FY 26 Budget

- Continue to watch revenue and cash flow.
- Using cash reserves due to lower census (decreased revenue) and increased expenditures.
- Legislative 4% Rescission in general funds totaling reduction of \$63,800 appropriated in Personnel, Operating, and Trustee & Benefits

## FY 27 Budget Appropriation - \$66,317,500

- Breakdown
  - Federal Funds - \$31,921,500; 48.13%
  - Miscellaneous Revenue - \$29,805,000; 44.94%
  - General Funds - \$1,736,200; 2.62%
  - Endowment Income - \$1,659,800; 2.50%
  - Veterans Recognition Income - \$1,195,000; 1.80%
- Highlights
  - \$40,900 New Capital Outlay
  - \$702,700 Replacement Items
  - <\$51,000> Reduction IT Maintenance & Licensing
  - \$220,000 OITS Hardware
  - Reappropriation of \$111,488,600 (Budget Law Exemptions) - not in total budget amount:
    - Boise Veterans Home Replacement Request - \$77,026,100.
    - Lewiston Veterans Home Replacement Request – \$34,462,500.

## FY 28 Budget Request

- Started Budget training in April.
- Address future requirements, objectives, and Veterans Recognition annual allocation plan.
- Submit agency budget request by August 31, 2026.

Questions/Comments: Mark Tschapl – There has been a lot of discussion about agencies needing to cut budgets. This did not impact our agency as much as some. We will request some of the carves out back from our FY26, FY27, and FY28 budgets.

Commissioner Cash – Is there a difference between the daily rates and the daily costs? Rates only impact private-pay and spouses. IDVS is requesting an 8% increase for the Boise and Lewiston Homes and a 5% increase for the Pocatello and Post Falls Homes. These requested increases are to keep up with inflationary factors. When Boise and Lewiston go to private rooms, instead of their current semi-private rooms, the rates will increase to reflect that change. Adjusting gradually will ensure the jump after the renovations won't be so steep. Our guiding principle is to keep our charges at or less the market rate.

Commissioner Brown motioned to endorse the recommended increase. Commissioner Gimpel seconded. Motion passed with unanimous consent.

## **Veterans Recognition Fund**

Discussed History of the Veterans Recognition Fund. There is approximately \$3 million in that fund. Recommendation is that no funds be transferred for the Veterans Recognition Fund Grant Program.

Commissioner Gimpel motioned that no funds be transferred/allocated for Veterans Recognition Fund Grants for the upcoming fiscal year. Commissioner Cash seconded. The motion passed with unanimous consent.

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

No CEC was authorized for this coming fiscal year. To offset that, the State is covering the entirety of the increase in employee benefits costs for this coming fiscal year.

A New HR Business Partner 2 was hired and is based out of Lewiston Veterans Home.

IT costs increased minimally.

**Education Report**

Keeping Tabs on the Cooperative Contract Agreement with the VA:

FY26 Allocation increased to \$186,921.00

- Received Q1 reimbursement on March 4, 2026 in the amount of \$86,637.77
- Will submit for Q2 reimbursement by the end of April (2026)

FY26 COLA

- VA approved COLA for FY2026 on March 3, 2026 adding an additional \$5,091 to education's allocation increasing our total allocation from \$181,530

Supplemental request for FY25 was submitted 12/16/2025 for \$112,012.81

- Supplementals were submitted to Idaho's VACO representative & are still pending final approval.
  - The team's VACO representative confirmed requested amount aligned with FY25's short-fall of funding on 12/26/2025.
- VA's FY25 total allocation was \$202,029.00

Education's Work in FY2026

- Team focus on approval productivity, with and are on target to meet goal of hitting our target metrics 100% for FY26.
- The Education Team continues to increase program opportunities for Idaho Veterans and their families.
- Fully implement phase 2 of updates to database that will work to increase CRM's functionality for all application and facility types.
- SAA's VA Contractual Focus
  - Assigned 0 RBS (aka Risk-Based Survey) [VA Target is 100%]
  - Assigned 12 Supervisory Visits – to-date: 50% of visits completed through 2 quarters [VA Target is 100%]
  - New Facility Inspection Visits Requirement – meeting targets 100% [VA Target is 100%]
  - New Approvals completed within 39 Days – to-date exceeding VA target at 100% [VA Target is 90%]
  - Complete all full reapproval packages within 36 months of prior full review – to-date performing at 94.44% [VA Target is 90%]

Program Activities in VA FY26 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter

The Education Team oversees 136 VA recognized active facilities and manages 259 inactive facilities for a total of 395 approved facilities. This number decreased from Q1 due to the team's inactive facility clean up by withdrawing 11 facilities.

By the end of VA's Q2, the Education team:

- Added 8 new facilities. <sup>Δ</sup>
- Moved 7 from inactive to active. <sup>Δ</sup>
- Approved an additional 1,052 programs since VA's Q1 (both active and inactive facilities).
- Processed an additional 8 new facility applications.

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

Active Facility Type	Q1 Number of Idaho Facilities approved	Number of Programs Approved in VA's Q2	Total Number of Programs Approved (ID FYTD)
IHL	20	754	3,996
NCD (includes vocational flight)	55	251	1,342
Apprenticeships (APP)	57	23	84
On-The-Job (OJT)	20	16	33
License/Certification*	16	1	2
Prep-Courses*	6	7	24
<b>Total:</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>1,052</b>	<b>5,481</b>

\*License, Certification, and Prep-Course activity do NOT count toward the total number of active facility counts VA uses in its allocation model.

Δ Not counted on VA's active facility count (aka: AFC report) posted August 2025

Sectors Education Contributes to Idaho

Type of Pursuit	Fry Scholarship	Transfer of Education Benefits from Veteran to Dependent	Veteran/Service member	Grand Total
Apprenticeship		1	95	96
College, non-degree	2	85	686	773
Correspondence		2	18	20
Flight		2	79	81
Graduate	2	94	474	570

<b>Non-College Degree</b>	2	29	258	289
<b>OJT</b>			57	57
<b>Undergraduate</b>	4	456	1570	2030
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>669</b>	<b>3237</b>	<b>3916</b>

Education's Outreach and Liaison Activities

- February 7-11, 2026
  - Shannon Patenoude attended the National Association of State Approving Agencies (NASAA) Midwinter Business & Training Meeting representing IDVS and the interests of Idaho ETIs, their SCOs, and beneficiaries.
    - Shannon received a certificate of recognition for her project management of the organization’s FY25 Annual Report.
      - This is the second year she project managed this report.
      - For a PDF copy of the report: <https://nasaa-vetseducation.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/FY25-NASAA-Annual-Report-FINAL.pdf>
- March 10-12, 206
  - The IDVS Education Team co-hosted a 2.5-day Veterans Education Summit in Lewiston, Idaho at Lewis Clark State College with the first day representing a full day of training from our VA counterparts. Participants attended both in-person & virtually.
    - Kyla Aldridge assisted with coordinating activities in the months prior to the event and attended day one of the event.
    - IDVS also presented at this event to SCOs:
      - Shannon trained SCOs on updates to approvals and CHP35 Sunset.
      - Additional appreciation to Veterans Outreach & Community Support team’s Jason Legler and VSO Team’s Joseph Riener for their informative presentations to Idaho SCOs.

Questions/Comments: Commissioner Maxwell asked if there was a VA drive to increase apprenticeships?

Paul responded that the SAA doesn't have much role in pushing for more programs. That falls under the purview of the Idaho Workforce Development Council and the Idaho Department of Labor.

**Veterans Outreach and Community Support (VOCS)** – presented by **Mitzi Cheldelin**

Events

- Vietnam Veterans Recognition Day

Approximately 500 Veterans and their families attended the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Vietnam Veterans Recognition Day on March 28. The event featured 33 vendors and received positive feedback throughout the day. The Warhawk Air Museum hosted the event to honor Vietnam Veterans and connect attendees to available resources.

## Programs

- Joining Forces Idaho
  - Joining Forces Treasure Valley meetings will move from Gowen Field to a new location in Meridian to provide easier access to attendees and a more central location.
  - Robertta continues to strengthen the Eastern Idaho Joining Forces meetings with a new relationship with the Elks in Blackfoot where meetings are taking place.
  - Jason has reinforced the benefit and purpose of Joining Forces and monthly meetings will begin in the Panhandle on Friday, May 1st.

- Idaho Veterans Guide

Searches on the Idaho Veterans Guide have more than doubled from this same period last year.

- Governor's Challenge

Governor Brad Little stopped by the 3 Annual Joining Forces Conference held in Coeur d'Alene to thank attendees for their service and commitment to their veteran brothers and sisters. He emphasized the great work being done by the Idaho Division of Veterans Services couldn't be done without the Joining Forces communities.

## Engagement January 1 – March 31:

- Veterans – 2,266
- Civilians – 750
- Mixed Events – 4,246
- Events – 252
- Counties Visited – 17/44

## Highlighted Events hosted by Community Partners this quarter:

- Veterans Coffee socials – might seem frivolous but the informal nature of these coffee socials often lead to a lot of important discussions that provide an opening to connect Veterans to available resources they otherwise wouldn't seek out.
- Veterans Treatment Courts
- Veterans Talking to Veterans - Corrections Facilities – every Wednesday night trauma informed coaching.
- Veterans Talking to Veterans – River of Life Men's Shelter in Boise.
- Conversations with IDOC – in the next 4 weeks an 80-bed tier will be opened that will only be Veterans.
- Suicide Mortality Review Committees in Kootenai and Bannock Counties – hope to expand this initiative to other counties. These review committees analyze records of suicide deaths to identify common trends. The hope is this analysis will lead to improved suicide prevention.

## Contributions through Outreach:

- Raised \$203,971.06 in direct Veteran Support thanks to Community Partners. Highlighted organized support from our community partners and volunteers:
  - \$118,896.06 in direct support for Veterans in need.
  - \$5,825 donated in support of Veterans programs.
  - \$79,250 recorded in Idaho Veterans Guide engagement.
- Request Statuses
  - 80 Complete
  - 37 Referred to community partners
  - 16 Disconnected
  - 2 Stop loss.
- 2 Emergency Grants Approved and Completed - \$3,000 total

- February 2, 2026 - \$1,500
- February 16, 2026 - \$1,500

Questions/Comments: none

**Legislative Update**

Bill Number	Short Description	Passed/Failed	Date Signed into Law
<a href="#">S1273</a>	Code cleanup, veterans. The bill removed references to the Department of Health and Welfare as it pertains to a veteran's trust held by the State. Veteran's assets held in trust by the State were moved in 2000 to the Division of Veterans Services in § 65-201, Idaho Code. This bill also repeals § 65-210, Idaho Code, which deals with the construction of the North Idaho Veterans Home (Post Falls), which welcomed its first resident February 27, 2023.	Passed	3/17/2026
<a href="#">S1286</a>	Veterans, consumer protection - This bill establishes Idaho specific consumer protection standards for paid assistance provided to veterans seeking help preparing claims for federal veterans' benefits. The legislation protects veterans from deceptive or predatory practices while preserving their right to choose how they seek assistance. It sets uniform definitions, disclosure requirements, and conduct standards for non-accredited individuals or entities offering paid claims preparation services. Upfront fees are prohibited, compensation must be contingent on a successful outcome, and fees are limited to a reasonable, one-time amount. The legislation requires disclosure of free assistance options, written consent from the veteran, and protection of personal, financial, and health information. It prohibits misleading advertising, guarantees of benefit outcomes, direct solicitation of veterans, use of overseas call centers, and the use of medical professionals to influence claims outcomes.	Passed	3/26/2026
<a href="#">S1373</a>	Approp, econ develop, FY 2027 maint. This was our maintenance budget.	Passed	3/19/2026
<a href="#">S1383</a>	Approp, veterans srvs, add'l. This was the enhancement to our maintenance budget. Included new equipment for the Homes, IT licensing fees, replacement items, and OITS Hardware.	Passed	3/26/2026
<a href="#">SR122</a>	Rule approval, judiciary and rules - adopted our pending rules related to the State Veterans Homes.	Passed	N/A

<p><a href="#">S1240</a></p>	<p>Guardianships, conservatorships - This bill is an update of current Idaho Code sections that address guardianship and conservatorship for adults and minors. These are found in the Uniform Probate Code (Title 15, Chapter 5) and in The Care and Treatment of Individuals with Developmental Disabilities (Title 66, Chapter 4). This legislation is the result of over five (5) years of intense study of issues related to guardianship and conservatorship by legal experts, community groups, and others. This bill adds further protections on multiple levels for those involved in the guardianship and conservatorship processes. It provides clarity in areas where questions have arisen in the current Code. It provides multiple detailed alternatives to formal guardianship and conservatorship court proceedings, including Protective Arrangements and Supported Decision Making.</p>	<p>Passed</p>	<p>3/20/2026</p>
<p><a href="#">H0545</a></p>	<p>Military chaplain therapy licensure - this legislation would allow military chaplains to work as licensed counselors in the state of Idaho. Chaplains are required by the U.S. Department of War to obtain a Master of Divinity degree with a 72-credit minimum. This equates to 20% more credits than the typical master's in counseling. This degree covers religious and counseling education. In addition to this degree, chaplains attend a 12-13 week (depending on the branch of military) Chaplains Officer Leadership Course where their counseling education continues. A certified military Chaplain's initial certification's required hours exceed that of a potential counselor seeking to work in this field as a civilian.</p>	<p>Passed the House on 3/9/26. Reported out of Senate Commerce &amp; Human Resources Committee w/ do pass recommendation on 3/18/26. Recommitted to Commerce &amp; Human Resources Committee on 3/19.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><a href="#">H0558</a></p>	<p>Children, federal benefits - Bill codifies existing practice by the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare to preserve survivor benefits from the Department of Social Security or Department of Veterans Affairs for eligible foster youth.</p>	<p>Passed</p>	<p>3/17/2026</p>

**Central Support Office Updates**

**State Veterans Homes presented by Deputy Chief Administrator Tracy Schaner**

- Boise Construction
  - Ongoing abatement related to pipes discovered and a broken water line.
  - Approximately 30 days behind the original construction schedule.
  - June 2028 is the approximate move in date for residents.
- Lewiston Construction
  - VA **SHCGP FY26 Priority List** \$1.4 billion of projects in Priority 1 have state matching funds
  - Congress appropriated \$275M in FY26 for the VA's SVHGP. 8 new projects were awarded.
  - April 8 IDVS received grant opportunity letters for both the Lewiston Home and the Pocatello Home projects.
    - We have until May 28 to finish the deliverables for the Lewiston award.
    - Lewiston build time line is 2.5-3 years in four phases.
    - Unfortunately, we must defer the Pocatello project. We will try to regain the state match to position us to be able to accept next year.
- **National SVH Update GGAC Update** – During our last Commission meeting, I reported that the VA had recommenced the GGAC, the federal advisory committee to which I was appointed by the VA Secretary.

Received a save the date for June 3<sup>rd</sup>.

### **Chief Administrator's Report**

As an agency we are very busy. Between the ongoing Boise construction and the prep work going into the Lewiston Home Renovation and trying to save the opportunity for the Pocatello Home Renovation

#### Budget from State and Impact on IDVS

- IDVS is always striving for efficiency. One of the main efforts is reducing our reliance on expensive staffing agencies. We have required levels of staffing we must meet, and it is a fine needle to thread between maintaining the highest level of staffing without unnecessary staffing.
- Always reviewing other costs with a focus on need. Goal is to never over or under purchase.
- Our VOCS team is extremely important in helping our agency do more with less. The network they are building provides a significant amount of support to the Veterans community without any increase to state costs.

### **New Business**

Chairman Callihan: The Veterans Community want to honor Reverend Rosco for his work on behalf of Idaho Veterans. There are discussions with the Governor's Office about honoring him for his distinguished work on behalf of Veterans.

The Next IVAC Meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, July 9, 2026, at the Central Support Office (351 Collins Road Boise, ID 83702).

**Chairman Callihan** is open to a motion to adjourn. **Commissioner Brown** motioned to adjourn at 10:57 AM MT. **Commissioner Cash** seconded. The motion was approved with unanimous assent. Meeting was adjourned at 10:57 AM MT

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Kevin R. Wallior  
Management Assistant  
Idaho Division of Veteran Services