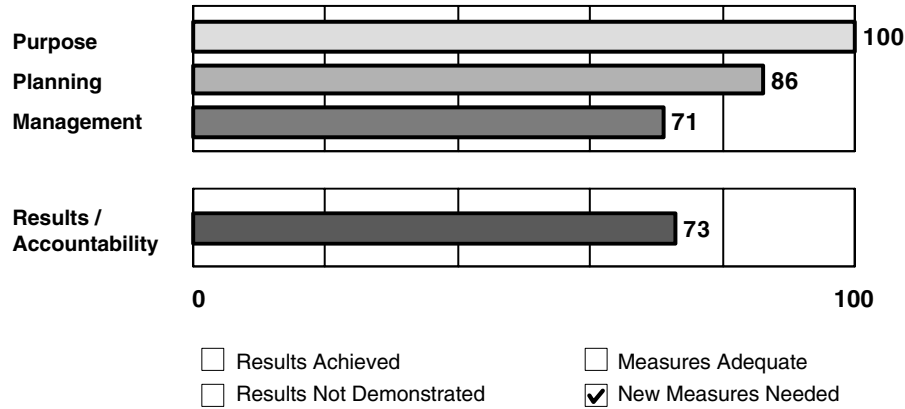


**Program: Burial Benefits**

**Agency:** Department of Veterans Affairs

**Bureau:** Department of Veterans Affairs



**Key Performance Measures**

**Year Target Actual**

Long-term Measure: Percent of veterans served by a burial option within a reasonable distance (75 miles) of their residence	1999	76.3	67
	2000	75.1	72.6
	2001	75.8	72.6
	2002	73.9	73.9
Long-term and Annual Measure: Percent of respondents who rate the quality of service provided by the national cemeteries as excellent	1999	88	84
	2000	88	88
	2001	90	92
	2002	93	91
Long-term and Annual Measure: Percent of respondents who rate national cemetery appearance as excellent	1999	80	79
	2000	82	82
	2001	88	96
	2002	96	97

**Rating: Moderately Effective**

**Program Type:** Direct Federal

**Program Summary:**

The purpose of this program is to honor veterans with a final resting place and lasting memorials that commemorate their service to our Nation. The center piece of this program is the system of 124 national VA cemeteries. VA also provides headstones, markers, and monetary benefits to veterans' families to help defray burial costs; and awards grants to states to build veterans cemeteries.

The assessment indicates that the program provides a valuable service to veterans and eligible family members in an efficient manner. Additional findings:

1. The program purpose is very clear and commonly held by interested parties.
2. The program meets key long-term and annual performance goals. However, VA has received \$25 million in additional funding over the last three years to enhance the appearance of cemeteries to those befitting national shrines, yet lacks a way to define and measure national shrine commitment needs and performance. Measures also do not yet exist for state cemetery grants and monetary benefits.
3. The program uses performance information to improve cemetery operation and outcomes. Even so, the Department is working to strengthen the link between budget, performance, and accountability.
4. Recent evaluations by an independent contractor indicate that the cemetery program performs well. VA continues to improve service such as adding kiosks to help visitors locate grave sites.

In response to these findings, the Administration:

1. Proposes a 4.8 percent increase in discretionary funding;
2. Will adopt more performance measures to address all burial benefits and the national shrine commitment; and
3. Will strengthen methods to link performance, budget, and accountability.

(For more information on this program, please see the Department of Veterans Affairs chapter in the Budget volume.)

**Program Funding Level (in millions of dollars)**

<u>2002 Actual</u>	<u>2003 Estimate</u>	<u>2004 Estimate</u>
386	410	427