

Agency Review: Department of Veterans' Assistance

Agency Purposes: The purpose of the Department of Veterans' Assistance (Department), as stated in West Virginia Code §9A-1-1(b), is to aid, assist, counsel, and advise veterans who have served and been honorably discharged or separated under honorable conditions from the Armed Forces of the United States. The Department is also required to serve the widows, widowers and dependents of veterans, and veterans who may have special needs as a result of homelessness, incarceration or physical or mental disabilities.

What Did PERD Find?

- As of September 17, 2024, the Department has spent \$563,281, or 17 percent, of the \$3.3 million in federal emergency relief funds it received in May and June 2021.
- The Department acknowledged the extended time in which the funds remain unspent; however, it indicated that plans have been developed on how the funds will be used.
- The Department states it has been advised by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USVA) that no spending deadline is associated with the funds.

PERD's Objectives:

The objectives of this review are: (1) to determine if the Department complied with allowability guidance imposed over its spending of federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, & Economic Security (CARES), and American Rescue Plan (ARP) monies; and (2) to determine if sufficient and adequate coordination exists between the Department and the Division of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) to provide effective reentry assistance for veterans who are being released or were recently released.

Recommendations:

The Department should put a higher priority on spending the federal emergency relief funds to complete the projects needed to improve the veterans nursing facility and the veterans home.

The Department should determine whether the United States Veterans Affairs is sufficiently and effectively serving West Virginia's incarcerated and paroled veterans.

The Department of Veterans' Assistance should coordinate with the United States Veterans Affairs and the West Virginia Division of Corrections and Rehabilitation to provide assistance as needed.

Table 2
Department of Veterans' Assistance
Federal Emergency Relief Fund Balances
as of September 17, 2024

Topic	Nursing Facility	Veterans Home	Totals
Total Amount Received	\$1,816,040	\$1,508,024	\$3,324,064
Total Amount Spent	\$358,160	\$205,121	\$563,281
Total Unspent Amount	\$1,457,880	\$1,302,903	\$2,760,783
Percent of Received Funds Spent	20%	14%	17%
Expiration of Funds	None		
Sources: Department of Veterans' Assistance for the Total Amount Received, Our Advanced Solution with Integrated Systems (OASIS) for the Total Amount Spent (WV-FIN-GL-062, Account Status Report), and PERD calculations for the Total Unspent Amount and Percent of Received Funds Spent.			

- The Department does not coordinate with the DCR to provide reentry assistance for veterans who are being released or were recently released.
- The Department states one of its reasons for not coordinating with the DCR is that the USVA coordinates with DCR. However, the Department does not know the extent to which the USVA is utilizing DCR data or if the USVA would welcome the Department's assistance.