



OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS

Called to Serve

Oklahoma Department of Veteran Affairs

FY 2026 Budget Hearing Presentation

Submitted by: Jay Bynum, Executive Director

Jay Bynum

Executive Director



The Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs serves to empower veterans and service members in their pursuit of quality of life and quality of opportunity in the great state of Oklahoma.

Founded in 1947, this agency now encompasses the following divisions:

- State Veterans Homes
- State Veterans Cemetery
- Claims and Benefits
- Veterans Services
 - Veteran Owned Business Outreach (OKVetWorks)
 - Veterans Employment Coordination
 - OK Specific Transition Education Program (OK STEP)
 - Veterans Life and Wellness
- State Approving Agency

Agency Vision, Mission and Core Values

ODVA's mission is to support, honor and care for Oklahoma veterans and their families.

- Facilitates personal and financial independence for veterans in all phases of life
- Advocates for veteran interests in state and federal claims and benefits
- Cultivates community support for veterans and veterans' programs
- Assists eligible veterans and dependents with State and Federal claims and benefits
- Embraces training and connection opportunities in areas of mental health and suicide prevention
- Promotes enterprise, entrepreneurship and employment opportunities for veterans
- Guarantees high quality of care and a home-like environment in State Veterans Homes
- Supports military personnel in transitioning to civilian life as Oklahoma veterans
- Maximizes GI Bill® accessibility and use in Oklahoma
- Partners with public and private entities to support broadest access for veterans to resources



Accomplishments

Top accomplishments for FY 2024 – FY 2025

- 1) Nursing program costs reduced by converting staffing contract positions to state employees.
- 2) Most recent available data from USDVA shows 40.48% of Oklahoma veterans are receiving USDVA compensation and/or pension. The work of ODVA's Claims & Benefits program holds the most appointments as representative of all eligible organizations.
- 3) Shepherded legislation to make Oklahoma state laws consistent with Title 38 federal law for VA educational benefits – SAA program.
- 4) The Cemetery program had 57 interments, hosted Wreaths Across America and the first Memorial Day Commemoration Ceremony at the cemetery.



Analysis of Agency Challenges

	Challenge	Current Actions (Briefly describe how the agency is currently addressing the challenge.)	Planned Actions (Briefly describe how the agency plans to address the challenge going forward.)
1	Service model and policies no longer keeps State Veteran Homes solvent	Monitoring service models to meet demand while driving out costs in variables that we control.	Right size capacity; changes to the Oklahoma Administrative Code and requesting appropriations to align with current cost of care.
2	Locating & engaging the Oklahoma veteran population for available services and opportunities	Developing a campaign to reach all veterans in Oklahoma for awareness of services provided	Measure success of campaign, optimize the agency through transformation, digitization, and strengthened partnerships.
3	Aging infrastructure; not sized or shaped for current demand	Building strategic capital asset management plan to improve, right size, and budget for true costs	Establish realistic capital expenditure line in budget rather than rely on operating budget to fund emergencies.
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Savings & Efficiencies (Current or Planned)

Savings or Efficiency Name	Brief description of how savings were achieved	Savings in Unit of Measurement*	FY 2024 (Actual \$ Savings)	FY 2025 (Projected \$ Savings)	FY 2026 (Projected \$ Savings)
Reduce % Reliance on Contract Nursing	Converted 242 contract positions to state employees.	Dollars (\$)	\$3.9M		
Optimization through transformation, digitization, automation		Dollars (\$) Amounts TBD- Early Stages of Implementations	N/A	Planned	Unknown

* Hours, FTE, square feet, etc.



Agency Goals and Key Performance Metrics

Goal		Metric	FY 24 Target	FY 24 Actuals	FY 25 Target	FY 29 Target
1	Optimize agency through transformation, digitization, and strengthened partnerships at all levels.	Cost savings and service efficiency			new	
2	Develop a holistic Veterans Service outreach campaign leveraging all our partners to contact and engage the state's 330,000 veterans to rapidly connect them to the services and benefits available to them.	Veterans registered with the Oklahoma Veterans Registry			new	
3	Establish and develop partnerships with federal, state, non- profit organizations, and veteran service organizations to leverage and eliminate redundancies.				new	
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6						
						

Projects for FY 2025

- 1) Centralization of resources, planning, and execution to create a fiscally and sustainable system.
- 2) Holistic veteran outreach program to capture and engage the State's 330,000 veterans to rapidly connect the veterans to services and benefits available to them.



Projects for FY 2026

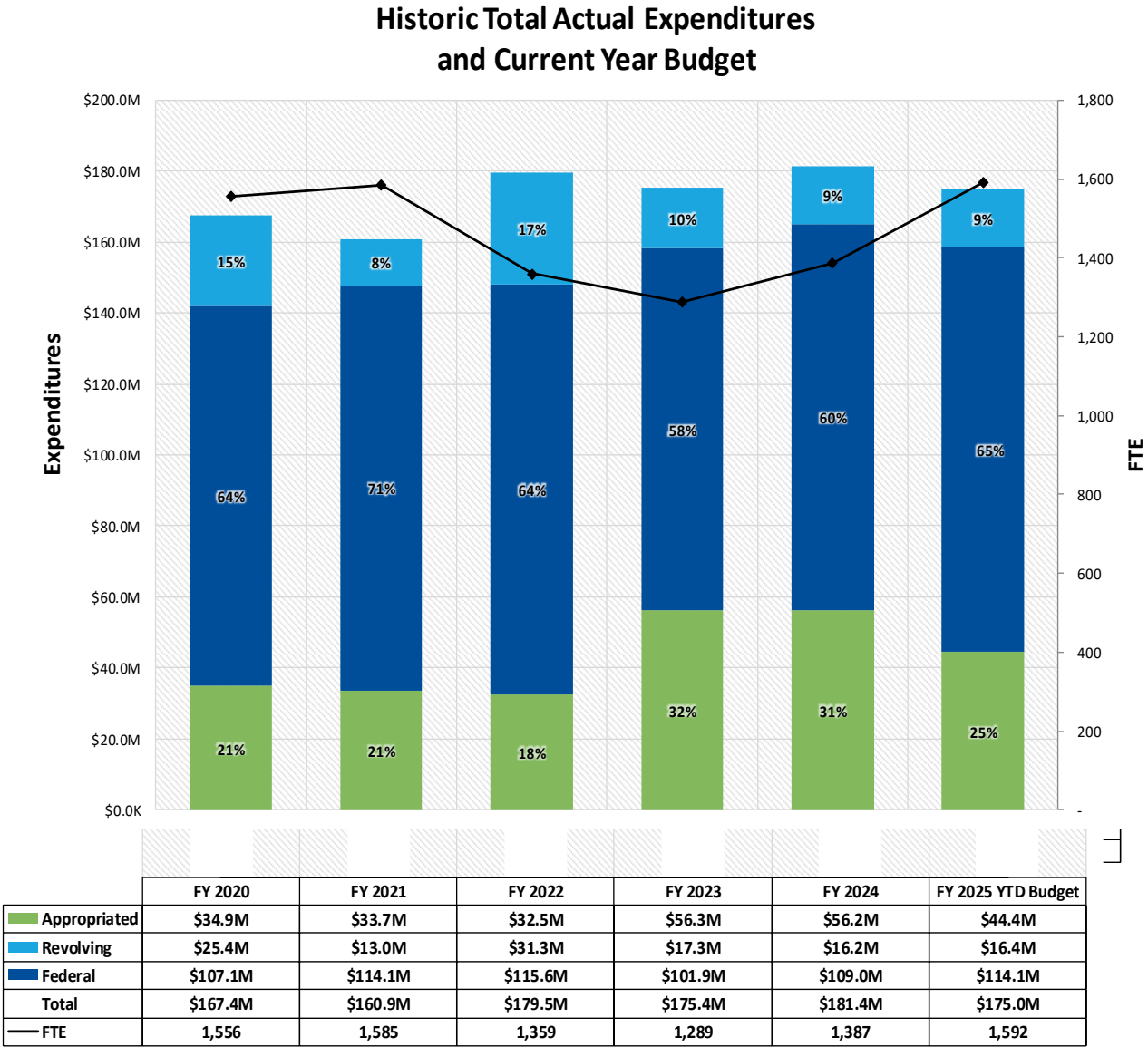
- 1) Centralization of resources, planning, and execution to create a fiscally and sustainable system.
- 2) Holistic veteran outreach program to capture and engage the State's 330,000 veterans to rapidly connect the veterans to services and benefits available to them.



Total Historic Actual Expenditures (FY 2020-24) and Current Year Budget (FY 2025)

Explanation of Changes and Trends

- Appropriations have remained stable, with one time increases for Sallisaw project completion, cash infusion, cemetery.
- Revolving funds vary greatly. In FY20 the depletion of the revolving fund began. FY21 lessened due to additional federal interventions received. In FY22, the revolving funds were completely depleted. FY23-FY25 the revolving funds consist of federal and private pay payments received in each year. Cost of care has increased by about 66% since FY19 pre-PHE, but private pay charges have not increased.
- FTE was lost in the PHE, with the agency unable to keep up with competing wages and incentives of for-profit hospitals and other, more flexible health care providers. The agency continues to try to rebuild its workforce to decrease reliance on costly contract labor.



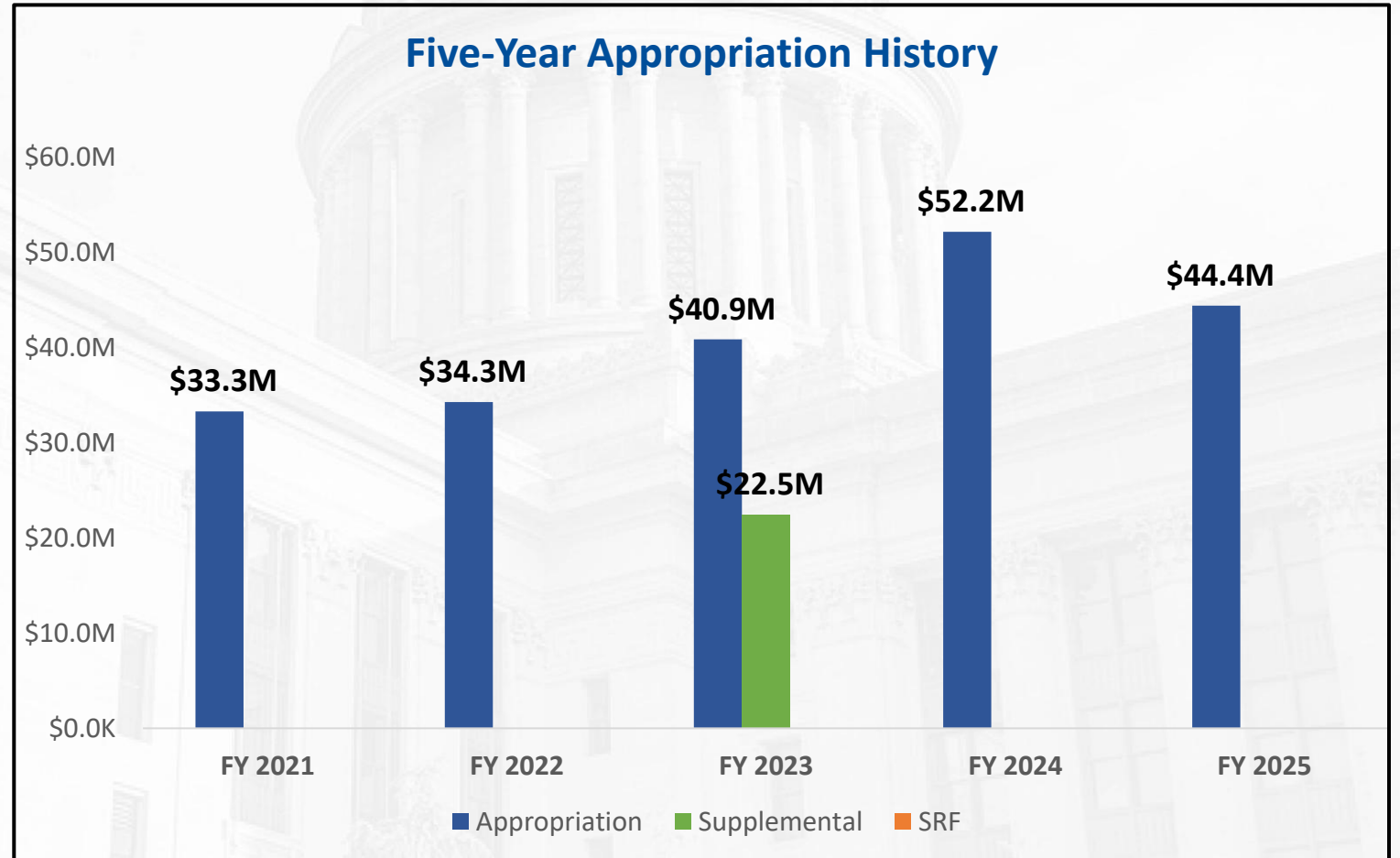
FY 2025 Budgeted Full Time Equivalents (FTE)



	FY 2025 Budgeted FTE
Total FTE	1,592
Supervisor FTE	207
Supervisors to Total FTE Ratio (%)	13%
Current Budgeted but Unfilled FTE	165

Appropriation History

Fiscal Year	Legislated Appropriation (\$) <i>(Includes supplementals and SRF/ARPA.)</i>
FY 2021	\$33,316,393
FY 2022	\$34,316,393
FY 2023	\$63,368,717
FY 2024	\$52,218,907
FY 2025	\$44,441,604



**Includes Supplemental and Statewide Recovery Fund (ARPA) appropriations.*



Financial Resource Analysis

Carryover	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Total appropriated carryover amount expended (\$)	\$2,152,602	\$0	\$1,791,711	\$4,208,023

Historical Cash Balances	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Year End Revolving Fund Cash Balances <i>(All Revolving Funds)</i>	\$45,486,202	\$16,456,182	\$13,961,746	\$11,910,838

Revolving Class Fund # <i>(Unrestricted only)</i>	Revolving Class Fund Name <i>(Unrestricted only)</i>	Current cash balance (\$)	Projected FY 2025 year-end cash balance (\$)
#22000	ODVA Revolving fund for duties	\$9,504,364	\$0
#		\$	\$
#		\$	\$
#		\$	\$
#		\$	\$
#		\$	\$
	Total Unrestricted Revolving Fund Cash balance:	\$	\$



Unrestricted funds are those that are not limited by state or federal law, rule, regulation, other legally binding method, or donor restriction.

FY 2023 – 2024 Appropriation Change Review

<i>Purpose of appropriation increase or decrease</i>	<i>Amount FY 2023</i>	<i>Amount FY 2024</i>	<i>Total amount received FY 2023 - 24</i>	<i>Total amount expended by 11/1/2024</i>	<i>Included in FY 2025 approp? (Yes/No)</i>	<i>If not expended fully, please explain.</i>
Supplemental – Sallisaw home emergency construction	\$10,863,470	\$10,863,470	\$21,726,940	\$20,436,686	No	Construction still in progress
Emergency Cash flow \$10m for operations, 1.6m Sallisaw	\$11,600,000	\$0	\$11,600,000	\$9,998,956	No	Sallisaw construction still in progress
Union Cemetery construction	\$250,000	\$0	\$250,000	\$122,220	No	
Construction Maintenance at Norman & Claremore	\$1,930,000	\$	\$1,930,000	\$1,912,921	No	
Ardmore Home Bond	\$2,132,854	\$2,630,190	\$4,763,044	\$4,763,044	Yes	
Cemetery Operations	\$2,276,000	\$	\$	\$		
	\$	\$	\$	\$		
	\$	\$	\$	\$		
Totals	\$	\$	\$	\$		



**Do not include SRF / ARPA appropriation increases.*

FY 2025 Appropriation Change Review

<i>Purpose of appropriation increase or decrease</i>	<i>Amount of increase or decrease (\$)</i>	<i>Does this need to be included in your FY 2026 appropriation? (Yes/No)</i>	<i>If yes, included in appropriation for same purpose? (Yes/No)</i>	<i>If not included for same purpose, please explain.</i>
Sallisaw emergency construction	\$(10,863,470)	No		
Decrease in Ardmore Bond	\$(13,833)	No		
Union Cemetery Restoration	\$(1,000,000)	No		
Sallisaw opening & certification	\$4,100,000	No		
	\$			
	\$			
	\$			
	\$			
Total adjustment	\$(7,777,303)			



**Do not include SRF / ARPA appropriation increases.*

Budget & Supplemental Incremental Request Summary

Request Name		FY 2026 Incremental Appropriation Request Amount (\$) <i>{or FY 2025 for Supplementals}</i>	Type of Request: Recurring, One-time, or Supplemental
1	Increased Operating costs.	\$16,000,000	Recurring
2	CAPEX	\$7,000,000	Recurring
3	Opening of Sallisaw Veterans home	\$(4,100,000)	One-time
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(1) Supplemental Budget Request

Name of Request	
Type: Supplemental	\$ Incremental Amount Requested for FY 2025
Describe why these funds are needed.	

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(1) Incremental Budget Request

Name of Request Increase Operating costs	
Type: Recurring or One-Time Recurring	\$ Incremental Amount Requested for FY 2026 \$ 16,000,000
Describe why these funds are needed. Average cost of care has increased 66% over the last 6 years. This is attributable to several factors, none of which can be controlled by the homes. Labor shortages & wage increases, higher operating costs at our facilities due to inflation, increased acuity levels, and heightened health and safety protocols introduced during the pandemic. The department requests an increase proportionate to the appropriations for the homes, in the amount of \$16,000,000.	



(2) Incremental Budget Request

Name of Request CAPEX	
Type: Recurring or One-Time Recurring	\$ Incremental Amount Requested for FY 2026 \$ 7,000,000
Describe why these funds are needed. The department requests \$7M to work through current known maintenance and replacement needs in the State Veterans Homes.	



(3) Incremental Budget Request

Name of Request Opening of the Sallisaw Home	
Type: Recurring or One-Time One-Time	\$ Incremental Amount Requested for FY 2026 \$ (4,100,000)
Describe why these funds are needed. No longer needed. A one-time request in FY25.	

