

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
FISCAL YEAR 2023 FISHER HOUSE PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT**

Program Overview

The mission of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Fisher House Program is to provide temporary lodging to eligible Veterans, active duty Service members, families and caregivers during certain episodes of care. The costs for Fisher House lodging are borne by VA.

VA currently operates and maintains fifty (53) Fisher Houses located the following locations:

- Samuel S. Stratton VA Medical Center, Albany, New York
- Bay Pines VA Healthcare System, Bay Pines, Florida
- VA Boston Healthcare System (West Roxbury), Boston, Massachusetts
- Cincinnati VA Medical Center, Cincinnati, Ohio
- VA North Texas Health Care System, Dallas, Texas
- VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System, Aurora, Colorado
- VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System, Los Angeles, California
- Edward Hines Jr. VA Hospital, Hines, Illinois
- Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center, Houston, Texas (three Fisher Houses)
- Bruce W. Carter VA Medical Center, Miami, Florida
- Minneapolis VA Health Care System, Minneapolis, Minnesota (two Fisher Houses)
- VA Palo Alto Health Care System, Palo Alto, California (two Fisher Houses)
- Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center, Richmond, Virginia (two Fisher Houses)
- St. Louis VA Health Care System, (Jefferson Barracks), St. Louis, Missouri
- VA Puget Sound Health Care System, Seattle, Washington
- James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital, Tampa, Florida (two Fisher Houses)
- West Palm Beach VA Medical Center, West Palm Beach, Florida
- Washington DC VA Medical Center, District of Columbia
- Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center, Augusta, Georgia
- VA Salt Lake City Health Care System, Salt Lake City, Utah
- VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- South Texas Veterans Health Care System, San Antonio, Texas
- Tennessee Valley Health Care System, Murfreesboro, Tennessee
- North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System, Gainesville, Florida
- Southern Arizona VA Health Care System, Tucson, Arizona
- VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System, Las Vegas, Nevada
- Clement J. Zablocki Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- VA Portland Health Care System (Vancouver Campus), Portland, Oregon
- VA Long Beach Healthcare System, Long Beach, California
- Orlando VA Medical Center, Orlando, Florida
- Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center, Charleston, South Carolina
- VA Connecticut Healthcare System, West Haven, Connecticut
- Dayton VA Medical Center, Dayton, Ohio

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- James J. Peters VA Medical Center, Bronx, New York (two Fisher Houses)
- Louis Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center, Cleveland, Ohio (two Fisher Houses)
- Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical Center, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- VA Maine Healthcare System, Togus, Maine
- VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System, Ann Arbor, Michigan
- VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System, Omaha, Nebraska
- Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Care System, New Orleans, Louisiana
- Hershel “Woody” Williams VA Medical Center, Huntington, West Virginia
- VA Kansas City Healthcare System, Kansas City, Missouri
- Lexington VA Medical Center, Soursley Campus, Lexington, Kentucky
- William Jennings Bryan Dorn VA Medical Center, Columbia, South Carolina
- Harry S. Truman Memorial Veterans’ Hospital, Columbia, Missouri

Program Authority

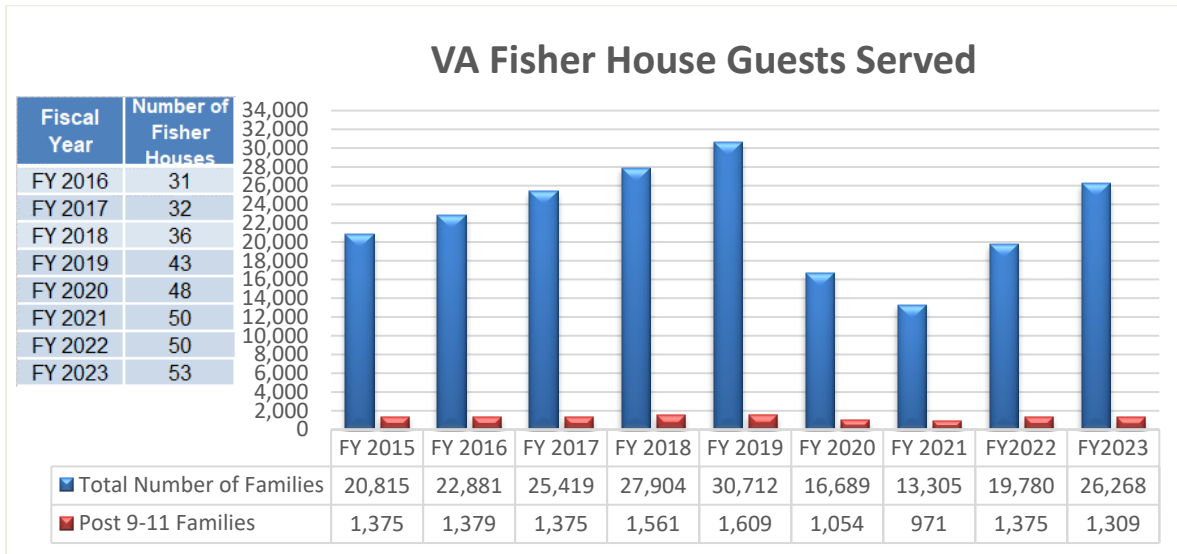
Section 221(a) of the Veterans Benefits and Health Care Improvement Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-419) gave VA authority to furnish temporary lodging in Fisher Houses constructed and donated by the Fisher House Foundation to Veterans, families and caregivers in connection with the Veterans’ examination, treatment or care in connection with benefits administered under title 38, United States Code (U.S.C.). This provision is codified at 38 U.S.C. § 1708, implemented in VA regulations at 38 C.F.R. part 60, and is administered by the Veterans Health Administration (VHA).

VHA Directive 1107, *VA Fisher Houses and Other Temporary Lodging*, provides further guidance for the VA Fisher House Program. The directive also includes criteria for new VA Fisher House site selection and information on the Fisher House application process.

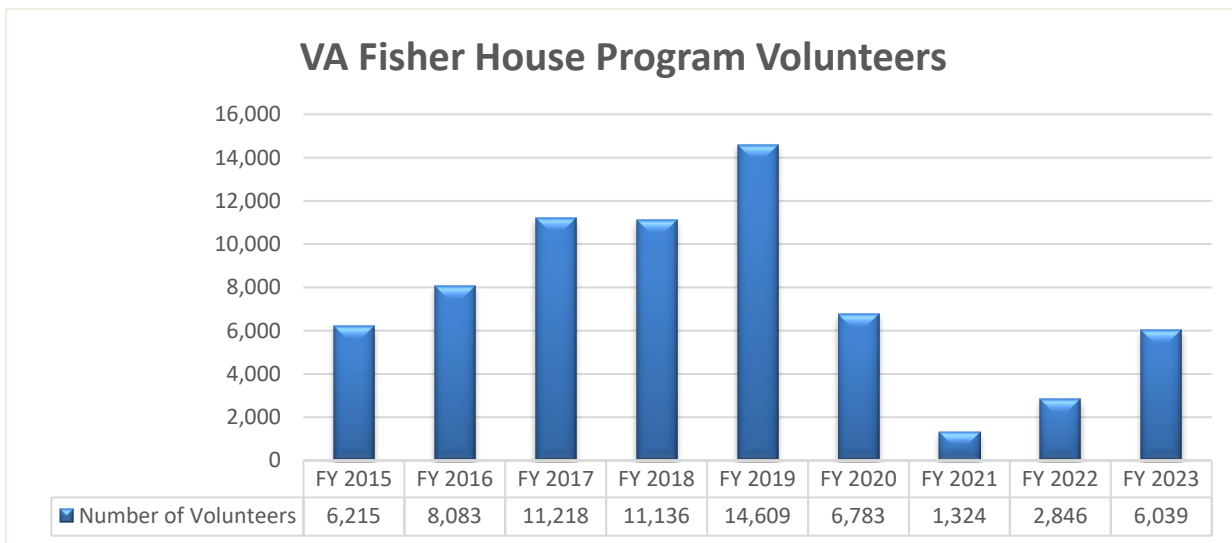
Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Program Accomplishments

- The chart below shows that VA Fisher House accommodated 26,268 families, including 1,309 families of Post 9/11 active duty Service members and Veterans. VA Fisher House accommodated 36,563 individuals during FY 2023.

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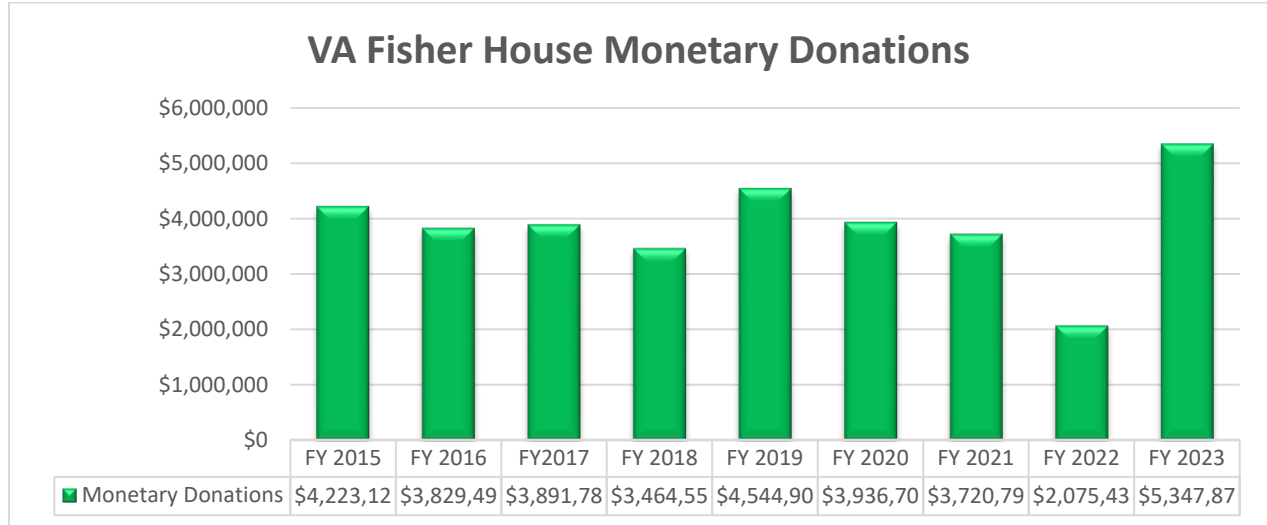


- The following charts show that 6,039 volunteers provided 23,779 hours of service in support of VA Fisher Houses during FY 2023. As the VA medical facilities recovered from the pandemic, on site Fisher House volunteer support continued to slowly increase for the FY 2023. This contributed to a continued increase in the number of volunteers and hours of volunteer support.



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- The following chart shows VA Fisher House received over \$5 million in monetary donations to support VA Fisher Houses during FY 2023.



- VA Fisher House guests saved over \$21 million in lodging costs.
- 5.4 days was the average VA Fisher House length of stay.
- VA Fisher Houses accommodated 1,309 minor children.
- Fisher House Foundation’s Hero Miles Program provided 2,962 airline ticket vouchers and contributed to a cost savings of over \$2.2 million in travel expenses for Veterans, families, and caregivers. Of the 2,962 airline tickets, Hero Miles Program provided 32 tickets to Veterans enrolled in the VA Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) and 55 airline tickets to Veterans receiving treatment at VA Polytrauma Centers. Hero Miles Program provided 82 airline tickets to support Veteran participation in the National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic and 86 tickets for the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.
- Fisher House Foundation’s Hotels for Heroes Program provided 877 nights of local hotel lodging for 490 families and caregivers of Post 9/11 active duty Service members and Veterans hospitalized at VA medical centers. Hotels for Heroes also provided 2,235 nights of lodging for 302 additional families of Veterans receiving care in the community. Hotels for Heroes contributed to over \$561,297.10 in combined lodging expense savings for these families. Hotels for Heroes was used to accommodate families when VA Fisher Houses were at capacity. Individuals who utilized the Hotels for Heroes Program relocated to a VA Fisher House once a suite was available.

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VA Fisher House Program Management

The Executive Director for Care Management and Social Work Services and the National VA Fisher House and Family Hospitality Program Manager, who is assigned under Care Management and Social Work Services and the Office of Patient Care Services, oversee the VA Fisher House Program. Under the auspices of the Executive Director, the National Fisher House and Family Hospitality Program Manager:

- Reviews applications for new VA Fisher Houses and assists the Office of the Under Secretary for Health in recommending sites for future VA Fisher House construction;
- Provides guidance to VA medical facilities developing plans for Fisher Houses;
- Monitors and budgets for costs associated with annual VA Fisher House refurbishment projects and use of General Post Funds designated for the Fisher House program;
- Develops and publishes guidance for the operation of VA Fisher Houses;
- Moderates monthly conference calls with VA Fisher House Managers and provides ongoing guidance and coaching related to Fisher House operations;
- Serves as the VA liaison to the Fisher House Foundation;
- Serves as a VA liaison to the Department of Defense (DoD) Fisher House Program;
- Identifies and develops key community partnerships on local and national levels in support of the Fisher House program; and
- Collaborates with multiple VA program offices to support Fisher House Program operations including Office of Healthcare Engineering, Office of General Counsel, Office of Construction and Facilities Management, VA Center for Development and Civic Engagement, Veterans Canteen Service and the Office of Community Engagement.

VA Fisher House Program FY 2023 Highlights

- Fisher House Foundation started construction on three (3) VA Fisher Houses; a second Fisher House in San Antonio, Texas; at Memphis, Tennessee, and Detroit, Michigan.
- The National VA Fisher House and Family Hospitality Program coordinated the distribution of over \$900K to VA medical facilities for Fisher House refurbishment.
- VA Fisher House Managers contributed to *The Patriot*, Fisher House Foundation's magazine, published quarterly to highlight Fisher House activities.
 - VA Ann Arbor Fisher House celebrated their nominee who was selected for Fisher House Volunteer of the Year
 - VA St Louis Health Care System Fisher House manager was highlighted in 'Meet the Manager'
- The National VA Fisher House and Family Hospitality Program Manager continued preconstruction activity for 21 sites on the approved future construction list. The

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National Program Manager provided ongoing guidance and consultation to 53 Fisher House Managers on Fisher House operations.

- The National VA Fisher House and Family Hospitality Program Manager visited two (2) VA medical facilities to assess construction sites to review sites.
- VA Fisher House Program celebrated two Fisher House openings at New Orleans, Louisiana, and Kansas City, Missouri, which were delayed due to pandemic travel restrictions.
- VA Fisher House Program also celebrated three dedications at new Fisher Houses and a topping off ceremony at San Antonio, Texas.

VA Fisher House Program Plans for FY 2024

In FY 2024, the VA Fisher House Program plans to:

- Dedicate three (3) VA Fisher Houses at Bay Pines, Florida (second house) in October, Audie L. Murphy VA Medical Center (second house), San Antonio, Texas, Lt. Col. Luke Weathers, Jr., VA Medical Center, Memphis, Tennessee.
- Initiate construction on the Fisher House Foundation 100th Fisher House. Projected construction at James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center, Chicago, Illinois; Little Rock VA Medical Center, Little Rock, Arkansas; and H. John Heinz III VA Medical Center, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
- Celebrate 10-year anniversaries at VA North Florida/South Georgia Fisher House, Gainesville, Florida; Alvin C. York VA Medical Center, Murfreesboro, Tennessee; and the second house at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center, Houston, Texas.
- Actively pursue land acquisition activities in collaboration with VA Office of Construction and Facilities Management at seven (7) locations in Birmingham, Alabama, Phoenix, Arizona, Iowa City, Iowa, Durham, North Carolina, Fargo, North Dakota, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and Madison, Wisconsin.
- Complete VA Fisher House pre-construction planning site visits at White River Junction, Vermont, and Asheville, North Carolina with Fisher House Foundation President, local community partners and VA Network and facility staff. Work with VA facility points of contact at priority sites to establish local Fisher House programs and develop project timelines for future Fisher House construction.
- Participate in quarterly meetings with VA-VHA program offices and Fisher House Foundation to review Fisher House project planning.
- Participate in quarterly conference calls with the National DoD Fisher House Programs to enhance Fisher House Program collaboration and service consistency across Departments.
- Provide oversight of the National VA Fisher House refurbishment program including scheduling, funding, and completing Fisher House refurbishment projects.
- Collaborate with Fisher House Foundation and the DoD Fisher House Program to plan and facilitate the Fisher House Manager's Face to Face Training in 2024.

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Please contact Jennifer Halter, National VA Fisher House and Hospitality Program Manager, at 612-471-6958 or Jennifer.Halter@va.gov.

Department of Veterans Affairs
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