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## **National Cemetery Administration**

### **FY 2018 – FY 2022 NCA Long Range Plan**

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#### **Mission**

##### ***National Shrines and Lasting Tributes***

NCA honors Veterans and their eligible family members with final resting places in national shrines and with lasting tributes that commemorate their service and sacrifice to our Nation.

#### **Vision**

NCA will be the model of excellence for burial and memorials for our Nation's Veterans and their families.

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# National Cemetery Administration

## Long Range Plan – FY 2018 – FY 2022

### Document Change Record

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Initial Publication	IUSMA – Ronald Walters	March 23, 2016
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## A Message from the Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs

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I am pleased to present the National Cemetery Administration's (NCA) 2018-2022 Long Range Plan. This updated plan builds upon the many outstanding accomplishments NCA achieved in 2017 and continues to focus on strategies that will enhance service to Veterans and their families.

I am proud to be a part of an organization that has such an impact on the lives of all of America's over 20 million Veterans. Our commitment is demonstrated in our world-class customer service and reflected annually in our internal customer satisfaction numbers which routinely score in the mid-90s. We are proud of these achievements and we will continue to find ways to further enhance the service and care we provide. We strive for perfection for every Veteran, and every family member, every time.

In 2017, several projects changed the way we interact with Veterans, their families, and the public. We updated our mobile National Gravesite Locator, developed the Online Daily Burial Schedule, and continued to implement GIS/GPS technology system-wide. These are just a few of the initiatives that are transforming NCA into the future.

Another NCA accomplishment is the Veterans Legacy Program (VLP) which is well on its way to enhance memorialization and increase awareness of Veterans' service and sacrifice. In February 2017, NCA awarded three separate university contracts to conduct research at national cemeteries in San Francisco, Black Hills, and Central Florida. We also welcomed a team of students from Harvard University to research the customer experience at VA national cemeteries and two cadets from the United States Military Academy who worked with cemetery directors in NCA service and outreach programs. We will continue to develop these strategic relationships with universities and other organizations, both public and private.

As I look to the future, I am committed to empowering our partners and stakeholders. In 2018, we will celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Veterans Cemetery Grants Program, a key partnership with the leaders of state and tribal governments. Today, 92% of our Veterans and their families have access to a national, state, or tribal cemetery within 75 miles of their home. Our goal is to provide 95% with such access. With the support of our partners, we anticipate meeting this goal. As shown in this plan, we are also pursuing innovative ways to address the remaining 5% of the Veteran population so they too are serviced by NCA.

Through the Veterans Legacy Program, we will redefine and modernize how we memorialize our Veterans as we seek to inspire younger generations to ensure that our Veterans are never forgotten. We will also show how Veterans have continued their service through contributions made to their communities after leaving the military. As we touch the hearts of our Veterans and the public, we will continue to shape the national discussion for how VA becomes the benefit provider of choice for Veterans and their families.

We have accomplished much and we will accomplish so much more. Our vision for the future will be achieved because of your commitment and dedication. Each one of us plays a key role in moving the organization forward, one step at a time.

We will succeed together. Thank you for your daily commitment to Veterans and their families. I am...

Sincerely,

Randy Reeves  
Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs



**National Cemetery Administration**  
**Long Range Plan for FY 2018 – 2022**  
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# Executive Summary

The FY 2018 – FY 2022 National Cemetery Administration (NCA) Long Range Plan sets forth the NCA's vision and priorities for improving the ways in which we honor Veterans with final resting places in national shrines and by commemorating their service to our Nation. This plan is consistent and aligns with the FY 2018-2024 VA Strategic Plan and SECVA's Priorities for VA. This plan ultimately supports VA's mission to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan – by serving and honoring the men and women who are America's Veterans.

The NCA Long Range Plan was developed from input provided by senior leadership from the field and offices within NCA Central Office. Goals, objectives, and strategies reflect a mix of ongoing and new initiatives. Each strategy has proposed performance measures. The resulting document provides a strategic roadmap for guiding NCA as an organization and for improving the manner in which NCA serves Veterans and their families. This long range plan also provides insight and guidance to NCA's five District Offices and 135 national cemeteries to inform their own respective strategic and operational planning processes.

The NCA Long Range Plan is a comprehensive effort that sets strategic initiatives for improving the performance of NCA's main missions in the areas of burials, memorials, and maintaining national shrines. The plan also provides the vision to ensure that NCA maintains its position as one of the most highly regarded organizations, in both the public and private sectors, in terms of customer satisfaction.



## Introduction

The National Cemetery Administration (NCA) provides burial and memorial benefits to Veterans and their eligible beneficiaries earned through service to our Nation. Eligibility for burial and memorialization benefits is defined in 38 U.S.C., with implementing regulations in Title 38 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

## Mission Statement

### *National Shrines and Lasting Tributes*

NCA honors Veterans and their eligible family members with final resting places in national shrines and with lasting tributes that commemorate their service and sacrifice to our Nation.

## Vision

NCA will be the model of excellence for burial and memorials for our Nation's Veterans and their families.

## Core Values

NCA and its employees embrace the Department of Veterans Affairs **I CARE** core values comprising Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect and Excellence.

Integrity	Act with high moral principle and adhere to the highest professional standards. Maintain the trust and confidence of all with whom we engage.
Commitment	Work diligently to serve Veterans and other beneficiaries. Be driven by an earnest belief in VA's mission. Fulfill our individual responsibilities and organizational responsibilities.
Advocacy	Be truly Veteran-centric by identifying, fully considering, and appropriately advancing the interests of Veterans and other beneficiaries.
Respect	Treat all those we serve and with whom we work with dignity and respect. Show respect to earn it.
Excellence	Strive for the highest quality and continuous improvement. Be thoughtful and decisive in leadership, accountable for our actions, willing to admit mistakes, and rigorous in correcting them.

## Activities and Programs

The National Cemetery Administration (NCA) administers a number of related burial benefits programs:

- National Cemeteries: Bury Veterans and other eligible individuals in national cemeteries and maintain the graves and their environs as national shrines;
- Veterans Cemetery Grants: Provide aid to states and tribal organizations in establishing, expanding, or improving state and tribal Veterans cemeteries;
- Headstones and Markers: Furnish headstones and markers for the graves of eligible persons in national, state, tribal or other government Veterans cemeteries and private cemeteries;
- Medallions: Furnish medallions commemorating the Veteran's service to the Nation that may be affixed to the privately purchased headstones or markers for Veterans interred in private cemeteries;
- Presidential Memorial Certificates: Provide certificates to families of deceased Veterans, recognizing the Veteran's contribution and service to the Nation;
- Outer Burial Receptacles: Provide a graveliner or partial reimbursement for a privately purchased outer burial receptacle for each new traditional gravesite in open national cemeteries administered by NCA;
- Caskets and Urns: Provide reimbursement to an individual or entity that pays for the casket or urn used to inter remains of an unclaimed Veteran in a national cemetery when there are no next of kin and insufficient resources;
- First Notice of Death: Record First Notice of (Veteran) Deaths based on Burial Flag applications, headstone/marker and burial applications, VA Insurance Claims Office, Arlington National Cemetery burials, corrections of VHA and Social Security Administration death exceptions into VA IT systems. Updated electronic files ensure timely termination of benefits and appointments, correction of erroneous dates of death, and next-of-kin notification of possible entitlement to survivor benefits.; and
- Historic Resources: Serve as custodian of historic resources at VA national cemeteries across the country and the legacy of Veterans buried in VA cemeteries.

## Veterans Legacy Program

VA has established the Veterans Legacy Program, a transformational effort to use national cemeteries to enhance the way in which VA memorializes our nation's Veterans; increase the public's awareness of the value of military service; and to enhance option for how families may choose to grieve through an interactive memorial experience.

All 135 VA national cemeteries will be used as platforms for community engagement and public education, with emphasis on empowering student-based research on site. Over 3.2 million Veterans are buried in these cemeteries from all war periods and conflicts, each with a story to tell. In 2017, VA inaugurated a series of unique partnerships between VA and academic institutions, which engaged university students to research Veterans' stories, make their stories accessible to the public, and teach K-12 students what they learned about Veterans. While similar in their mission to memorialize Veterans through student engagement, each of the partnerships reflects the unique geographic and demographic characteristics of the local communities. VA will expand these partnerships in the future.

Legacy products are also being used beyond the classroom. NCA is partnering with various stakeholders who are committed to ending Veteran suicide. These groups will share the inspirational stories researched by students to demonstrate how Veterans can lead meaningful and impactful lives

after leaving military service and sending a strong, affirming message to all our Veterans that when they leave military service, their story isn't over.

Complementing Legacy research and engagement efforts, VA took the first steps of a major transformation of public digital engagement in Veteran memorialization. The VA is creating an interactive website that will enable virtual memorialization of the millions of Veterans buried at VA national cemeteries. When fully implemented, the platform will allow online visitors to pay their respects and will permit researchers, students, and professionals to share information about more than 3.2 million Veterans memorialized by NCA. Most importantly, it will allow families to upload artifacts related to a Veteran's service, such as letters, pictures, and videos, to be shared with the public. Visitors to a gravesite will be able to use their smartphones or other devices to "scan" a Veteran's headstone and access the uploaded information, thereby creating an interactive memorial experience.

## **Strategic Challenges and Advantages**

### Challenges:

- Acquiring suitable land to expand access to a burial option and addressing the burial needs of unserved Veterans;
- Increasing awareness and utilization of all benefits;
- Obtaining necessary appropriations to attain performance targets within overall Federal budget constraints;
- Using natural resources effectively and efficiently;
- Reconciling the individual's customized expectations of burial with National Shrine standards;
- Responding to changing perceptions of burial and memorialization;
- Obtaining, managing and integrating technological innovations/advances;
- Enhancing interoperability between other VA business lines and systems.

### Advantages:

- Being highly respected with a strong reputation for quality service;
- Having a workforce (70 percent of whom are Veterans) that brings a strong understanding of the mission to the workplace;
- Being large enough to take advantage of economies of scale and small enough to be agile;
- Having a robust national training center focused on NCA's unique training requirements;
- Having an established centralized shared services approach to provide common administrative services to the entire organization while also fulfilling unique requirements.

## **Comparative Data Sources**

### Within VA:

- VA All Employee Survey
- VA Pulse Quarterly Employee Experience Surveys
- VA Biannual Safety Perception Survey
- NCA Customer Surveys of Satisfaction
- Monthly Performance Reviews

### Within Industry:

- Cemetery industry studies
- Partners – American Battle Monuments Commission, National Park Service, Army National Military Cemetery Program, and State and Tribal Cemeteries

## Outside Industry:

- American Customer Satisfaction Index
- The U.S. Office of Personnel Management Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey
- Baldrige Excellence Framework

## Performance Improvement System

Multi-faceted approach to continuous improvement which includes:

- Workforce and management tied together by the unifying ideals of Goals, Engagement, Accountability, and Results (G.E.A.R.) program.
- Organizational Assessment and Improvement Program (Integrates Baldrige Performance Excellence Framework, Operational Standards and Measures, and Internal Controls)
- Communities of Practice to share best practices across the organization
- Lean Six Sigma as a standard process improvement methodology
- Process Mapping

## Environment in which National Cemeteries, State Cemeteries, and Partners Operate

NCA seeks to accommodate Veteran burial needs within an ever-changing environment. Through analysis of multiple NCA customer satisfaction survey responses, emerging burial studies, and Veteran population data, NCA estimates the following environmental impacts on future service delivery:

- Interment and memorialization practices will continue to evolve, as they have in the past. For instance, over the past 40 years, the demand for cremation interments (inurnments) has increased significantly so that inurnments currently make up approximately half of all the interments conducted in national cemeteries. We expect practices to continue to evolve.
- In NCA's 2014 New and Emerging Burial Practices Study, "Veterans overwhelmingly expressed the opinion that burial preferences should not be dictated by the VA/NCA, but rather should be based on the desires of individual Veterans and/or their family members. Significantly, they did not feel that the dignity of national cemeteries would be negatively impacted if new burial methods were provided, and they also indicated that all burial options presented to them during the research are both appropriate and dignified if they reflect a Veteran's or family's preference."
- Interments in VA national cemeteries are projected to exceed 133,000 in 2018 and peak at about 138,000 in 2022. Interments will gradually begin to decline and are expected to be about 132,000 in 2028. The total number of gravesites is expected to increase from nearly 3.66 million in 2018 to more than 4.1 million in 2022.
- In FY 2018, NCA expects to process nearly 362,000 applications for headstones and markers for placement in national, state, tribal and other public or private cemeteries. The number of headstones and markers applications processed is expected to stay steady at 362,000 in 2019, declining to about 357,000 in 2023.
- NCA expects to issue nearly 678,000 Presidential Memorial Certificates (PMCs) in FY 2018; and in the period FY 2018 to FY 2022, NCA will deliver nearly 3.5 million PMCs.
- Although providing dignified burials for Veterans will remain a core mission through 2022, NCA anticipates an increasing emphasis on memorialization efforts to include products and programs developed for the public (particularly educational institutions) for use online and onsite at VA National Cemeteries. NCA also envisions increased partnerships with other Federal agencies such as the American Battle Monuments Commission, and National Park Service and the Library of Congress in the development and implementation of these efforts

## Stakeholders and Partners

NCA's burial programs serve a varied and diverse group of stakeholders. Our primary stakeholders are those who are the direct beneficiaries of VA burial benefits—Veterans and their families. Veterans Service Organizations and professionals in the funeral and mortuary industry are also important stakeholders. Various components of the Department of Defense (DoD), including active duty service members and National Guard and Reserve forces, comprise another significant stakeholder group. In addition, members of a number of environmental groups, historical and genealogical societies, as well as the general public, are included.

The inclusion of families takes into account the significance of next of kin, since not only eligible Veterans but also their eligible family members may receive burial benefits. It is important that these Veterans, widows, widowers, and other family members are treated with compassion and dignity at all times—from the time of need and initial bereavement, to their return to the cemetery to visit their loved one's gravesite. Each cemetery's appearance is maintained in a manner befitting a national shrine, thus providing an enduring positive impression.

Veterans Service Organizations (VSO) are key stakeholders and partners in the VA mission. These organizations act as a voice for Veterans and their families, and as advocates for their needs and expectations. At many national cemeteries, VSOs are important partners with DoD and NCA in providing military funeral honors.

States, through their Veterans Affairs Departments, and tribal organizations, through their Tribal governments, play an increasingly important role in providing benefits to Veterans and their families. By establishing and operating state and tribal Veterans cemeteries as a complement to VA national cemeteries, they provide important additional burial capacity for Veterans and their families.

Department of Defense (DoD) cemeteries, especially those operated by the Army National Cemeteries Program (including Arlington National Cemetery (ANC)), Department of Interior's National Park Service (NPS) national cemeteries, and the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) continue to remain important partners in providing burial and memorial services for Veterans and their families. NCA provides Government-furnished headstones and markers for all federally-administered cemeteries. NCA manages a congressionally mandated advisory committee, on which representatives from ABMC, NPS, and ANC are ex officio members. NCA and ANC have formalized a working group to ensure the organizations share information and collaborate on shared goals, and a memorandum of agreement between the two allowing for mutual training support.

DoD and the uniformed services are included as NCA stakeholders, recognizing the important role they play in honoring those who have served. Veterans' families expect that appropriate military funeral honors will be provided at national cemeteries to recognize Veterans' service to our Nation. By law, DoD provides military funeral honors upon request, but this requires close coordination with NCA. NCA facilitates volunteer groups who supplement DoD's military funeral honors.

Funeral directors are another significant stakeholder group, often acting as spokespersons for the Veteran and next of kin. These professionals are also directly involved in the delivery of VA services through the coordination of committal services and interments and assistance in applying for headstones and markers.

Private cemeteries and local/municipal government cemeteries are stakeholders. Each year, VA furnishes more than 200,000 headstones and markers for Veterans' gravesites in these cemeteries.

NCA also considers members of the general public as stakeholders that have expectations of how their government should honor service and sacrifice. Additionally, national cemeteries are considered national shrines. Many cemeteries date from the Nation's Civil War and are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. As such, they are of interest to historical societies, individuals interested in history and genealogical research, and others who may not have family members interred in a national cemetery. As stewards of public resources, NCA is responsible to all Americans for the prudent management of taxpayer dollars and the sound environmental management of the land.

Finally, it is also appropriate to recognize NCA employees and other stakeholders within the Department: the Veterans Benefits Administration, the Veterans Health Administration, and headquarters staff offices. All VA organizational elements are important partners with NCA in providing seamless service to Veterans and their families.

## **Strategic Imperatives**

Achieve the following strategic imperatives:

1. Focus on our core mission to provide timely, high quality burial services and memorial benefits to Veterans and eligible family members.
2. Emphasize exceptional customer service and continuous improvement, with involvement at all levels of the organization to enhance quality and operational effectiveness.
3. Use data analysis and information technology to more effectively and efficiently accomplish the mission of the organization.
4. Be an agile organization, able to recognize and adapt to emerging trends and respond quickly to changing customer preferences while maintaining National Shrine standards.
5. Take care of our most valuable assets—our employees—through workforce planning, recruitment and retention, training and development, and safe operations.
6. Drive and implement innovation to enhance the provision of burial and memorial benefits where it makes sense to do so.
7. Inspire trust with our customers, employees and other stakeholders based on accountability and living our **I CARE** values
8. Maintain and enhance the infrastructure required to accomplish our mission.



## **NCA Long-Range Planning Integration with VA FY2018 – 2024 Strategic Plan and SECVA Priorities**

NCA long-range goals, objectives, and strategies support the overall Department of Veterans Affairs' Strategic Plan and the SECVA's Priorities.

There are four VA Strategic Goals, three of which address what VA will do specifically for Veterans, and a fourth “enabling” goal focused on what VA must do internally to achieve the outcomes described in the first three goals. NCA's alignment with these priorities will ensure NCA supports key strategic advances in VA:

1. Veterans choose VA for easy access, greater choices, and clear information to make informed;
2. Veterans receive timely and integrated care and support that emphasizes their well-being and independence throughout their life journey;
3. Veterans trust VA to be consistently accountable and transparent; and
4. VA will modernize systems and focus resources more efficiently to be competitive and to provide best-in-class capabilities to veterans and its employees.

There are 5 SECVA Priorities:

1. Greater Choice: VA is committed to ensure Veterans can make decisions that work best for them and their families.
2. Improve Timeliness: Veterans must receive the benefits, care and services they need in a timely manner, no matter where they are.
3. Suicide Prevention: Suicide prevention is VA's highest clinical priority. Suicide is a national health crisis; it requires all of Government, along with public-private partnerships to address.
4. Focus Resources: Veterans and taxpayers deserve to know VA resources are spent on the care and services Veterans need most.
5. Modernize Systems: Veterans and VA employees need systems and technology that enable them to deliver the high-quality care and services Veterans deserve.;

See Appendix A for a cross-referencing of NCA's strategic goals, objectives, and strategies with VA FY2018 – 2024 Strategic Plan and SECVA Priorities.

## Long-Range Goals, Objectives, Strategies, and Measures

NCA has five strategic goals, each with separate supporting objectives and strategies. Each strategy has both primary and supporting responsibility assigned to a Deputy Under Secretary or other senior NCA official for accountability. Responsibility is assigned through parentheses designation as follows: (Primary Office/Supporting Office).

### Goal #1: Veterans and eligible family members will have increased access to burial benefits.

1. Objective 1.1: By the end of 2022, increase access to a burial option in a national, state, or tribal Veterans cemetery
  - a. Strategy 1.1.1: Open 15 new national cemeteries by 2022, thereby providing an additional 2% of the Veteran population with reasonable access to a burial option within 75 miles of their homes (43/41)
    - i. Measures:
      1. Number of planned new national cemeteries actually opened (traditional, rural and urban)
      2. Additional percent of Veterans provided reasonable access to a burial option through the opening of new national cemeteries
    - b. Strategy 1.1.2: Establish new state Veterans cemeteries in targeted areas to contribute a 2% increase towards the percent of Veterans that have access to a burial option in a national, state, or tribal Veterans cemetery within 75 miles of their homes (40A3-VCGP/42)
      - i. Measures:
        1. Number of new state cemeteries in targeted areas opened through grants
        2. Additional percent of Veterans provided reasonable access to a burial option through the opening of new state cemeteries in targeted areas established through a grant
  2. Objective 1.2: By the end of 2022, address the burial needs of unserved Veterans (i.e., the remaining 5 percent of eligible Veterans – including those that live abroad who do not have reasonable access to a national or state Veterans cemetery within 75 miles of their homes, and where it is not fiscally prudent or geographically feasible to establish a Veterans cemetery near their home)
    - a. Strategy 1.2.1: Resubmit a proposal to obtain the authority to pay a transportation allowance for the cost to transport the remains of the eligible Veteran or dependent to the nearest VA national or state Veterans cemetery (42/41)
      - i. Measures:
        1. Accomplishment of milestones related to the resubmission of the proposal
        2. Percent of those without reasonable access who utilize the new benefit
      - b. Strategy 1.2.2: Resubmit a proposal to increase the burial and plot allowances for all eligible Veterans without reasonable access to a burial option in a national or state Veterans cemetery (42/41)
        - i. Measures:
          1. Accomplishment of milestones related to the resubmission of the proposal
          2. Percent of those without reasonable access who utilize the new allowances

Goal #2: More Veterans and eligible family members will use VA burial and memorial benefits.

1. Objective 2.1: By the end of 2022, increase the percent of Veterans and eligible family members that choose to be interred in a national, state, or tribal Veteran cemetery and utilize memorial benefits
  - a. Strategy 2.1.1: Develop and implement a plan to provide routine weekend burials in national cemeteries, to include those cemeteries closest to Veterans without reasonable access to a burial option in a national or state veteran cemetery (within 75 miles of their residence) (41/42)
    - i. Measures:
      1. Accomplishment of milestones related to the study and establishment of weekend burials, to include special accommodation of Veterans without reasonable access
      2. Number of cemeteries with weekend burials in each district
      3. Percent of Veterans without reasonable access who utilize weekend burial
      4. Percent of respondents to the survey of satisfaction who rate the quality of service provided on the weekends as comparable to that provided on the weekdays
      5. Percent of respondents to the survey of satisfaction who indicate they chose burial in a national cemetery due to the availability of weekend burials
      6. Number and percent of burials conducted on the weekends
    - b. Strategy 2.1.2: Enhance outreach efforts to increase the number of Veterans and family members who are aware of VA burial and memorial benefits (40-COS/44)
      - i. Measures:
        1. Accomplishment of milestones related to the establishment and use of enhanced social media outlets.
        2. Percent of respondents to the survey of satisfaction that respond “yes” to the question “prior to your time of need, were you aware of the benefits related to burial in a national cemetery?”
        3. Overall percent of Veterans who utilize burial in a national, state or tribal cemetery
        4. Percent of Veterans who utilize burial in national cemeteries with the lowest baseline utilization rates
        5. Percent of eligible Veterans who utilize headstones/markers/medallions in a private cemetery
    - c. Strategy 2.1.3: Provide alternative burial options, including a natural or environmentally sensitive burial section, in national cemeteries (41/42)
      - i. Measures:
        1. Number of national cemeteries with a natural or environmentally sensitive burial section
        2. Number and percent of alternative burials conducted in cemeteries providing such options
        3. Percent of respondents to the survey of satisfaction who rate the quality of service related to alternative burials as comparable to that of conventional burials
  2. Objective 2.2: By the end of 2022, enhance processes and methods to easily apply for and obtain timely eligibility determinations for burial in a national, state, or tribal Veteran cemetery and utilization of memorial benefits
    - a. Strategy 2.2.1: Fully implement a program for Veterans and their families to obtain pre-need burial eligibility determinations in advance of their time-of-need (41/44)
      - i. Measures:
        1. Percent of respondents to the survey of satisfaction who are satisfied with the pre-need program

2. Percent of respondents to the survey of satisfaction who indicate they became aware of their VA burial and memorial benefits due to the pre-need program
  3. Number of individuals that receive pre-need eligibility determinations
  4. Number of individuals that received pre-need eligibility determinations who are buried in national/state/tribal Veterans cemeteries
  5. Number of individuals enrolled in the pre-need program who utilize memorial benefits
- b. Strategy 2.2.2: Implement self-service capability to provide Veterans, eligible family members and other stakeholders enhanced options for how and when they request burial and memorial benefits, including on-line application for those benefits (43/41)
- i. Measures:
    1. Accomplishment of milestones related to the full implementation of self-service capability, including on-line application for burial and memorial benefits
    2. Number of Veterans, eligible family members and other stakeholders who use self-service capability to apply for pre-need eligibility determination
    3. Number of Veterans, eligible family members and other stakeholders who use self-service capability to apply for PMCs
    4. Number of Veterans, eligible family members and other stakeholders who use self-service capability to apply for headstones, markers, medallions, and niche covers.
    5. Number of Veterans, eligible family members and other stakeholders who use self-service capability to apply for time of need eligibility determinations
    6. Number of Veterans, eligible family members and other stakeholders who use self-service capability to schedule a burial
    7. Percent of respondents to the survey of satisfaction who are satisfied with the self-service capability
    8. Percent of respondents to the survey of satisfaction who indicate they were more likely to use VA burial and memorial benefits due to self-service capability

Goal #3: Veterans will be memorialized through enhanced tributes befitting their service and sacrifice to the nation.

1. Objective 3.1: By the end of 2022, improve the quality and timeliness of existing memorial benefits
  - a. Strategy 3.1.1: Improve quality and timeliness of headstones, markers, and medallions (41/42)
    - i. Measures:
      1. Percent of respondents to the survey of satisfaction who agree or strongly agree that the quality of the headstone, marker, medallion, or niche cover received from VA was excellent
      2. Percent of headstones, markers, and niche covers in national cemeteries that are delivered undamaged and correctly inscribed
      3. Percent of headstones, markers, and niche covers ordered by national cemeteries for which inscription data are accurate and complete
      4. Percent of graves in national cemeteries marked within 60 days of interment
    5. Percent of applications for headstones and markers that are processed within 20 days for the graves of Veterans who are not buried in national cemeteries
  - b. Strategy 3.1.2: Improve quality and timeliness of Presidential Memorial Certificates (41/42)
    - i. Measures:
      1. Percent of respondents to the survey of satisfaction who agree or strongly agree that the quality of the Presidential Memorial Certificate received from VA was excellent

2. Percent of respondents to the survey of satisfaction who agree or strongly agree that the timeliness of the Presidential Memorial Certificate received from VA was satisfactory
  3. Percent of Presidential Memorial Certificate applications that are processed within 20 days of receipt
  4. Percent of respondents to the survey of satisfaction who agree or strongly agree that receiving a PMC at the cemetery during the committal service (versus mail delivery) enhances the memorial experience
2. Objective 3.2: By the end of 2022, implement new initiatives to enhance Veteran memorialization and celebrate their legacy and military service
- a. Strategy 3.2.1: Implement digital memorialization capability to provide access to memorial information and services (40-COS/41)
    - i. Measures:
      1. Number of applications or services available through both a desktop and mobile device
      2. Number of web-based applications or services that enable external users access to cemetery tools and content from a browser
      3. Number of national cemeteries with Facebook photo album pages
      4. Number of national cemeteries that provide a schedule of burials and events on the Web
      5. Number of Veterans' gravesites in national cemeteries that have memorial information about the Veteran's military service accessible through both a desktop and mobile device
      6. Percent of respondents to the survey of satisfaction who agree or strongly agree that the quality and accessibility of digital memorialization tools are excellent
    - b. Strategy 3.2.2: Fully implement a Veterans Legacy Program (VLP) to enhance memorialization and increase awareness of Veteran sacrifice and post-military contributions by creating educational resources and programming for use by the public, both digitally and onsite at VA national cemeteries (40-COS/44)
      - i. Measures:
        1. Accomplishment of milestones related to the establishment of the VLP Office in NCA
        2. Accomplishment of milestones related to the development of a plan to integrate the VLP with efforts of VHA's Suicide Prevention Office and/or other parties
        3. Number of VA national cemeteries with a suite of cemetery educational resources available for use by students, teachers and the general public
        4. Number of Federal and non-Federal partnerships established to provide educational programming and alternative funding sources
        5. Number of VLP programs, such as educational workshops and seminars delivered online and onsite for the public
        6. Number of students that visit national cemeteries specifically to conduct hands-on learning related to the VLP
        7. Number of visits to the VLP website and associated webpages with VLP products; number of VLP-generated social media postings
        8. Percent of respondents to the survey of satisfaction who agree or strongly agree that the quality of Veterans Legacy products are excellent
        9. Number of web-enabled maps of national cemeteries that provide gravesite location information and directions to the plot location

Goal #4: Stakeholders will place greater trust in NCA based on enhanced accountability.

1. Objective 4.1: By the end of 2022, strengthen capability to account for remains, mark graves, account for gravesite usage, and map gravesites by improving our use of information technology (41/43)
  - a. Strategy 4.1.1: Implement Global Positioning System (GPS) technology to collect geo-spatial data for all gravesites in national cemeteries and use a Geographical Information System (GIS) to enhance the accounting for remains, marking of graves, and mapping of national cemeteries (41/43)
    - i. Measures:
      1. Accomplishment of milestones related to the full implementation of GPS/GIS in NCA
      2. Number of gravesites, headstones, and markers that have geo-spatial data collected and uploaded to the GIS
      3. Number of national cemeteries using GIS to produce cemetery and gravesite layout maps
      4. Number of cemetery maps that enable viewing of plot status in real time to indicate: undeveloped space, developed space, plot type, plot availability and location of remains and headstones
      5. Number of First Notice of Events related to gravesite accountability issues
      6. Percent of gravesites marked correctly during bi-annual Gravesite Assessment Reviews
    - b. Strategy 4.1.2: Improve the monitoring and tracking of burial rates and depletion projections for national, state and tribal Veterans cemeteries to ensure appropriate gravesite expansions (42/41)
      - i. Measures:
        1. Number of unplanned interruptions to existing burial service due to lack of available gravesites
        2. Percent difference in projected vs. actual burial rates
  2. Objective 4.2: By the end of 2022, strengthen capability to continuously assess and improve the operation and maintenance of Veterans cemeteries to meet National Shrine standards
    - a. Strategy 4.2.1: Fully implement the redesigned Organizational Assessment and Improvement Program (42/40A3-VCGP)
      - i. Measures:
        1. Number of national cemeteries that undergo at least one third-party site visit and assessment by either a Central Office or District team
        2. Number of NCA Central Office Services that undergo at least one third-party site visit and assessment
        3. Number of NCA District offices that undergo at least one third-party site visit and assessment
        4. Percent (average or composite) of high priority standards and measures met for all OAI site visits conducted in each FY
        5. Percent (average or composite) of medium priority standards and measures met for all OAI site visits conducted in each FY
        - 6.
        7. Percent of national cemeteries and services that receive “national” OAI excellence recognition
        8. Number of OAI reviews conducted per annual operating plan (planned vs. actual)
        9. Percent of required annual OAI self-assessments actually completed on time

- b. Strategy 4.2.2: Enhance partnerships with state and tribal organizations to ensure the operations and maintenance of grant-funded state and tribal Veteran cemeteries (STVC) meet National Shrine standards (40A3-VCGP/42)
  - i. Measures:
    - 1. Number of training opportunities for STVC personnel at NCA's National Training Center (NTC)
    - 2. Number of STVC personnel that receive training at NCA's NTC
    - 3. Increase in knowledge of STVC personnel after completing a learning offering
    - 4. Number of STVCs that receive "compliant" status with National Shrine standards through the Compliance Review Program (CRP)
    - 5. Mean and median score of CRPs conducted in each FY
  
- c. Strategy 4.2.3: Obtain broader stakeholder feedback (42/44)
  - i. Measures:
    - 1. Increased frequency of sampling/surveying through the NCA customer satisfaction survey
    - 2. Number of new stakeholder feedback mechanisms implemented
    - 3. Number of new stakeholder engagements conducted that leverages customer satisfaction survey data to improve operations or customer service

Goal #5: Stakeholders will be served more efficiently and effectively by NCA's internal capacity.

1. Objective 5.1: By the end of 2022, improve the employee experience to employ a workforce with higher employee satisfaction that provides better service to Veterans
  - a. Strategy 5.1.1: Implement competency-based training solutions to develop leaders, enhance individual performance, and support continuous learning (43/41)
    - i. Measures:
      1. Percent improvement in the All Employee Survey score for the following statement:  
"I have received the training I need to do my job well."
  - b. Strategy 5.1.2: Develop and implement administration-wide workforce and succession plans to ensure excellence in recruitment, retention, training, and position management to meet the current and future needs of the organization (43/41)
    - i. Measures:
      1. Time to hire, calculated from the date of the request to fill a position to the enter on duty date (55% of hires are made within 80 days)
      2. Percent improvement in All Employee Survey scores for the following questions/statements:
        - a. How satisfied are you with the number of opportunities for promotion?
        - b. I am given a real opportunity to develop my skills in my work group.
        - c. Employees in my work group are competent to accomplish our tasks.
        - d. I plan to leave my job within the next six months.
  - c. Strategy 5.1.3: Develop and implement targeted safety campaigns, programs and related training to improve employee health and safety (43/41)
    - i. Measures:
      1. Rate of NCA employee days lost from work due to on-the-job injuries
      2. Number of new and open Workers' Compensation cases by District
      3. Total OWCP chargeback costs
  - d. Strategy 5.1.4: Ensure a diverse and inclusive workforce (43)
    - i. Measures:
      1. Improvement in the Diversity Index, which is a measure of VA's aggregate workforce diversity by race, ethnicity, and gender as compared with the respective demographic group representation in the R/CLF
      2. Number of EEO findings against management officials
      3. Achieve a 98% participation rate for management when an employee elects ADR instead of counseling
      4. Improvement in the All Employee Survey scores for the following statement:  
"Discrimination is not tolerated in my workplace."
      5. Achieve a 50% resolution rate at the informal EEO stage.
2. Objective 5.2: By the end of 2022, increase the effectiveness of our policies, processes, and tools to improve the quality, consistency, and reliability of our outcomes
  - a. Strategy 5.2.1: Update or write all necessary policy and regulations and electronically publish and archive these documents to allow easy referencing and searching (42/40-COS)
    - i. Measures:
      1. Number of directives, handbooks, and policy notices published
      2. Number of regulations finalized out of NCA and submitted to VA/OMB for review
  - b. Strategy 5.2.2: Implement business intelligence (BI) capability to provide NCA the tools necessary to better measure its performance and service to the Veteran (43/42)
    - i. Measures:
      1. Number of strategic and operational performance measures that are kept up-to-date on the external Veteran-facing Access and Timeliness dashboard.



2. Number of strategic and operational performance measures that are kept up-to-date on the internal NCA operational performance dashboard.
- c. Strategy 5.2.3: Provide tools to assist the Veteran and VA in using common data and services to fulfill benefit requests (43/41)
  - i. Measures:
    1. Number of NCA systems integrated with the VA enterprise to provide seamless VA interaction to Veterans and their families
    2. Percent of burial and memorial eligibility determinations processed automatically or partially processed automatically
- d. Strategy 5.2.4: Implement enhanced benefits management and cemetery services IT systems by replacing Burial Operations Support System (BOSS) and Automated Monument Application System (AMAS) with enhanced systems that meet all business requirements (43/41)
  - i. Measures:
    1. Accomplishment of milestones related to BOSS replacement
    2. Accomplishment of milestones related to AMASS replacement
- e. Strategy 5.2.5: Adopt and implement enhanced burial and headstone/marker setting technologies (42/41)
  - i. Measures:
    1. Completion of annual analysis and leadership presentation of aggregated headstone/marker setting technologies study results over the four-year test period.
    2. Accomplishment of milestones related to the study and implementation of pre-placed urn crypts

## **Implementation**

This long-range plan states NCA's strategic goals, objectives, strategies and key measure for the next five years, and assigns responsibility to NCA leaders to implement strategies and develop performance targets for measures identified. The annual performance plans for those assigned as the primary and supporting officials will include their assigned strategies and performance targets.

Responsible executive leads for each strategy must complete and maintain an Operating Plan of Actions and Milestones (POAM) identifying at least the following elements for each assigned strategy: strategy lead, actions, action owners, specific annual performance targets for each performance measure, and timelines for completion. The NCA Office of Finance and Planning, Policy and Planning Service will provide the necessary templates for this purpose. Subsequently, Policy and Planning Service will facilitate execution review meetings as needed with strategy leads to monitor and track progress.

# Appendix A: NCA Long-Range Planning Integration with VA FY2018 – 2024 Strategic Plan and SECVA Priorities

12.11.2017 – DRAFT, PRE-DECISIONAL, DELIBERATIVE DOCUMENT – Do Not Disseminate Outside of VA

## 2024 VETERANS AFFAIRS STRATEGIC PLAN



### WHERE WE ARE NOW...

The President, Vice President, Congress, & veteran services organizations all share this goal to help modernize the VA. And that's why I'm confident that we can turn VA into the type of organization that Veterans and families deserve, and all of us want to see. - Secretary Shulkin

#### MISSION STATEMENT

To fulfill President Lincoln's promise to care for those "who shall have borne the battle" and for their families, caregivers, and survivors.

#### VALUES

VA core values (I-CARE) define who we are and our culture. They serve as a guide in providing care and services to Veterans, their families, and beneficiaries.

Integrity Commitment Advocacy Respect Excellence

#### SECVA PRIORITIES

Greater Choice    Improve Timeliness    Suicide Prevention    Focus Resources    Modernize Systems

### WHERE WE ARE GOING: OUR GOALS

#### GOAL 1

Veterans **choose VA** for **easy access, greater choices**, and clear information to make informed decisions



- 1.1: VA anticipates Veterans' changing needs throughout their lives to enhance their choices.
- 1.2: Veterans are informed of, understand, and can avail themselves of the benefits, care, and services they choose.

#### GOAL 2

Veterans receive **timely** and **integrated care** and support that emphasizes their well-being and independence throughout their life journey



- 2.1: VA has collaborative, **high-performing**, and **integrated delivery networks** that enhance Veteran well-being and independence.
- 2.2: VA ensures at-risk and underserved Veterans receive what they need to eliminate Veteran **suicide**, homelessness, and poverty.

#### GOAL 3

Veterans trust VA to be consistently **accountable** and **transparent**



- 3.1: VA is always **transparent** to enhance Veterans' choices, to maintain trust, and to be openly **accountable** for its actions.
- 3.2: VA holds its personnel and external service providers **accountable** for delivering excellent customer service and experiences while eliminating **fraud, waste, and abuse**.

#### GOAL 4

VA will **modernize systems** and **focus resources** more efficiently in order to be competitive and to provide "best-in-class" capabilities to Veterans and its employees



- 4.1. (Agility) VA's **infrastructure improvements**, improved decision-making protocols, and **streamlined services** enable VA to agilely adapt to changing business environments and Veteran needs.
- 4.2. (Human Capital Management Modernization & Transformation) VA will **modernize** its human capital management capabilities to empower and enable a diverse, fully staffed, and highly skilled workforce that consistently delivers world class services to Veterans and their families.
- 4.3. (VA IT/Cybersecurity) VA **IT modernization** will quickly deliver effective solutions that will enable VA to provide improved customer service and provide a secure and seamless experience while decreasing its rate of spend.
- 4.4. (Data driven decision making) VA will institutionalize data supported and performance focused decision making that will improve the quality of outcomes.

### HOW WE WILL GET THERE: OUR STRATEGIES

- 1.1.1: VA Understanding of Veterans begins with their experience in military service and continues throughout their lives
- 1.1.2: VA focuses on Veteran outcomes to tailor choice
- 1.1.3: VA uses Veteran journey maps to enhance understanding
- 1.2.1: VA helps Veterans navigate the full array of care, benefits, and services
- 1.2.2: VA tailors communications to make it easy to understand options
- 1.2.3: VA advocates for Veterans

- 2.1.1: VA builds high-performing and integrated delivery networks that leverage both virtual and physical delivery of benefits, care, and services
- 2.1.2: Improved separation preparations and compensation supports Veteran independence
- 2.1.3: VA will excel at foundational services to include care management
- 2.1.4: Emphasizing Veteran and their families whole health and wellness
- 2.1.5: Contribute to Veteran well-being by providing end of life services
- 2.2.1: Comprehensive care for combat/catastrophically ill, injured, wounded
- 2.2.2: Early intervention and full access to mental health and suicide prevention
- 2.2.3: Support to caregivers and seamless care of aging Veterans
- 2.2.4: Increased access for rural Veterans
- 2.2.5: Implement housing first and provide integrated support to impoverished/homeless Veterans
- 2.2.6: VA is there for families

- 3.1.1: Public sharing of VA and private sector performance comparison data
- 3.1.2: Veterans have a voice in VA
- 3.2.1: All employees provide excellent customer service
- 3.2.2: Good performers are rewarded
- 3.2.3: All employees are held accountable
- 3.2.4: Fraud, waste, and abuse are proactively identified, deterred, or eliminated
- 3.2.5: **External benefits, care, and service providers are held accountable**

- 4.1.1: Agile strategic footprint
- 4.1.2: VA drives change in external business environment
- 4.1.3: Rapid integration of proven innovation
- 4.1.4: Delayering and organizational design
- 4.1.5 Strategic sourcing
- 4.1.6 Force protection, mission assurance, and Federal disaster response
- 4.2.1: **Standardize human capital policies enterprise-wide**
- 4.2.2: **Improve staffing to ensure a qualified workforce is in place**
- 4.2.3: **Improve workforce and leadership competency**
- 4.3.1: Buy first
- 4.3.2: Modernize legacy systems and processes
- 4.3.3: Launch Digital Veterans Platform
- 4.3.4: Enhance the nation's medical research and graduate education capability
- 4.3.5: Enhance service to VA business lines
- 4.3.6: Modernize and unify VA's digital services
- 4.3.7: Enhance cybersecurity
- 4.4.1: Institutionalize value management and analytics
- 4.4.2: Standardized accessible data
- 4.4.3: Institutionalize consistent modeling /predictive analyses
- 4.4.4: Institutionalize governance

### HOW WE WILL KNOW WE ARRIVED: OUR PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Veterans surveyed are satisfied (or better) with the available choices for Veteran care, benefits, and services.
- Eligible Veterans choose VA as their provider of Choice for their care.
- Veterans agree that they received timely, relevant, and easy to understand information from VA that empowered them to make informed choices about their benefits, services, and care.
- Veterans agree that the statement "I feel like a valued customer" is true.

- Veterans are satisfied with the results of the Veteran benefits, care and services they received.
- VA's organizational performance matches or exceeds industry standards for excellence in all of its lines of business.
- Veterans have a good quality of life (presence of positive emotions in daily activities, participation in society, satisfying relationships, and overall life satisfaction).
- Zero Veteran suicides.
- Zero Veterans are homeless.
- Veterans achieve independence and economic security.

- Veterans say, "I trust VA to fulfill our country's commitment to Veterans."
- VA publishes healthcare benchmarks aligned with the private sector.
- VA publishes benefits and service delivery performance data.
- VA eliminates fraud, waste, and abuse.
- Performance based action will be taken against all proven poor performers within 90 days of substantiation of poor performance.
- Appropriate disciplinary or adverse action will be initiated against all employees within 90 days of substantiation or misconduct.

- VA has aligned its strategic footprint and services to ensure it can adapt quickly to changing Veteran needs.
- VA attracts a quality workforce as a result of its being identified as one of the Best Places to Work in Federal Government (large agencies) [FEVS best places to work index score]
- VA retains a quality workforce as a result of improvement in the VA employee engagement index (FEVS)
- Users are satisfied (or better) with VA's ability to provide secure and transparent interoperability of information and data.
- Employees report easy access to the information/data needed for effective decision-making.
- Increase the number of VA initiatives and programs that deliver better outcomes/value for Veterans.

VA operates in a high-performing and integrated Veteran network; provides a tailored Veteran experience; and is anticipatory, flexible, and scalable.

NCA’s strategic goals, objectives and strategies support and map to VA FY2018 – 2024 Strategic Plan and SECVA Priorities as depicted in the below table.

No.	Primary Owner	Supporting Owner	NCA Strategy	NCA Goal	NCA Objective	VA 2018-2024 Strategic Objective	SECVA Priority
1	43	41	Strategy 1.1.1: Open 15 new national cemeteries by 2022, thereby providing an additional 2% of the Veteran population with reasonable access to a burial option within 75 miles of their homes (43/41)	Goal #1: Veterans and eligible family members will have increased access to burial benefits	Objective 1.1: By the end of 2022, increase access to a burial option in a national, state, or tribal Veterans cemetery.	2.2: VA ensures at-risk and underserved Veterans receive what they need to eliminate Veteran suicide, homelessness, and poverty.	Suicide Prevention: Suicide prevention is VA’s highest clinical priority. Suicide is a national health crisis; it requires all of Government, along with public-private partnerships to address.
						4.1. (Agility) VA’s infrastructure improvements, improved decision-making protocols, and streamlined services enable VA to agilely adapt to changing business environments and Veteran needs.	Modernize Systems: Veterans and VA employees need systems and technology that enable them to deliver the high-quality care and services Veterans deserve.
2	40A3-VCGP	42	Strategy 1.1.2: Establish new state Veterans cemeteries in targeted areas to contribute a 2% increase towards the percent of Veterans that have access to a burial option in a national, state, or tribal Veterans cemetery within 75 miles of their homes (40A3-VCGP/42)	Goal #1: Veterans and eligible family members will have increased access to burial benefits	Objective 1.1: By the end of 2022, increase access to a burial option in a national, state, or tribal Veterans cemetery.	2.2: VA ensures at-risk and underserved Veterans receive what they need to eliminate Veteran suicide, homelessness, and poverty.	Suicide Prevention: Suicide prevention is VA’s highest clinical priority. Suicide is a national health crisis; it requires all of Government, along with public-private partnerships to address.
						4.1. (Agility) VA’s infrastructure improvements, improved decision-making protocols, and streamlined services enable VA to agilely adapt to changing business environments and Veteran needs.	Modernize Systems: Veterans and VA employees need systems and technology that enable them to deliver the high-quality care and services Veterans deserve.
3	42	41	Strategy 1.2.1: Resubmit a proposal to obtain the authority to pay a transportation allowance for the cost to transport the remains of the eligible Veteran or dependent to the nearest VA national or state Veterans cemetery (42/41)	Goal #1: Veterans and eligible family members will have increased access to burial benefits	Objective 1.2: By the end of 2022, address the burial needs of unserved Veterans (i.e., the remaining 5 percent of eligible Veterans – including those that live abroad who do not have reasonable access to a national or state Veterans cemetery within 75 miles of their homes, and where it is not fiscally prudent or geographically feasible to establish a Veterans cemetery near their home).	1.1: VA anticipates Veterans’ changing needs throughout their lives to enhance their choices.	Greater Choice: VA is committed to ensure Veterans can make decisions that work best for them and their families.
						2.2: VA ensures at-risk and underserved Veterans receive what they need to eliminate Veteran suicide, homelessness, and poverty.	Suicide Prevention: Suicide prevention is VA’s highest clinical priority. Suicide is a national health crisis; it requires all of Government, along with public-private partnerships to address.
						4.1. (Agility) VA’s infrastructure improvements, improved decision-making protocols, and streamlined services enable VA to agilely adapt to changing business environments and Veteran needs.	Modernize Systems: Veterans and VA employees need systems and technology that enable them to deliver the high-quality care and services Veterans deserve.

4	42	41	Strategy 1.2.2: Resubmit a proposal to increase the burial and plot allowances for all eligible Veterans without reasonable access to a burial option in a national or state Veterans cemetery (42/41)	Goal #1: Veterans and eligible family members will have increased access to burial benefits	Objective 1.2: By the end of 2022, address the burial needs of unserved Veterans (the remaining 5 percent of eligible Veterans – including those that live abroad who do not have reasonable access to a national or state Veterans cemetery within 75 miles of their homes, and where it is not fiscally prudent or geographically feasible to establish a Veterans cemetery near their home).	1.1: VA anticipates Veterans’ changing needs throughout their lives to enhance their choices.	Greater Choice: VA is committed to ensure Veterans can make decisions that work best for them and their families.
						2.2: VA ensures at-risk and underserved Veterans receive what they need to eliminate Veteran suicide, homelessness, and poverty.	Suicide Prevention: Suicide prevention is VA’s highest clinical priority. Suicide is a national health crisis; it requires all of Government, along with public-private partnerships to address.
5	41	42	Strategy 2.1.1: Develop and implement a plan to provide routine weekend burials in national cemeteries, to include those cemeteries closest to Veterans without reasonable access to a burial option in a national or state veteran cemetery (within 75 miles of their residence) (41/42)	Goal #2: More Veterans and eligible family members will use VA burial and memorial benefits.	Objective 2.1: By the end of 2022, increase the percent of Veterans and eligible family members that choose to be interred in a national, state, or tribal Veteran cemetery and utilize memorial benefits.	1.1: VA anticipates Veterans’ changing needs throughout their lives to enhance their choices.	Greater Choice: VA is committed to ensure Veterans can make decisions that work best for them and their families.
						2.2: VA ensures at-risk and underserved Veterans receive what they need to eliminate Veteran suicide, homelessness, and poverty.	Suicide Prevention: Suicide prevention is VA’s highest clinical priority. Suicide is a national health crisis; it requires all of Government, along with public-private partnerships to address.
						4.1. (Agility) VA’s infrastructure improvements, improved decision-making protocols, and streamlined services enable VA to agilely adapt to changing business environments and Veteran needs.	Modernize Systems: Veterans and VA employees need systems and technology that enable them to deliver the high-quality care and services Veterans deserve.
6	40-COS	44	Strategy 2.1.2: Enhance outreach efforts to increase the number of Veterans and family members who are aware of VA burial and memorial benefits (40-COS/44)	Goal #2: More Veterans and eligible family members will use VA burial and memorial benefits.	Objective 2.1: By the end of 2022, increase the percent of Veterans and eligible family members that choose to be interred in a national, state, or tribal Veteran cemetery and utilize memorial benefits.	1.1: VA anticipates Veterans’ changing needs throughout their lives to enhance their choices.	Greater Choice: VA is committed to ensure Veterans can make decisions that work best for them and their families.
						1.2: Veterans are informed of, understand, and can avail themselves of the benefits, care, and services they choose.	
						3.1: VA is always transparent to enhance Veterans’ choices, to maintain trust, and to be openly accountable for its actions.	Focus Resources: Veterans and taxpayers deserve to know VA resources are spent on the care and services Veterans need most.
						4.3. (VA IT/Cybersecurity) VA IT modernization will quickly deliver effective solutions that will enable VA to provide improved customer service and provide a secure and seamless experience while decreasing its rate of spend.	Modernize Systems: Veterans and VA employees need systems and technology that enable them to deliver the high-quality care and services Veterans deserve.

7	41	42	Strategy 2.1.3: Provide alternative burial options, including a natural or environmentally sensitive burial section in national cemeteries (41/42)	Goal #2: More Veterans and eligible family members will use VA burial and memorial benefits.	Objective 2.1: By the end of 2022, increase the percent of Veterans and eligible family members that choose to be interred in a national, state, or tribal Veteran cemetery and utilize memorial benefits.	1.1: VA anticipates Veterans' changing needs throughout their lives to enhance their choices.	Greater Choice: VA is committed to ensure Veterans can make decisions that work best for them and their families.
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						4.1. (Agility) VA's infrastructure improvements, improved decision-making protocols, and streamlined services enable VA to agilely adapt to changing business environments and Veteran needs.	Modernize Systems: Veterans and VA employees need systems and technology that enable them to deliver the high-quality care and services Veterans deserve.
8	41	44	Strategy 2.2.1: Fully implement a program for Veterans and their families to obtain pre-need burial eligibility determinations in advance of their time-of-need (41/44)	Goal #2: More Veterans and eligible family members will use VA burial and memorial benefits.	Objective 2.2: By the end of 2022, enhance processes and methods to easily apply for and obtain timely eligibility determinations for burial in a national, state, or tribal Veteran cemetery and utilization of memorial benefits.	1.1: VA anticipates Veterans' changing needs throughout their lives to enhance their choices.	Greater Choice: VA is committed to ensure Veterans can make decisions that work best for them and their families.
						1.2: Veterans are informed of, understand, and can avail themselves of the benefits, care, and services they choose.	
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4.4. (Data driven decision making) VA will institutionalize data supported and performance focused decision making that will improve the quality of outcomes.							
9	43	41	Strategy 2.2.2: Implement self-service capability to provide Veterans, eligible family members and other stakeholders enhanced options for how and when they request burial and memorial benefits; including on-line application for those benefits (43/41)	Goal #2: More Veterans and eligible family members will use VA burial and memorial benefits.	Objective 2.2: By the end of 2022, enhance processes and methods to easily apply for and obtain timely eligibility determinations for burial in a national, state, or tribal Veteran cemetery and utilization of memorial benefits.	1.1: VA anticipates Veterans' changing needs throughout their lives to enhance their choices.	Greater Choice: VA is committed to ensure Veterans can make decisions that work best for them and their families.
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						<p>4.1. (Agility) VA’s infrastructure improvements, improved decision-making protocols, and streamlined services enable VA to agilely adapt to changing business environments and Veteran needs.</p> <p>4.3. (VA IT/Cybersecurity) VA IT modernization will quickly deliver effective solutions that will enable VA to provide improved customer service and provide a secure and seamless experience while decreasing its rate of spend.</p> <p>4.4. (Data driven decision making) VA will institutionalize data supported and performance focused decision making that will improve the quality of outcomes.</p>	<p>Modernize Systems: Veterans and VA employees need systems and technology that enable them to deliver the high-quality care and services Veterans deserve.</p>
10	41	42	<p>Strategy 3.1.1: Improve quality and timeliness of headstones, markers, and medallions (41/42)</p>	<p>Goal #3: Veterans will be memorialized through enhanced tributes befitting their service and sacrifice to the nation.</p>	<p>Objective 3.1: By the end of 2022, improve the quality and timeliness of existing memorial benefits.</p>	<p>4.1. (Agility) VA’s infrastructure improvements, improved decision-making protocols, and streamlined services enable VA to agilely adapt to changing business environments and Veteran needs.</p>	<p>Modernize Systems: Veterans and VA employees need systems and technology that enable them to deliver the high-quality care and services Veterans deserve.</p>
11	41	42	<p>Strategy 3.1.2: Improve quality and timeliness of Presidential Memorial Certificates (41/42)</p>	<p>Goal #3: Veterans will be memorialized through enhanced tributes befitting their service and sacrifice to the nation.</p>	<p>Objective 3.1: By the end of 2022, improve the quality and timeliness of existing memorial benefits.</p>	<p>4.1. (Agility) VA’s infrastructure improvements, improved decision-making protocols, and streamlined services enable VA to agilely adapt to changing business environments and Veteran needs.</p>	<p>Modernize Systems: Veterans and VA employees need systems and technology that enable them to deliver the high-quality care and services Veterans deserve.</p>
12	40-COS	41	<p>Strategy 3.2.1: Implement digital memorialization capability to provide access to memorial information and services (40-COS/41)</p>	<p>Goal #3: Veterans will be memorialized through enhanced tributes befitting their service and sacrifice to the nation.</p>	<p>Objective 3.2: By the end of 2022, implement new initiatives to enhance Veteran memorialization and celebrate their legacy and military service.</p>	<p>4.3. (VA IT/Cybersecurity) VA IT modernization will quickly deliver effective solutions that will enable VA to provide improved customer service and provide a secure and seamless experience while decreasing its rate of spend.</p> <p>4.4. (Data driven decision making) VA will institutionalize data supported and performance focused decision making that will improve the quality of outcomes.</p>	<p>Modernize Systems: Veterans and VA employees need systems and technology that enable them to deliver the high-quality care and services Veterans deserve.</p>

13	40-COS	44	Strategy 3.2.2: Fully implement a Veterans Legacy Program (VLP) to enhance memorialization and increase awareness of Veteran sacrifice and post-military contributions by creating educational resources and programming for use by the public, both digitally and onsite at VA national cemeteries (40-COS/44)	Goal #3: Veterans will be memorialized through enhanced tributes befitting their service and sacrifice to the nation.	Objective 3.2: By the end of 2022, implement new initiatives to enhance Veteran memorialization and celebrate their legacy and military service.	1.2: Veterans are informed of, understand, and can avail themselves of the benefits, care, and services they choose.	Greater Choice: VA is committed to ensure Veterans can make decisions that work best for them and their families.
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						4.4. (Data driven decision making) VA will institutionalize data supported and performance focused decision making that will improve the quality of outcomes.	
14	41	43	Strategy 4.1.1: Implement Global Positioning System (GPS) technology to collect geo-spatial data for all gravesites in national cemeteries and use a Geographical Information System (GIS) to enhance the accounting for remains, marking of graves, and mapping of national cemeteries (41/43)	Goal #4: Stakeholders will place greater trust in NCA based on enhanced accountability.	Objective 4.1: By the end of 2022, strengthen capability to account for remains, mark graves, and account for gravesite usage by improving our use of information technology.	1.2: Veterans are informed of, understand, and can avail themselves of the benefits, care, and services they choose.	Greater Choice: VA is committed to ensure Veterans can make decisions that work best for them and their families.
						3.1: VA is always transparent to enhance Veterans' choices, to maintain trust, and to be openly accountable for its actions.	Focus Resources: Veterans and taxpayers deserve to know VA resources are spent on the care and services Veterans need most.
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15	42	41	Strategy 4.1.2: Improve the monitoring and tracking of burial rates and depletion projections for national, state and tribal Veterans cemeteries to ensure appropriate gravesite expansions (42/41)	Goal #4: Stakeholders will place greater trust in NCA based on enhanced accountability.	Objective 4.1: By the end of 2022, strengthen capability to account for remains, mark graves, and account for gravesite usage by improving our use of information technology.	1.2: Veterans are informed of, understand, and can avail themselves of the benefits, care, and services they choose.	Greater Choice: VA is committed to ensure Veterans can make decisions that work best for them and their families.
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						4.1. (Agility) VA's infrastructure improvements, improved decision-making protocols, and streamlined services enable VA to agilely adapt to changing business environments and Veteran needs.	Modernize Systems: Veterans and VA employees need systems and technology that enable them to deliver the high-quality care and services Veterans deserve.



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16	42	40A3-VCGP	Strategy 4.2.1: Fully implement the redesigned Organizational Assessment and Improvement Program (42/40A3-VCGP)	Goal #4: Stakeholders will place greater trust in NCA based on enhanced accountability.	Objective 4.2: By the end of 2022, strengthen capability to continuously assess and improve the operation and maintenance of Veterans cemeteries to meet National Shrine standards.	4.1. (Agility) VA's infrastructure improvements, improved decision-making protocols, and streamlined services enable VA to agilely adapt to changing business environments and Veteran needs.	Modernize Systems: Veterans and VA employees need systems and technology that enable them to deliver the high-quality care and services Veterans deserve.	
17	40A3-VCGP	42	Strategy 4.2.2: Enhance partnerships with state and tribal organizations to ensure the operations and maintenance of grant-funded state and tribal Veteran cemeteries (STVC) meet national shrine standards (40A3-VCGP/42)	Goal #4: Stakeholders will place greater trust in NCA based on enhanced accountability.	Objective 4.2: By the end of 2022, strengthen capability to continuously assess and improve the operation and maintenance of Veterans cemeteries to meet National Shrine standards.	1.1: VA anticipates Veterans' changing needs throughout their lives to enhance their choices.	Greater Choice: VA is committed to ensure Veterans can make decisions that work best for them and their families.	
						3.1: VA is always transparent to enhance Veterans' choices, to maintain trust, and to be openly accountable for its actions.	Focus Resources: Veterans and taxpayers deserve to know VA resources are spent on the care and services Veterans need most.	
18	42	44	Strategy 4.2.3: Obtain broader stakeholder feedback (42/44)	Goal #4: Stakeholders will place greater trust in NCA based on enhanced accountability.	Objective 4.2: By the end of 2022, strengthen capability to continuously assess and improve the operation and maintenance of Veterans cemeteries to meet National Shrine standards.	1.1: VA anticipates Veterans' changing needs throughout their lives to enhance their choices.	Greater Choice: VA is committed to ensure Veterans can make decisions that work best for them and their families.	
						3.1: VA is always transparent to enhance Veterans' choices, to maintain trust, and to be openly accountable for its actions.	Focus Resources: Veterans and taxpayers deserve to know VA resources are spent on the care and services Veterans need most.	
19	43	41	Strategy 5.1.1: Implement competency based training solutions to develop leaders, enhance individual performance, and support continuous learning (43/41)	Goal #5: Stakeholders will be served more efficiently and effectively by NCA's internal capacity.	Objective 5.1: By the end of 2022, improve the employee experience to employ a workforce with higher employee satisfaction that provides better service to Veterans.	2.1: VA has collaborative, high-performing and integrated delivery networks that enhance Veteran well-being and independence.	Improve Timeliness: Veterans must receive the benefits, care and services they need in a timely manner, no matter where they are.	
						3.2: VA holds its personnel and external service providers accountable for delivering excellent customer service and experiences while eliminating fraud, waste, and abuse.	Focus Resources: Veterans and taxpayers deserve to know VA resources are spent on the care and services Veterans need most.	
						4.2. (Human Capital Management Modernization & Transformation) VA will modernize its human capital management capabilities to empower and enable a diverse, fully staffed, and highly skilled workforce that consistently delivers world class services to Veterans and their families.	Modernize Systems: Veterans and VA employees need systems and technology that enable them to deliver the high-quality care and services Veterans deserve.	

20	43	41	Strategy 5.1.2: Develop and implement administration-wide workforce and succession plans to ensure excellence in recruitment, retention, training, and position management to meet the current and future needs of the organization (43/41)	Goal #5: Stakeholders will be served more efficiently and effectively by NCA's internal capacity.	Objective 5.1: By the end of 2022, improve the employee experience to employ a workforce with higher employee satisfaction that provides better service to Veterans.	2.1: VA has collaborative, high-performing and integrated delivery networks that enhance Veteran well-being and independence.	Improve Timeliness: Veterans must receive the benefits, care and services they need in a timely manner, no matter where they are.
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21	43	41	Strategy 5.1.3: Develop and implement targeted safety campaigns and programs and related training to improve employee health and safety. (43/41)	Goal #5: Stakeholders will be served more efficiently and effectively by NCA's internal capacity.	Objective 5.1: By the end of 2022, improve the employee experience to employ a workforce with higher employee satisfaction that provides better service to Veterans.	4.1. (Agility) VA's infrastructure improvements, improved decision-making protocols, and streamlined services enable VA to agilely adapt to changing business environments and Veteran needs.	Modernize Systems: Veterans and VA employees need systems and technology that enable them to deliver the high-quality care and services Veterans deserve.
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22	43	NA	Strategy 5.1.4 : Ensure a diverse and inclusive workforce (43)	Goal #5: Stakeholders will be served more efficiently and effectively by NCA's internal capacity.	Objective 5.1: By the end of 2022, improve the employee experience to employ a workforce with higher employee satisfaction that provides better service to Veterans.	3.2: VA holds its personnel and external service providers accountable for delivering excellent customer service and experiences while eliminating fraud, waste, and abuse.	Focus Resources: Veterans and taxpayers deserve to know VA resources are spent on the care and services Veterans need most.
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23	42	40-COS	Strategy 5.2.1: Update or write all necessary policy and regulations and electronically publish and archive these documents so they can be easily referenced and searched (42/40-COS)	Goal #5: Stakeholders will be served more efficiently and effectively by NCA's internal capacity.	Objective 5.2: By the end of 2022, increase the effectiveness of our policies, processes, and tools to improve the quality, consistency, and reliability of our outcomes.	1.2: Veterans are informed of, understand, and can avail themselves of the benefits, care, and services they choose.	Greater Choice: VA is committed to ensure Veterans can make decisions that work best for them and their families.
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24	43	42	Strategy 5.2.2: Implement business intelligence (BI) capability to provide NCA the tools necessary to better measure its performance and service to the Veteran (43/42)	Goal #5: Stakeholders will be served more efficiently and effectively by NCA's internal capacity.	Objective 5.2: By the end of 2022, increase the effectiveness of our policies, processes, and tools to improve the quality, consistency, and reliability of our outcomes.	4.1. (Agility) VA's infrastructure improvements, improved decision-making protocols, and streamlined services enable VA to agilely adapt to changing business environments and Veteran needs.	Modernize Systems: Veterans and VA employees need systems and technology that enable them to deliver the high-quality care and services Veterans deserve.
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25	43	41	Strategy 5.2.3: Provide tools to assist the Veteran and VA in using common data and services to fulfill benefit requests (43/41)	Goal #5: Stakeholders will be served more efficiently and effectively by NCA's internal capacity.	Objective 5.2: By the end of 2022, increase the effectiveness of our policies, processes, and tools to improve the quality, consistency, and reliability of our outcomes.	1.2: Veterans are informed of, understand, and can avail themselves of the benefits, care, and services they choose.	Greater Choice: VA is committed to ensure Veterans can make decisions that work best for them and their families.
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26	43	41	Strategy 5.2.4: Implement enhanced benefits management and cemetery services IT systems by replacing Burial Operations Support System (BOSS) and Automated Monument Application System (AMAS) with enhanced systems that meet all business requirements (43/41)	Goal #5: Stakeholders will be served more efficiently and effectively by NCA's internal capacity.	Objective 5.2: By the end of 2022, increase the effectiveness of our policies, processes, and tools to improve the quality, consistency, and reliability of our outcomes.	<p>4.3. (VA IT/Cybersecurity) VA IT modernization will quickly deliver effective solutions that will enable VA to provide improved customer service and provide a secure and seamless experience while decreasing its rate of spend.</p> <p>4.4. (Data driven decision making) VA will institutionalize data supported and performance focused decision making that will improve the quality of outcomes.</p>	Modernize Systems: Veterans and VA employees need systems and technology that enable them to deliver the high-quality care and services Veterans deserve.
27	42	41	Strategy 5.2.5: Adopt and implement enhanced burial and headstone/marker setting technologies (41/42)	Goal #5: Stakeholders will be served more efficiently and effectively by NCA's internal capacity.	Objective 5.2: By the end of 2022, increase the effectiveness of our policies, processes, and tools to improve the quality, consistency, and reliability of our outcomes.	<p>4.1. (Agility) VA's infrastructure improvements, improved decision-making protocols, and streamlined services enable VA to agilely adapt to changing business environments and Veteran needs.</p> <p>4.3. (VA IT/Cybersecurity) VA IT modernization will quickly deliver effective solutions that will enable VA to provide improved customer service and provide a secure and seamless experience while decreasing its rate of spend.</p> <p>4.4. (Data driven decision making) VA will institutionalize data supported and performance focused decision making that will improve the quality of outcomes.</p>	Modernize Systems: Veterans and VA employees need systems and technology that enable them to deliver the high-quality care and services Veterans deserve.