

September 2014

# Puerto RicoAnd the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

## General Information

The [Department of Veterans Affairs](http://www.va.gov/) (VA) offers a wide variety of programs and services for the nation’s 22 million veterans and continues to place a renewed emphasis on three long-term goals: increasing access to VA benefits and services, reducing the claims backlog, and eliminating veterans’ homelessness.

### Increasing Access

Nearly 13 million veterans receive at least one benefit or service from VA, an increase of over a million in four years. In 2013, about 8.9 million veterans were enrolled in [VA health care](http://www.va.gov/health/), and more than 4 million veterans and survivors received [VA disability compensation or pensions](http://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/) totaling some $54 billion. In 2013, VA surpassed a significant milestone with the Post-9/11 GI Bill program supporting more than a million recipients since the program began in August 2009 with expenditures totaling more than $30 billion. Nearly 68,000 trainees participated in VA’s [vocational rehabilitation](http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre/index.htm) activities in 2013, and nationally, some 6.7 million lives were insured through [life insurance](http://www.benefits.va.gov/insurance/) policies valued at $1.3 trillion. Nearly 125,000 veterans and family members were buried in VA’s [national cemeteries](http://www.cem.va.gov/index.asp) and more than 352,000 headstones and markers were provided for veterans’ graves worldwide.

### Reducing the Claims Backlog

Veterans across the country wait too long to receive benefits they have earned. That’s why VA began a robust plan to fix the decades-long problem and made considerable strides last year. Nationwide, VA completed a record-breaking 1.17 million claims in 2013 – more than 4 million claims in the last four years – and deployed an end‐to‐end paperless electronic claims processing system known as the Veterans Benefits Management System at every regional office by June 2013. In the past four years alone, VA has added more than 940,000 veterans to its compensation rolls, more than the active duty Army and Navy combined.

### Eliminating Homelessness

VA is committed to achieving the Department’s [goal of ending veteran homelessness](http://www.va.gov/homeless/about_the_initiative.asp) in 2015. In 2013, VA served nearly 350,000 veterans who were homeless or at risk of homelessness – a 43 percent increase from 2012. Since 2009, VA has partnered with Congress, the Department of Housing and Urban Development and hundreds of community organizations across the country to reduce the estimated number of homeless veterans by more than 23 percent. VA’s joint program with HUD, known as [HUD-VASH](http://www.va.gov/homeless/hud-vash.asp), has provided housing vouchers for more than 58,000 Veterans since 2008; VA is expanding other successful programs such as [Supportive Services for Veterans and Families (SSVF)](http://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf.asp) to prevent thousands of Veterans and their families from becoming homeless.

### General Information – Puerto Rico (Fiscal year 2013 data)

* *Number of veterans: 99,928*
* *VA expenditures in Puerto Rico: $1.4 billion*
	+ *Compensation and pensions: $698 million*
	+ *Medical and construction programs: $621 million*
	+ *Insurance and indemnities: $2.5 million*
	+ *General operating expenses: $20 million*
* *Number of veterans receiving disability compensation or pension payments: 33,959*
* *Number of Puerto Ricans using GI Bill® or other VA education benefits: 6,880*
* *Number of home loans in Puerto Rico backed by VA guarantees: 2,243*
* *Value of Puerto Rico home loans guaranteed by VA: $370 million*
* *Number of VA life insurance policies held by Puerto Rico residents: 3,429*
* *Value of VA life insurance policies held by Puerto Rico residents: $35.5 million*
* *Number of Puerto Rico participants in VA vocational rehabilitation: 750*
* *Number of veterans buried in Puerto Rico’s VA national cemeteries: 1,782*
* *Number of headstones and markers provided for graves of Puerto Rico veterans and survivors: 3,291*

## Health Care

One of the most visible of all VA benefits is [health care](http://www1.va.gov/health/index.asp). VA operates more than 1,700 sites of care, including 150 hospitals (or medical centers), 985 outpatient clinics, 300 Vet Centers, 70 Mobile Vet Centers, 135 community living centers (formerly, nursing homes), and 104 residential rehabilitation treatment programs.  In 2013, VA treated more than six million patients during 86 million outpatient visits and nearly 700,000 inpatient admissions.  VA is taking advantage of new technologies to expand access to care. For example, [VA telehealth programs](http://www.telehealth.va.gov/) – the largest and most comprehensive in the nation – are turning veterans’ homes and communities into preferred sites of care.  In 2013, VA’s telehealth programs provided care to more than 600,000 veterans in more than 1.7 million episodes of care.  Outreach using mobile health clinics and [rural health care](http://www.ruralhealth.va.gov/) partnerships is expanding access to veterans in rural areas like never before.

### Health Care - Puerto Rico

* *Inpatient admissions, statewide, fiscal year 2013:*
* [*San Juan*](http://www.caribbean.va.gov)*: 10,720*
* *Outpatient visits, statewide, fiscal year 2013: 1 million*
* *Outpatient clinic locations*

Arecibo

Ceiba

Comerio

Guayama

Mayaguez

Ponce

Utuado

Vieques

* *Veterans* [*Readjustment Counseling*](http://www.vetcenter.va.gov/Vet_Center_Services.asp) *Centers**(Vet Centers)* [*Locations*](http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/vetcenter.asp?isFlash=0)*:*

*Arecibo*

*Ponce*

*Rio Piedras*

## Disabilities and Pensions

Not all military service-related issues end when people are [discharged from active duty](https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits-portal/ebenefits.portal). About 3.7 million veterans received monthly VA disability compensation in 2013 for medical conditions related to their service in uniform. VA pensions went to about 308,000 wartime veterans with limited means.

### Disabilities and Pensions - Puerto Rico (Fiscal year 2013 data)

* *Number of veterans receiving monthly disability compensation: 24,435*
* *Number of VA pensions to veterans in Puerto Rico: 9,524*
* *Number of disability compensation claims processed: 9,885*

## Memorial Affairs

Most men and women who served in the military are [eligible for burial](http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/burial_benefits/eligible.asp)in a VA national cemetery, as are their spouses and dependent children.  VA manages the country’s [network of national cemeteries](http://www.cem.va.gov/cems/listcem.asp) with approximately 4 million[gravesites](http://gravelocator.cem.va.gov/) at 131 national cemeteries in 41 states and Puerto Rico, as well as in 33 soldier’s lots and monument sites.  In 2013,**nearly 125,000 veterans and dependents were buried** in VA's national cemeteries. Additionally, VA provided more than 352,000[headstones and markers](http://www.cem.va.gov/hmm/index.asp)and some 407,000 [Presidential Memorial Certificates](http://www.cem.va.gov/pmc.asp) to the loved ones of deceased veterans.VA also has provided funding for the creation of 93 [state veterans cemeteries](http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/grants/veterans_cemeteries.asp) since the [Veterans Cemetery Grants Program](http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/grants/veterans_cemeteries.asp) began in 1978. In 2013, more than 32,000 burials were conducted in state cemeteries.

### Memorial Affairs – Puerto Rico

* *National cemetery burials in Puerto Rico, 2013:*
* [*Puerto Rico National Cemetery*](http://www.cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/puertorico.asp)*: 1,782*
* *Headstones and markers provided in 2013 (statewide): 3,291*
* *Presidential Memorial Certificates issued in 2013 (statewide): 1,743*

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