

VAU.S. Department
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VA strengthens care and benefits for Veterans with \$243 billion budget request for fiscal year 2021

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has a proposed \$243.3 billion budget for fiscal year (FY) 2021.

The 10.2% increase from FY 2020 will allow VA's continued commitment to provide Veterans with high quality health care and timely access to benefits and services.

"The budget request will ensure Veterans and their families experience health improvements and technological modernization advancements," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "That's evidenced by the increase in budget funds we're receiving — that not only increase health care services and benefits to Veterans — but allow VA to lead the way in forward thinking innovation."

Budget highlights

The FY 2021 budget provides robust funding for the [secretary's top priorities](#). It includes \$109.5 billion (an increase of \$13.5 billion or 14.1% above 2020) in discretionary funding and resources for [health care](#), [benefits](#) and [national cemeteries](#). Additionally, there's \$133.8 billion (an increase of \$9 billion or 7.2% above 2020) in mandatory funding for benefit programs, specifically: compensation and pensions, readjustment benefits, housing and insurance.

[MISSION Act](#): Beginning June 6, 2019, VA launched its new and improved Veterans Community Care Program giving Veterans a choice about how best to meet their health care needs. More than 5,000 Veterans per week are accessing the new urgent care benefits provided through the MISSION Act. The FY 2021 request would provide resources to support expansion of the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family to eligible Veterans seriously injured in the line of duty on or before May 7, 1975.

Preventing Veteran Suicide: \$10.2 billion (\$682 million above 2020) for mental health services includes \$313 million for [suicide prevention](#) programs, a \$76 million increase (32%) over FY 2020. Part of this funding will support President Trump's Executive Order, [President's Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End a National Tragedy of Suicide \(PREVENTS\)](#) program.

Women's Health: \$626 million (\$53 million or 9% above FY 2020) for gender-specific [women's health care](#). This increase will expand access to gynecology, provide more

primary care services for women and enable VA to continue to identify and serve the health care needs of women Veterans.

Electronic Health Record Modernization (EHRM): \$2.6 billion (\$1.2 billion above FY 2020) to continue implementation of a single longitudinal electronic health record (EHR) from active duty to Veteran status and ensure interoperability with the Department of Defense. In addition to funding continued [EHR](#) deployment to further sites, the FY 2021 request will accelerate nationwide deployment of the Centralized Scheduling Solution.

Transforming Business Systems: \$221 million in the request will support the continued deployment of a modern integrated financial and acquisition management system. The request also includes \$236 million for VA to transform its supply chain system through the implementation of the LogiCole solution (formerly Defense Medical Logistics Standard Support) and other supply chain improvements.

[Blue Water Navy \(BWN\):](#) \$137 million to continue implementing the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019 (BWN) by ensuring sufficient staff are hired to support claims processing, handle call center activity, and conduct quality reviews. In FY 2021, VA expects to receive an estimated 70,000 BWN claims and appeals. VA has received more than 14,000 BWN claims — since Jan. 7 — and has already issued \$7.5 million in retroactive benefit payments to 218 BWN Veterans and survivors.

VA National Cemeteries: \$360 million for increased burial access, partnering with stakeholders and [preserving Veterans' legacies](#). In 2019 the National Cemetery Administration achieved the highest customer satisfaction index for any organization in either the public or private sector from the American Customer Satisfaction Index.

Capital Investments: \$1.9 billion for VA's total construction program, including funding to complete the American Lake (Tacoma, Washington) and Long Beach (Long Beach, California) projects.

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