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Veterans Affairs**

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# 2024

## Statewide Symposium in Support of Service Members, Veterans & Their Families

April 17-18 | Phoenix, Arizona

arizona coalition  
for military families





# Basic Needs, Benefits & Beyond

Session 3

Key State and Federal Benefit  
and Program Updates



# Facilitators



**Joy Sprink**

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Arizona Coalition for Military Families



**April Jones**

ACTING DEPUTY ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Arizona Department of Economic Security





# Agenda

1

**Mandy French**

Phoenix VA Regional Benefits Office

2

**Miles Morell**

Arizona Department of Veterans Services

3

**Angie Rodgers**

Arizona Department of Economic Security





# Phoenix VA Regional Office - Updates

Walt Strong

Assistant Director

Phoenix VA Regional Benefits Office



# PHOENIX VA REGIONAL OFFICE



**D. Chris Norton**  
*Director*  
*(June 2016)*  
*Phoenix VARO*



**Amanda French**  
*Assistant Director*  
*(March 2022)*  
*Phoenix VARO*



**Walter Strong**  
*Assistant Director*  
*(July 2023)*  
*Phoenix VARO*



2024

# VBA CLAIMS (FY) 2024 Snapshot

- In FY24, **26,932** Compensation claims were processed by the Phoenix Veterans Service Center (VSC)
- Total Arizona Veterans Monetary benefits received: **\$310,488,422**;  
AZ Beneficiaries: **162,374**. (October 2023 – March 2024)



# PACT ACT (FY) 2024

- Phoenix began processing PACT Act claims on January 1, 2023. FYTD, nationally VA has:
  - Completed **1,149,559** PACT Act claims,
  - Grant rate; **862,912** PACT Act claims (~75% grant rate)
  - Issued **\$4.82 Billion** in Retroactive Award Payments.
- Increased outreach activities
  - In FY24, the Phoenix Regional Office conducted **189** individual outreach events, totaling **860 hours** of outreach.
  - Phoenix Regional Office is ranked **#3** in the district for outreach hours.

VA



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# CONTACT THE VBA

In Person: 3333 North Central Avenue  
Phoenix, AZ 85012

Office Hours: 0800 – 1600 (Monday - Friday)

Automated Appointment System:  
<https://va.my.site.com/VAVERA/s/>

VBA Call Center: 1-800-827-1000



# Military Family Relief Fund Program

Miles Morell

Arizona Department of Veterans'  
Services



# Arizona Department of Veterans' Services

*For Arizona veterans and those who care for them.*



## **Military Family Relief Fund Program (MFRF) Pre 9/11 & Post 9/11**

**Presented by:**

**Miles Morell, Program Administrator**



# Quick Topics



- Military Family Relief Fund or (MFRF)
- Background of the program Including criteria and eligibility
- Application process from start to finish with examples
- Transition In Place program or (TIP)
- Timelines of the MFRF process and what to expect
- Important contacts to know if there are questions
- Summary & Questions



# Important Contacts



- **Miles Morell:**

602-234-8437

[Mmorell@azdvs.gov](mailto:Mmorell@azdvs.gov)

**Arizona Department of Veterans' Services:** [www.azdvs.gov](http://www.azdvs.gov) or 602-255-3373

- **Be Connected:**

[www.BeConnected.org](http://www.BeConnected.org) For additional questions or information; email us at

1-866-4AZ-VETS (429-8387) [mfrf@azdvs.gov](mailto:mfrf@azdvs.gov)





# Be Connected In Action

Angie Rodgers

Executive Deputy Director

AZ Department of Economic Security



# TRANSFORMING CLIENT EXPERIENCE

How Arizona is reimagining economic security and meeting individuals and families where they are



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

*Your Partner for A Stronger Arizona*





# About Us

The Department of Economic Security is one of the nation's largest cross-cutting human services and employment agencies and works to strengthen individuals, families, and communities to build a thriving Arizona.

**50+**

Programs  
administered

**2.9M**

Arizonans  
served annually





## Current State

# Accessing Help

Despite having more than 50 programs housed under one roof, many DES programs operate in silos and leverage more than 100 antiquated portals and case management systems. Each of these systems rely on unique processes, and none of them talk to one another.

Individuals and families often struggle to connect to programs right for them and have difficulty navigating through complex service delivery and eligibility requirements. This can result in negative client experiences and worsen or prolong hardship.

**20**

Client-facing  
Portals

**100+**

Other Technology  
Applications & Tools



## Our Strategy

# Transforming Client Experience

To increase access; facilitate faster, quality services; and improve the overall client experience, the Department is launching an integrated, multi-service client portal that seamlessly connects individuals and families to all DES programs - no matter where they are.



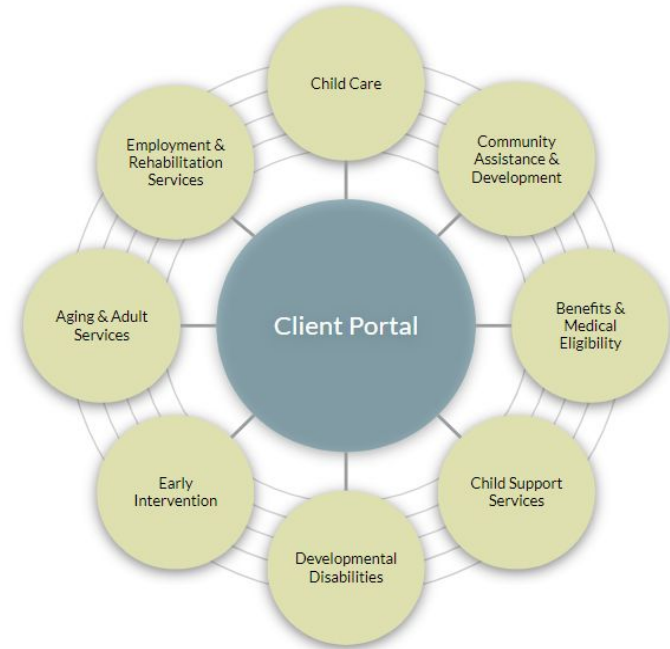
Increase  
Access

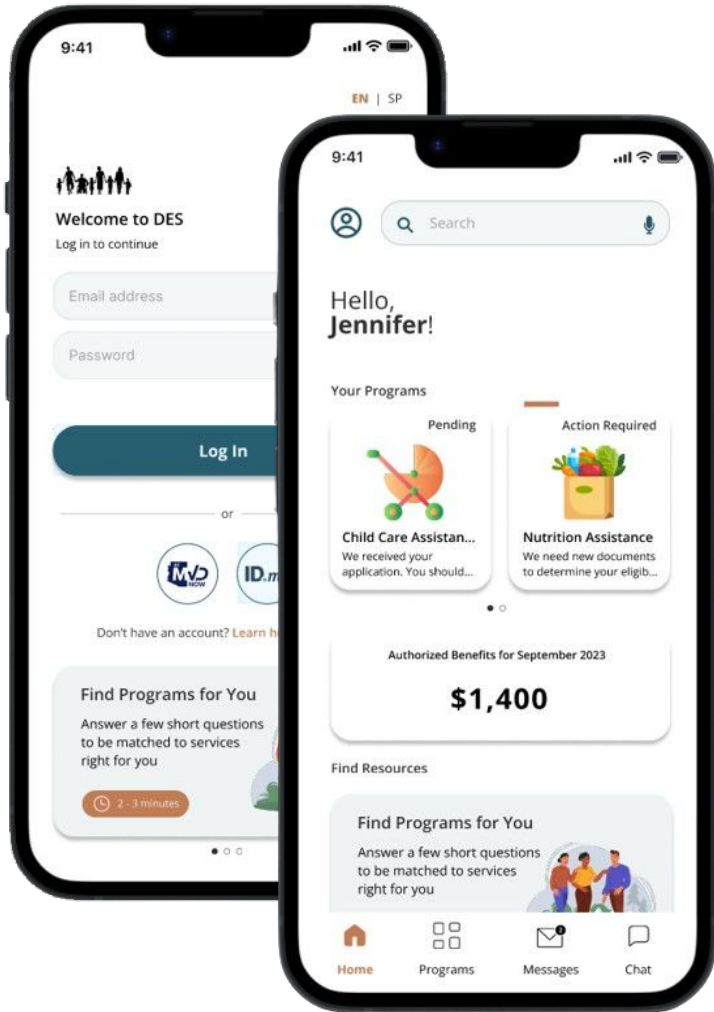


Fast-track  
Benefits & Services



Create Positive  
Experiences





## The Client Portal

# DES at Your Fingertips

The client portal will provide a sleek, intuitive design that prioritizes client needs and provides an easy-to-use self-service gateway to all of DES. For the first time, clients will be able to “skip the line” and engage with DES day or night, access programs from wherever they are, and manage their services - from application to benefit - in just a few clicks.

- Sign Up / Log In & Account Management
- Personalized User Dashboard
- Program Directory, Eligibility Pre-screen & Resource Locator
- Integrated Application Intake & Management
- Benefits Management
- Messaging & Notifications
- AI Chatbot

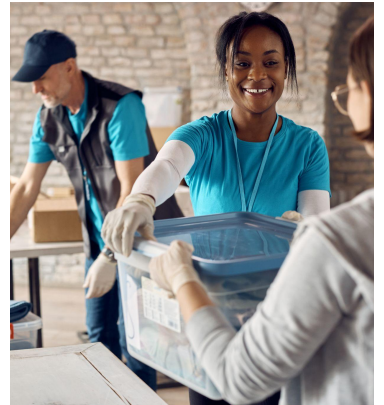


## COMMUNITY RESOURCE NAVIGATION

# Expanding Our Footprint

We know that not everyone can apply online. That's why we're committed to keeping our offices open and expanding the DES footprint through partnerships with community-based organizations - especially in communities with limited internet access.

Our partners will be able to assess needs, connect to appropriate resources, assist with applications, and check-in with clients to ensure they receive the help they need when they need it.





# Questions?





# Session Evaluation

We want to hear from you!

