

## **2023–24 DEPARTMENTAL RESULTS REPORT**

- The Departmental Results Report (DRR) outlines what we accomplished and the results achieved for Veteran health and well-being in 2023-24 (tabled in Parliament on December 17, 2024).
- We improved the way we deliver benefits and programs and streamlined our processes while we continued to work on our top priority of reducing processing times for Veterans.
- Our focus continues to be on improving the overall health, well-being and financial security of Veterans and their families, while recognizing and commemorating those who have served.
- More than 90% of the \$6.1B spent in 2023–24 consisted of payments to Veterans, their families, and other program recipients.

## **WHEN PRESSED:**

### **Q1 – Why did the Department lapse funding in 2023-24?**

Lapsing funds is a normal and expected part of any budgetary process.

- Our annual budget varies each year based on Veteran demand for our programs and services.
- Our benefits are demand-driven; so, no matter how many Veterans come forward, when eligible, they will receive benefits. These are based on estimates and the process guarantees that whenever a Veteran comes forward—this year, next year, or beyond—they will receive benefits.
- Overall, we increased the number of programs and services for Veterans and their families over recent years. We spent \$6.1 billion on service delivery in 2023-24, compared to \$4.8 billion in 2020-21.

### **Q2 – Why is there a significant reduction of FTEs moving forward?**

Funding for FTEs is sometimes allocated on a temporary basis to address a specific need.

- The drop in full-time employees planned for 2026-2027 is due to the end of temporary funding.
- The funding that we received for Disability Benefits is ending on 31 March 2026.

### **Q3 – What is VAC doing to address wait times?**

We continue to improve the current processing times for disability benefits and this remains our top priority. We have made progress, but we know there is more work to do

- The average processing time for first applications in the third quarter of 2023–2024 was 18.1 weeks.
- Since 2020, we have reduced the backlog by 75%. As of 31 December 2023, there were 5,054 applications over the service standard. There were more than 16,000 fewer applications over the service standard than on 30 June 2020. During this period, the total number of pending applications was reduced from 45,296 to 31,577.
- In 2023-2024, 69% of applications were processed within the service standards which is more than double what was accomplished in 2020-2021.

## **BACKGROUND – 2023-24 DEPARTMENTAL RESULTS REPORT**

The 2023–24 DRR provides parliamentarians and Canadians with information on what we accomplished and how we achieved the results we wanted to reach during the fiscal year against the plans set out in our [2023-24 Departmental Plan](#). The DRR is generally tabled and published approximately 18 months after the tabling of the corresponding year's Departmental Plan.

All Departmental corporate reporting is published both on GC InfoBase - [GC InfoBase - Infographic for Veterans Affairs Canada](#) and on VAC's external website - [Reports - Publications and reports - Veterans Affairs Canada](#). TBS requires that the reports be published to the web within 2 hours of tabling in Parliament.

Highlights from this year's Report include:

- Made significant progress on streamlining operations and delivering faster, more efficient services to Veterans and their families. Despite a 78% increase in disability benefit applications since 2015–16, with the help of additional temporary staff we reduced the backlog of disability benefits applications by 75% between 2020 and 2024.
- This staffing increase combined with efforts to introduce new, innovative technologies, and expand our outreach have helped us meet the demand and steadily improved the percentage of disability benefit decisions made within the 16-week target.
- Secured additional resources through a \$164.4 million investment to keep up our progress and maintain momentum in reducing the backlog. This funding will extend the contracts of employees who process disability benefits applications until March 2026. It will also extend the positions of case managers and other front-line staff, who assist Veterans and manage caseloads, until March 2027.
- Worked closely with Veterans during their transition out of the CAF to identify needs and barriers, establish goals and connect them to the programs and services available.
- Continued to promote the OSISS Program to support Veterans and their families. By December 2023, 2,001 peers received services, including 589 participating in group meetings. Veterans and their family members make up 73% of those served by OSISS (the other 27% being still serving CAF members and their families).
- Introduced the Service Health Records Search Tool (SHRST) which uses advanced machine reading and handwriting recognition to modernize retrieving critical health information from service records.

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Source: Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance Date: 2024/12/20

- Continued modernizing key tools critical to disability benefit decisions—the [EEGs](#) and the [TOD](#). These enhancements aim to improve consistency in decision making and reduce the need for hand-offs in the process to make faster decisions for Veterans. These updates streamline and standardize decision-making, using the latest health evidence.
- Improved programs for medically released members and their families in partnership with the Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services. These supports included 24/7 crisis management services, specialized transition programs, and traditional family support.
- Expanded our outreach efforts beyond the mandated visits to Northern communities to include Northern Quebec, Northern Newfoundland & Labrador, and Indigenous communities to deepen our understanding of and responsiveness to the unique needs of Veterans in these regions.
- In-person services resumed in northern communities and we maintained support for Indigenous Veterans through peer support groups.
- Collaborated with Statistics Canada to analyze financial health, revealing that 17% of Veterans have incomes below the Low-Income Measure. A study was launched to examine income challenges Veterans face post-service.
- Supported housing initiatives through the Veteran and Family Well-being Fund (VFWF) that help Veterans find safe and stable housing. We funded 23 projects with a total of \$945,000 focused on this work.
- Led a delegation to the 2023 Invictus Games which were held in Düsseldorf, Germany. Team Canada, with thirty-two members including Veterans and active service members, competed in ten adaptive sports over 8 days.
- Launched an extensive web feature on 2SLGBTQI+ Canadians in uniform which offers an historical perspective on the discrimination and harm faced by members of this community who served in the CAF and also recognizes their important contributions throughout Canada's military history.

Quick stats from the DRR include:

- Reduced the backlog of disability benefit applications by 75% since 2020.
- By March 2024, 69% of disability benefit decisions were made within the 16-week target (up from 30% in 2020–21).
- Employed 3,673.3 full-time equivalents, including many new hires, most of whom provided direct service to Veterans and their families.
- Spent over \$690 million in Treatment Benefits to support about 87,000 Veterans for prescription drugs, dental, audio services, vision care, and nursing services.
- Supported housing initiatives for homeless Veterans through The [Veterans Homelessness Program](#), which is delivering \$79.1M in funding to provide rent supplements and other supports.
- Provided over \$1.2 billion to Veterans, survivors, and orphans via the Income Replacement Benefit program to support their financial well-being, rehabilitation and re-establishment to post military life.
- Provided essential financial aid 1,053 times, assisting 842 Veterans and their families with over \$1.6 million to cover basic necessities like shelter, food, and clothing via the Veterans Emergency Fund (VEF) program.
- Funding to support 2,060 Veterans in long-term care which covered care, enhanced programs and services, and helped Veterans with their monthly accommodation and meal costs.
- Spent \$29M in Education Training Benefits (ETB) for over 2,000 Veterans to support new certification, degrees, diplomas, or additional training.
- Supported the preference of participants with 57% of OSI clinic services being provided virtually.
- Hosted quarterly virtual webinars connecting Veterans with employers and attracting between 800-1,000 participants in each session. 3,600 participants attended four webinars with 111 presentations from 80 diverse employers.
- Distributed over 4.4 million commemorative learning products across Canada in the weeks leading up to Veterans' Week.
- Approved funding for 176 initiatives through the Community Partnerships Program, which included 15 new community war memorials, 18 restorations and major additions to existing memorials, and 143 community engagement initiatives.