



November 14, 2024

The Honorable Governor Jim Pillen
State Capitol, 2nd Floor N.E.
P.O. Box 94848
Lincoln, NE 68509-4848

Mr. Brandon Metzler
Clerk of the Legislature
State Capitol, Room 2018
P.O. Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509-4604

Dear Governor Pillen and Mr. Metzler:

On behalf of the State of Nebraska's Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs, please accept this report pursuant to Nebraska Revised Statute § 55-606.

In 2024, Nebraska's Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs met twice pursuant to Nebraska Revised Statute § 55-603. On August 9th, 2024, the Commission voted to contract with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Bureau of Business Research to summarize and assess the economic impact of military assets in Nebraska pursuant to Nebraska Revised Statutes § 55-605 and § 55-606. For 2024, the Commission put forth five recommendations that have their roots in the 2008 BRAC Task Force Report. These five recommendations serve as the Commission's "recommendations for preserving and sustaining military assets and missions existing in Nebraska" and serve as the Commission's "recommendations for actions which the state can take to encourage expanding such assets and missions" pursuant to Nebraska Revised Statute § 55-606. On November 4, 2024 the Commission voted to proceed with proposed changes discussed during the meeting and proceed with the submission of this report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert W. Ford Jr." in a cursive script.

Robert W. Ford Jr.
Military Affairs Liaison
Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs



A Bureau of Business Research Report
From the University of Nebraska—Lincoln

The Economic Impact of Nebraska Military Assets: An Update for Fiscal Year 2023

Final Report

Prepared for the Nebraska Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs

November 15, 2024

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	4
Economic Impact Estimates	4
1. Introduction	5
2017-2023 Economic Impact of Nebraska Military Assets	5
Commission Recommendations	6
The Current Report	16
2. Military Assets and Spending.....	18
Offutt Air Force Base.....	18
Nebraska National Guard, Air National Guard, and Nebraska Emergency Management Agency	21
Reserve Components	24
3. Department of Defense Military Retiree and Veterans Affairs Spending.....	28
Military Retirees paid by the DoD.....	28
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs	29
GI Bill Spending and Utilization.....	35
Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs.....	35
4. Economic Impact Analysis.....	37
Economic Impact Methodology	37
Economic Impact of Military Spending	38
Economic Impact of Military Retirement Pensions	42
Economic Impact of Veterans Affairs Spending.....	42
Economic Impact of the Army Corps of Engineers	44
Economic Impact of GI Bill Benefits for Higher Education.....	45
Summary of Annual Economic Impact.....	45

Table of Tables

Table 1. The Annual Economic Impact on Military Bases, Military Retirement System Payments and Veterans Affairs Spending on the State of Nebraska, FY 2023	4
Table 2. Total State and Federal Funding to Nebraska Army National Guard	13
Table 3. Total State and Federal Funding to Nebraska Air National Guard (to Support Maintenance and Sustainment of Facilities and Infrastructure by State Fiscal Year)	13
Table 4. Offutt AFB and USSTRATCOM Military and Civilian Personnel FY 2023	21
Table 5. Offutt AFB and USSTRATCOM Payroll/Benefits and Expenditures FY 2023	21
Table 6. Nebraska National Guard Employment, FY 2023	23
Table 7. Nebraska National Guard Payroll, Benefits, and Operations, FY 2023	24
Table 8. Army Reserve Personnel and Expenses, FY 2022/2023	25
Table 9. Air Force Reserve Personnel and Expenses, FY 2022/2023	26
Table 10. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Nebraska Personnel and Payroll	26
Table 11. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works Spending in Nebraska, FY 2023	27
Table 12. Nebraska Military Retirees and Pension/Retirement Compensation, FY 2023	28
Table 13. Total VA Spending in Nebraska, FY 2018 to 2023 (in millions)	33
Table 14. Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs Appropriations, 2017-2024 Biennia	36
Table 15. Direct Employment, Employee Compensation and Output Impact of Offutt Air Force Base	39
Table 16. The Annual Economic Impact of Offutt Air Base on Nebraska	39
Table 17. The Annual Economic Impact of the Nebraska National Guard on the State	40
Table 18. Direct Employment, Employee Compensation and Output Impact of Nebraska-based Reserve Forces.....	41
Table 19. The Annual Economic Impact of Reserve Forces on Nebraska.....	41
Table 20. The Overall Economic Impact of Nebraska Military Assets on the State	42
Table 21. The Annual Economic Impact of Military Retirement System Payments on the Nebraska Economy	42
Table 22. Veterans Affairs Spending in Nebraska Fiscal Year 2023 By Program	43
Table 23. The Annual Economic Impact on Nebraska from Veterans Affairs Spending.....	44
Table 24. The Annual Economic Impact on Nebraska from Veterans Affairs Spending: Employee.....	44
Table 25. The Total Annual Economic Impact of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on the Nebraska Economy	45
Table 26. The Total Annual Impact of GI Bill benefits on the Nebraska Economy	45
Table 27. The Annual Economic Impact on Military Bases, Military Retirement System Payments and Veterans Affairs Spending on the State of Nebraska, FY 2023	46

Table of Figures

Figure 1. State & Federal Spending on Nebraska National Guard	12
Figure 2. Nebraska National Guard Locations	22
Figure 3. Army Reserve Locations in State of Nebraska	25
Figure 4. VA Facilities and Locations in the State of Nebraska	30
Figure 5. Number of Veterans Residing in Nebraska Counties (FY 2023)	31
Figure 6. Number of Veterans per 1,000 Residents (FY 2023)	32
Figure 7. VA Expenditures per County in the State of Nebraska (FY 2023, in millions)	34
Figure 8. VA Spending per Veteran per County in the State of Nebraska (FY 2023).....	35
Figure 9. Approach for Calculating the Annual Economic Impact of Military Assets on Nebraska.....	38

Executive Summary

This report was commissioned by the Nebraska Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs and conducted by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Bureau of Business Research (BBR). The study is designed to provide detailed information about the status of military assets located in Nebraska, including payroll and operations spending at the various facilities across the state. The report also examines Department of Defense retirement spending and Veterans Affairs spending that takes place in Nebraska. The economic impact is estimated in terms of economic output (business sales), employee compensation (wages and benefits) and employment. The report serves as an update to similar studies that were completed by the BBR on behalf of the Nebraska Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs annually since 2017. These studies demonstrate that military, veteran, and retirement spending have a considerable impact on the state economy.

Economic Impact Estimates

- Spending at military bases and installations in FY 2023 accounted for \$2.6 billion in economic output, \$1.5 billion in employee compensation, and 23,661 jobs generated in Nebraska.
- Retirement and pension spending by Department of Defense (DoD) military retirees in Nebraska in FY 2023 generated 2,815 new jobs in Nebraska (in addition to the 23,661 noted above), resulting in \$152.4 million in compensation to these employees.
- Estimates show that VA spending in FY 2023 resulted in \$2.6 billion in economic output and the employment of 16,428 workers with a total salary of \$1.0 billion.
- Army Corps of Engineers spending in FY 2023 resulted in \$144.2 million in economic output, 1,242 jobs, and \$103.4 million in employee compensation.
- GI Bill spending in the state in FY 2023 resulted in 337 jobs, \$14.5 million in salary, and \$32.6 million in economic output.

Table 1. The Annual Economic Impact on Military Bases, Military Retirement System Payments and Veterans Affairs Spending on the State of Nebraska, FY 2023

Source of Impact	Output (Million \$)	Employee Compensation (Millions \$)	Employment (Jobs)
Military Bases	\$2,574.1	\$1,502.9	23,661
Military Retirement System Payments	\$498.4	\$152.4	2,815
Veterans Affairs Spending	\$2,604.6	\$1,028.6	16,428
Army Corps of Engineers	\$144.2	\$103.4	1,242
GI Bill Benefits	\$32.6	\$14.5	337

1. Introduction

Defense spending provides economic benefits for the state and local economies. Spending in support of military installations and associated military missions is an integral part of the health of the local economies. Like other states, Nebraska benefits greatly from federal military spending that takes place within its borders. Such spending includes: operations and operations support, salary paid to Active, Guard, and Reserve personnel, veteran compensation, and military retiree pension payments. The effects of military spending can be felt throughout Nebraska, as military installations and veterans are found in every region of the state.

Military spending has received increased attention at the state and local levels, with many recent reports illustrating the importance of military spending upon local and state economies. For example, a May 2020 report “U.S. Foreign Policy for the Middle Class: Perspectives From Nebraska”, states that, “After trade and immigration, those interviewed mentioned defense spending as the aspect of U.S. foreign policy that mattered most to them.”¹ Examples of the local impact of military spending include the 2022 San Diego Economic Impact Report.² State examples from Texas,³ Kentucky,⁴ Florida,⁵ Missouri,⁶ Alabama,⁷ Arkansas,⁸ South Carolina,⁹ and Ohio,¹⁰ offer context for the depth and breadth of military support and spending around the country. According to the U.S. Department of Defense, Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation¹¹ in its “Defense Spending by State Fiscal Year 2022” report, defense spending in Nebraska contributed 1.1% of state GDP in FY 2022.¹²

2017-2023 Economic Impact of Nebraska Military Assets

From 2017 to 2023 the Nebraska Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs contracted with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Bureau of Business Research (BBR) annually to conduct a review of U.S. Department of Defense and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs assets, as well as to estimate the impact of military and veteran spending in the State of Nebraska in FY 2016 through FY 2022. The

¹ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, et al. “U.S. Foreign Policy for the Middle Class: Perspectives from Nebraska.” (May 21, 2020). Page 43. Available: https://carnegieendowment.org/files/USFP_Nebraska_full_final.pdf

² San Diego Military Advisory Council, “San Diego Military Economic Impact Report.” (2022). Available: https://sdmac.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/2022_sdmac_report_singlepage2.pdf

³ Texas Military Preparedness Commission, “Biennial Report 2021-2022.” (July 2022). Available:

https://gov.texas.gov/uploads/files/organization/military/Biennial_2021-2022_Final_2022-07-01.pdf

⁴ Kentucky Commission on Military Affairs. (October 2023). Available: <https://kcma.ky.gov/Pages/index.aspx>

⁵ Florida Defense Support Task Force. (October 2023). Available: <https://www.enterpriseflorida.com/military-defense/florida-defense-support-task/>

⁶ Office of the Missouri Military Advocate. (October 2023). Available: <https://military.ded.mo.gov/>

⁷ Alabama Military Stability Foundation. (October 2023). Available: <http://www.almsf.org/home.html>

⁸ Arkansas Military Affairs Committee. (October 2023). Available: <https://www.arkansasedc.com/community-resources/military-affairs>

⁹ “The 2022 Economic Impact of South Carolina’s Military Community.” (June 2022). Available: <https://scdva.sc.gov/sites/scdva/files/Documents/Economic%20Impact%20Final%20June%202022.pdf>

¹⁰ Jobs Ohio, “Ohio Military and Federal Sector Economic Impact Study.” (October 2023). Available:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/collections/acff01cf3c4d49e8a2de206b56c9a770?item=1>

¹¹ Of note, the FY 2021 National Defense Authorization Act changed the Office of Economic Adjustment to the Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation.

¹² U.S. Department of Defense, Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation, “Defense Spending by State Fiscal Year 2022.” (October 2023). Available: https://oldcc.gov/sites/default/files/defense-spending-rpts/OLDCC_DSBS_FY2022_FINAL_WEB.pdf

current report builds upon the body of work created through the 2017,¹³ 2018,¹⁴ 2019,¹⁵ 2020,^{16,17} 2021,^{18,19} 2022²⁰, and 2023²¹ reports. Additionally, the 2008 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Task Force and its subsequent report provide substantive context and background to the body of work presented in this report.²²

Commission Recommendations

The Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs continues to put forth five recommendations that have their roots in the 2008 BRAC Task Force Report.²³ Although 15 years old, the recommendations were validated in 2023 when the Nebraska Air National Guard's 155th Refueling Wing was evaluated for replacement of their older KC-135 aircraft with the newer KC-46 aircraft. Unfortunately, the Air Force later excluded the 155th Wing from consideration, but the selection criteria used by the Air Force correlated strongly with the commission's recommendations. To better compete in future DOD basing and equipment fielding decisions, Nebraska must continue to advance these recommendations.

1. Provide support to local subdivisions in their efforts to improve military installations.

Military installations operate in partnership with local government entities rather than as isolated facilities. Infrastructure improvements and community enhancements play a crucial role in military readiness by providing personnel and equipment with reliable access to essential services and support systems. Efficient transportation networks and facilities enable rapid mobilization and effective logistics operations, vital for operational success; furthermore, a vibrant community with modern amenities can positively influence future Department of Defense basing decisions by highlighting the strategic benefits of situating military installations in areas that offer a high quality of life for service members and their families.

The Critical Infrastructure Facilities Cash Fund (CIFCF) offers grants for soil and water improvement projects aimed at critical infrastructure facilities, including military installations, transportation routes, and wastewater treatment facilities. For instance, the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District

¹³ Nebraska Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs. (November 2017). Available:

https://nebraskalegislature.gov/FloorDocs/105/PDF/Agencies/Veterans_Affairs_Department_Of/610_20171120-163741.pdf

¹⁴ Nebraska Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs. (November 2018). Available:

https://nebraskalegislature.gov/FloorDocs/105/PDF/Agencies/Veterans_Affairs_Department_Of/610_20181115-103419.pdf

¹⁵ Nebraska Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs. (November 2019). Available:

https://nebraskalegislature.gov/FloorDocs/106/PDF/Agencies/Veterans_Affairs_Department_Of/610_20191115-104724.pdf

¹⁶ Nebraska Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs. (November 2020). Available:

https://nebraskalegislature.gov/FloorDocs/106/PDF/Agencies/Veterans_Affairs_Department_Of/610_20201113-160211.pdf

¹⁷ Nebraska Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs. (November 2020 with updates from February 2021). Available:

<https://veterans.nebraska.gov/sites/veterans.nebraska.gov/files/doc/2020%20Economic%20Impact%20of%20Nebraska%20Military%20Assets%20-%20An%20Update%20for%20Fiscal%20Year%202019.pdf>

¹⁸ Nebraska Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs. (November 2021). Available:

https://nebraskalegislature.gov/FloorDocs/107/PDF/Agencies/Veterans_Affairs_Department_Of/610_20211115-175849.pdf

¹⁹ Nebraska Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs. (November 2021 with updates from February 2022). Available:

<https://veterans.nebraska.gov/sites/veterans.nebraska.gov/files/doc/1.%20NCMVA%20Draft%20Report%20-%2003-04-2022.pdf>

²⁰ Nebraska Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs. (November 2022). Available:

https://nebraskalegislature.gov/FloorDocs/107/PDF/Agencies/Veterans_Affairs_Department_Of/610_20221103-102107.pdf

²¹ Nebraska Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs. (November 2023). Available:

<https://veterans.nebraska.gov/sites/default/files/doc/1.%20NCMVA%20Final%20Report%2011-15-2023.pdf>

²² Nebraska Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Task Force, Report. (December 2008). Available: <http://govdocs.nebraska.gov/epubs/L3745/B036-2008.pdf>

²³ 2008 BRAC Task Force Report, available at <https://veterans.nebraska.gov/commission-military-and-veteran-affairs>

(NRD) utilized a CIFCF grant to extend and upgrade levees near Offutt Air Force Base, enhancing flood protection for both the base and the Papillion Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant. Collaborative efforts among the NRD, Offutt, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have further strengthened flood defenses by replacing outdated stormwater culverts and installing backflow prevention valves, which can be closed to avert significant fuel spills from leaving the base.

The commission advocates for legislative backing of further infrastructure improvements through sustained CIFCF funding, as well as pursuing federal funding through future National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) allocations and the Department of Defense's Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation's (OLDCC) Defense Community Infrastructure Program (DCIP) grants. In 2023, OLDCC awarded approximately \$100 million in grants under the Defense Community Infrastructure Pilot Program, although Nebraska was not selected for any of the grants that year.

2. Recommend land use planning legislation to ensure governmental entities and developers coordinate when building near military bases, including a requirement that local subdivisions conduct a feasibility study to address encroachment issues.

The strategic importance of military bases cannot be overstated, as they are critical to national security and local economies. However, urban development near these bases can lead to encroachment issues, including noise pollution, safety concerns, and operational restrictions, which can compromise both military readiness and community well-being. It is essential to establish land use planning legislation that mandates coordination between governmental entities and real estate developers when building near military bases. This should include a requirement for local subdivisions to conduct feasibility studies to address encroachment issues. Feasibility studies encourage thoughtful, long-term planning that balances development needs with the preservation of military operations.

In addition to ensuring coordination between governmental entities, developers, and military installations, prohibiting foreign investments in land around military bases is a critical measure for safeguarding national security. This added layer of protection can prevent potential threats that may arise from foreign ownership of strategically located properties. Foreign entities owning land near military bases can potentially use these properties as vantage points for surveillance and intelligence gathering. This can compromise sensitive military operations and technologies. Restricting foreign investments ensures that strategic assets and resources, such as land and sensitive infrastructure, remain under domestic control and reduces the risk of economic coercion.

2023 NE LB 1300 advances this recommendation. LB 1300 included the adoption of the Pacific Conflict Stress Test Act and the Foreign Adversary Contracting Prohibition Act. The Pacific Conflict Stress Test Act is a legislative measure designed to evaluate the United States' preparedness for potential conflicts in the Pacific region, particularly focusing on military, economic, and strategic readiness. The act mandates assessments of military capabilities, supply chain resilience, and diplomatic strategies in the context of escalating tensions or conflicts. It requires coordination among various government agencies and the military to ensure comprehensive analysis and readiness. The goal is to identify vulnerabilities and enhance the nation's ability to respond effectively to crises in the Pacific, thereby safeguarding national

security interests. The Foreign Adversary Contracting Prohibition Act is a legislative measure aimed at safeguarding national security by restricting government contracts with entities linked to foreign adversaries. The act prohibits state agencies from entering into contracts with companies or individuals that have significant ties to nations identified as foreign adversaries. The objective is to prevent potential security risks, such as espionage or sabotage, by ensuring that critical government functions and sensitive information are not compromised by foreign influence.

3. Recommend colleges and universities offer courses aligned with military missions. Additionally, Nebraska institutions should pursue partnerships with the Department of Defense (DoD) when feasible.

As highlighted in the 2008 BRAC Task Force Report, “Offering courses that correspond with military needs would potentially increase the value of that installation and the missions that rely on personnel with specific educational training such as foreign languages,” thereby benefiting the State of Nebraska.

The Nebraska University System continues to aggressively expand programs supporting the DoD and U.S. national security interests. Key initiatives include:

1. Deterrence and Assurance Academic Alliance (DA3): This alliance partners U.S. Strategic Command with academic institutions focused on research and analysis of deterrence, assurance, and related strategic national security themes. Participating universities include Bellevue University, Creighton University, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the University of Nebraska-Kearney, and the University of Nebraska-Omaha.

2. National Deterrence Lab (NDL): Based at the University of Nebraska Omaha (UNO), the NDL develops and assesses integrated deterrence options supporting U.S. policy and combatant command operations. Utilizing Multi-Actor Deterrence Analysis Modeling (MADAM), the lab conducts efficient deterrence analyses and fosters cross-agency communication, significantly streamlining deterrence planning and analysis.

3. National Strategic Research Institute (NSRI): As a DoD-designated University Affiliated Research Center (UARC) since 2012, NSRI has conducted research valued at \$293 million across 188 awards. It has previously secured significant contracts, including a \$92 million contract from the U.S. Strategic Command and a \$25 million contract from the National Nuclear Security Administration in 2021. NSRI also focuses on strategic deterrence, nuclear threat reduction, and health-related research, such as a \$24.5 million contract with the Defense Health Agency awarded in 2023.

4. Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources (IANR): IANR collaborates with NSRI to advance research in agricultural and natural resources security, biological defense, bio-surveillance, bio-detection, and pandemic preparedness, addressing threats to U.S. and global food systems.

5. National Counterterrorism Innovation, Technology, and Education Center (NCITE): This Department of Homeland Security (DHS) academic center of excellence at UNO conducts \$50 million in federally funded research on terrorism and targeted violence. NCITE’s work includes transformative workforce development and patented technologies to facilitate suspicious activity reporting. The center

offers DHS grant funding through 2030 and beyond, making it the nation's largest academic provider of counterterrorism research.

6. Nebraska Defense Research Corporation Center (NDRC): NDRC bridges government, industry, and academia to promote technological discovery and expedite command, control, and communications capabilities to customer operations. It supports secure, mission-enhancing capabilities and accelerates technology transfer and licensing.

7. Project NExT: The University of Nebraska Medicine (UNMC) Project NExT aims to enhance the readiness of the nation's civilian and military health systems to respond to pandemics and other disasters. It includes the development of a joint civilian-military medical surge facility through public-private partnerships.

8. Global Center for Health Security (GCHS): Based at UNMC, GCHS promotes research, education, and clinical care related to bio-preparedness, infectious diseases, and high-consequence infections. The center has secured \$122.6 million in extramural funding over the past five years and includes facilities such as the National Quarantine Unit and training centers like the C-STARS in collaboration with the Air Force Research Laboratory.

9. National Drought Mitigation Center (NDMC): Located at the University of Nebraska—Lincoln, NDMC collaborates with U.S. Air Force Weather on predicting civil unrest and building a Global Composite Drought Indicator (GCDI) Hot Spot Early Warning and Information System. This project marks NDMC's initial venture with the DoD.

10. Space, Cyber, and National Security Law Program: Situated within the University of Nebraska College of Law for almost two decades, the Space, Cyber, and National Security Law Program bridges law, technology, and global security. Students develop the skills to solve problems involving key aspects of US national security while exploring the laws and regulations that impact every satellite, phone call and online interaction.

4. Review and recommend legislation or regulatory reform to support military personnel and families including employment and educational opportunities.

In a memorandum to the National Governors Association the Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force stated, “we will encourage leadership to consider the quality of schools near bases and whether reciprocity of professional licenses is available for military families when evaluating future basing or mission alternatives.” To assist policymakers, the Defense State Liaison Office (DSLO) develops recommended legislation to support service members and their families.²⁴ Below are the 2024 priorities that the DSLO assesses as “not fully complete” in Nebraska.

1. Military Access to Quality Family Child Care: In many cases, DOD-certified military family child care providers must also be licensed or registered by the state when simply caring for DOD children. By recognizing military family child care certification, in lieu of requiring state licensing, states can enhance access to military child care and reduce the time on waitlists. States can also support Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood-PLUS, which increases access for active-duty, National Guard

²⁴ Defense State Liaison Office. (2023). Available: <https://statepolicy.militaryonesource.mil/>

and reserve families.

2. Military Spouse Employment and Economic Opportunities: Many military spouse professionals must relicense each time they transfer with their active-duty spouse. As states implement the provision of the Military Spouse Licensing Relief Act, they can help military spouses maintain professional and financial stability by enacting licensing compacts and ensuring that licensing agencies make their application processes accessible to military spouses.

3. State Support for Military Families With Special Education Needs: Highly mobile children, including military children, are more likely to experience recurring educational disruptions and challenges, particularly those who need access to special education and related services. States can assist by streamlining processes to ensure timely establishment of comparable special education services upon relocation and reducing burdens associated with due process proceedings.

4. Child Abuse Identification and Reporting: Federal law requires the DOD to request state reports regarding instances of child abuse and neglect involving military family members. States can support military Family Advocacy Programs by requiring child protective services to report cases to the military at the onset of their investigations.

5. Military Family Anti-Discrimination Status: To supplement employment protections under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, states can add military family status as a class protected in state education, housing, public utilities and civil rights laws.

6. State Response to Military Interpersonal Violence: While the DOD has led the implementation of enterprise-wide guidance on prevention, states can address harmful behaviors, such as sexual assault and domestic violence, by expanding protections for victims. Enacting state policy best practices can supplement federal program efforts and changes.

In addition to bills in support of the DSLO objectives, the Nebraska legislature passed several bills in 2023 that supported military employment and quality of life for service members, veterans and military families. Some examples include: LB16 provides an alternative way for licensing boards to license experienced workers with comparable Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) from outside of Nebraska; LB253 provides for the creation of a veteran justice program; LB 867 creates a special migratory waterfowl hunting season for veterans, a one-day hunting permit and stamps for certain veterans on Veterans Day, and active-duty military state park entry permit.

5. Recommend the state acknowledge the role of inflation in operations and maintenance funding.

The Nebraska National Guard (NENG) recommends that the State of Nebraska acknowledge, through either legislative or budgetary action, the role that inflation has upon NENG funding. This recommendation follows years of similar suggestions to the State of Nebraska by the NENG.

In 2023, the NENG recommended that the State of Nebraska acknowledge the impact that inflation has upon operations and maintenance funding. In 2022, the NENG similarly recommended that the State adjust its funding for operations and maintenance based upon, at a minimum, the annual inflation rate.

This suggestion replaced previous years' recommendations for the State to increase appropriations to ensure full commitment of Federal dollars for National Guard infrastructure needs.

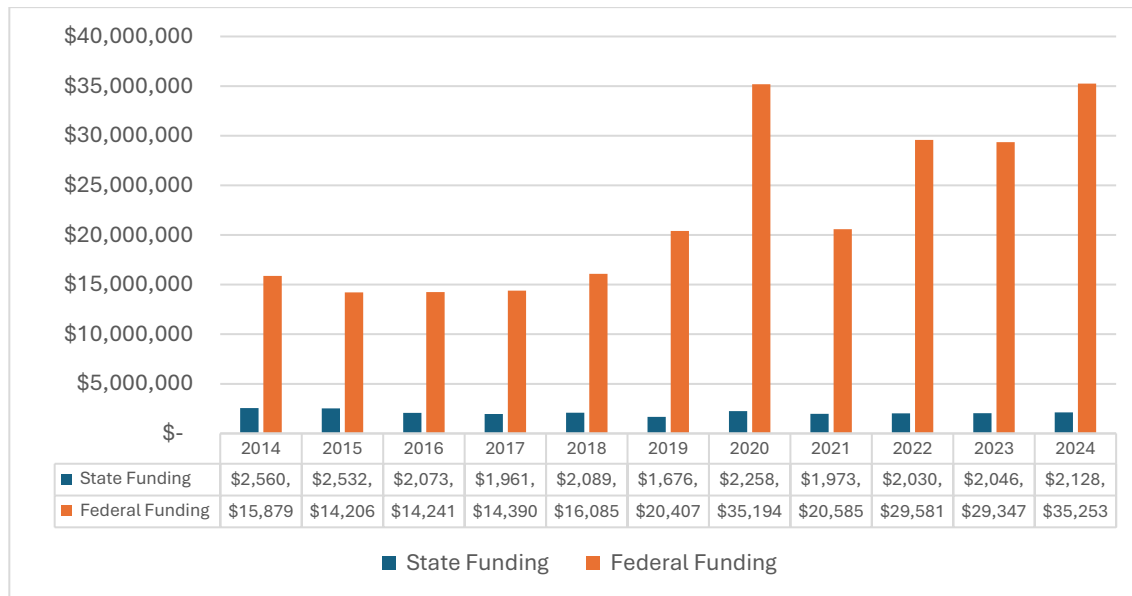
For background, the Department of Defense (DoD) provides Federal funds to the NENG to support operations, maintenance, sustainment, and modernization of new and existing facilities. The State provides matching funds based on cooperative agreements with the Federal government that define cost shares for National Guard facilities based on type, function, and the units that utilize them and activities that occur within. Each service branch has different guidelines outlined in the US Code to ensure that funding regulations are adhered to. This guidance, which is followed by all states and territories, is critical to the success of military projects and is often contingent on positive working relationships between state leaders, local National Guard units, and the Federal government.

NENG is proud of the collaborative and deeply supportive relationship it has with State leaders, lawmakers, and community members. This long-standing cooperation allows the NENG to function seamlessly within Nebraska communities across the State and present a united front to various Federal government entities when seeking Federal support. As a result of this support, there has been consistent State level funding support to both Army and Air facilities, which has ensured that Nebraska remains a competitive contender for additional military mission assignments, successful emergency responses, and impactful deployments.

After thorough evaluation of economic trends and future growth consideration, the NENG recommends the State of Nebraska acknowledge the role that inflation has upon operations and maintenance funding. Like many organizations across the nation, the NENG has observed increasing inflation rates on services and goods. Unfortunately, the NENG was not immune to the financial impact of rising inflation. This economic shift has caused the price of materials and labor to increase on existing and future projects, ultimately, forcing the NENG to redesign and compromise additional facility capacity and function to accommodate the rising costs. As shown in the report, there is room for additional financial support through an increase in State funding that will coincide with current economic trends.

Figure 1 depicts the shared funding of State and Federal monies allocated to the NENG. Federal spending is shown to have more fluctuation due to the changing priorities of the United States Military during that time. State funding, however, has remained consistent from 2013 to present, typically hovering around \$2 million. The data presents two realities: while there is consistent support from the State, there has been little increase to account for inflation rates.

Figure 1. State & Federal Spending on Nebraska National Guard



As published by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, inflation rates are at an all-time high resting currently at roughly 3.3 percent at the time of this report.²⁵ The financial support historically provided to the NENG is simply not going as far as it would have just four years ago when inflation was nearly 2 percent.²⁶ Understanding that inflation is an ever-changing variable, the NENG recommends that the State take inflation into consideration when making funding decisions.

Nebraska Army National Guard. The Nebraska Army National Guard (NEARNG) deems Readiness Centers as the most critical Military Department facilities. They support training, administration, operations, and serve as the centralized gathering point for NEARNG soldiers. Readiness Centers function as mobilization platforms used during federal and state activations of military personnel. There are 24 Readiness Centers strategically located across the state. They require the largest portion of the overall State cost sharing. Each Readiness Center requires a cost share of 25 to 50 percent to construct, operate, and maintain.

As outlined in Table 2 below, while there has been consistent State contribution to NEARNG projects, the dollar amounts provided do not keep in step with increasingly volatile inflation rates. For numerous reasons the cost of labor and supplies have increased nationwide over the past two to three years while the amount of funding provided to complete the necessary projects remained stagnant. The static levels of State appropriations challenge the ability of the NENG to maintain and modernize readiness centers to meet unit and mission requirements.

²⁵ [CPI Home : U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics \(bls.gov\)](https://www.bls.gov)

²⁶ Ibid

Table 2. Total State and Federal Funding to Nebraska Army National Guard											
State Funds (in millions)											
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
544-07	\$2.01	\$1.68	\$1.63	\$1.50	\$1.65	\$1.06	\$1.66	\$1.38	\$1.40	\$1.40	\$1.45
544-081	\$0.23	\$0.49	\$0.13	\$0.14	\$0.14	\$0.20	\$0.19	\$0.17	\$0.18	\$0.18	\$0.18
Total	\$2.24	\$2.18	\$1.75	\$1.64	\$1.78	\$1.26	\$1.85	\$1.55	\$1.58	\$1.58	\$1.63
Federal Funds (in millions)											
Total	\$14.73	\$13.02	\$13.12	\$13.14	\$15.04	\$19.23	\$33.66	\$19.10	\$24.81	\$26.47	\$29.63
Percent State Funds Match to Federal Funds											
	15%	17%	13%	12%	12%	7%	5%	8%	6%	6%	6%

Nebraska Air National Guard. A portion of the Federal funding the Nebraska Air National Guard (NEANG) receives from DoD are matched up to 25 percent with State funding through a cooperative agreement. These funds are utilized for the sole purpose of salaries and benefits of State employees, utility payments, and day-to-day preventative maintenance. For Sustainment, Restoration (repair), and Modernization (SRM) of NEANG facilities and infrastructure, the DoD, through the National Guard Bureau (NGB), provides 100 percent federal funding. These funds are executed according to NGB policy, and not restricted by the terms of the Master Cooperative Agreement.

As seen in Table 3 below, 2024 had an incremental increase in the amount of State funding and a sharp increase from the Federal funding received in the prior year. This can be attributed to the return to more steady state sustainment, modernization and restoration funding and a decrease in the amount of construction taking place in 2023.

Table 3. Total State and Federal Funding to Nebraska Air National Guard (to Support Maintenance and Sustainment of Facilities and Infrastructure by State Fiscal Year)											
State Funds (in millions)											
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
544-02	\$0.32	\$0.35	\$0.32	\$0.31	\$0.29	\$0.39	\$0.39	\$0.40	\$0.43	\$0.44	\$0.48
544-03	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
544-05	--	--	--	\$0.02	\$0.02	\$0.02	\$0.02	\$0.02	\$0.02	\$0.02	\$0.02
Total	\$0.32	\$0.35	\$0.32	\$0.32	\$0.31	\$0.41	\$0.41	\$0.42	\$0.45	\$0.46	\$0.49
Federal Funds (in millions)											
Total	\$1.15	\$1.18	\$1.12	\$1.25	\$1.04	\$1.18	\$1.54	\$1.48	\$4.77	\$2.87	\$5.63
Federal Funds Returned (in millions)											
	\$0.19	\$0.13	\$0.16	\$0.28	--	--	--	--	\$0.02	--	--
Percent State Funds Match to Federal Funds											
	15%	17%	13%	12%	12%	7%	5%	8%	6%	6%	6%

Ongoing & Recently Completed Nebraska National Guard Military Construction Projects. At the time of this report the NENG has several construction and modernization projects in progress. These projects came from a list of strategically prioritized needs from NENG to become better equipped to serve the state of Nebraska and the United States' national security interests.

While not all of the projects and modernizations listed below include State funding, the State of Nebraska's leadership, state legislature, and community partners were instrumental in showing support to the NENG during the financial request and space allocation process for these projects.

Bellevue Readiness Center (Completion winter 2024)

- \$32.9M from military construction funding
- \$7.6M in state funding

Camp Ashland Training Site (Completed December 2023)

- \$31.4M from military construction

North Platte Vehicle Maintenance Shop (Final Project Payment Approved February 2024)

- \$10.03M from military construction

Mead Barracks (Completion expected Winter 2024)

- \$11.6M in military construction funding

GTS Barracks 310114 (in design)

- \$861K in military construction funding

GTS Barracks 310171 (in design)

- \$273K in military construction funding

NEARNG Aircraft Maintenance Hanger (Project cancelled)

- \$443k in military construction funding

Fuel Cell Hangar Modernization (final design in progress, construction expected 2025)

- \$10.4 Million in Sustainment, Modernization, and Maintenance Funds from National Guard Bureau

Runway 18/36 Replacement (final design in progress)

- \$47 Million in Sustainment, Modernization, and Maintenance Funds from National Guard Bureau
- \$54 Million in FAA funding
- \$6 Million in Lincoln Airport Authority funding

KC-135 Simulator Facility (final design in progress)

- \$8.1 Million in Military Construction Funds

The NENG is able to uphold and serve the constitutions of the State of Nebraska and of the United States successfully due to the financial and communal support it receives from across the State. Through the collaborative financial efforts to position the NENG and the State of Nebraska as a prepared, mission capable, and military conscious and friendly state, much has been achieved. The NENG views the future as an opportunity to exceed past expectations and address current barriers. The last 10 years has seen consistent State funding to support the needs of the NENG, however there is room to grow and respond to the changing climate the organization is operating within. The recommendation for the State to acknowledge inflation reflects the needs of the NENG for the financial support required to meet necessary operations.

DOD activities since the commission's last report impacting Nebraska. As referenced earlier, the Air National Guard's 155th ARW was under consideration to receive the KC-46A Pegasus to replace its aging KC-135 Stratotankers, which are scheduled to begin retiring in 2027. The ANG is still waiting for a full report on how it scored compared to the seven states selected (Alabama, Illinois, Kansas, Maine, Mississippi, Ohio, Tennessee) to move forward in the process. The commission recommends reviewing the scoring used in this process and evaluating programs and policies to improve Nebraska based units future assessments.

In October of 2024, the Air Force activated the 95th Wing at Offutt Air Force Base. The 95th will grow approximately 70 military personnel at Offutt beginning in 2025 and be fully operational in 2027. The new wing's focus provides combatant commanders with assured command and control (C2) over assigned forces through global command, control, and communication (C3) capabilities.

Grants supported by LB 774 approved in 2023 allowed the University of Nebraska System and the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) to expand collaborative efforts to identify U.S. service members missing or unaccounted for from the country's past conflicts. Now DPAA will be able to draw on the NU System to advance its mission to account for the 81,000-plus U.S. missing service members while university faculty and students have opportunities to work with experienced forensic scientists. The proximity of NU campuses to the DPAA's skeletal human forensic laboratory at Offutt has already allowed for successful collaborations. University of Nebraska - Omaha faculty and students developed software to significantly speed the process of identifying human remains and a certificate in forensic anthropology at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln includes opportunities for students to train and intern at the DPAA. Grants provided under LB 774 build on that work, engaging all four campuses in the university system; a wide range of disciplines are involved, including archaeology, dentistry, information science and technology, anthropology and others.

In October 2024, the President signed the Veteran Improvement Commercial Driver License Act, sponsored by Senator Deb Fischer. The law ensures that veterans can use GI Bill Benefits at new branches of new commercial driving program (CDL) schools whose primary institutions already received regulatory approval. Prior to this law, if an approved CDL school opened a secondary facility at a new location, VA regulations prevented veterans from using their GI Bill benefits at these locations for 2 years. This bill eliminates this red tape to make it easier for veterans to use their GI Bill benefits to get

their CDL licenses and also makes sure that these schools still comply with state and VA rules regarding curriculum standards to ensure no programs are exploiting veterans.

The Air Force selected Colorado-based aerospace supplier Sierra Nevada Corporation to produce a new E-4B Survivable Airborne Operations Center (SAOC) plane to replace the service's four existing aircraft under a new \$13 billion deal awarded in 2024. Currently all E-4B aircraft are assigned to the 595th Command and Control Group at Offutt. The E4-B performs the role of a highly survivable, mobile nuclear command and control (C2) outpost that directs US forces, executes emergency war orders, and coordinates actions by civil authorities in the event of a national emergency or the destruction of ground C2 infrastructure. Sierra is due to deliver the new fleet by July 2036.

The Current Report

There are multiple purposes of the present report. First, this report will serve to update the economic impact data presented in *The Economic Impact of Nebraska Military Assets* from November 15, 2023, thereby providing a current snapshot of the economic impacts of military and veteran spending in the state. This information will yield a comprehensive understanding of the magnitude of military and veteran spending in Nebraska. Data for these analyses have been derived from a wide range of sources including federal statistics from the Department of Defense, the Census Bureau, and the Department of Veterans Affairs, statistics from reports produced by Offutt Air Force Base and the Nebraska National Guard, and from correspondence with Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps Reserves. Analysts utilize industry-standard approaches (i.e., IMPLAN, IMpact analysis for PLANning²⁷) to derive estimates of the direct, indirect, and induced effects of defense and military retiree spending in the state. Direct effects include direct spending by the agencies on payroll and to vendors. Indirect effects include vendor spending at other local businesses. Induced effects capture business activity as employees spend their paychecks on goods and services. Second, this report will consider the aggregate benefits of military service upon the state economy. Data for this analysis is drawn from many of the same sources as described in the previous paragraph and informed by research conducted through reviewing academic and applied research literature.

In sum, the current report will provide stakeholders with the situational awareness of current levels of spending on military installations and spending on veterans and military retirees, as well as the indirect effects of such spending. This report will also yield key insights into the various costs and benefits of proposed strategies to attract and retain veterans and retired DoD personnel into the state. Ultimately, the information can be used to further prepare the State of Nebraska for growth by identifying the strengths on which Nebraska might capitalize, as well as the potential weaknesses in this particular economic domain.

This report was funded through the Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs pursuant to Nebraska Revised Statute 55-605.²⁸ The Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs is tasked to prepare an

²⁷ IMPLAN, Impact Analysis for Planning. (2023). Available: <http://implan.com/>

²⁸ Nebraska Revised Statute 55-605. (2023). Available: <https://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/statutes.php?statute=55-605>

annual report pursuant to Nebraska Revised Statute 55-606.²⁹

²⁹ Nebraska Revised Statute 55-606. (2023). Available: <https://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/statutes.php?statute=55-606>

2. Military Assets and Spending

This section outlines the major military installations throughout the state, and provides detailed information on the employment, salary, and operating costs associated with each installation. The chapter covers active-duty bases, National Guard bases and locations, and facilities where Reserves are located. Information on additional DoD assets is also included. Data were obtained from a wide range of sources including publicly available federal and state data sources, installation reports, personal communications with staff, and personal communications with legislative and governmental affairs staff.

Offutt Air Force Base

Offutt Air Force Base has a long and storied history in Nebraska. Perhaps the state's most visible installation, Offutt's origins began with construction of Fort Crook in the 1890's. The Fort initially served as the home of U.S. Army Infantry units, and continued to serve this purpose through the early 1900's. In 1921, an airfield was built to facilitate takeoffs, landings, and refueling of military and government aircraft. Through the 1940's, Offutt Field served as the location of a new bomber plant that produced notable aircraft used during World War II. In 1948 the entire installation was transferred to the Department of the Air Force and was renamed Offutt Air Force Base. In this same year, Strategic Air Command (SAC) was established on base. Throughout the 1960's, 1970's and 1980's Offutt continued to grow and adapt to shifting threats around the globe. In 1992, SAC was disestablished and, in its place, the United States Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM) was established. Over the years, USSTRATCOM has evolved and experienced organizational changes which resulted in its current organizational structure and role.

According to the 2023 Offutt AFB Economic Impact Statement, Offutt AFB currently has 33 aircraft assigned. The base consists of 3,633 acres of land, 2.58 million square yards of paved surface, and 7.52 million square feet of building space. The base employs nearly 11,000 military, civilian and contractor staff, with a total payroll of over \$1 billion and an additional \$437 million in expenditures on construction, service contracts, and other federal expenditures. The units at Offutt AFB execute global missions around the clock.

55th Wing. Offutt AFB is the home of the 55th Wing. The 55th Wing is the largest wing in Air Combat Command and the second largest in the Air Force. The Wing provides global reconnaissance, real-time intelligence gathering, command and control, information warfare, electronic attack, treaty verification and combat support to national leaders and agencies as well as Air Force and joint warfighters. The wing's support functions include: base mobility; manpower; logistics; aircraft and vehicle maintenance; civil engineering; contracting; personnel administration and education; law enforcement; resource security; morale, welfare and recreation; medical and dental care; and local as well as global command, control, and communication capabilities. The wing performs staff requirements to include: administration; legal services; comptroller; public affairs; history; inspection; plans and programs; ground and flight safety; protocol; inspector general; chaplain services; sexual assault prevention and response; and equal opportunity functions for both military and civilian members. Pursuant to Nebraska Revised Statute 55-601, the Commander of the 55th Wing of the Air Combat Command or his or her designee serves as a nonvoting, ex officio member of Nebraska's Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs.³⁰

³⁰ Nebraska Revised Statute 55-601. (2022). Available: <https://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/statutes.php?statute=55-601>

USSTRATCOM. Offutt AFB is also home to the U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM). USSTRATCOM is one of eleven Combatant Commands and is responsible for detecting, deterring, and preventing strategic attacks against the U.S. and its partners. The command coordinates with other combatant commands and governmental agencies that provide national security. USSTRATCOM deters strategic attack and employs forces, as directed, to guarantee the security of our nation and our allies. As a global warfighting combatant command, USSTRATCOM delivers a dominant strategic force and innovative team to maintain our Nation's enduring strength, prevent and prevail in great power conflict, and grow the intellectual capital to forge 21st century strategic deterrence. The priorities of USSTRATCOM are Strategic Deterrence, Decisive Response, and A Combat- Ready Force. Pursuant to Nebraska Revised Statute 55-601, the Commander of the United States Strategic Command or his or her designee serves as a nonvoting, ex officio member of Nebraska's Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs.³¹

557th Weather Wing. In addition to the 55th Wing and USSTRATCOM, Offutt AFB is also home to the 557th Weather Wing. The 557th Weather Wing was formed when the Air Force Weather Agency was re-designated in March 2015. The 557th comprises more than 1,450 personnel, 12 squadrons, 5 detachments, and 17 operating locations across the globe. The 557th Weather Wing's authoritative environmental data and information, from the "mud to the sun," is utilized worldwide for all facets of operations by Air Force, Department of Defense, intelligence community, and other governmental agencies enabled by its unique mission capabilities, high performance computing center and locally run global atmospheric weather exploitation model. Pursuant to Nebraska Revised Statute 55-601, the Commander of the 557th Weather Wing of the United States Air Force or his or her designee serves as a nonvoting, ex officio member of Nebraska's Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs.³²

Additional Units on Offutt AFB. In addition to the 55th Wing, USSTRATCOM, and the 557th Weather Wing several other critical organizations are located at Offutt AFB:

The 595th Command and Control Group, located at Offutt AFB, and "aligned under Eighth Air Force and Air Force Global Strike Command"³³ was activated in October 2016.³⁴ By realigning the 625th Strategic Operations Squadron, the 1st Airborne Command and Control Squadron, the 595th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, and 595th Strategic Communications Squadron under one command, the 595th Command and Control Group is able to "ensure U.S. strategic deterrence by providing aircrew, operators and maintenance personnel for nuclear command, control and communications (NC3) platforms enabling the National Command Authority survivable, real-time strategic assessment and global strike capabilities."³⁵

³¹ Nebraska Revised Statute 55-601. (2023). Available: <https://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/statutes.php?statute=55-601>

³² Nebraska Revised Statute 55-601. (2023). Available: <https://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/statutes.php?statute=55-601>

³³ 595th Command and Control Group. (2023). Available: <https://www.8af.af.mil/Units/595th-Command-and-Control-Group/>

³⁴ 55th Wing Public Affairs. (2016). Available: <https://www.acc.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/965021/595th-command-and-control-group-activates-at-offutt/>

³⁵ 595th Command and Control Group. (2023). Available: <https://www.8af.af.mil/Units/595th-Command-and-Control-Group/>

The 170th Group, a unique Nebraska Air National Guard unit based at Offutt AFB, will be doubling in size and mission through the addition of the 170th Maintenance Support Squadron and the 170th Intelligence Support Squadron.³⁶ This expansion builds on the recognition of the superb Total Force Integration between the Nebraska Air National Guard and 55th Wing. In May 2021, a Total Force Association Health Assessment by the Headquarters Air Force Directorate of Total Force Integration revealed that Offutt's Total Force Integration is exceptional.³⁷

The 343rd Recruiting Squadron (RCS) is headquartered at Offutt AFB. The active-duty squadron covers a 370,000 square-mile area that includes Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.³⁸ The 343rd RCS is tasked with recruiting highly talented and qualified personnel into the Air Force. The 20th Intelligence Squadron (20 IS) is located on Offutt AFB. The 20 IS provides geospatial and targeting intelligence to combatant commanders and war fighting forces.³⁹ The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) maintains an accredited laboratory at Offutt AFB. Forensic anthropologists work to identify remains with the goal of "returning every POW/MIA possible, to their family."⁴⁰ The U.S. Air Force Heartland of America Band, a 15-member unit, has been assigned to Offutt AFB since 1948.⁴¹ The band is well known to the Bellevue community, the State of Nebraska, and around the world for its commitment to excellence.

Offutt AFB and USSTRATCOM Personnel and Spending. As the above descriptions indicate, Offutt AFB is home to many of the critical organizations that ensure the nation's security. The vast majority of Offutt personnel live in Nebraska where they, in turn, spend their paychecks on goods and services. Units at Offutt purchase highly technical support and research and development services from local businesses as well as national companies with a presence in the state. Data from Offutt Air Force Base and USSTRATCOM were derived from the Offutt Air Force Base Economic Impact Statement 2023.⁴² This report was provided directly to the authors for use in the present report.

The data indicate that Offutt AFB and USSTRATCOM combined to employ 10,797 individuals in FY 2023. The majority of these employees (6,848) are active duty military members; 193 additional personnel are with the Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard. A total of 3,756 civilian employees are employed on the base. Of these, 2,176 are appropriated fund civilians, with the remainder categorized as employees from non-appropriated funds, employees from the Base Exchange, and employees from the Cobalt Credit Union are also located on Offutt. Personnel in these latter categories are not included in this analysis (see Table 4).

³⁶ Offutt Air Force Base, press release. (September 14, 2022). Available: <https://www.offutt.af.mil/News/Article/3165987/offutt-based-air-national-guard-unit-doubling-in-size-mission-next-year/>

³⁷ Offutt Air Force Base, press release. (May 14, 2021). Available: <https://www.offutt.af.mil/News/Article/2618201/assessment-reveals-offutts-total-force-integration-is-exceptional/>

³⁸ 343rd Recruiting Squadron. (2022). Available: <https://www.recruiting.af.mil/About-Us/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/714509/343rd-recruiting-squadron/>

³⁹ 20th Intelligence Squadron. (2022). Available: <https://www.afhra.af.mil/About-Us/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/862205/20-intelligence-squadron-acc/>

⁴⁰ 55th Wing Public Affairs. (November 17, 2017). Available: <https://www.offutt.af.mil/News/Article/1375455/laid-to-rest-dpaa-brings-record-number-of-service-members-home/>

⁴¹ USAF Heartland of America Band. (2022). Available: <https://www.music.af.mil/Bands/US-Air-Force-Heartland-of-America-Band/About-Us/>

⁴² Offutt Air Force Base Economic Impact Statement 2023. (2023). Available: https://www.offutt.af.mil/Portals/97/55th%20Wing/PA/2023_OFFUTT_Economic_Impact_Report-240409.pdf

Table 4. Offutt AFB and USSTRATCOM Military and Civilian Personnel FY 2023	
Active-Duty Air Force	5,934
Active Duty Army, Navy, Marines	914
Total Nebraska-Based Military	6,848*
Appropriated Fund Civilians	2,176
Total	9,024
*The Offutt AFB Economic Impact Statement lists 193 Air Force Reserve/Air National Guard personnel employed at the base. These personnel are not included in the analysis of the Offutt AFB impact; instead, these personnel are included in the impact estimate of the Nebraska Air National Guard and Air Force Reserves.	

Total payroll figures from the Offutt AFB Economic Impact Statement indicate over \$982.0 million in payroll to military and civilian members (see Table 5). The majority of payroll and benefits was spent on military members (\$524.8 million), with pay and benefits to appropriated civilian personnel totaling \$299.0 million. In addition, over \$437.9 million in general operating expenditures were spent in FY 2023. These costs were devoted to construction, service contracts, and other federal expenditures. In sum, about \$1.43 billion in total expenditures were made in FY 2023.

Table 5. Offutt AFB and USSTRATCOM Payroll/Benefits and Expenditures FY 2023	
Payroll	Dollars
Active Duty Personnel-All Services	\$524,844,240
Appropriated Fund Civilians	\$299,934,322
Other Civilian Employees	\$12,825,431
Contractors	\$158,040,782
Total Payroll	\$995,644,775
Base Expenditures	
Construction	\$32,243,718
Service Contracts	\$307,537,693
Other Federal Expenditures	\$98,117,283
Total Base Expenditures	\$437,898,694
Total Payroll and Expenditures	\$1,433,543,469
Source: Offutt Air Force Base Economic Impact Statement 2023.	

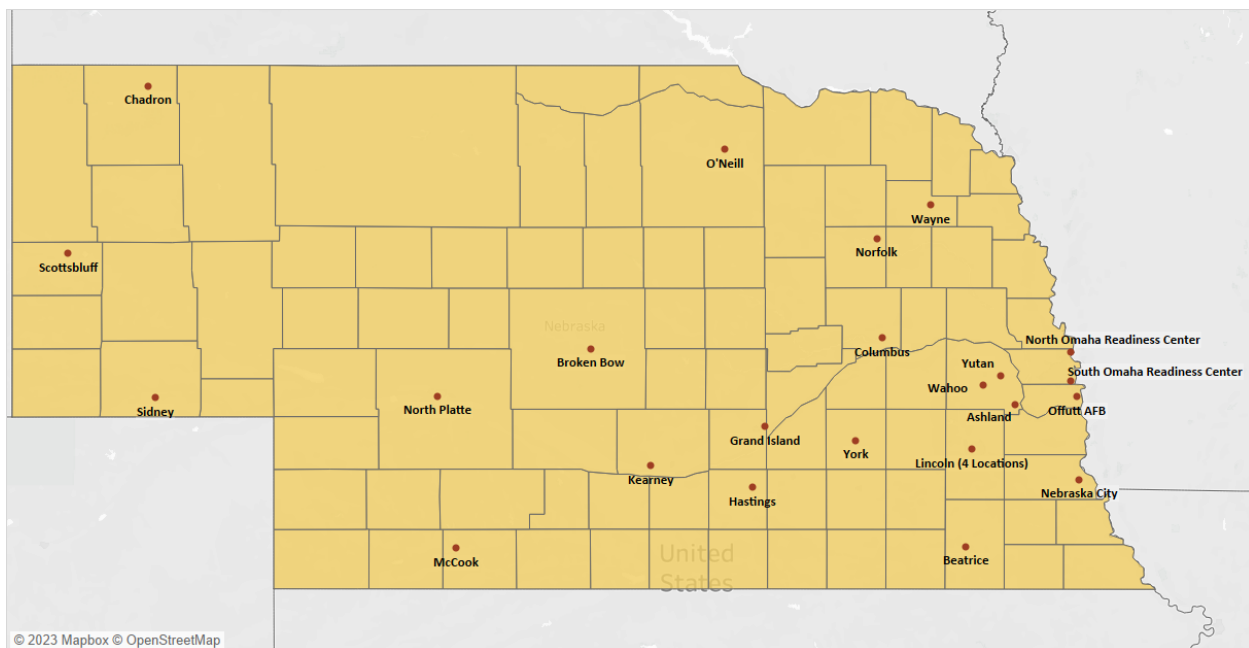
Nebraska National Guard, Air National Guard, and Nebraska Emergency Management Agency

The Army National Guard and the Air National Guard are two of the three components of the Nebraska Military Department. Under Title 32 of the U.S. Code, National Guard members are federally funded, yet are under state control. These units can be called under State Active Duty to help assist with

emergencies and other scenarios in Nebraska and can also be called into duty under various interstate compacts to provide assistance in other states.

The National Guard maintains a considerable presence in locations throughout the state. Nebraska National Guard locations are presented on the map in Figure 2 below. Collectively, the bases and installations in the state are referred to as “Fort Nebraska.” Comprising Fort Nebraska are 26 Readiness Centers and one Air National Guard Base distributed across 23 communities. Larger installations include Camp Ashland in Ashland, the Lincoln Army Aviation Support Facility/Readiness Center in Lincoln, the Greenlief Training Site in Hastings, and the Mead Training Site. The Air National Guard maintains a large concentration of facilities at the Lincoln Municipal Airport. The Army National Guard operates smaller facilities in Beatrice, Broken Bow, Chadron, Columbus, Grand Island, Kearney, Lincoln, McCook, Nebraska City, Norfolk, North Platte, Omaha (North Omaha Readiness Center and South Omaha Readiness Center), Offutt AFB, O’Neill, Scottsbluff, Sidney, Wahoo, Wayne, York, and Yutan. All told, the Nebraska National Guard maintains over 2.7 million square feet of facilities and manages 6,434 acres of land in Nebraska.

Figure 2. Nebraska National Guard Locations



Key capabilities of the Nebraska National Guard include air refueling, military police, engineering, chemical, cavalry, support/maintenance, rotary aviation and medical. In line with the Department of Defense’s assessment of potential threats to U.S. national security interests, the Nebraska National Guard’s mission is focused on Great Power Competition to include the Russian sphere of influence, the growth of China, Iran’s aggression, North Korea’s belligerence, and the fight against terrorism in the Middle East. Accordingly, members of the Nebraska National Guard are currently mobilized to locations around the globe, with the greatest concentration of Nebraska National Guard members mobilized to countries in the U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) Area of Responsibility (AOR). The Nebraska National Guard also supports the health, safety, and welfare of Nebraskans and other citizens in need.

These facilities and locations provide employment and training opportunities for Nebraskans, and also provide support for Nebraska businesses which provide much of the contracted operational support at these facilities. Furthermore, National Guard members receive valuable vocational training during their time with the Guard. While difficult to quantify, this training has the potential to enhance the occupational skillsets of National Guard members, thereby increasing the earning potential of these individuals in their civilian careers.

The Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) is the third component of the Nebraska Military Department. The agency is located at the Joint Force Headquarters on the Nebraska National Guard base in Lincoln. According to correspondence with the Nebraska National Guard, there are 59 full-time positions dedicated to NEMA, funded through both state and federal funding streams. The agency focuses on four primary phases of emergency management: preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. NEMA works with partners at the local and federal levels to prepare for man-made or natural disasters. Once a disaster occurs, NEMA has an established procedure through which localities can request state assistance in the wake of a disaster. If a local entity does request and receive state support following an emergency, yet the state resources through the Governor’s Emergency Fund are insufficient for proper response, the state can in turn request support and assistance from the federal government. Table 6 provides a breakdown of positions relevant to the present report.

Table 6. Nebraska National Guard Employment, FY 2023	
Traditional National Guard	3,965
Active Guard Reserve Title 32	597
Active Duty Title 10	9
Total Military Personnel	4,571
Federally Funded State Personnel	132.5*
Military Department Total Personnel	4,703.5
Source: Direct communication with Nebraska National Guard Government Relations Specialist. Data for this table are updated as of October, 2024. As of October 29, 2024, these data have not been included in the economic impact analysis presented in following chapters.	
*Additional positions are funded through state funds, or through a combination of state and federal funds. These personnel are not reported in this table, nor are included in analyses in later chapters.	

National Guard and NEMA Spending. Data related to the personnel employed by the Nebraska National Guard and Nebraska Air National Guard were derived from direct correspondence with the Nebraska National Guard.⁴³ The data indicate there are 4,693 total federally-funded military and state employees across the Nebraska National Guard, Air National Guard, and NEMA. As indicated in in personal communication with the Nebraska National Guard, Military Department Payroll is \$179.1 million in federally funded salary for the National Guard. There are \$65.5 million in benefits and incentives as well. About \$52.3 million in federal operational funds are used to support the activities of the Nebraska National Guard.

⁴³ Nebraska National Guard, Government Relations Specialist. (October 25, 2024). Email correspondence.

Table 7 below presents these totals, derived from correspondence with personnel at the Nebraska National Guard. In the execution of the economic impact analysis presented in Chapter 4 of this report, analysts eliminated some categories of spending from the analysis. Therefore, the figures used in Chapter 4 may differ slightly from the figures presented here. More detail on what is included in the economic impact analysis is included in Chapter 4.

Table 7. Nebraska National Guard Payroll, Benefits, and Operations, FY 2023	
Federally Funded Payroll	\$179,076,124
Benefits	\$65,541,862*
Federally Funded Operational Funds	\$58,890,157
Total Payroll, Benefits and Operations	\$303,508,143
Source: Nebraska Military Department, Direct Communication. Data for this table are updated as of October, 2024. As of October 29, 2024, these data have not been included in the economic impact analysis presented in following chapters.	
*Benefits information was unavailable via direct communication with the Nebraska National Guard. Therefore, analysts computed this number by multiplying total non-federal payroll by .366, which is the ratio of benefits to payroll in the 2017 Nebraska National Guard Economic Impact Report.	

Reserve Components

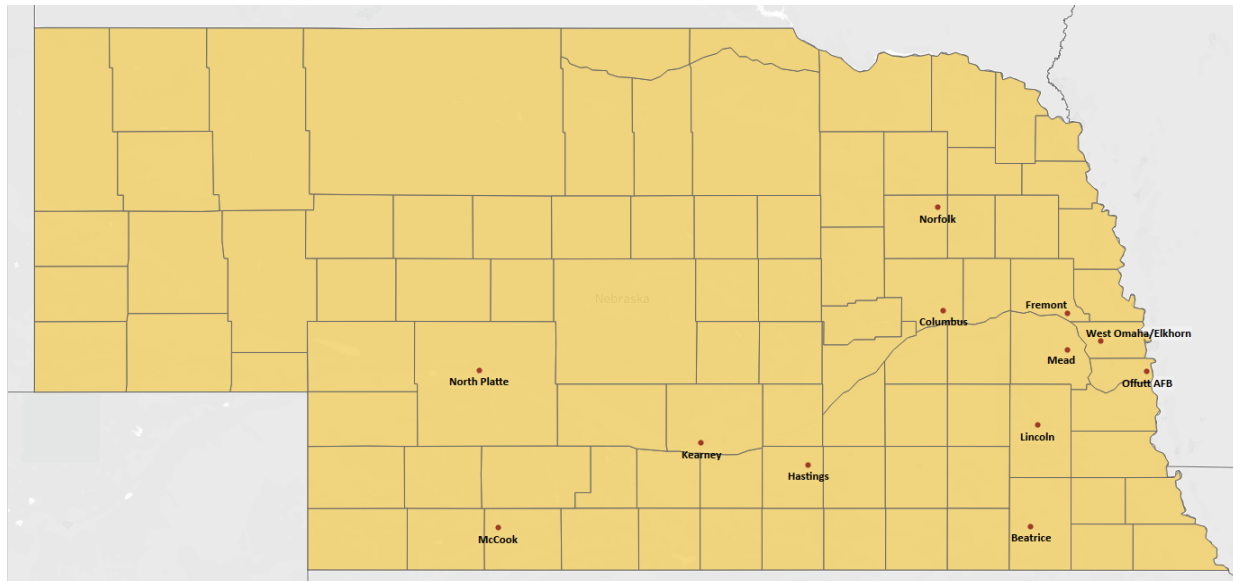
Army Reserve. The Army Reserve is the Army’s federal reserve force that provides depth and support to the Joint Force. The Army Reserve provides access to trained and ready Soldiers, leaders, and cohesive units.⁴⁴ The Army Reserve maintains facilities and units throughout Nebraska. Army Reservists serve in Beatrice, Columbus, Elkhorn (Omaha), Fremont, Hastings, Kearney, Lincoln, McCook, Mead, Norfolk, North Platte, and at Offutt AFB. These locations are presented on the map in Figure 3. In Nebraska, Army Reserve forces have medical, logistical, transportation, military police, engineering, and quartermaster capabilities.⁴⁵ Of note, in 2020, Children’s Hospital & Medical Center in Omaha received the Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award based on the nomination of an Army Reservist.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ U.S. Army Reserve, About Us. (2023). Available: <http://www.usar.army.mil/About-Us/>

⁴⁵ U.S. Army Reserve, State of Nebraska and the United States Army Reserve. (2023). Available: <http://www.usar.army.mil/Featured/Ambassador-Program/Find-an-Ambassador/Nebraska/>

⁴⁶ Omaha World Herald, “Children’s Hospital earns top award for supporting staffer and her unit deployed to Afghanistan.” (September 5, 2020).

Figure 3. Army Reserve Locations in State of Nebraska



An FY 2022 report indicated that there were 1,310 Army Reserve personnel assigned throughout Nebraska. There were over \$41.8 million in payroll across military and civilian personnel (see Table 8).⁴⁷ Please note that updated data for FY 2023 were not available at the time of publication of this report.

Table 8. Army Reserve Personnel and Expenses, FY 2022/2023		
	Number	Payroll
Army Reserve Personnel and Active Guard Reserve	1,310	\$36,677,056
Civilian Personnel	52	\$5,138,206
Total	1,362	\$41,815,262
Source: Army Reserve Ambassador Program, State of Nebraska: https://www.usar.army.mil/AtAGlance/ Also see: https://www.usar.army.mil/Portals/98/Documents/At%20A%20Glance%202022/USAR AtAGlance Publication Revision 2022 webversion.pdf?ver=IKj7kA7Z3SB1cPlch9tDUw%3d%3d		

Air Force Reserve. The U.S. Air Force Reserve maintains a presence at Offutt AFB Nebraska. Offutt AFB is home to the 49th Intel Squadron (part of the 655th Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Group), the 960th Network Warfare Flight (part of the 960th Cyberspace Operations Group), HQ Support Air Force Elements (AFELM), the Readiness and Integration Organization Detachment, and the Central Recruiting Squadron Operation location. Across these organizations, 248 military and 6 civilian (254 total) employees are located at Offutt AFB. A 2022 economic impact report conducted by the Air Force Reserve Command indicated that salary for Reservists and Civilians is \$15.8 million and \$0.8 million in operations spending. This results in a total of \$16.6 million in salary and operations for these units (see

⁴⁷ Nebraska Army Reserve Economic Impact Data obtained via State of Nebraska, Army Reserve Ambassador Program. (2023). Available: <https://www.usar.army.mil/Portals/98/Documents/At%20A%20Glance%202022/Nebraska01.jpg?ver=vAxzwQYh7tU8JqaN2Vxdpg%3d%3d>

Table 9).

Table 9. Air Force Reserve Personnel and Expenses, FY 2022/2023		
	Number	Payroll and Operations
Air Force Reserve and Civilian Personnel	254	\$16.6 million
Source: Direct communication with Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command		

U.S. Marine Corps Reserve. Omaha is home to Detachment 1, Maintenance Company of Combat Logistics Battalion 451, a part of the 4th Marine Logistics Group of the Marine Corps Forces Reserve. Located near the Metropolitan Community College campus in North Omaha, Detachment 1 occupies 4.4 acres of land and maintains 42,226 square feet of facilities. As of FY 2023, personnel include 12 active-duty personnel, 4 active reserve personnel (three U.S. Marine Corps and one U.S. Navy), and 110 Reserve personnel, for a total of 126 personnel stationed in Omaha. Annual salary was \$2.82 million, and total annual operating costs were \$329,831.⁴⁸

Navy Reserve. The Navy Reserve Center (NRC) Omaha (formerly called the Navy Operational Support Center Omaha) is located on Offutt Air Force Base where it occupies an 18,914 square foot facility on 2.14 acres of land. In FY 2024, personnel included three active-duty personnel, nine active reserve personnel, and 258 Reserve personnel, for a total of 270 personnel stationed in Omaha. The salary paid between October 1, 2023 and August 31, 2024 was \$1.83 million. Total sustainment costs were \$2.28 million.⁴⁹ Total salary and operating expenditures were \$3.15 million.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Omaha District plays a significant role in Nebraska and throughout the Missouri River Basin. The Corps is one of the largest Federal employers in Omaha and the state, with 708 employees located at the headquarters in downtown Omaha as of FY 2024. These employees help the Corps execute military construction, civil works, and environmental restoration projects in Nebraska and throughout the region. Communications with the USACE Omaha Division reveal a payroll of \$68.5 million (see Table 10).⁵⁰

Table 10. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Nebraska Personnel and Payroll		
	Number	Payroll
Personnel	708	\$68,465,143
Source: Personal communication with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District, September 2024.		

In addition to its operations in Omaha, the Corps plays a vital role throughout Nebraska maintaining waterways, earthen dams, reservoirs, and one hydroelectric facility. Table 11 presents the total operation and maintenance budget for civil works conducted by the Corps in Nebraska in FY 2023. As the table

⁴⁸ Marine Corps Reserve Point Paper. (2023). Document provided to authors.

⁴⁹ Navy Operational Support Center Omaha, Nebraska 2019 Economic Impact. Document provided to authors.

⁵⁰ U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District. Document provided to authors.

indicates, operation and maintenance costs for Gavins Point Dam were about \$10 million, with an additional \$3.2 million in costs to operate and maintain Harlan County Lake in south central Nebraska. All told, \$15.5 million in operation and maintenance costs were accrued during FY 2023. These figures are slightly lower than operation and maintenance spending in recent years. When combined with the estimated payroll of personnel at USACE Omaha District Headquarters, there was about \$84.0 million in spending by the USACE in Nebraska in FY 2023.

Table 11. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works Spending in Nebraska, FY 2023			
	Operation	Maintenance	Total
Gavins Point Dam, Lewis and Clark Lake	\$8,158,000	\$1,933,000	\$10,091,000
Harlan County Lake	\$2,851,000	\$310,000	\$3,161,000
Missouri River – Kenslers Bend, NE to Sioux City, IA	\$75,000	\$38,000	\$113,000
Papillion Creek and Tributaries Lakes	\$659,000	\$141,000	\$800,000
Salt Creek and Tributaries	\$1,104,000	\$206,000	\$1,310,000
Total			\$15,475,000
Source: Department of the Army Office, Assistant Secretary of the Army. (March, 2023). Fiscal Year 2023: Civil Works Budget of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Available: https://usace.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16021coll6/id/2253			

National Strategic Research Institute. The National Strategic Research Institute⁵¹ (NSRI) at the University of Nebraska (NU) was formed in 2012. NSRI is one of 15 University Affiliated Research Centers (UARC)s in the U.S., designated by the Office of the Secretary of Defense. NSRI is engaged in a long-term, strategic partnership with its DOD sponsor, U.S. Strategic Command, to provide mission critical research and development capabilities for the command as well as other DOD and federal government entities pursuing national security missions. Working with researchers from across NU, NSRI has five research focus areas comprised of several leading capabilities that are leveraged to meet evolving national security objectives in multiple domains: nuclear weapons enterprise support; technologies for detecting and countering biological, chemical and radiological weapons; medical countermeasures and response; threat-based training and exercise support; and mission-related research. In 2020, U.S. Strategic Command renewed its commitment to NSRI and NU by awarding a new five-year, \$92 million contract.⁵² The growth of NSRI demonstrates its continued potential to enable deterrence of, preparedness for, and response to strategic national security threats across multiple domains through research and support. NSRI currently employs 18 prior military personnel/veterans who provide subject matter expertise to the research focus areas and bridge the gap of operational missions with the research requirements. In October 2022, NSRI celebrated a decade of service.⁵³

⁵¹ National Strategic Research Institute. (2022). Available: <https://nsri.nebraska.edu/>

⁵² National Strategic Research Institute, "New \$92 million contract will expand University of Nebraska national defense research." (September 15, 2020). Available: [https://nsri.nebraska.edu/news/news-releases/2020/09/new-\\$92-million-contract-will-expand-university-of-nebraska-national-defense-research](https://nsri.nebraska.edu/news/news-releases/2020/09/new-$92-million-contract-will-expand-university-of-nebraska-national-defense-research)

⁵³ National Strategic Research Institute. (October 12, 2022). Available: <https://nsri.nebraska.edu/news/news-releases/2022/10/celebrating-a-decade>

3. Department of Defense Military Retiree and Veterans Affairs Spending

In addition to the personnel and operational costs associated with military installations, service in the military has a significant impact on Nebraska's economy through the country's support of veterans and retired military personnel. This chapter presents the total amount of federal and state spending on military retirees, spending made through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and through the State of Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs. Data were obtained via publicly available federal and state sources.

Military Retirees paid by the DoD

According to the Statistical Report on the Military Retirement System, FY 2023, there are currently 14,677 military retirees in Nebraska.⁵⁴ This number up from 14,538 retirees in FY 2022; 14,521 retirees in FY 2021; 14,609 retirees in FY 2020; 14,641 retirees in FY 2019; 14,600 in FY 2018; 14,654 retirees in FY 2017; and 14,660 retirees in FY 2016. Of the military retirees residing in Nebraska in FY 2023, 13,593 received pension payments from the Federal Government through the DoD; this number is up from 13,441 in FY 2022 and up from 13,492 in FY 2021. In FY 2023, the total amount of monthly pension payments was \$38.8 million, which is up from recent years. Extrapolating this number across an entire calendar year, military retiree pension payments totaled \$466.1 million in the state. This figure is up from \$422.4 in FY 2022; \$399.6 in FY 2021; \$397.2 in FY 2020; \$392.76 million in FY 2019; \$380.7 million in payments in FY 2018; and from \$373.32 million in payments in FY 2017. Table 12 below presents the total number of military retirees and total amount of payments per DoD branch in FY 2023.

Table 12. Nebraska Military Retirees and Pension/Retirement Compensation, FY 2023			
	Military Retirees Receiving Compensation	Monthly Payments (in millions)	Annual Payments (in millions)
Air Force	7,886	\$24.6	\$295.5
Army	3,520	\$8.0	\$96.1
Marines	362	\$1.1	\$12.7
Navy	1,825	\$5.2	\$61.9
Total	13,593	\$38.8	\$466.1
Source: Previous year's data received from DoD Office of the Actuary, Statistical Report on the Military Retirement System. FY 2023 data received from direct communication from DoD Office of the Actuary. Future data may be retrieved directly from the Defense Manpower Data Center.			

⁵⁴ DoD Office of the Actuary, "Statistical Report on the Military Retirement System, Fiscal Year 2022." (2023).

Available: <https://media.defense.gov/2023/Oct/06/2003315292/-1/-1/0/MRS%20STATRPT%202022%20V999.PDF>

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA),⁵⁵ provides services in several locations throughout the state (see Figure 4).⁵⁶ Facilities include the Omaha VA Medical Center and the Grand Island VA Medical Center. VA Clinics exist in Bellevue, Gordon, Holdrege, Lincoln, Norfolk, North Platte, O'Neill, and Scottsbluff. The Grand Island VA Medical Center and Community-Based Outpatient Clinics in Bellevue, Holdrege, Lincoln, Norfolk, and North Platte fall under the VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System, a part of Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 23: VA Midwest Health Care Network.⁵⁷ The Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Gordon and Scottsbluff (Panhandle of Nebraska CBOC) fall under the VA Black Hills Health Care System which is also a part of VISN 23.⁵⁸ The VA Multi- Specialty Outpatient Clinic in Sidney falls under the Cheyenne VA Medical Center, a part of VISN 19: Rocky Mountain Network.⁵⁹ "Vet Centers" in Omaha and Lincoln fall under the Veterans Health Administration and provide counseling, community outreach, and other service referrals. The Veterans Benefits Administration maintains two facilities in Nebraska, the Lincoln Regional Benefits Office and an Intake Site at Offutt AFB. The National Cemetery Administration maintains the Fort McPherson National Cemetery (near Maxwell), the Omaha National Cemetery and the Forest Lawn Cemetery Soldiers' Lot (also in Omaha).

Across its various locations in Nebraska, the VA provides a wide variety of services to the many veterans living in the state. These services include the full range of health services to meet the needs of Nebraska veterans. Locations also provide services to homeless veterans and help provide housing options to at-risk veterans.

⁵⁵ For the purposes of this report, we will use "VA" to abbreviate U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs instead of USDVA which is commonly used. For the Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs we will use "NDVA."

⁵⁶ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, VA Locations and Facilities in Nebraska. (October 2023). Available: https://www.va.gov/Directory/guide/fac_list_by_state.cfm?State=NE&dnum=All

⁵⁷ VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System. (2023). Available: <https://www.nebraska.va.gov/>

⁵⁸ VA Black Hills Health Care System. (2023). Available: <https://www.blackhills.va.gov/>

⁵⁹ Sidney VA MSOC. (2023). Available: https://www.cheyenne.va.gov/locations/Sidney_VA_MSOC.asp

Figure 4. VA Facilities and Locations in the State of Nebraska

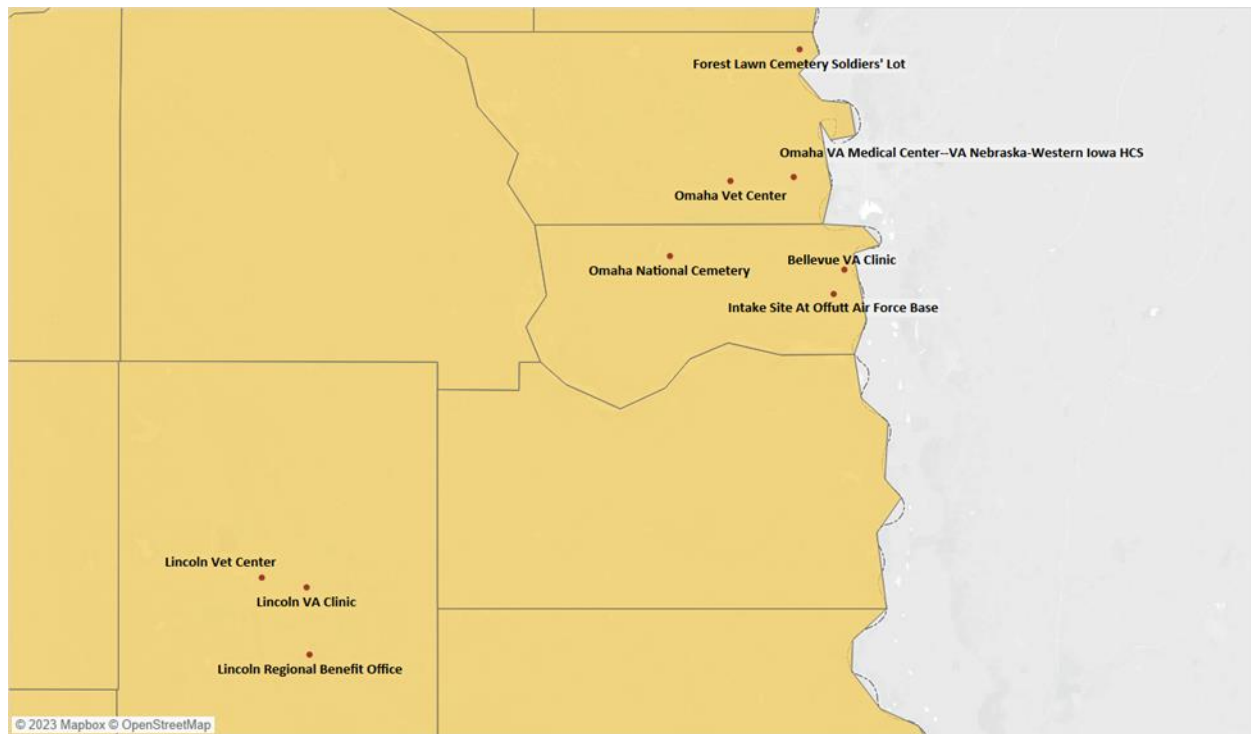
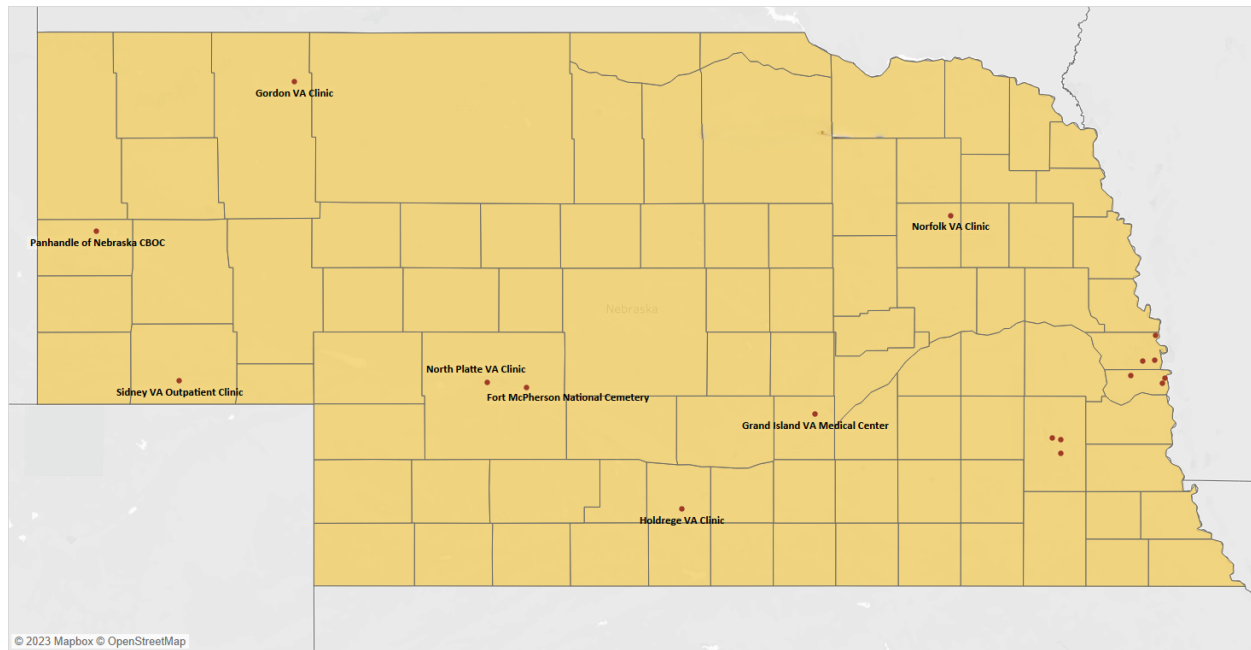
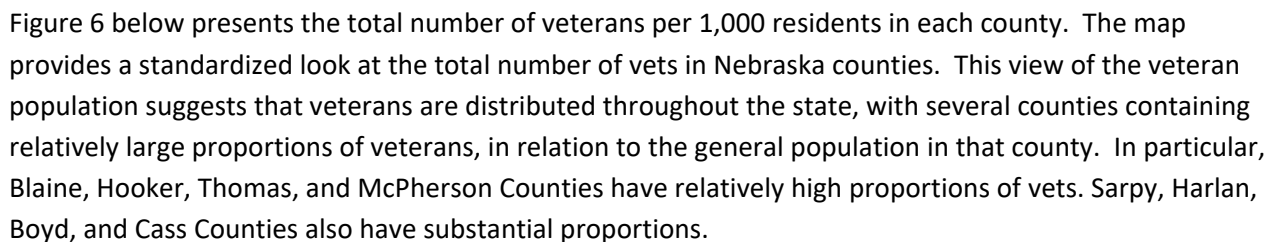
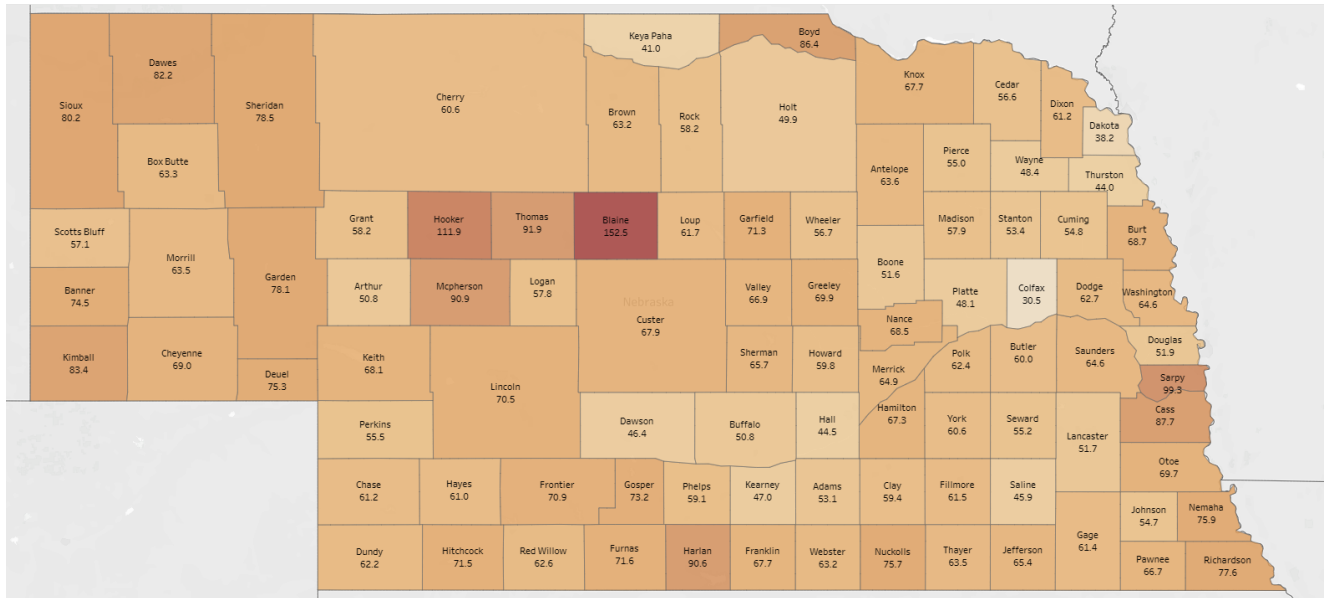


Figure 5. Number of Veterans Residing in Nebraska Counties (FY 2023)



31

Figure 6. Number of Veterans per 1,000 Residents (FY 2023)



The VA provides extensive benefits to the veterans living throughout Nebraska. Table 13 presents the full details of statewide VA spending. In FY 2023, the total amount of VA spending in Nebraska was \$1.82 billion, with 48,563 unique patients throughout the state. This is an increase in expenditures but a decrease in unique patients from FY 2022, where the total amount of VA spending in was about \$1.80 billion, with 49,221 unique patients throughout the state. The total amount of spending is spread across several broad categories: Compensation and Pension; Construction; Education and Vocational Rehabilitation/Employment; General Operating Expenses; Insurance and Indemnities; and Medical Care. The largest proportion of FY 2023 spending was on compensation and pension (\$918.9 million), followed by medical care (\$780.5 million).

Table 13. Total VA Spending in Nebraska, FY 2018 to 2023 (in millions)						
	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023
Compensation & Pension	\$554.79	\$645.76	\$698.16	\$724.61	\$856.67	\$918.94
Construction	\$12.51	\$37.99	\$48.40	\$13.62	\$8.06	\$3.33
Education & Vocational Rehabilitation/ Employment	\$56.84	\$64.76	\$59.47	\$52.73	\$47.54	\$58.58
General Operating Expenses	\$41.12	\$45.52	\$48.06	\$17.01	\$41.18	\$50.48
Insurance & Indemnities	\$10.96	\$9.72	\$8.86	\$9.66	\$6.88	\$4.36
Medical Care	\$515.43	\$552.46	\$649.94	\$662.07	\$836.79	\$780.52
Total FY Spending	\$1,191.64	\$1,356.20	\$1,512.90	\$1,479.71	\$1,797.12	\$1,816.2
Unique Patients	48,273	48,458	47,754	51,505	49,221	48,563
Spend per Unique Patient	\$24,685	\$27,987	\$31,681	\$28,729	\$36,511	\$37,400
Source: FY 2023 data derived from: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, Geographic Distribution of Expenditures, Fiscal Year 2023. FY 2022, 2021, 2020, 2019, 2018, and 2017 data derived from previous years' reports.						

To understand the general distribution of VA dollars in Nebraska, it is useful to examine VA spending levels in each county. Figure 7 presents the total amount of VA spending per county in Nebraska in FY 2023. Once again, the largest spending totals are seen in the counties with the highest numbers of military veterans. It is likely that VA spending contributes to health care spending as veterans purchase health care and related services primarily in the county in which they live. However, it is also likely that a significant proportion of veterans in rural counties must travel to population centers to receive required health care. It is clear from the map that VA spending impacts every county in the state, contributing millions of dollars to the state and local economies.

Sioux \$818	Dewes \$9,893	Sheridan \$8,341	Cherry \$4,802			Kearney \$4,678	Keya Paha \$15,020	Holt \$8,989	Boyd \$2,594	Knox \$9,646	Cedar \$5,252	Dixon \$4,437	Dakota \$10,727	
	Box Butte \$10,910					Brown \$2,576	Rock \$1,035			Antelope \$5,219	Pierce \$4,439	Wayne \$3,468	Thurston \$2,490	
Scotts Bluff \$37,095	Morrill \$4,941	Garden \$1,899	Grant \$281	Hooker \$553	Thomas \$618	Blaine \$237	Loup \$995	Garfield \$3,967	Wheeler \$480	Boone \$4,882	Madison \$22,799	Stanton \$3,737	Cuming \$5,969	Burt \$6,177
Banner \$268			Arthur \$185	McPherson \$186	Logan \$829	Nebraska Custer \$10,077			Valley \$3,703	Nance \$3,729	Platte \$20,573	Colfax \$4,756	Dodge \$32,637	Washington \$15,838
Kimball \$6,859	Cheyenne \$10,085	Deuel \$2,375	Keith \$7,175	Lincoln \$33,488		Dawson \$12,089		Sherman \$3,703	Howard \$8,642	Merrick \$9,092	Polk \$4,636	Butler \$6,393	Saunders \$20,223	Douglas \$409,220
			Perkins \$1,932					Buffalo \$40,247	Hall \$64,818	Hamilton \$8,965	York \$13,485	Seward \$13,057	Lancaster \$281,628	Sarpy \$338,791
			Chase \$2,715	Hayes \$548	Frontier \$2,556	Gosper \$2,237	P Phelps \$9,011	Kearney \$5,412	Adams \$29,772	Clay \$5,948	Fillmore \$6,399	Saline \$8,834	Otoe \$13,009	Cass \$43,353
			Dundy \$1,038	Hitchcock \$3,175	Red Willow \$11,311	Furnas \$5,545	Harlan \$3,516	Franklin \$4,300	Webster \$3,423	Nuckolls \$4,194	Thayer \$4,503	Jefferson \$6,264	Gage \$24,617	Nemaha \$5,993
													Pawnee \$2,066	Richardson \$7,271

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[illegible]

One important aspect of VA spending is the GI Bill program. The GI Bill allows veterans with active-duty educational benefits, provides a living allowance, provides money for books, and is transferable to spouses and children. Note that this spending flow does not appear in Table 13 above. According to information from the VA,⁶¹ there were 5,088 students utilizing some type of GI Bill program in CY 2023, the most recent year for which data are available. Of these, 2,642 students utilized the Post-9/11 GI Bill program. In CY 2023, Nebraska schools received \$18.6 million in tuition spending from eligible students utilizing the Post-9/11 GI Bill program. It is clear that Nebraska Colleges and Universities, as well as the broader economy, benefit from the spending that takes place in Nebraska by GI Bill beneficiaries.

The Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs (NDVA) also provides health care-related services to veterans in the state. NDVA operates four veterans' homes located in Bellevue, Kearney, Norfolk, and Scottsbluff. These homes provide a variety of medical, nursing, and rehabilitative services. The services range from assisted living care to skilled nursing care.⁶² The Veterans' Homes Board makes "all final determinations regarding admission, or continued admission, to one of the homes."⁶³ Eligible members include veterans who served on active duty, who were discharged or otherwise separated with a characterization of honorable or general, and who lived in Nebraska for at least two years in their lifetime. Veterans must be disabled due to service or age, are at least partially dependent on public support, or require care that can only be provided in a public facility. Spouses, widows, and widowers of veterans are

⁶³ Nebraska Revised Statute 80-319. (2023). Available: <https://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/statutes.php?statute=80-319>

eligible, as are Gold Star mothers and fathers.

Table 14 below presents the Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs Budget for the 2018-2019 legislative biennium through the 2023-2024 legislative biennium. It is important to keep in mind that the state dollars in support of operations can be used to help attract greater levels of federal funding to the state. For example, Nebraska Veterans State Service Officers (and County Veterans Service Officers) assist Nebraska veterans by determining eligibility for benefits from the VA or other federal programs. Thus, the state dollars used to fund State Service Officers are leveraged to obtain greater levels of federal funds in support of veterans. Note that payroll supported by the State of Nebraska general fund is not included in the direct economic impact for the purposes of this report. Notionally, state funds would be spent by Nebraska taxpayers within the Nebraska economy. Additionally, if State of Nebraska general funds were not spent to support the Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs it is highly likely that the general funds would be spent within the Nebraska economy by the State of Nebraska. For the purposes of this report, federal tax revenue from Nebraska which "has left the State of Nebraska" is assumed to "return to the Nebraska economy" due to the presence of Nebraska Veterans Homes. Other operations include NDVA's administration of temporary emergency aid through the Nebraska Veterans Aid Fund.⁶⁴ NDVA is also responsible for the Nebraska Veterans Cemetery at Alliance which was recently ranked "in the top 3% to 5% of cemeteries inspected" by the USDVA's National Cemetery Administration.⁶⁵

Table 14. Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs Appropriations, 2017-2024 Biennia						
	FY 2018-2019	FY 2019-2020	FY 2020-2021	FY 2021-2022	FY 2022-2023	FY 2023-2024
General Fund	\$25,901,529	\$26,582,179	\$27,182,314	\$31,905,888	\$41,601,098	\$41,601,098
Cash Fund	\$15,888,622	\$16,254,758	\$16,578,388	\$16,120,144	\$51,524,284	\$48,813,484
Federal Dollars	\$24,898,861	\$25,414,794	\$25,870,637	\$22,870,637	\$48,948,581	\$30,057,227
Agency Total	\$66,689,012	\$68,251,731	\$69,631,339	\$70,896,669	\$142,073,963	\$120,471,809
Sources: State of Nebraska, Administrative Services, State Budget Division: Program Appropriations by Fund Type, 2017-2019 Biennium. Available: https://budget.nebraska.gov/assets/program-appropriations-summary-by-fund-type-(2018-session).pdf State of Nebraska, Administrative Services, State Budget Division: Program Appropriations by Fund Type, 2019-2021 Biennium. Available: https://budget.nebraska.gov/assets/program-appropriations-summary-by-fund-type-(2019-session).pdf State of Nebraska, Administrative Services, State Budget Division: Program Appropriations by Fund Type, 2021-2022 Biennium. Available: https://www.nebraska.gov/das/budgetportal/advanced.html?budget_type=A&fiscal_year=2022 State of Nebraska, Administrative Services, State Budget Division: Program Appropriations by Fund Type, 2022-2023 Biennium. Available: https://www.nebraska.gov/das/budgetportal/advanced.html?budget_type=A&fiscal_year=2022 Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs , Annual Statistics FY 2023. (October 2023). Available at: https://veterans.nebraska.gov/sites/veterans.nebraska.gov/files/FY23%20NDVA%20Annual%20Report.pdf						

⁶⁴ Nebraska Veterans Aid Fund. (2023). Available: <https://veterans.nebraska.gov/nebraska-veterans-aid-fund-nva>

⁶⁵ Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs, Available at: <https://veterans.nebraska.gov/nebraska-state-veterans-cemetery-alliance-gets-%E2%80%98%E2%80%99-survey>

4. Economic Impact Analysis

The description of Nebraska military bases indicated tens of thousands of jobs and approximately one billion dollars in annual payroll along with hundreds of millions of dollars of operating expenses. This level of economic activity portends a substantial annual impact on the Nebraska economy. The primary purpose of this chapter is to estimate that annual economic impact from military assets in Nebraska.⁶⁶ The impact includes the direct employment and economic activity at the bases as well as the multiplier impact, the impact which occurs at other Nebraska businesses due to services purchased for military bases and as members of the military and civilians working at the bases spend their paychecks. The economic impact is estimated in terms of economic output (business sales), employee compensation (wages and benefits) and employment.

The chapter also estimates the impact on the Nebraska economy from pensions, health care services and other benefits received by DoD military retirees and other veterans. Impacts include direct employment at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and other health care facilities in Nebraska and private businesses throughout the state as DoD military retirees and other veterans spend their paychecks.

Economic Impact Methodology

Spending on military bases, military pension payments and U.S. Veterans Affairs spending in Nebraska generates an increase in economic activity in Nebraska. This is known as the direct economic impact. There is also a “multiplier” impact throughout the Nebraska economy. Focusing on the impact from military bases, the multiplier impact occurs as initial base spending circulates within the local economy. In particular, the multiplier impact occurs because military personnel spend their paychecks throughout the local economy on typical household expenditures such as food, health care, housing, insurance, apparel, and entertainment, or as veterans spend payments from the Veteran’s Administration or military pensions. There also may be a multiplier impact as the military purchases supplies to operate a base over the course of a year. The multiplier impact captures how businesses throughout the Nebraska economy gain from the money attracted to Nebraska due to military activity.

Economic multipliers are used to estimate the multiplier impact. An economic multiplier shows the ratio of the multiplier impact to the direct impact. For example, an employee compensation multiplier would show the dollars and cents of multiplier compensation for each \$1 of direct employee compensation. An employee compensation multiplier of 0.6 would imply that there is \$0.60 of employee compensation at other Nebraska businesses for each \$1 of compensation at a Nebraska military base. Economic multipliers can be calculated for Nebraska for output, employee compensation and employment. Economic multipliers are calculated with the IMPLAN model software. The IMPLAN model software is the leading multiplier model with capacity to estimate the economic impact of businesses and organizations in nearly 500 industries or public sectors, in cities, counties, states, or combinations of states and/or counties. “Federal government, military” is one sector in the IMPLAN model and is used to estimate multiplier impacts for Nebraska military bases. The IMPLAN model contains appropriate industry detail to calculate unique economic multipliers for each relevant industry or type of household spending.⁶⁷

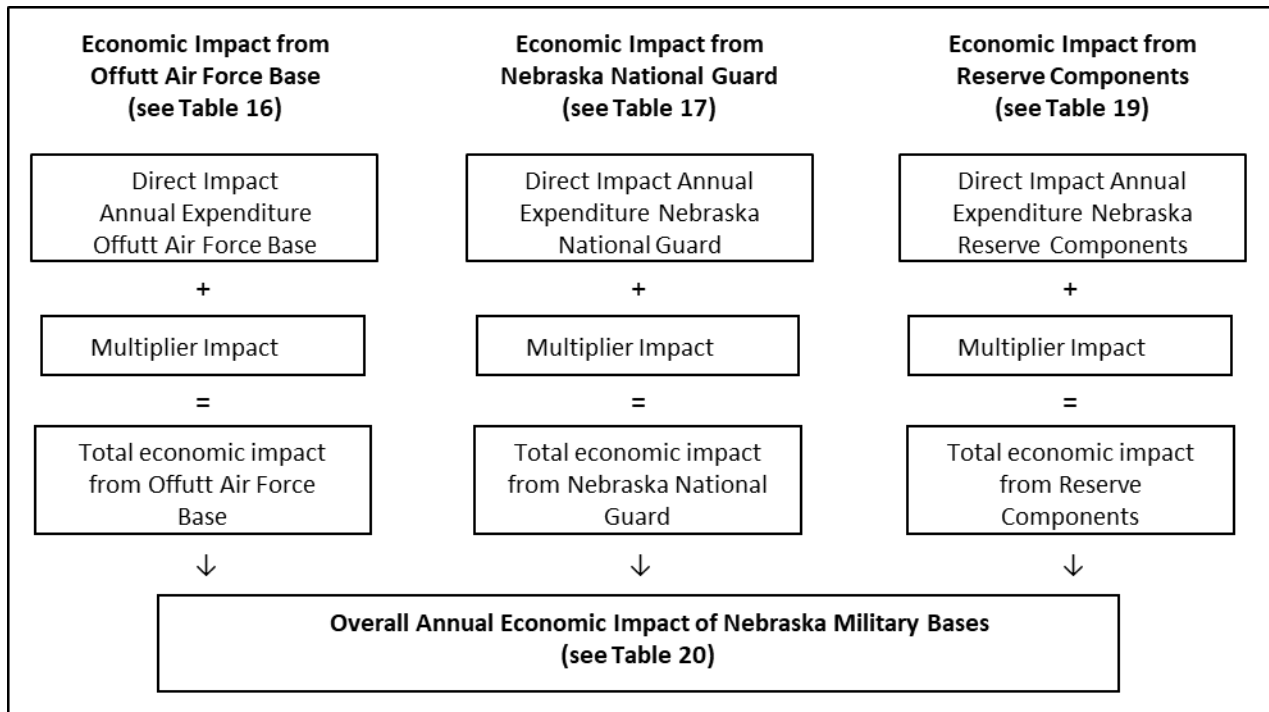
⁶⁶ Nebraska Revised Statute 55-606. (2023). Available: <https://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/statutes.php?statute=55-606>

⁶⁷ Income from military pensions and veteran compensation only generates a multiplier impact as income is spent.

Economic Impact of Military Spending

Military bases generate an economic impact on Nebraska by employing military personnel and contractors and through other aspects of operations such as purchasing utilities. In some years, there is also an impact from major construction projects. For Nebraska, the largest economic impact is from Offutt Air Base but there is also an impact from the Nebraska National Guard and from the Reserve Components. Figure 9 shows how the annual economic impact will be calculated for the operations of Nebraska military assets: Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska National Guard, and Reserve Components. The total economic impact for each component is the sum of the direct spending impact and the multiplier impact.

Figure 9. Approach for Calculating the Annual Economic Impact of Military Assets on Nebraska



Offutt Air Force Base. The report *Offutt Air Force Base Economic Impact Statement 2023*⁶⁸ reported military and civilian employment at the base of 9,024 and \$824.8 million⁶⁹ in military and civilian payroll. Payroll is combined with \$98.1 million in other federal expenditures to yield a direct output impact of \$922.9 million. The output, payroll (employee compensation) and employment values are reported in Table 15.

The report *Offutt Air Force Base Economic Impact Statement 2023* further indicates that there is spending of \$307.5 million on service contracts. Detailed information available for fiscal year 2016 indicates that

⁶⁸ Offutt Air Force Base Economic Impact Statement 2023. (2023). Available:

<https://www.offutt.af.mil/Portals/97/Resources/2022%20Economic%20Impact%20Analysis%20v2.pdf>

⁶⁹ Employment at the Base Exchange and on-base branch of the Cobalt Credit Union is not included in the employment figure. These jobs will be captured in the multiplier impact. Payroll for base jobs used in the economic impact also do not reflect payroll for the Base Exchange and Cobalt Credit Union.

84.3% of contract spending that year was with businesses which performed the service act at Offutt Air Force Base or in Bellevue. If remaining spending is assumed to occur out of state, applying this percentage to fiscal year 2023 contract spending yields an estimated \$259.4 million in service contracts let to businesses located in Nebraska (either a Nebraska company or a company conducting the work at a Nebraska location). These values are also reported in Table 15. Based on industry averages available from the IMPLAN model and the distribution of contract services among industries in the *Offutt Air Force Base Economic Impact 2016* document, that level of service contract spending would support direct employment in Nebraska of 1,772 full-year equivalent jobs with employee compensation of \$107.7 million. These values also are reported in Table 15, along with a footnote to indicate that the figures are estimates using IMPLAN.

Offutt Air Force Base Economic Impact Statement 2023 also reports construction spending during fiscal year 2023 of \$32.2 million. Based on industry averages available from the IMPLAN model, that level of construction spending would support an estimated 194 full-year jobs and \$11.8 million in employee compensation during the year. Table 15 also shows totals. The total direct output impact of Offutt Air Force Base during Fiscal Year 2023 was \$1,214.5 million. The total direct impact in terms of employee compensation is \$944.3 million and the direct employment impact is 10,990 jobs.

Table 15. Direct Employment, Employee Compensation and Output Impact of Offutt Air Force Base			
	Output (Millions of \$)	Employee Compensation (Millions of \$)	Employment
Military and Civilian	\$922.9	\$824.8	9,024
Service Contracts	\$259.4	\$107.7 ¹	1,772 ¹
Construction	\$32.2	\$11.8 ¹	194 ¹
Total	\$1,214.5	\$944.3	10,990
Source: <i>Offutt Air Force Base Economic Impact Statement 2023</i> and BBR calculations using IMPLAN			
¹ Indicates value estimated using IMPLAN; otherwise estimates from source document			

These values also are included in Table 16, in the direct impact column. The table further includes an estimate of the annual multiplier impact on the Nebraska economy for Fiscal Year 2023. The multiplier impacts are calculated by the UNL Bureau of Business Research utilizing the IMPLAN model. The total annual economic impact is the sum of the direct and multiplier impacts. The total annual impact from Offutt Air Force Base during Fiscal Year 2023 was \$2,043.0 million in output, including \$1,196.5 million in employee compensation paid to 15,891 workers.

Table 16. The Annual Economic Impact of Offutt Air Base on Nebraska			
	Direct Impact	Multiplier Impact	Total Impact
Output (Millions of \$)	\$1,214.5	\$828.5	\$2,043.0
Employee Compensation (Millions of \$)	\$944.3	\$252.2	\$1,196.5
Employment	10,990	4,900	15,891
Source: <i>Offutt Air Force Base Economic Impact Statement 2023</i> and BBR calculations using IMPLAN			

National Guard. The Nebraska National Guard also generates an economic impact on the state by drawing in resources to employ military personnel and operate base facilities. Economic impact analysis focused on data for the Nebraska Military Department. All 4,704 employees (some of which are part-time) of these three agencies are in positions fully or partially supported by federal funds or federal funds which pass through Nebraska state government and are therefore part of the direct employment impact on Nebraska.⁷⁰ This is because federal tax revenue from Nebraska which “has left the State of Nebraska” is assumed to “return to the Nebraska economy” due to the presence of military assets. These employees receive payroll support of \$187.3 million from the federal government. Note that payroll supported by the State of Nebraska general fund is not included in the direct economic impact. Similarly, Nebraska Capital Construction Funds are not included in the direct economic impact.⁷¹

Table 17 shows the total annual economic impact of the Nebraska National Guard on the state during Fiscal Year 2023.⁷² The total annual impact includes the direct impacts and the multiplier impacts calculated by the UNL Bureau of Business Research utilizing the IMPLAN model. The annual impact from the Nebraska National Guard was \$417.9 million in terms of output, including \$229.0 million in employee compensation paid to workers in 5,483 jobs.

Table 17. The Annual Economic Impact of the Nebraska National Guard on the State			
	Direct Impact	Multiplier Impact	Total Impact
Output (Millions of \$)	\$279.1	\$138.8	\$417.9
Employee Compensation (Millions of \$)	\$187.3	\$41.6	\$229.0
Employment	4,704	779	5,483
Source: Nebraska National Guard (Email correspondence) and BBR calculations using IMPLAN.			

Reserve Forces. The Air Force, Army, Marine Corps and Navy Reserve also generate an economic impact on the State of Nebraska. Table 18 shows the direct annual economic impact in terms of employment, payroll (payroll) and output (payroll plus operating costs) reported for each branch of the Reserves.⁷³ Data from the Army Reserve are for 2023, data from the Air

⁷⁰ State-funded NEMA employees were not included in the present analysis.

⁷¹ This report does not include an estimate of the impact from National Guard capital construction fund projects but could include the federal portion of any capital construction.

⁷² Note that the figures in Table 17 are computed using actual dollar figures reported by the Nebraska National Guard via email. This differs slightly from the analysis of Offutt Air Force Base/USSTRATCOM in Tables 15 and 16 above, where IMPLAN was used to first derive economic impact estimates of general expenditures, service contracts, and construction spending in Table 15, followed by an analysis of the total impact of these three spending components in Table 16. A different approach was taken for Offutt Air Force Base/USSTRATCOM because service contract spending represents a more complex line of spending. Because contract spending was directly reported in the Offutt Air Force Base Annual Report, it provided the opportunity to isolate this spending and derive an economic impact estimate from it. The methodology used in this report is consistent with the approach utilized in previous years' reports.

⁷³ FY 2022 Air Force Reserve Command Economic Impact Analysis, Army Reserve Impacts FY 2022 (By The Numbers), U.S. Marine Corps Reserve (Omaha Nebraska) Economic Impact FY2023, Navy Operational Support Center Omaha, NE Economic Impact 2019

Force Reserve are for Fiscal Year 2022 and data from the Marine Reserve are for Fiscal Year 2023. The Navy Reserve confirmed that data for 2023 was not significantly different from 2019 and subsequent years, so values from the 2019 study are utilized.

Table 18. Direct Employment, Employee Compensation and Output Impact of Nebraska-based Reserve Forces			
	Output (Millions of \$)	Employee Compensation (Millions of \$)	Employment
Air Force Reserve	\$16.6	\$15.8	254
Army Reserve	\$42.5	\$41.8	1,362
Marine Corps Reserve	\$3.1	\$2.8	126
Navy Reserve	\$4.1	\$1.8	270
Total	\$66.4	\$62.3	2,012
Source: FY 2022 Air Force Reserve Command Economic Impact Analysis, Army Reserve Impacts FY 2022 (By The Numbers), U.S. Marine Corps Reserve (Omaha Nebraska) Economic Impact FY2023, Navy Operational Support Center Omaha, NE Economic Impact 2019			

The total direct economic impact of Reserve Components in Nebraska is \$66.4 million over a one-year period. The impact includes \$62.3 million in compensation spread over 2,012 jobs.

These values also are included in Table 19, in the direct impact column. The table further includes an estimate of the annual multiplier impact on the Nebraska economy. The multiplier impacts are calculated by the UNL Bureau of Business Research utilizing the IMPLAN model. The total annual economic impact is the sum of the direct and multiplier impacts. The total annual impact from the Nebraska Reserves was \$113.2 million in output, including \$77.4 million in employee compensation paid to workers in 2,288 jobs.

Table 19. The Annual Economic Impact of Reserve Forces on Nebraska			
	Direct Impact	Multiplier Impact	Total Impact
Output (Millions of \$)	\$66.4	\$46.8	\$113.2
Employee Compensation (Millions of \$)	\$62.3	\$15.1	\$77.4
Employment	2,012	276	2,286
Source: FY 2022 Air Force Reserve Command Economic Impact Analysis, Army Reserve Impacts FY 2022 (By The Numbers), U.S. Marine Corps Reserve (Omaha Nebraska) Economic Impact FY2023, Navy Operational Support Center Omaha, NE Economic Impact 2019, and BBR calculations using IMPLAN			

Overall Annual Economic Impact of Nebraska Military Assets. The overall annual impact is the sum of the impact from Offutt Air Force, National Guard and Reserve bases in the state which was summarized in Tables 16, 17, and 19. These impacts are summed and presented in Table 20 below. The overall annual economic impact from Nebraska military bases was \$2,574.1 million in terms of output, including \$1,502.9 million in employee compensation paid to workers in 23,661 jobs. When interpreting these numbers through the lens of an input-output analysis, it is possible to say that the multiplier effect is 1.65.

Table 20. The Overall Economic Impact of Nebraska Military Assets on the State			
	Direct Impact	Multiplier Impact	Total Impact
Output (Millions of \$)	\$1,560.0	\$1,014.1	\$2,574.1
Employee Compensation (Millions of \$)	\$1,194.0	\$308.9	\$1,502.9
Employment	17,706	5,955	23,661
Source: BBR calculations using IMPLAN			

Economic Impact of Military Retirement Pensions

The multiplier approach also is used to calculate the economic impact from DoD military pension and Veterans Affairs expenditures in Nebraska. This spending includes pensions for military retirees and veteran compensation, spending on Veterans Affairs operations and construction, and Veterans Affairs services such as health care, education and vocational rehabilitation. There were \$466.1 million in payments by the military retirement system to residents of Nebraska during Fiscal Year 2023, according to the *Statistical Report on the Military Retirement System Fiscal Year 2023* (DoD Office of the Actuary, 2023). These payments were made to 13,593 eligible DoD military retirees living in the state. The payments impact the Nebraska economy but do not result in economic activity in the state until the income is spent. As a result, there is no direct economic impact from the payments, however, there is a substantial multiplier impact. The multiplier impact occurs as retiree households spend their payments at Nebraska businesses including retail stores, restaurants, rent, health services, insurance and entertainment and recreation.⁷⁴ The multiplier impact is also the total economic impact of the Military Retirement System. Table 21 shows the total annual economic impact on Nebraska from military retirement payments during Fiscal Year 2023. The annual impact from military retirement payment was \$498.4 million in terms of output, including \$152.4 million in employee compensation paid to workers in 2,815 jobs.

Table 21. The Annual Economic Impact of Military Retirement System Payments on the Nebraska Economy			
	Output (Millions \$)	Employee Compensation (Millions \$)	Employment (Jobs)
Total Economic Impact	\$498.4	\$152.4	2,815
Source: <i>Statistical Report on the Military Retirement System Fiscal Year 2023</i> and BBR calculations using IMPLAN			

Economic Impact of Veterans Affairs Spending

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs spent \$1.82 billion in the State of Nebraska during Fiscal Year 2023, according to the report *Geographic Distribution of VA Expenditures for Fiscal*

⁷⁴ The multiplier impact is little higher than the amount of military retirement payments for two reasons. First, a portion of the income received by Nebraska military retirees is spent in other states. Second, for retail spending such as groceries, clothing and gasoline, only the mark-up portion of spending generates an impact on the local economy, as most retail items are manufactured or refined in other parts of the country or other parts of the world.

Year 2023 produced by the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs spent on a variety of programs including compensation and pensions for injured veterans, vocational rehabilitation, education services and health care services. The administration also had general operating expenses for providing veterans programs in Nebraska and spent on facilities construction. Table 22 shows Fiscal Year 2023 spending by purpose and program. The largest components of spending are for compensation and pensions and medical care, with education and vocational rehabilitation programs third. General operating expenses for Veterans Affairs programs in Nebraska were \$50.5 million.

Table 22. Veterans Affairs Spending in Nebraska Fiscal Year 2023 By Program	
Purpose/Program	Amount (Millions \$)
General Operating Expenses	\$50.5
Construction	\$3.3
Compensation and Pension	\$918.9
Medical Care	\$780.5
Education & Vocational Rehabilitation/Employment	\$58.6
Insurance & Indemnities	\$4.4
<i>Source: Geographic Distribution of VA Expenditures for Fiscal Year 2023</i>	

Table 23 shows the direct impact, multiplier impact, and total economic impact for each purpose and program. The impact is presented in terms of output, since output is the broadest measure of economic activity. With two exceptions, the expenditures reported in Table 22 are also the direct economic impact on Nebraska. The first exception is the compensation and pensions categories. Like payments from the military retirement system, these Veterans Affairs compensation and pension payments do not generate a direct economic impact but do lead to a multiplier impact as the money is spent at Nebraska businesses. The second exception is the expenditures on the insurance and indemnities program. These are payments received as part of insurance programs sponsored by the VA. As with all insurance, the insurance benefit payments are in part supported by premiums. In other words, benefit payments are not necessarily new money for the Nebraska economy since premium payments are made by Nebraskans. While insurance policies may be subsidized, the conservative assumption is to assume that premium payments by Nebraskans are the source of these funds and there is therefore no direct impact, or multiplier impact, on the economy from Veterans Affairs insurance and indemnity payments.

Table 23 also shows multiplier impacts. Multiplier impacts are estimated using economic multipliers developed from IMPLAN. The largest annual economic impact is from Veterans Affairs spending on medical care. The annual economic impact is \$1,422.0 million, including a direct economic impact of \$780.5 and a multiplier impact of \$647.5. The total annual economic impact from employee compensation and pension payments is \$982.6 million. The total annual economic impact from all Veterans Affairs spending in Nebraska was \$2,604.6 during Fiscal Year 2023. From an input-output perspective, the multiplier effect for VA spending was 1.81.

Table 23. The Annual Economic Impact on Nebraska from Veterans Affairs Spending			
Impact in Terms of Output	Direct Impact (Millions \$)	Multiplier Impact (Millions \$)	Total Impact (Millions \$)
General Operating Expenses	\$50.5	\$25.2	\$75.7
Construction	\$3.3	\$2.4	\$5.7
Compensation and Pension	\$0.0 ^a	\$982.6	\$982.6
Medical Care	\$780.5	\$647.5	\$1,422.0
Education & Vocational Rehabilitation/Employment	\$58.6	\$54.0	\$112.6
Total			\$2,604.6
Source: <i>Geographic Distribution of VA Expenditures for Fiscal Year 2023</i> and BBR calculations using IMPLAN			
^a There was \$918.9 million in VA Compensation and Pension payments in FY 2023. This dollar figure is not included as a Direct Impact as it represents a type of household payment, the effect of which is not felt until the money is spent in Nebraska and other states. Nonetheless, the impact of this spending is included in the IMPLAN model, as seen by the \$899.0 million in induced (or multiplier impact) spending. Induced effects capture business activity as employees spend their paychecks on goods and services.			

Table 24 shows the total economic impact of Veterans Affairs spending on Nebraska by program for the two additional measures of impact: employee compensation and employment. The total estimated annual impact across all purposes and programs was \$1,028.6 million in employee compensation paid to workers in 16,428 jobs. Once again, the largest contribution to the annual impact was Veterans Affairs spending on medical care followed by spending on compensation and pensions.

Table 24. The Annual Economic Impact on Nebraska from Veterans Affairs Spending: Employee		
	Employee Compensation (Millions \$)	Employment (Jobs)
General Operating Expenses	\$41.6	413
Construction	\$2.3	39
Compensation and Pension	\$300.4	5,550
Medical Care	\$645.9	9,483
Education & Vocational Rehabilitation/Employment	\$38.4	943
Total	\$1,028.6	16,428
Source: <i>Geographic Distribution of VA Expenditures for Fiscal Year 2023</i> and BBR calculations using IMPLAN		

Economic Impact of the Army Corps of Engineers

Corps employees execute military construction, civil works, and environmental projects in Nebraska and throughout the Missouri River Basin. In 2023, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Omaha Division had 708 employees at its headquarters in downtown Omaha, with an annual payroll of \$68.5 million.

USACE also had operations and maintenance projects within Nebraska totaling \$15.39 million during Fiscal Year 2023. Table 25 shows the annual economic impact of the Omaha Headquarters, operations and maintenance projects within Nebraska, and the USACE overall.

The total impact is presented, which reflects both the direct and multiplier impact. The USACE Omaha Division headquarters has an annual economic impact of \$116.8 million while USACE operations and maintenance had an annual impact of \$27.3 million during FY 2023. The total annual impact of USACE overall is \$144.2 million, including \$103.4 million in employee compensation spread over 1,242 jobs.

Table 25. The Total Annual Economic Impact of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on the Nebraska Economy			
	Output (Millions \$)	Employee Compensation (Millions \$)	Employment (Jobs)
USACE Headquarters	\$116.8	\$83.7	993
USACE Operations and Maintenance	\$27.3	\$19.7	249
USACE Total	\$144.2	\$103.4	1,242
Source: Correspondence with the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers Omaha Office. Fiscal Year 2023: Civil Works Budget of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Available: https://usace.contentdm.oclc.org/utils/getfile/collection/p16021coll6/id/2109			

Economic Impact of GI Bill Benefits for Higher Education

GI Bill benefits support higher education spending in Nebraska. According to the VA GI Bill Comparison Tool Data, GI Bill or Post-911 GI Bill students in Nebraska received \$18.6 million worth of tuition and fee benefits during FY 2023. These benefits increased higher education spending in Nebraska with a resulting economic impact on the state economy. The economic impact is summarized in Table 26. The direct output is the \$18.6 million in spending at both private and public higher education institutions. The IMPLAN model provides estimates of employee compensation and employment in the higher education industry associated with \$18.6 million in tuition and fee spending. The IMPLAN model is also used to calculate the multiplier impact. The direct and multiplier impacts are summed to estimate the total economic impact in FY 2023. The total annual impact of GI Bill higher education benefits in FY 2023 is \$32.6 million, including \$14.5 million in employee compensation spread over 337 jobs.

Table 26. The Total Annual Impact of GI Bill benefits on the Nebraska Economy			
	Output (Millions \$)	Employee Compensation (Millions \$)	Employment (Jobs)
Direct Impact	\$18.6	\$10.7	263
Multiplier Impact	\$14.0	\$3.7	75
Total Impact	\$32.6	\$14.5	337
Source: 2023 VA GI Bill Comparison Tool, FY 2023 Data and BBR calculations using IMPLAN			

Summary of Annual Economic Impact

This chapter provided estimates of the annual economic impact of Nebraska Military bases on

the state economy during Fiscal Year 2023. The chapter also provided estimates of the annual economic impact from payments to Department of Defense military retirees residing in Nebraska from the military retirement system as well as the annual economic impact from Veterans Affairs spending on the State of Nebraska and the annual economic impact of Army Corps of Engineers operations. The economic impact from each source is presented in Table 27 below. Military bases have the largest annual economic impact on the State of Nebraska. Veterans Affairs spending has the second largest annual impact. Payments through the military retirement system and the Army Corps of Engineers also have a substantial economic impact.

Table 27. The Annual Economic Impact on Military Bases, Military Retirement System Payments and Veterans Affairs Spending on the State of Nebraska, FY 2023			
Source of Impact	Output (Million \$)	Employee Compensation (Millions \$)	Employment (Jobs)
Military Bases	\$2,574.1	\$1,502.9	23,661
Military Retirement System Payments	\$498.4	\$152.4	2,815
Veterans Affairs Spending	\$2,604.6	\$1,028.6	16,428
Army Corps of Engineers	\$144.2	\$103.4	1,242
GI Bill Benefits	\$32.6	\$14.5	337
Source: BBR calculations using IMPLAN			

The impact from retirement payments also has potential to grow if Nebraska can retain and attract more military retirees to the state. Further, military retirees and other veterans also impact the state economy by adding to the available labor force in the state. A larger, skilled workforce populated with skilled military retirees and other veterans would help more Nebraska businesses expand.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Nebraska Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs, Impact of Military Service on Employee Skills and Salaries. (2017). Annual Report. Available: https://nebraskalegislature.gov/FloorDocs/105/PDF/Agencies/Veterans_Affairs_Department_Of/610_20171120-163741.pdf