



# **2023 Annual Report**

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STATE OF COLORADO

**COLORADO BOARD OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS**



**Members**

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Sean Maday, Vice Chair

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**The Adjutant General**

December 21, 2023

**CBVA ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023**

Pursuant to §28-5-703 (2017) C.R.S, I am pleased to provide you the Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs Annual Report for the period July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023.

**Executive Summary:**

- Veterans Assistance Programs:
  - Solid execution rates (VTF: 87%, VAG: 89%) with approval for a second grants administrator.
  - Call for increased attention to underserved groups, especially women Veterans.
- Identified Veterans' Issues:
  - Healthcare access challenges, mental health service gaps, and transportation issues.
  - Statewide housing shortage, homelessness, and financial struggles, including fuel and utilities.
- CDLE's Top Veteran Issues:
  - Mental health, veteran employment, and housing ranked as the

most critical challenges.

- Funding Allocation Impact:
  - Majority of funds directed to emergency services, including housing.
  - Potential mental health benefits through increased funding.
- Legislative Funding Recommendations:
  - Urgent plea to restore \$1M to VAG and \$3M to VTF for mental health services, unemployment prevention, and homelessness.
- Cemetery Maintenance Challenge:
  - Lithochrome issue affecting stone engravings, necessitating 1.0 FTE for maintenance.
  - Emphasizing the state's responsibility to honor veterans and their families.
- Legislative Support Request:
  - Strong call for continued legislative support in the upcoming session.
  - Emphasis on addressing veterans' health, unemployment, and homelessness.

The Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs (CBVA) mission is to ensure that Colorado remains a healthy environment for those who have served and sacrificed for our country and their families. We also advise The Adjutant General at the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (**DMVA**) and the Division of Veterans Affairs (OVA) We do this by holding our meetings, meeting with Veterans, in person when feasible and virtually when not, across the state. In addition, Board members visited all five state-run Veteran Homes. During this period, we held our meetings at:

- Routt County Administrative Building, Steamboat Springs, CO
- Mount Carmel Veterans Service Center, Colorado Springs, CO
- Western Region One Source, Grand Junction, CO
- Rocky Mountain Regional VAMC, Aurora, CO
- VA Regional Office, Lakewood, CO
- VHAS Rocky Mountain Health Network VISN 19, Glendale, CO
- Melissa Memorial Hospital, Holyoke, CO

- Bill Daniels Veteran Service Center, Denver, CO
- Joint Forces Headquarters, Centennial, CO

The Board added one new member from Douglas County. Six of seven Board members are from the I-25 corridor (Aurora, Castle Rock, Centennial, Colorado Springs, Parker, and Superior). Only one member is from rural Colorado; he is a Veterans Service Officer (VSO) in Pagosa Springs. The Board recommends that the next Board member be from the Western Slope and, if possible, a county VSO and that the Board makeup continues to be a cross between rural Colorado and the I-25 corridor.

The Veterans Trust Fund (VTF) and Veterans Assistance Grant (VAG) programs continue to be highly utilized throughout the state. The execution rate for the VTF was 87% and the VAG 89%. Lack of payment turnaround rates has kept many recipients from executing at 100%. We also find that when there is a shortage of staff at the DMVA accounting office this adds to this problem. With the approval, this fiscal year, to hire a second grants administrator, by the Division of Veterans Affairs, should help resolve this problem.

The DVA has filled the state's need for a State Woman Veterans Coordinator/Veterans Services Officer. It is estimated the State has 47,329 VA registered women veterans, and an estimated additional 20,000 unregistered Colorado women veterans. Only 9% of VTF grants went to women Veterans. The Board and the DVA are working together to encourage grant recipients to increase VTF funds to underserved populations, specifically women Veterans. The good news was that 20% of the VAG went to women Veterans.

In our travels across the State meeting Veterans, and from Veteran representatives at our meetings, we have identified the following issues facing Colorado veterans:

- Access to healthcare
- Lack of mental health especially in our rural areas and lack of mental health providers

- Lack of transportation for healthcare
- Statewide shortage of housing and shelters - especially during winter months
- Homelessness
- Inability to purchase fuel, gas, and utilities

In the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment's Annual Report to the board they listed the top three issues facing Veterans and their families as:

- Mental health
- Veteran employment
- Housing

The CDLE further reported "Most remaining reported issues are financially-related hardships due to the increased costs of living, transportation, and energy, which can be more dependent on location and family size. Any changes that help Veterans with these issues will likely help stabilize their lives and expand their opportunities to obtain a sustainable career and prosper."

One way the State helps to resolve these issues is through increased funding to the Veteran Assistance Grant and Veteran Trust Fund Programs. This year 58% of the VAG and 44% of VTF funds were expended for emergency services, including housing.

The VTF funds may be used for:

- Short Term Emergency Assistance (e.g. temporary utilities, food, vouchers, medical, clothing, etc.)
- Job Training/Education/Assistance (e.g. direct training, tools, text books, clothes)
- Homeless Prevention/Shelter Operations/Temporary Housing Assistance (e.g. housing or rental assistance, food, clothing, medical, utilities, etc.)
- Mental Health and Hygiene (e.g. counseling, retreats, animal therapy)

- Medical Transportation (e.g. vouchers and reimbursements; vehicle purchase, maintenance & operation)
- Veterans Stand Downs
- Special Programs Unique to the Identified Needs of a Particular Community

VAG awards may be used for:

- Mental health services
- Housing for veterans experiencing homelessness
- Job training
- Employment, and
- Family counseling services

In 2020, the Legislature removed \$1M from the VAG and \$3M from the VTF. By returning these funds, you would enable the state to allocate more resources to the two programs, directly addressing the issues impacting Colorado Veterans. For instance, mental health issues, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression, are significant risk factors for suicide among veterans. According to the VA, 212 Colorado Veterans committed suicide in 2021. In rural areas, there are not enough mental health providers; yet, VAG funds, for instance, could be used by grantees for tele-health programs. With winter coming, the additional funds would also support more sheltering and transportation for veterans to receive health care. Restoring the funds to the VTF and VAG programs will go a long way to provide the assistance needed for veterans' health and well-being and prevent unemployment and homelessness and ultimately strength our State. This recommendation is also supported by the United Veterans' Coalition of Colorado's in their legislative goals for this coming legislative session.

The Board is also responsible for consulting with the OVA on rules to maintain the Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado, in Grand Junction, in compliance with applicable State and federal statutes and rules. The cemetery is facing a challenge with the durability of Lithochrome, a darkening agent used to enhance the visibility of stone engravings. The



agent is prematurely wearing away, causing the engravings to fade, and become difficult to read. This makes the gray granite memorials very difficult, if not impossible, to read. To correct this problem, the cemetery needs 1.0 permanent FTE at the cost of approximately \$60k per year to exclusively assure continued maintenance, (perpetual care) (as prescribed by SB28-5-508) to the growing numbers of headstones and niche covers at the cemetery. Currently 4,700+ headstones and niche covers are placed at the cemetery, and many are 20+ years old. These older stones require a refreshed lithograph to the lettering to improve intelligibility and properly restore the headstones and niche covers. The National Cemetery Administration will not replace these stones. It is the State's responsibility to correct the Lithochrome problem and show the proper respect to our Veterans and their families.

The Board is honored to serve our Veterans who have sacrificed for our country as well as their families. We hope that you will also continue to support our Veterans in this coming legislative session with the Board's recommendations above.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "SMA Scanlon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sheila M. Q. Scanlon,  
Chair, Colorado Board of Veteran Affairs

**COLORADO BOARD OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS**



**Members**

Sheila Scanlon, Chair  
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**Governor**

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Laura L. Clellan

**The Adjutant General**

**Report on CDVA Training**

**SFY 2022-2023**

Pursuant to C.R.S. § 28-5-705, the Board approved a training plan from the Colorado Division of Veterans Affairs for new county veterans service officers in November 2022. This 30-60-90 plan establishes requirements for new veterans service offices to obtain and maintain state certification and recommendation for VA accreditation. The Board will be kept apprised of changes and modification to the training plan, as recorded in the meeting minutes of 02 November 2022.

The Division held two training sessions for county veterans service officers to obtain CEUs since the Board's 2022 annual report. The first was held 22-23 March 2023 with eight CEUs available. The second was held 19-22 September with 16 CEUs available. Both trainings were attended by a Board member. The next training session is scheduled for 4-5 April 2023.

The Board will continue to partner with Division to assess and approve training plans for new county veterans service officers and to review training conferences.

# STATE OF COLORADO

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## DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

### Division of Veterans Affairs

155 Van Gordon Street Suite 201  
Lakewood, CO 80112  
(303) 914-5832



27 November 2023

David Callahan

Director

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County Commissioners

Re: State Board of Veterans Affairs Annual Report to the Governor

### **Executive Summary**

The division experienced increases in new powers of attorney from 7,735 to 9,834; claims 10,086 to 15,511; and property tax exemption applications 16,066 to 21,066 in 2023, while health care enrollment reported a slight decrease from 114,878 to 113,890.

Decision reviews remained steady at 2,671 compared to 2,694 in 2022, while appeals to the Board of Veterans Affairs experienced a decrease from 164 to 156 and BVA hearings from 413 to 274 during 2023. See Table 1 for 2022-2023 comparison.

Implementation of the Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxins (PACT) Act of 2022 expanded and extended eligibility for VA health care for Veterans with toxic exposures and Veterans of the Vietnam era, Gulf War era, and Post-9/11 era.

Colorado Veterans filed 21,380 distinct PACT Act related claims with a sum of awards totaling \$51,412,643 million.

Colorado veterans continued to make a positive impact on local economies with more than \$4.8 billion in total VA expenditures distributed within the State. The Colorado Division of Veterans Affairs assisted with facilitation of direct payments to veterans in the form of compensation and pension benefits exceeding \$2.7 billion. In other benefits, nearly \$352 million went to education and employment readiness and more than \$1.6 billion was expended on medical care.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs reported the Colorado veteran population at 374,233, which is a decrease from last year of 13,385. This decrease reflects the loss of aging veterans, many from World War II and Korea.

The division has moved forward and made progress with several recommendations identified during the VSO Performance audit of September 2022. Development and implementation of the 30-60-90 day VSO training and certification program, VSO accreditation, information system security, uniformity of CVSO hourly voucher payments, expansion of regional field service offices, and development of a division strategic plan with supporting key measures has postured the division to further prompt and efficient services to all Veterans across Colorado on a uniform basis.

Table 1

<b>COLORADO DIVISION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS</b>		
<b>Summary of Program Assessment</b>		
<b>ITEM</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
New Powers of Attorney	7,735	9,834
New Claims	10,086	15,511
Health Care Enrollment (statewide)	114,878	113,890
Decision Reviews	2,694	2,671
Appealed to BVA	164	156
BVA Hearings	413	274
Veteran Property Tax Exemption Applications	16,066	21,066

**Significant Activities and Accomplishments**

The division recently published its first policies and procedures manual which provides written policies and procedures for appointment, training, certification, and accreditation of VSOs; managing and securing sensitive data; processing of support payments to counties; deploying division resources to help ensure uniform service; and strategic planning and governance. Training, certification, and accreditation of our Veterans Service Officers is foundational in ensuring we are providing uniformed services across the state to those we assist in filing claims for federal and state benefits. The Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs-approved VSO training curriculum will assist in certifying newly appointed CVSOs in a prompt, efficient and uniform manner, while also meeting VA training requirements for those CVSOs eligible for VA accreditation. This is a team effort between the counties, the state and federal VA agencies. Counties select and hire Veterans Service Officers, the state certifies, and the VA Office of General Counsel accredits.

The General Assembly approved eight additional FTEs in 2023, which included an additional Regional VSO, Division Training Officer, VSO Liaison, Appeals Program Assistant, Grants Specialist, Veteran Memorial Cemetery Program Assistant, VMC Grounds Crew Supervisor, and a Program Assistant to manage the Veteran Community Living Center outpatient mental health program. A Women's Veteran Service Office Coordinator, originally appropriated in 2022, was also filled during 2023.

Further assessment of the division's resources resulted in the addition of a Claims and Benefits Supervisor to support the regional field officers and a Division Operations Officer to coordinate and synchronize the division's state-wide activities. The WROS increased its administrative support with one additional administrative assistant and two DEERS operators to assist Veterans.

### **Challenges and Opportunities**

Current state-wide VSO resources remain inadequate in meeting the claims and benefits assistance of approximately 374,000 Colorado Veterans, which have brought in nearly \$2.7 billion in compensation and pension assistance and \$1.6 billion in medical care, with a total VA expenditure for all programs exceeding \$4.8 billion. The division is advocating for additional full-time state and county VSO's to address the division's statutory directive of furthering prompt and efficient services to all Veterans across Colorado on a uniform basis, while also addressing an additional 21,380 distinct PACT Act claims. It is estimated that these additional PACT Act claims will further increase VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation claims for the surviving spouse, children or parents of Veterans who die from a PACT Act related illness. Additional state and county VSOs will assist in reducing appointment wait times, currently more than 45 days, for higher density Veteran populations across the state. Additional VSOs will enable the division to reduce appointment wait times to two weeks or less across the state and be more closely aligned with the Colorado Revised Statute §28-5-705 of

furthering prompt and efficient service to all Veterans across Colorado on a uniform basis.

Identifying the number and location of our state Veterans remains a challenge. The division currently uses the VA Geographical Distribution of Expenditures as reported by the National Center for Veteran Analysis and Statistics; however, this data only reports those Veterans in the VA system, which by some estimates is 20 percent less than the actual count. To address this disparity and to locate those currently outside the VA system, the state will contract with a provider who can provide contact information for those Veterans outside the VA system.

The state currently lacks a veteran resource information clearinghouse as directed by Colorado Revised Statute §28-5-711 and has received appropriations to create a veteran resource information clearinghouse for our state's Veterans by June 30, 2024. Ongoing annual appropriations will be required to fund an FTE to maintain the currency of resources.

The military funeral honors stipend has been well received by participating veteran service organizations across Colorado; however, current program funding is not sufficient to meet the growing demand. The division plans to pursue additional funding for supporting the military funeral honors stipend program on an ongoing basis.

The division has identified a need to establish a Southern Region One Source in Pueblo that will improve access to resources and services for rural Veterans residing in southern Colorado. The vision for this Southern Region One Source Center is to collaborate with Mt. Carmel in creating a private-public partnership based on the best practices and lessons learned from the Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center in Colorado Springs and Western Region One Source in Grand Junction.

## **Administrative Condition**

The division will continue to pursue an increase in spending authority from the Veterans Trust Fund that will assist in addressing more requests for assistance across the state. Restoration of the \$4,000,000 swept from the division's Veteran Trust Fund and Veterans Assistance Grant programs in 2020 will remain a division priority until restored. These funds are essential in addressing additional services, such as the Southern Region One Source, ongoing resourcing of the veteran resource information clearinghouse, fulfilling resource needs and amenities for veteran community living centers, state veterans cemeteries expansion, Western Region One Source operations, and the health and well-being of our Veterans.

The recently completed Colorado Office of Policy, Research and Regulatory Reform Sunset Review of the Veterans Assistance Grant program recommended a seven-year continuance of the grant program, until 2031. The Veteran Assistance Grant, combined with the Veteran Trust Fund, provides over \$1.8 million dollars to veteran service organizations, nonprofits, and governmental agencies that provide services to ensure the health and well-being of Veterans, capital improvements or needed amenities for veterans community living centers, costs incurred by state veteran cemeteries, and costs incurred by the division in support of veteran assistance and services. The division was successful in increasing the Veterans Trust Fund appropriation by \$250,000 and receiving an appropriation of \$500,000 to create and operate the veterans resource information clearinghouse, which has been an unfunded mandate since 2009.

The Veterans Memorial Cemetery is fully staffed and continues to provide a dignified final resting place for our Veterans and their eligible dependents, with 6,045 internments since beginning operations on September 5, 2002. The Western Region One Source is fully staffed and has served 26,823 Veterans, service members, and their families since opening their doors on May 9, 2019.



## Short and Long-Term Goals

### Short-term goals:

- Staff all DVA organizational structure vacancies by March 31, 2024
- Improve DVA Veteran's net promoter score satisfaction with DMVA services 5% by June 30, 2024
- Improve accreditation of eligible VSOs 10% by June 30, 2024
- Increase VBMS access for eligible VSOs 20% by June 30, 2024
- Conduct 20 community outreach events by June 30, 2024
- Identify and resolve five gaps in Veterans services by June 30, 2024
- Improve overall grant execution rate 6% by June 30, 2024
- Obtain/sustain 100 percent occupancy of WROS leased office space by June 30, 2024
- Field a veteran's resource information clearinghouse by June 30, 2024
- Identify and locate those Veterans currently outside the VA system by June 30, 2024

### Long-term goals:

- Improve DVA customer service experience another 5% by June 30, 2025
- Increase accreditation of eligible VSOs an additional 5% by June 30, 2025
- Increase VBMS access an additional 10% by June 30, 2025
- Conduct 40 community outreach events by June 30, 2025
- Identify and resolve 10 gaps in Veterans services by June 30, 2025
- Improve overall grant execution rate an additional 4% by June 30, 2025
- Provide following WROS services: Housing, Employment, Training, DEERS, Education, Counseling, Life Skills, Wellness, Transition, and VSO services by June 30, 2025
- Implement Women Veterans Study recommendations by June 30, 2025
- Partner with Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center in standing up and resourcing a Southern Region One Source for Veterans in Pueblo by June 30, 2025

The Colorado Division of Veterans Affairs is grateful for the opportunity to serve our Colorado Veterans and remains committed, along with the assistance of our local, county, state, and federal partners in delivering the highest levels of service and assistance to our Veterans and their families. I would like to personally thank each organization and individual who has made a difference in the life of a Veteran in 2023. "One Team, One Fight!"

David Callahan

Director

Division of Veterans Affairs

## **Veterans Assistance Grant**

### **2022-2023 Final Report**

Pursuant to C.R.S. 28-5-712, Legislative appropriations authorized the Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) Veterans Assistance Grant to receive \$850,000 from the general fund for FY 2022-2023. Of these funds, a total of \$800,000 was designated to be granted to non-profit or governmental agencies to provide assistance to veterans in the State. Additionally, a total of \$157,886 from the VAG Cash Fund was allocated, all of which was designated for grant funding. This resulted in a total of \$957,886 of funds available to be awarded to organizations throughout the state serving veterans. The following is a final report of the administration of those monies.

A total of 32 non-profit organizations and governmental entities throughout the state were awarded grants totaling \$956,997.00. The direct services provided through the grants include the provision of emergency services (19%), food/gas (3%), health and well-being (13%), housing (34%), mental health (7%), and transportation (3%). VAG grantees served a total of 1,398 unduplicated veterans were served. In total, 3,696 service contacts were made to veterans through this funding.

A total of \$850,154.40 was expended by the grantees, resulting in an 89% execution rate, which is consistent with the year prior. The grant programs continued to address housing stability needs for veterans not eligible for relief fund assistance, while referring those eligible for assistance to DOH relief funds. Many of the grantees continued to demonstrate creativity and resiliency in adapting and finding ways of serving veterans during the ongoing pandemic. The majority of grantees continue to be located in the urban areas of the state, while the minority are located in rural settings. Grant staff are working to conduct outreach to the eastern part of the state in order to distribute VAG funds to more rural areas. In addition, grant staff will be working with grantees to provide more services to underserved veterans, focusing on women veterans.

Program evaluation measures include a service recipient survey to measure the effectiveness of the services provided by the grantees and to measure the outcomes or impact of the services. The survey utilizes a standard Likert scale to rate the grantee

program as well as changes in the overall health and well-being of veterans served. Overall, the majority of veterans rated the services received as favorably, with the majority indicating an overall well-being for themselves and an increase in wellbeing for their families. These indicators demonstrate that the services provided meet the statutory intent of improving veterans overall health and wellbeing and an increase in mental health support.

Grant staff conducted 18 application training webinars and numerous 1:1 technical assistance throughout the reporting period. 23 grantee check-ins were conducted throughout the grant year to address questions and concerns, with the intent to increase the grantee execution rate.

### **Program Highlights**

- Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center, VAG grantee, was able to assist an 11 year, Honorably Discharged, Disabled Army Veteran and his family to maintain stable housing with the funds from the Veterans Assistance Grant. This support greatly helped the veteran and his family in a tough spot.
- Rocky Mountain Human Services (RMHS), one of Home Front Military Network's (HFMN's) partners, reached out HFMN to collaborate on helping a veteran get into housing. The veteran, his wife, and their children were living in a very dangerous area of town, and the landlord was not keeping up on the maintenance of the home, and it was becoming a safety issue for their children. The veteran found a home but, due to their credit, the landlord was charging a double deposit, and their total move-in costs were \$6,000, making the move into safe housing unaffordable without assistance. RMHS was able to cover a large portion, the veteran was able to contribute some, and they were looking to HFMN for help with the remaining balance. That assistance provided the veteran and his family stable and safe housing. During our follow-up contact, the spouse informed the case manager that the veteran's work had picked up considerably. Because of the additional income, and the veteran and his family not wanting a repeat of their prior situation, they paid their rent ahead of schedule. We are thrilled that they were fiscally responsible and that their rent is paid through the end of 2023. This partnership between the veteran and community agencies, and the generous

support of DMVA Veterans Assistance Grant Funds, has enabled the veteran to focus on long-term financial stability so the veteran and his family can thrive.

- Richard came to the El Paso County Homeless Veterans Coalition 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Stand Down for Homeless Veterans in October 2022. He was completely homeless with only his motorcycle for transportation and only the hope of a job opportunity that he had just applied for that would take several weeks of background checks, etc. to learn if he would even be offered. After being put through the vetting process for our Transitional Housing Initiative (THI) program, he was selected as one of the 10 family unit participants to be housed in hotel accommodation for 30 days while attending life skills trainings and going through the process to secure stable employment & more permanent housing. During the THI Richard was offered the position he applied for and we were able to negotiate a rental home situation for him as he began his training for his new job. One year later Richard says that his life has turned 180 degrees around thanks to the hand up provided by the El Paso County Homeless Veterans Coalition utilizing funds provided by the Colorado Veterans Assistance Grant. He remains in a stable home situation having begun a meaningful relationship and has been working many overtime hours at his job, receiving several promotions as he works diligently to continue improving his life. Richard says he hates to even consider where he would be today without the critical hand up provided at just the right time through the all-volunteer efforts of the El Paso County Homeless Veterans Coalition.

Given the increasing interest in the Veterans Assistance Grant program as indicated by the number of applicants and amounts requested, we respectfully request the full amount of grant funds be allocated as noted in statute.

A full list of grant recipients, location and funding amount is attached.

**FY2022-2023 Veterans Assistance Grantees**

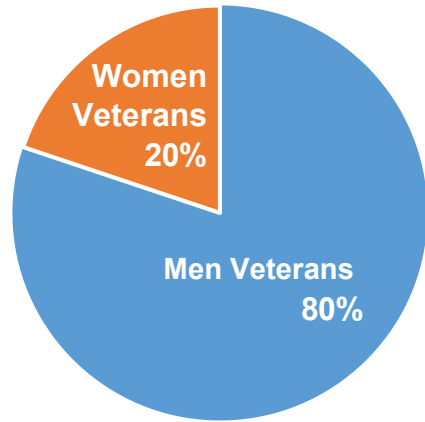
<b>Grantee</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Amount Awarded</b>
Grand County VSO	Grand County	Veteran Assistance Mental Health	\$26,500.00
Warrior Bonfire	State-wide	Veteran Assistance	\$30,000.00
The Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks Lodge 1319	Archuleta County	Veteran Assistance Transportation	\$50,730.00
El Paso County Homeless Veterans Coalition	El Paso County	Homeless Transition Program, Veteran Assistance	\$90,000.00
Douglas County Government	Douglas County	Veteran Assistance	\$7,000.00
Park County	Park County	Veteran Assistance Transportation	\$20,000.00
La Puente Home	La Puente	Veteran Assistance	\$41,184.00
Veterans for Veterans of Archuleta County	Archuleta County	Veteran Assistance	\$92,184.00
Pikes Peak Workforce Center	El Paso County	Veteran Assistance Job Training	\$12,000.00
Boulder County	Boulder County	Veteran Assistance	\$20,000.00

Las Animas County	Las Animas County	Veteran Assistance	\$10,000.00
City and County of Broomfield Human Services	City and County of Broomfield	Veteran Assistance	\$5,000.00
CO- Columbine Women's Marine Association	Statewide	Veteran Assistance	\$31,184.00
Alamosa County Veterans Service Office	Alamosa County	Veteran Assistance Transportation	\$62,165.00
Gunnison County Veteran Services	Gunnison County	Veteran Assistance	\$28,000.00
Healing Warriors Program	Fort Collins	Mental Health/Alternative Therapy	\$61,184.00
Huts for Vets	State wide	Alternative Therapy/Outdoor Recreation Therapy	\$30,000.00
Home Front Military Network	Colorado Springs	Veteran Assistance	\$86,184.00
Salvation Army	Statewide	Veteran Assistance	\$8,000.00
Colorado Coalition for the Homeless	Denver	Veteran Assistance Employment Assistance Transportation	\$6,184.00
Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center	Colorado Springs	Veteran Assistance	\$71,184.00

Remount Foundation	Colorado Springs	Equine Assisted Therapy	\$60,000.00
Sobriety House	City/County Denver	Substance Abuse Residential Treatment	\$65,000.00
County of Costilla	Costilla County	Veteran Assistance	\$24,934.00
Pueblo County Dept. of Human Services	Pueblo County	Stand Down-Veteran Assistance	\$9,880.00
<b>Total (after modifications)</b>			<b>\$956,997.00</b>

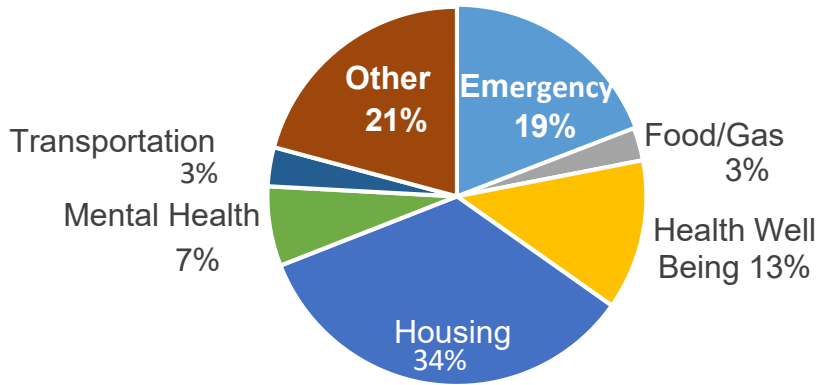


### FY2022-2023 Veterans Served- VAG



Men  
Veterans    Women Veterans

### FY2022-2023 Breakdown of Expenses- VAG



Emergency    Employment    Food/Gas    Health Well  
Housing    Mental Health    Transportation    Being Other

# DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS REPORT ON THE COLORADO STATE VETERANS AFFAIRS TRUST FUND FOR FY 22-23

**Subject:** Colorado State Veterans Trust Fund

**Requirement:** Pursuant to §25-1-108.5 (2), C.R.S. as amended, the following report is provided for State Fiscal Year 20-21 covering the period from July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023.

**Funds Received:** The Veterans Trust Fund (VTF) received a Long Bill appropriation of \$832,045 for FY 22-23. This does not include \$75,000 of additional spending authority of the Tobacco Master Settlement funds authorized for the Western Region One Source (WROS). The Division of Veterans Affairs was authorized to expend \$42,500 for administration of the grant; the actual expenditures were \$41,627 for administration. Of the total non-administrative appropriation, \$15,000 was allocated for Board travel. A total of \$817,044.03 was awarded in grants to nonprofit organizations and Veterans Community Living Centers throughout the State. Of those grant funds awarded, \$707,780.69 was expended, resulting in an 87% execution rate, which is the same as last fiscal year.

**Program Description (with eligible population):** The Colorado State Veterans Trust Fund is designed with the overall goal of assisting all veterans in need residing in the State of Colorado regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, gender identity, marital or religious status. The key goals of the program are to provide sufficient support and funding to meet the needs of veterans in the four areas defined below:

- State Veteran's Community Living Centers for capital improvements or needed amenities for existing or future state veteran's nursing homes.
- Operation and maintenance of existing or future State Veterans Cemeteries.
- Costs incurred by the Division of Veterans Affairs.
- Veterans programs operated by nonprofit veterans' organizations that meet criteria adopted by the Board and that are selected by the Board as grant recipients.

Non-Profit Criteria:

Nonprofit veterans' organizations: Nonprofit veterans' organizations must be nationally recognized by the United States Congress as an organization that can provide services to veterans under Title 38, USC. This includes organizations designated by the IRS as a 501(c)19 or 501(c)23 organization as well as some 501(c)4 entities.

Program Criteria: The Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs (CBVA) established criteria for veteran programs operated by nonprofit veteran's organizations located within the State of Colorado to provide assistance for veterans in need. Examples of such programs are veteran's transportation programs to medical centers and/or clinics, homelessness prevention and intervention emergency needs, medical/mental health services not provided and/or covered through the VA, and other needed services such as food and gas or other assistance.

Eligible Population: Veterans within the state of Colorado with an other than dishonorable discharge. There are no income eligibility requirements, although demonstrated need for assistance is required.

**Services Provided**: The following represents a breakdown by category of agencies that received funding, grants or awards during the reporting period, to include the type of service and/or assistance provided.

**Non-Profit Veterans Service Organizations** and **State Veterans Community Living Centers** – these organizations expended \$707,780.69 in grant funds to support veterans and their needs.

- Bruce McCandless Veterans Community Living Center in Florence was awarded \$27,303.00 and expended the funds for massage chairs, coffee bar, and a Scandent system for their residents; Rifle Community Living Center was awarded \$21,700.00 and expended the amount for a portable speaker system for their residents, and the Veterans Community Living Center at Homelake, in Monte Vista was awarded funds for wall mounted TV's and a Bluetooth technology system to assist with noise control for residents.
- Non-Profit Veterans Service Organizations expended the remaining amount of grant funds. The services provided were located throughout the state, with the majority of programs in rural areas. As previously noted, services include transportation to medical appointments, emergency assistance, housing support, medical/mental health assistance not provided by the VA, and other services to meet the needs of veterans. The majority of funding went towards providing veterans with emergency financial assistance. This consisted of food and gas expenses, car repair, utilities, propane, firewood and other essential items.
- Grantees spent a higher percentage of grant funds on emergency financial assistance and transportation costs which are becoming the common needs addressed through the grant, due to rising utility costs and inflation.

### **Program Data Overview**

- 739 unduplicated veterans were served
- 91% Men Veterans served
- 9% Women Veterans served
- 44% of funds went to emergency services
- 27% housing
- 9% Transportation

- Food/Gas 6%
- Health and Well Being 5%
- Mental Health Services 5%
- Other 4%: roofing and furnace repair, battery for wheel chairs, weighted blanket and dental care

**Program Effectiveness:** A service recipient survey is utilized to measure the effectiveness of the services provided by the grantees and to measure the outcomes or impact of the services. The survey utilizes a standard Likert scale to rate the grantee program effectiveness and changes in well-being. Overall, the majority of the veterans rated the services favorably (strongly agree and agree) with the majority indicating a decrease in urgent needs. The majority of veterans stated that the services received made a difference in their overall well-being and that they would recommend the organization to other veterans as well. Many veterans write personal notes of appreciation on the surveys as well.

**Evaluation of the Operation of the Program:** As with the past few years, COVID continued to impact programs, although the impact was not as severe as seen in prior years. The grant programs continued to address housing stability needs for veterans not eligible for relief fund assistance, while referring those eligible for assistance to DOH relief funds. Homeless veterans normally served through temporary motel stays until gaining entry into a housing program were better served by other organizations that were able to provide long-term hotel stays. Over the past year, programs saw many veterans that would not be able to maintain heating costs without VTF funding.

Process improvements is a primary focus in terms of the grant program operations. Minor changes in processes led to more efficiency and effectiveness in programming. The increase in the number of grantee trainings via webinars and one-on-one sessions continued throughout the year. Staff were able to conduct eighteen (18) grant application trainings. The increase of grant trainings led to overall higher application scores, overall.

The Grant Administrator provided 1:1 technical assistance to numerous grantees over the fiscal year. Grantee check-ins were conducted on a weekly basis to improve grant execution rates. A total of 15 check-ins were conducted with VTF grantees during the

reporting year. An updated and improved Grantee Handbook was provided to all grantees with specific details on VTF policies, procedures and processes. We continue to seek input from grantees for further program enhancements. The process of grant modifications in which funds from underspending grantees were released to grantees who had spent their funds continued to prove successful.

Program staff will work with grantees during the next fiscal year to increase VTF funds to underserved populations, specifically women veterans.

The training of Board members to determine an organization's capacity and to make funding decisions accordingly is ongoing. The Board received application and ongoing grant training. As always, we continue to expand outreach to eligible entities to increase the saturation throughout the state. Outreach has been focused on the eastern part of the state which represents the biggest gaps in VTF funding.

**Program Highlights:**

- VFW Post 5231 in Cortez, assisted a veteran that was experiencing housing insecurity. This grantee was able to provide her with temporary shelter and consulted other agencies in the area to assist with the matter. Finding out the veteran was a prior hairstylist, Post 5231 invited her to the Stand Down event to cut hair for veterans. In doing this, she felt value again in what she did and could do. Post 5231 also assisted the veteran in getting her car fixed in order to have safe and reliable transportation. This veteran now lives in her own place and has started her own salon.

**Grantees:** Please see the attached list for all grantees awarded Veterans Trust Fund monies.

**In Closing:** Over the past eighteen years the Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and the Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs, through the Colorado Veterans Trust Fund, have provided direct benefits ranging from emergency assistance, housing assistance, work clothes, rent assistance, utility assistance and transportation to Veterans Affairs medical facilities to tens of thousands of veterans throughout the State. We respectfully request the full amount of funding of 1% of the total Tobacco Master Settlement for FY2024-2025.

**FY2022-2023 Veterans Trust Fund Grantees**

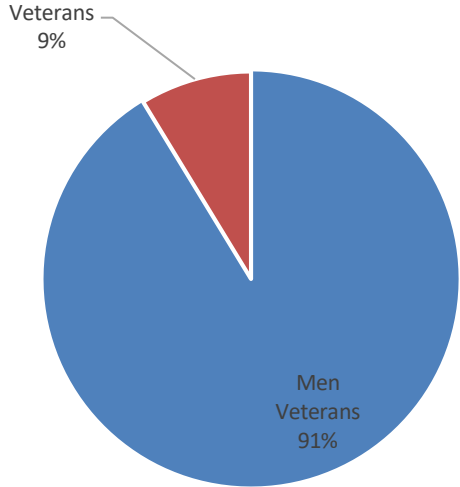
<b>Grantee</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Amount Awarded</b>
American Legion Post 88, Hot Sulphur Springs	Hot Sulphur Springs	Veteran Assistance	\$35,000.00
American Legion Post 44	Steamboat Springs	Transportation, Veteran Assistance	\$3,880.00
American Legion Post 62	Craig	Transportation, Veteran Assistance	\$8,000.00
VFW Post 5231	Cortez	Veteran Assistance	\$60,000.00
DAV Chapter 44	Cortez	Veteran Assistance	\$61,364.00
American Legion Post 75	Cortez	Veteran Assistance	\$40,000.00
VFW Post 12063	Westcliffe	Veteran Assistance	\$60,000.00

VFW Post 5843	Meeker	Transportation, Veteran Assistance	\$3,750.00
Department of Colorado, VFW	Lakewood	Veteran Assistance	\$37,322.03
American Legion Post 09	La Junta	Transportation, Veteran Assistance	\$21,000.00
American Legion Post 11	Trinidad	Veteran Assistance	\$20,000.00
American Legion Post 22	Northglenn	Veteran Assistance	\$51,364.00
VFW Post 3641	Pueblo	Veteran Assistance	\$40,400.00
American Legion Post 16	Denver Metro Area	Veteran Assistance	\$6,000.00
American Legion Dept, of Colorado	Statewide	Veteran Assistance	\$20,000.00
DAV Chapter 21	Denver Metro Area	Veteran Assistance	\$26,364.00
DAV Chapter 48	Durango	Veteran Assistance	\$20,000.00
Veterans Community Living Center McCandless	Florence	Massage Chairs, Coffee Bar, Scandent System	\$27,303.00
Veterans Community Living Center Rifle	Rifle	Bi-Polar Ionization, portable speaker system	\$21,000.00



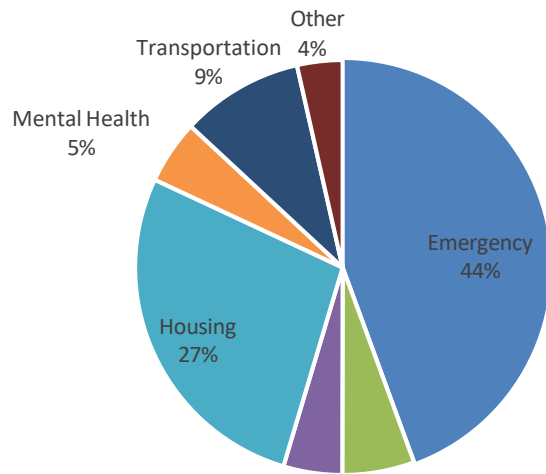
Veterans Community Living Center Homelake	Monte Vista	Wall mounted TV's, Bluetooth technology	\$30,869.00
Veterans Community Living Center Fitzsimons	Aurora	Dining chairs and furnishings	\$100,000.00
Veterans Memorial Cemetery	Statewide	Facility Upgrades	\$51,364.00
Western Region One Source	Statewide	Position	\$71,364.00
<b>TOTAL AWARDED</b> <i>(This amount does not include returned funds, only awarded)</i>			<b>\$817,044.03</b>

FY2022-2023 Veterans Served



Men Veterans 91% Women Veterans 9%

FY 2022-2023 Breakdown of Services VTF



Emergency 44% Employment 0% Food/Gas 6% Health Well Being 5% Housing 27% Mental Health 5% Transportation 9% Other 4%

**Status Report**  
**Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado**  
**November 1, 2022 through October 31, 2023**  
**To the Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs**

**1. Background**

The Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado was authorized by the Colorado Legislature in 1999 to honor Colorado veterans. A grant to build the cemetery was obtained from the United States Veterans Administration (VA). Construction began in June 2001 and was completed in September 2002. The cemetery is located on 22.5 acres at 2830 Riverside Parkway, Grand Junction, Colorado, just east of the Grand Junction Regional Center and south of the Grand Junction Readiness Center.

The cemetery opened on September 5, 2002, with an initial capacity of 3,337 units 1,758 units for casketed remains and 1,579 units for cremated remains (of which 861 were columbarium [wall] niches). Additionally, there were 775 memorial garden plots available for veterans whose remains were scattered, not recovered, buried at sea or were donated to science. In 2011, two new columbaria were added to the cemetery, providing an added 336 niches. At this time, 392 in-ground niches were also added. In 2015, a substantial expansion project increased spaces by 1,979 gravesites, 672 columbarium niches, and 628 in-ground niches, along with infrastructure improvements. In 2020 a third Capital Construction project added eight new columbaria holding an additional 1,344 niches. Improvements to the irrigation and retention ponds also took place. Two of these newest columbaria were designed to be double sided, to reduce footprint and allow for future land space needs. The cemetery's capacity can be expanded, as necessary, to meet future needs.

The cemetery is intended to be a dignified final resting place for Colorado's veterans of the armed services, their spouses and eligible dependents. It has been designed to provide a place of meditation and quiet contemplation for veterans, their families and friends. There are memorial walks on either side of the creek running northeast to southwest through the cemetery. These walks pass by five columbaria in front of which are benches for visitors' convenience. The other fourteen columbaria surround the cemetery against the bordering exterior berms. There are landscaped areas for in-ground interments, which are enhanced by thoughtful placement of trees, shrubs, and other plantings. These areas provide additional places for individual reflection.



The Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado conveys the appreciation of the people of Colorado to its veterans and their families for answering the call to duty and faithfully and honorably serving the United States of America and the State of Colorado.

## **2. Physical Layout and Facilities** *(Figure 1J)*

The Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado occupies 22.5 acres of land owned by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. Approximately 15 acres of this land is developed and in use. There are four facilities onsite: an Administration Building; a Committal Shelter; a Pump House; and, a Maintenance /Storage Building, (known as the West Shop). There is an attached garage/light maintenance area at the Administration Building.

**West  
Shop**



**Committal  
Shelter**

**Administration  
Building**

**Pump  
House**

### **3. Organization**

The organizational structure of the cemetery includes an Administrator, One Cemetery Support Assistant, one Support Lead, three full-time Grounds Persons, one Lead Grounds person and one Grounds Supervisor. The cemetery has been approved again as a VA Work Study site, and there is currently a US Army veteran from Colorado Mesa University filling the position. This veteran student contributes 25 hours a week in the administration office and is paid by the VA. All employees report to the cemetery administrator with oversight by the Lead Cemetery Support Assistant.

### **4. Functions**

There are essentially four functions at the cemetery: management/administrative, operational, maintenance and landscaping. They involve various and diverse duties and responsibilities as listed below.

#### **Management/Administrative Function**

##### **ELEMENTS**

##### **Interaction/coordination/scheduling (with funeral service providers and/or next- of-kin), to include:**

- Confirming eligibility of veterans, spouses, dependents for interment
- Scheduling interments
- Scheduling Committal
- Shelter Assigning
- gravesites, plots, niches
- Scheduling use of Visitors
- Room
- Preparations for interment, to include assisting families, (as needed), with military funeral honors, burial flags, Presidential Memorial Certificates
- Making records requests through the National Eligibility office

on behalf of veterans and family members  
Assisting with additional NCA burial benefits to include  
receipt of burial flag, Presidential Memorial Certificate and  
Veterans Legacy Memorial

**Interaction with veterans, spouses, dependents, to include:**

Responding to inquiries  
Distributing forms  
Completing early registrations, i.e., early determinations of  
eligibility Conducting tours  
Community outreach events  
Assisting with records requests and burial arrangements

**Records and documentation, to include:**

Preparing interment record packages (VMC Forms 01 and 02,  
copies of discharge documentation, residency paperwork,  
and interment worksheet) Preparing Interment  
Remembrances  
Preparing interment tags and temporary markers  
Preparing and distributing daily interment schedule &  
attachments with detailed interment instructions and  
mapped locations  
Preparing, filing and distributing burial permits to appropriate  
boards of health Preparing and maintaining manuals  
Developing, maintaining and updating  
procedures Generating and maintaining  
records, to include:  
Records of interment (using USVA Burial Operations Support  
System [BOSS]) Interment logs, registers and maps  
Early registration logs  
Property lists and  
inventories PM  
schedules

Non-exempt time records

Demographic and  
statistical records

Maintaining and updating grave locator  
system Preparing work schedules for  
operations personnel

Preparing and filing reimbursement claims with US  
Department of Veterans Affairs for veteran  
interments

**Monitoring, reporting and, when necessary, taking action  
in regard to systems, equipment and fleet vehicle  
service, warranties, guarantees**

**Performance of routine office tasks to include:**

Responding to in-person, telephonic, email and  
written inquiries

Generating routine correspondence and reports

Ordering supplies and equipment

Filing

Tracking non-exempt time records and employee leave

Initiating and working with division accounting office to provide  
accuracy with necessary processes

Coordinating volunteer efforts

Assigning tasks, monitoring, generating and approval of VA

Time records Assigning tasks, monitoring and maintaining  
appropriate records of Criminal

Justice Community Service clients and Mesa County work crews



**Awareness and marketing efforts to include:**

Developing, preparing, and distributing presentations, pamphlets, booklets, posters, etc.

Making presentations to Veterans Service Organizations and other groups Attendance of Community Outreach events and Scheduled VA Town Halls

**Establishing and maintaining liaisons with appropriate agencies and organizations, to include:**

National Cemetery Administration and other USVA

agencies Veterans Service Organizations

Veterans Service Officers to include both

state and county USVA Medical Center -

Grand Junction

Grand Junction Regional Center

CDHS Division of Facilities Management

Community Service Groups

Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

Colorado Army National Guard

Volunteer groups and organizations

**Training and instruction to include:**

Attendance at appropriate seminars and training

sessions Training of new hires and support

personnel

Research and registration for position

appropriate training weekly safety training with

staff

Assurance of maximum use of granted training funds and

management of such

**Headstones, niche covers, monuments and memorial plaques to include:**

Providing guidance for ordering headstones and niche covers along with those wishing to erect monuments, purchase memorial pillar, assembly benches, niche vases, rose and/or tree plaques

Ordering headstones and niche covers

Inspecting headstones and niche covers upon receipt for accuracy of inscription and compliance of standards

Processing associated paperwork and making required entries into BOSS

Selecting appropriate locations for monuments

Assigning memorial plaques

Generating and maintaining associated records and correspondence

Advising families when headstones, niche covers, and/or memorial plaques have been set and emailing images

**Gifts and donations to include:**

Processing financial gifts and donations for memorial plaques, niche vases and general donations

Tracking receipt of and assuring accurate distribution of associated funds  
Preparing and sending personalized 'Thank you' or tax receipts to donors

**Operational Function**

**ELEMENTS**

**Burial Operations, to include:**

Preparing Committal Shelter for services, including setting up microphone, podium, flags, chairs and urn table

Preparing and transporting casket carriage to committal shelter

Setting up and preparing interment locations, to include

identifying, marking, opening graves/niches, placing drapes and placement of temporary markers  
Transporting caskets/urns and flowers to gravesites  
Placing caskets and urns in assigned gravesites  
Opening and closing of gravesites and placing flowers  
Setting and removing headstones, niche covers and vases

**Planning, preparation and hosting veterans' events, to include:**

Memorial Day  
Ceremony Veterans Day  
Day Ceremony  
Veterans Day Parade  
Wreaths Across America Ceremony  
Quarterly Military Honors for Unaccompanied Veterans  
National Vietnam War Veterans Day  
Saluting Branches Day  
Missing in America Project

**Safety and security to include:**

Operating fire and security Alarm system Monitoring  
Building security cameras  
Monthly inspection of on-site facilities and equipment, fire extinguishers and the scheduling of yearly servicing  
Monthly inspection of on-site automatic defibrillator units, and scheduling of yearly inspection and service

## **Maintenance Function**

### **ELEMENTS**

#### **Installing monuments, memorial plaques and vases Custodial maintenance (i.e., janitorial services) to include:**

- Maintain administrative office including restrooms
- Sweep, mop and vacuum floors
- Empty trash and transport to dumpster
- Wash windows
- Replace consumables

#### **Fleet vehicle and equipment maintenance to include:**

- Change oil
- Lubricate as needed
- Clean equipment
- Effect minor repairs
- Replace filters
- Sharpen/balance blades
- Schedule more extensive repairs and servicing
- Report monthly usage per state procedure

#### **Facilities repair and upkeep to include:**

- Monthly facility inspections
- Replace light bulbs
- Replace filters
- Clean and maintain facilities
- Effect minor repairs
- Schedule more extensive repairs and servicing

**Snow removal to include: '** 

Remove snow from walkways and roadways using plow and/or sweeper  
Remove snow from Committal Shelter using handheld tools

Removal of snow from rooftops utilizing snow brooms

**De-icing**

De-ice walkways, Committal Shelter and roadways using commercial product and/or handheld tools

**Landscaping Function****ELEMENTS****Developing landscaping schedule of services**

Based on varied and diverse input, develop schedule(s) for different landscaping tasks

**Irrigation system management and operation to include:**

Install, repair, replace sprinkler heads and/or other components

Monitor and adjust watering times in zones

Monitor, operate and maintain irrigation system computer

Service and lubricate irrigation pumps

Perform yearly cleaning of irrigation pump filters

Monitor system to ensure proper operation

Maintain ponds, stream corridor and water features

Implement contingency measures in event of system failure

Test system at beginning of season and ready for operation

Shut down and winterize the system at end of season

**Landscape maintenance, to include:** Installing/replacing sod

Staking and wrapping trees

Weeding

Aerating

Fertilizing

Pruning

Trimming

Planting

Mowing

Seeding

## **5. Extra-Curricular Activities**

In addition to their daily functions, the cemetery staff is heavily involved in other veterans-related tasks and activities on the Western Slope.

Management/Administrative staff is responsible for organizing the Grand Valley Combined Honor Guard and the cemetery administrator is a permanent member of its Board of Directors. As such, the administrator is tasked with the responsibility of helping to oversee the Honor Guard and ensuring its efficient and effective deployment. The Grand Valley Combined Honor Guard has performed over 4,078 Military Funeral Honors and numerous flag presentations, parades, school appearances and other ceremonies during its sixteen-year existence.

The Honor Guard's popularity has increased to the point where it is in constant demand. Again, this year the Honor Guard, which consists of approximately 22 active members, has had to decline numerous invitations because of a lack of resources, and the recent passing of 4 active guard members.

Since implementation in October of 2016, The Quarterly Military Honors Service continues every quarter. During this service, the Grand Valley Combined Honor Guard performs military honors as a tribute and final salute

in memory of all veterans who had no military honors or were unaccompanied during their committal, for the preceding three months. The Commander reads a list of the veterans' name, Branch of Service, and War Period served. Along with the GVCHG, the ceremony includes the Patriot Guard Riders, COARNG Team III, the Rocky Mountain Scots (bagpipers), the Veterans Memorial Bell, a dove release and two cannon shots. We have provided Military Honors Quarterly for thirty-six veterans during this reporting period.

The cemetery's management/administrative staff have been, and continue to be, responsible for many other events, including:

**Memorial Day Activities - Annually in May**

- Ensuring proper decoration of Cemetery and placement of individual flags on gravesites
- Retreat Ceremony the night before Memorial Day
- Flag Retirement and Burning Ceremony the night before Memorial Day
- Memorial Day Program and Ceremony at Cemetery

**Veterans Day Activities -Annually in November**

- Ensuring proper decoration of cemetery
- Veterans Day program and ceremony partnering with the Western Region One Source Veterans Day Parade supporting the Grand Valley Combined Honor Guard

**Other Veterans-Related Activities (in Grand Junction, Fruita, and Palisade)**

- Fourth of July Parades and Ceremonies
- Fall Festival Parade
- Resource events
- Wreaths Across America Program
- Saluting Branches Program
- Local School Presentations
- Veterans Stand Downs
- Veterans Caregiver Summit

Town Halls

Veterans Community meetings

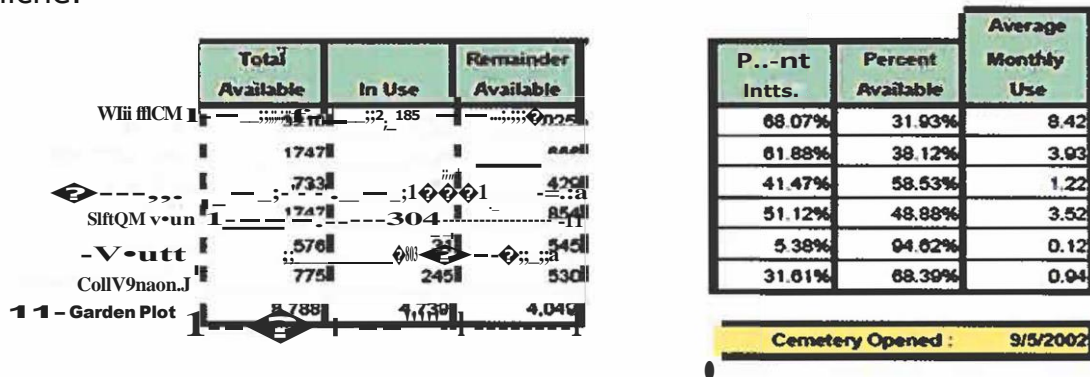


## 6. Burial Operations

### Gravesite Utilization (Figure 2)

Based on the total interments as of October 31, 2023, the average interment rate is 1.1/day, since the opening of the cemetery in 2002.

Currently, cremation is the preferred disposition, making up 68% of all interments. 66% of those opting for cremation choose a columbarium niche over an in-ground niche.



(Note: There are no reserved spaces except when both a husband and wife are veterans and choose to exercise their right to an individual gravesite. In those cases, a space is reserved for the survivor next to the decedent; totals do not reflect double occupancies)

### 2020 - 2023 Interments by Month (Figure 3)

CY 2023 has had 327 interments to date

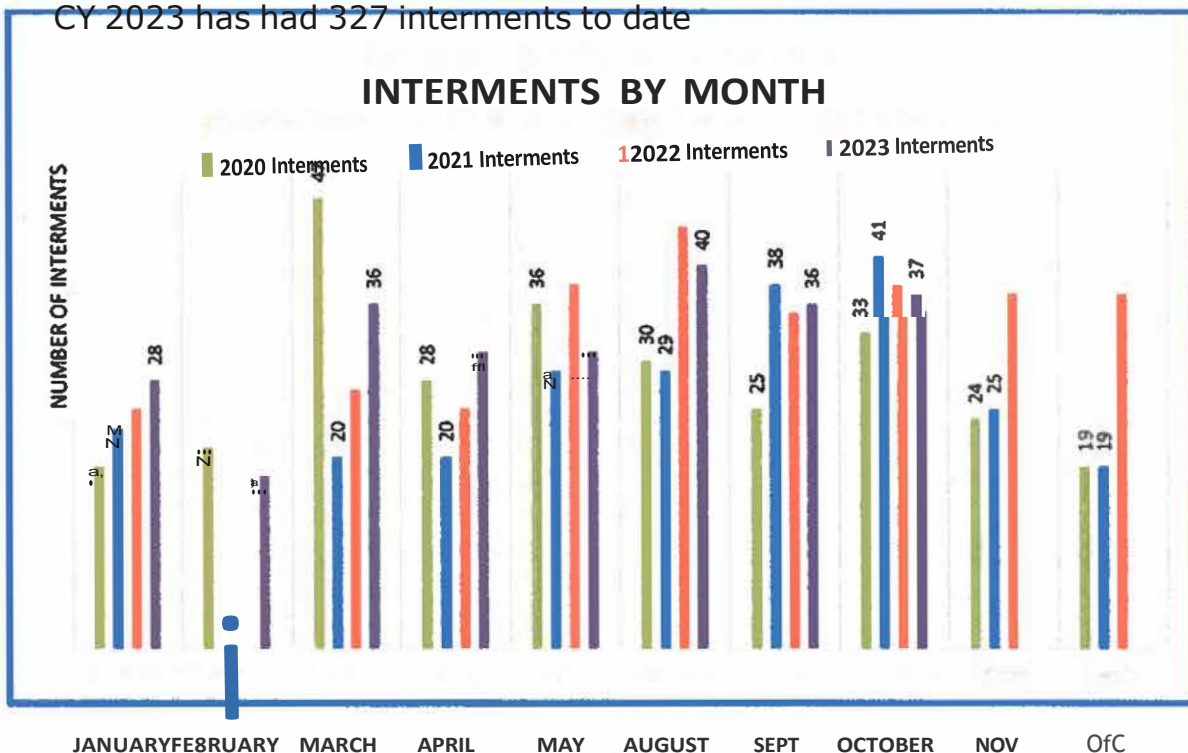


Figure 3

## 2002 - 2023 Interments by Year (Figure 4)

The interments of 6,032 veterans, spouses and/or dependents are broken down by year below. Chart is reflective of interments through October 31, 2023

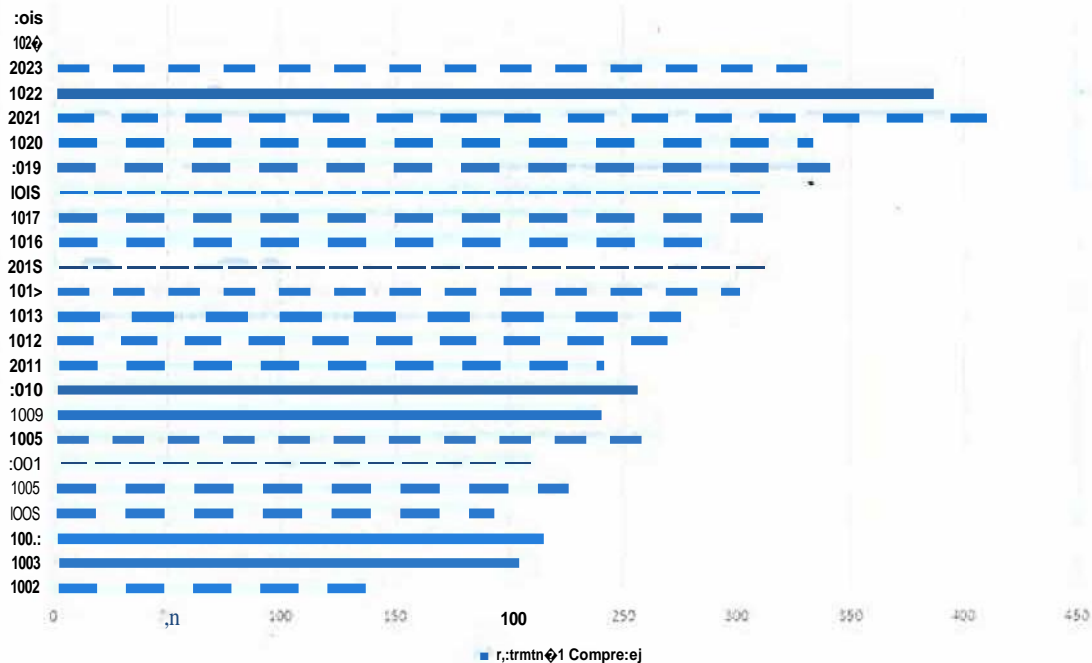


Figure 4

## **7. Customer Satisfaction**

In 2021 we found that our families were not comfortable using the previously implemented computerized Qualtrics surveys. In 2022, The cemetery chose to transition back to paper surveys that are handed to families by cemetery representatives. On the surveys, there is room for any comments a respondent may wish to make. The responses the cemetery has received from the most recent surveys remain positive and appreciative of staff and services provided.

All responses are kept on file at the cemetery and are available to anyone wishing to review them. In addition, the cemetery has maintained a log at the front desk where visitors were invited to share their opinions.

## **8. Early Registrations**

To better serve the local veterans' community, and at the same time attempt to predict future needs, the Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado offers an Early Registration. The Early Registration services we provide allows a veteran to receive an early determination of eligibility for interment at this cemetery. A veteran will complete a cemetery form, (VMC Form 1) and submit it with a copy of his/her discharge documents, (e.g., DD214). If the veteran's home of record was not in Colorado, proof of current Colorado residency is required. The cemetery staff determines the veteran's eligibility for interment and keeps copies of the paperwork on file so that at the time of death, it will be one less task for the family to worry about.

For those who have not completed early registration, instances frequently occur where eligibility for interment could not be immediately determined, (i.e., the family could not find the discharge paper). Although the cemetery has the ability to expedite the receipt of documentation, (in the event a death has occurred), a delay of interment still exists until National Personnel Records Center is able to locate and supply the information.

The ancillary benefit to the cemetery of such a program, is that it allows cemetery staff to estimate future interment needs and incorporate the information into short-, and long-range planning. Being able to anticipate the future needs of our veteran community and their families, allows us to serve them better in the future.

As of October 31, 2023, 2,289 veterans have completed the early registration. This represents 5,343 likely interments, including these veterans, their spouses and eligible dependents.

## **9. Issues and Concerns**

### **Federal Reimbursements**

The submittal process for reimbursement applications implemented in March of 2001, remains ongoing. The required forms are uploaded online through Access VA (Quick Submit), directly to Pensions and Claims. This provides an additional layer of security, as well as immediate access to all documents by claims processors. This submittal process continues to be time consuming but has resulted in more timely payments.

Burial reimbursements from the VA were increased to \$948.00 per veteran in October 2023. This is up from \$893.00 as previously reported. This amount represents 80% of the actual cost to inter an individual veteran. Spouses or other eligible dependents are not reimbursed. Federal reimbursements only account for about half of the cemetery's budget.

Currently, the accrued balance of outstanding reimbursements is at \$23,533.00 for this reporting period. On average, payments are received within 45 days of the submittal.

### **Equipment Replacement/Repair**

The usage of cemetery equipment has increased greatly as interment numbers continue to rise. This leads to an increased cost of scheduled equipment maintenance as well as unforeseen equipment failure. Currently, we foresee future needs to include additional servicing on equipment due to extended use.

The military Jeeps that are utilized for interment services, were all taken for extended service this year, with the additional funds provided through CBVA and the Veterans Trust Fund. The Jeeps are running well; however, they continue to be unreliable and in need of consistent care.

The static torpedo display was also taken in for a full refinish with additional funds provided through Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs and the Veterans Trust Fund. Required reporting of repairs have been submitted to the US Naval Undersea Museum.

### **Personnel Issues and Needs**

The cemetery staff currently consists of eight (8) FTE's, three (3) in the office, one (I) grounds crew supervisor, one **(1)** lead grounds member and three (3) level **1** grounds crew members. Currently the grounds lead position is vacant, and a temp employee is filling this position.

Transfer of the Honor Guard Stipend program to DVA Grants program has been requested from DVA Leadership. At this time the cemetery staff continue to maintain the program until the Grants office is properly staffed to assume the duty. Once staffed and trained, the .3FTE previously assigned to the cemetery for this task, will be transferred to the Grants program for this

purpose.

As the cemetery facilities age, the frequency and cost for repairs increase. Hiring of a facility maintenance technician would assist with the upkeep needs and remove this responsibility from the overburdened grounds crew. In addition, hiring an FTE will reduce the expense of costly outside vendor repairs that strains the cemetery operational budget. This position can be split to accommodate the maintenance needs at the Western Region One Source.

After 22 years, the cemetery's lithographed headstones are starting to fade. This fading, of the painted engraving, makes the gray granite headstones and niche covers very difficult to read. Staff receive weekly inquiries regarding the condition of these stones. National Cemetery Administration will not replace these weathered stones but have granted approval for state cemeteries to have them repainted at the states expense. Because this will be a continuing maintenance issue, the cemetery is in need of a skilled and trained FTE dedicated to the purpose of maintaining lithograph.

### **Roadway and Sidewalks**

Concrete maintenance is a continued need at the cemetery. Concrete hazards are currently being mitigated with temporary repairs. As the cemetery ages, yearly expenses will increase for the care and maintenance of the roadways, and concrete pathways. An estimated \$25,000/year could be easily spent on repairs and maintenance.

### **Stonework**

A combination of age, water and weather conditions continue to damage to the older Columbarium with stone veneer. For FY 2024, \$10,000 was made available to assist with repairs. Additional funding will be required for future repairs.

## **In-Ground Gravesites**

Discrepancies with the original site survey provided in section 7 were found, and an updated grid map and pinning of the section was required. No previously occupied spaces were affected. However, 300 previously surveyed spaces were lost. This was due to the stream slope that was not configured into the original survey as well as the road to the west of section 7. Currently the cemetery inventory has over 650 vacant in-ground niche spaces.

## **Software Inefficiencies**

The current software utilized to manage and maintain records at the cemetery has become inefficient and it has been discovered that it allows for errors. The program was written over 20 years ago and will not convert to updated software. Cemetery administrator is currently researching the opportunity to utilize the federal BOSS system or to purchase of a specialized cemetery management software that will accommodate both the federal, and state reporting requirements.

## **NCA Audit**

The mapping project for NCA compliance was completed this year. Completion has been reported to Nation Cemetery. A procedure for continual auditing of these records has been implemented and will assure future compliance.

## **GJ Regional Center**

At this time, The Regional Center remains operational through November. The status of the facility, once it is vacated, is of concern. Our intent is to advocate for the cemetery to remain hallowed grounds as a final resting place for our veterans and their dependents. We have expressed interest in a two- acre strip of land adjacent to the cemetery, at no cost to us. This additional land can be utilized for additional burial expansion and/or parking. This zero-

dollar exchange has not been approved as of this date and time.

### **Office Space**

As the administrative and supervisory staff have increased at the cemetery, there is a need for additional workspace and adequate workstations for the new positions. Currently with the three administrative staff, grounds supervisor and VA work-study, we are operating in minimal space with very limited workstations. There is no location for private interaction with at-need families.

### **10. Monuments and Memorial Benches**

Two metal benches were donated to the cemetery this year, for additional seating in our assembly area. These donations were made by local chapters of the VFW (Post 3981) and Daughters of the American Revolution (Mount Garfield Chapter).

### **11. Saluting Branches**

Saluting Branches was held this year on September 20, and resulted in the removal of 13 trees, stump grinding, tree pruning, placement of tree stakes, fertilizers, deer guards, watering receptacles and the planting of 45 new trees throughout the cemetery. Participants for this day included 46 volunteers and IO employees/interns. There was a large giveaway that consisted of items donated by community partners. Donations for breakfast, lunch and refreshments were generously provided by Little Caesar's Pizza and supplemented by the department. Of the trees that were planted, 3 were donated by Mount Garfield Nursery, and the remainder were purchased with granted VTF funds as well as a generous donation from the Colorado Tree Coalition. The previously established partnerships with Colorado State University, local tree care companies, city arborists, Vermeer and US Bank made the event a successful one that will continue to benefit the cemetery for



years to come.

## **12. Honor Guard Stipend**

The bill requires that the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (OMVA) pay a stipend to a local veteran's service organization for providing an honor guard detail at the funeral of an honorably discharged veteran. In FY 2023, the appropriation for this program was increased mid-year by an additional \$10,000 to extend funds available to the veteran community. As a part of the FY 2024 Long Bill, this appropriation was increased to \$70,000.00. This amount represents the total cost of the program management and the payable funds.

## **In Closing**

The Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado continues to be revered in not only the local community, but within the entire State of Colorado. You cannot enter the cemetery without admiring the beauty of the meticulously cared for grounds. Families gather here, not only to grieve, but to celebrate lives, remember friends, and reflect. This location serves as a reminder of the sacrifices made and the commitments promised. It is a history lesson to children and a civics lesson to all. The State, its residents, the Colorado Division of Veterans Affairs are dedicated to veterans, and this cemetery reflects how grateful we are for the service that was selflessly given to our nation.

In addition to the rewarding purpose of the cemetery, we strive to be a contributing presence in the veteran community. With event participation, building of partnerships, outreach and involvement, our purpose spreads wider than our 22 acres.

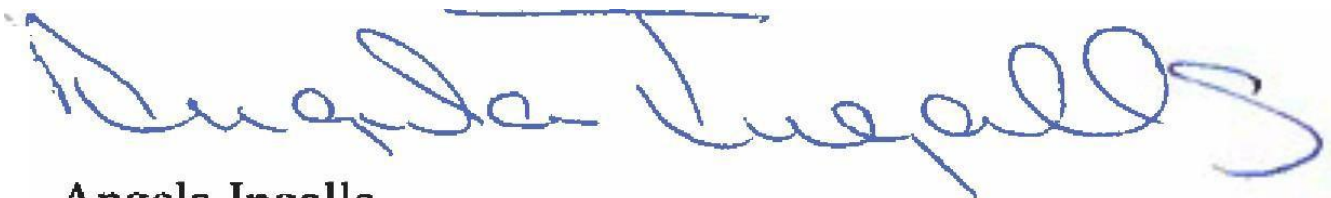
As this cemetery ages, additional funding to maintain this monument will be

needed. At 20 years since inspection, we have grown at an unexpected pace, and we continue to see that this pace is not slowing. Looking forward to future demand, aging facilities, budget constraints and minimal increase in federal funding, there is concern. Exploration of additional funding continues, with the intention to maintain the high levels service, owed to those who have served, and the families who sacrificed.

As the Cemetery Administrator, I am proud, and thankful, to be a part of such a rewarding purpose. It is my intention to see that our objectives remain clear and focused on the development, care, efficient operation, and management of this facility. All of this, without compromising the quality of service to our community.

The cemetery and its staff continue to express gratitude for the support from the veterans' community. Because of our benefactors, we are allowed to focus on, and effectively serve, the needs of families who have faithfully and honorably served this country.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Angela Ingalls". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line at the top.

**Angela Ingalls**  
**Administrator**

Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado  
Grand Junction, Colorado

**STATE OF COLORADO**

**DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**Western Region One Source**



482 28 Road

Grand Junction, CO 81501

(970) 257-3760

1 December 2023

Darin Collazo

WROS Administrator

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### **Executive Summary**

The Western Region One Source has achieved many accomplishments over the last year, and the facility's new team is looking forward to continuing with this momentum. The mission statement of the Western Region One Source is to connect Veterans, Military Service Members, and their families with service providers and resources in order to enhance their opportunities and quality of life. Our vision is to become the trusted One Source in the Western Region of Colorado for all veterans, military service members and their families who are seeking a connection with service providers and resources. In following our mission statement, the Western Region One Source collaborates with community partners to provide resources to Veterans in one central location. Through routine events and community partnerships, outreach events and internal events, the WROS has reached thousands of Veterans. This facility is well located near the VA hospital and not far from our State Veteran Memorial Cemetery, a sister facility under the DVA family. We partner with many programs that support Veterans, especially the homeless initiatives. As a unique facility that aims to serve an

underserved population, the Western Region One Source will continue to provide the highest level of service and assistance to our Colorado Veteran Population.

### **Significant Activities and Accomplishments**

Since the appointment of the new team at the Western Region One Source, the facility has been able to reconnect with community partners, establish an outreach team, and become active with the Veteran Community. Each event attended or hosted has raised awareness of the WROS, and connected more Veterans to services, entitlements and eligibilities.

- June 23<sup>rd</sup>: WROS hosted a Stand Down with VFW 3981, 156 in attendance.
- August 7<sup>th</sup>: PACT Act Resource Table at the Workforce Center, assisted 30+ veterans.
- August 31<sup>st</sup>: Veterans Night on Main Street, positive interactions with 40+ veterans
- September 14<sup>th</sup>: Governors Listening Tour at Two Rivers Convention Center, positive interactions with dozens of members of the community.
- October 12<sup>th</sup>: Navy Federal Credit Union Event at WROS, 7 attended and working on plans to host more in the future.
- October 21<sup>st</sup>: WROS hosted the Senator Hickenlooper and Senator Bennet's Academy Interviews, 16 in attendance.
- September 29<sup>th</sup>: WROS hosted a Stand Down and Resource Fair with VFW 3981, 336 in attendance.

- November 10<sup>th</sup>: DMVA partnered with Jim Doody for Veterans Day Memorial in Fruita, CO, 100+ in attendance.



*Figure 1 Vietnam Veteran Memorial, Veterans Day Celebration Friday, November 10th, 2023.*

- November 11<sup>th</sup>: WROS hosted Purple Heart Award Ceremony for SFC William K. Montgomery, 114 in attendance including Brigadier General Laura Clellan, The Adjutant General and Congresswoman, Lauren Boebert.



*Figure 2 Purple Heart Award Ceremony for SFC William Montgomery, Saturday, November 11th, 2023.*

- November 11<sup>th</sup>, Veterans Day Parade, partnered with the Veterans Memorial Cemetery to hand deliver thank you letters from the community to veterans, hundreds in attendance.

## **Challenges and Opportunities**

During the first quarter of 2023, the Western Region One Source experience a 100% turnover in personnel. From March to June, an interim Property Administrator and Temporary State employee kept the doors of the facility open to serve the Veteran Population, while the division sought a new team. In June of 2023, a new administrator was appointed who was then tasked with hiring a new support team. The State Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System Officer (DEERS) was selected next, followed by the additional appointment of a Federal DEERS Officer. These two officers serve the entire West side of the Rocky Mountains with the issuance of ID cards, CAC cards and connecting Veterans, Service Members and their families with services and benefits. Once these positions were in place, the two remaining positions of Support Representatives were filled. These two state employees not only serve as coverage for the facility to be open, but allow for additional coverage of the facility, including flexibility for after-hours events and attending outreach opportunities.

A challenge affecting the Western Region One Source in the long term is to secure sustainable funding. This facility is beholden to a Sunset Review, with the expectation to be fully functioning independently of any State Funding upon the sunset in December 2030. However, a significant challenge to the WROS being fully self-funded is that with all leased office space rented out, there is still a deficit of \$116,000 per year. At full rental capacity, the facility will generate about \$134,000 annually. The annual budget for the WROS for Fiscal Year 22/23 is about \$250,000, with an anticipated increase in utility costs with more people in the facility. Having six years to resolve this challenge presents the opportunity to make community ties and seek support from pillars of the community, which will in turn further the awareness of the facility.

## **Administrative Condition**

As of September 2023, the Western Region One Source returned to being fully staffed and remains very active in supporting the mission statement. The Administrator has reestablished the Advisory Committee to work towards satisfying the Sunset Review by measuring the effectiveness of the WROS. Utilizing a feedback company, Qualtrics, the WROS team has began to receive quantifiable feedback and input from the community we serve, with 56 surveys filled out within two weeks of the survey going live. With two DEERS Officers, the facility is now able to work on clearing up the backlog of individuals who were unable to obtain their ID cards between the months of March and July. With two support representatives, the facility is able to maintain open hours while attending outreach events in different counties or outside of business hours.

## **Supporting Statistics**

For the calendar year of 2023, the Western Region One Source has served more than 8,600 Veterans by way of phone support (2990), Events/Walk-ins (5645). As a service to Disabled Veterans, the WROS administrative team assisted the DMVA this year with processing 4,369 Property Tax Exemption Applications. By way of special events, outreach and routine events and activities are indicators of the successful impact that we are having in this community. In July of 2023, special events and routine activities brought 363 visitors to the WROS. In August of 2023, we had 476 visitors attending events. In September of 2023, we saw 745 visitors and collaborated with VFW 3981 to host a stand down and resource fair at the WROS. In October, we had more than 940 visitors tracked, thanks in large part to the popular Coffee club and Caregiver support groups that occur on Wednesdays. For the month of November, more than 670 Veterans have attended events at the facility, many of which attended the Purple Heart Award Ceremony, the weekly coffee club and the Veteran's In Business Luncheon.

As of November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the Western Region One Source has been open for 1,042 working days and has served 27,493 veterans, military members and their families.

## **Short-term goals**

- Increase number of certified Notary Public employees by one to assist Veterans, Active Service Members and their families by March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024.
- Add a Yoga program to the regular events, aimed at the younger, underserved Veteran populations by February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024.
- Establish an ongoing relationship with the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) and host their monthly meetings at the WROS by February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024.
- WROS staff participates in at least 2 outreach events per month, at least 12 by June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024.
- Increase Tenant Occupancy by 5%, from 90% to 95@ by June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024.



## **Long-term goals**

- Improve facilities by paving the parking lot and correcting the drainage issues on the property by June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025.
- Incorporate memorabilia, art and historical artifacts into the facility by June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025.
- Add events that support Mental Health, Employment and Overall wellness programs to the monthly events calendar at the WROS by June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025.
- Provide Housing, Employment, Training, Education, Counseling, Life Skills, Wellness, DEERS, Transition, and VSO services by June 30, 2025.
- Receive additional DEERS/RAPIDS equipment to better serve the Western Region of Colorado by December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025.
- Increase funding by gifts, grants & donations to the WROS by \$20,000 by December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025.

We are committed to serving and assisting our Veterans, Service Members and families to the best of our ability. We are grateful for the support we receive from our counties, state and federal partners and look forward to making 2024 an even more successful year.

Respectfully submitted,

*Darin Collazo*

Darin Collazo

WROS Administrator

Division of Veterans Affairs

## Workforce Development Programs

633 17th Street, Ste 700

Denver, CO 80202-3660



**COLORADO**

Department of  
Labor and Employment

October 25, 2023

David Callahan

Director, Division of Veterans

Affairs Department of Military

and Veteran Affairs 1333

South Colorado Blvd. Building

C, Suite 113 Denver, CO

80222

Dear Mr. Callahan:

The attached report reflects the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE), Workforce Development Program's (WDP) accomplishments for Program Year 2022 (PY 2022). WDP is dedicated to providing Colorado's veterans with outstanding employment and training services and to providing Colorado businesses with qualified veteran job seekers.

The report outlines the outreach services provided to veterans through the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) and state- and county-operated American Job Center/Workforce Center staff. The JVSG program staff partner with the local workforce areas in accordance with the US Department of Labor/VETS Veterans Program Letters (VPL), specifically VPL 01-20\_ (<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1aYGOjFMiapRziKCu7WSX0335IEuvd5tx?usp=sharing>, replaces VPL 03-14), which outlines the

## Workforce Development Programs

633 17th Street, Ste 700

Denver, CO 80202-3660



**COLORADO**  
Department of  
Labor and Employment

duties and responsibilities of the Local Veteran Employment Representative (LVER) and the Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialist. These 24 individuals are strategically located within county- and state-operated Workforce Centers serving the highest numbers of veterans.

The mission of the JVSG program is to provide eligible transitioning service members, veterans, eligible spouses, and caregivers of wounded warriors with the employment and training services needed to succeed in today's workforce. As always, CDLE looks forward to the continued partnership with the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Office to meet the employment needs of Colorado veterans and their families. If you have any questions about this report, please feel free to contact Colin Schneider, State Veterans Program Coordinator, at (303) 547-8347 or [colin.schneider@state.co.us](mailto:colin.schneider@state.co.us).

*Kelly Folks*

Sincerely,

Kelly Folks

Director, Employment & Training Division

# Workforce Development Programs

633 17th Street, Ste 700  
Denver, CO 80202-3660



**COLORADO**  
Department of  
Labor and Employment



## Program Year 2022 Report on Service to Veterans July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

Annual Report to the Department of Military and Veteran Affairs

**Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE)**

**Program Year (PY) 2022 Report on Service to Veterans  
July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023**

**For the Colorado Department of Military and Veteran Affairs  
Annual Report to the Governor**

The Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) provides a wide array of labor and employment services to Colorado veterans throughout the state in county-run Workforce Centers and satellite offices. The CDLE effectively uses the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) and the State Workforce System to promote the hiring and retention of eligible veterans, spouses, and caregivers of wounded warriors. State and county Labor and Employment Specialists provide employment services that include, but are not limited to:

- Resume and cover letter writing
- Interview tips and techniques
- Translation of military experience to civilian knowledge, skills, and abilities
- Navigation of online job boards and career fair resources
- Targeted job searches by industry
- Provision of labor market information and wage data
- Identification of community-based education and training opportunities
- Remote and in-person provision of services

Workforce Centers also refer eligible veterans to appropriate Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) career services, training programs, and registered apprenticeship programs throughout the state. Colorado Workforce Centers make referrals to various federal, state, and local agencies, and to non-profit partners in the community that provide supportive services to those in need.

As shown in the table below, 13,860 veterans registered for employment assistance during PY 2022 through the CDLE's statewide database, Connecting Colorado. Connecting Colorado provides a web-based platform that matches qualified job seekers with employers in need of skilled workers. Employers can post job openings, view resumes, search for qualified candidates, and learn about the hiring incentives offered by the state. Veterans can post resumes, conduct job searches, access employment resources using self-directed virtual employment tools, and receive in-person or virtual staff-assisted services through their local Workforce Center. Of note:

- There was a slight increase in the number of veterans seeking staff-assisted employment services and only marginal changes in most categories. The most significant increases were in the 18-44 age group (169) and the Post 9/11 category (193).
- Although the percentage of veteran registrants decreased, in most categories, more veterans were served. This increase could be associated with the expanded availability of in-person and virtual service options, which provide customers with greater flexibility to receive services.
- Veterans who receive staff-assisted services are more likely to display higher average wages as well as higher rates of

entered employment and employment retention. For this reason, the CDLE strongly encourages veterans to visit their local Workforce Center to receive one-on-one staff-assisted services.

The table below provides a demographic breakout of all veterans registered in the system and those who received staff-assisted services.

### Colorado Veteran Demographics of Veterans Served by Workforce Center Staff

	Total Vets	Age 18-44	Age 45-54	Age 55+	Post 9/11	Disabled Vets <30%	Special Disabled >30%	Recently Separated
<b>PY 2022</b>	<b>13,860</b>	<b>6,946</b>	<b>2,784</b>	<b>4,052</b>	<b>4,006</b>	<b>4,596</b>	<b>3,708</b>	<b>1,919</b>
<b>Received Staff Assisted Service</b>	<b>7,515</b>	<b>3,252</b>	<b>1,580</b>	<b>2,652</b>	<b>2,592</b>	<b>2,701</b>	<b>2,154</b>	<b>935</b>
<b>Percent</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>49%</b>
<b>PY 2021</b>	<b>12,003</b>	<b>5,707</b>	<b>2,416</b>	<b>3,816</b>	<b>3,566</b>	<b>4,232</b>	<b>3,420</b>	<b>1,885</b>
<b>Received Staff Assisted Service</b>	<b>7,408</b>	<b>3,083</b>	<b>1,595</b>	<b>2,706</b>	<b>2,399</b>	<b>2,623</b>	<b>2,105</b>	<b>975</b>

<b>Percent</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>52%</b>
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Source: CC 9002, PY 2022 (7/1/2022 - 6/30/2023, report run 9/20/23)

Note: Veterans may be counted in more than one category with the exception of age categories.



US Code Title 38, Veterans' Benefits, requires the CDLE to provide priority of service to veterans for all Employment and Training programs funded by the US Department of Labor (DOL). A "veteran" is defined as a person who served in active military service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable. "Priority of service" means that the veteran or eligible person either receives access to employment, training, and placement services provided by a local Workforce Center or through a job training program such as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), ahead of or earlier in time than non-veterans, notwithstanding any other legal provisions. The CDLE has issued statewide guidance on this requirement and is in full compliance with the federal mandate.

Colorado takes priority of service even further. The names of qualified veterans appear at the top of all employer-generated electronic applicant referral lists. As a result, in PY 2022, the Workforce Centers referred 54% of registered veteran job seekers to job openings compared to 43% of non-veterans.

During PY 2022, Connecting Colorado posted 755,636 job openings from 9,915 employers. Most of these job openings were a result of the CDLE's active participation with Job Central, a public service employment website owned and managed by leading US employers through their membership in the Direct Employers Association. It enables employers to outreach through a network of 50 state sites and over 6,200 cities and communities nationwide.

In addition to the state and county Labor and Employment Specialists who provide front-line services to all veterans, the CDLE employs 16 full-time Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP)

Specialists, 6 full-time Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LVER), and 2 full-time Consolidated Veteran Employment Specialists (CVSRs are half-time DVOPs and half time-LVERs), all of whom are assigned to workforce areas around the state. The primary role of DVOP Specialists is to provide intensive services to “eligible veterans and eligible persons.” In order to effectively serve eligible veterans and spouses and efficiently target their services, the DVOP Specialists use a case management approach. Under federal law, services are limited to eligible veterans and eligible persons who meet the definition of an individual with a Significant Barrier to Employment (SBE).

DVOPs provided staff services to 610 registered veterans, 601 (98.5%) of whom received intensive employment services to help them obtain suitable employment. Veterans in need of intensive services fall into one or more of the following categories:

- Disabled veterans
- Wounded warriors
- Homeless
- Formerly incarcerated
- Vietnam era
- Recently separated
- Low income
- Lacking a high school diploma

- Between ages 18-24
- Receiving public assistance
- An eligible spouse or caregiver

Intensive services require more staff time than regular employment services and are coordinated with comprehensive employment plans to ensure access to the necessary training and supportive services. Intensive services provide support both during program participation and after job placement. The following table breaks out the types of barriers for the veterans who received staff-assisted services from a DVOP Specialist during PY 2022.

**Colorado Veteran Demographics of Veterans Serviced by DVOP Specialists  
FY2021**

<b>Total Vets</b>	<b>Post 9/11</b>	<b>Disabled Vets &lt;30%</b>	<b>Special Disabled &gt;30%</b>	<b>Recently Separated</b>	<b>Homeless</b>	<b>Female</b>
<b>610</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>105</b>

Source: CC Vets 200, PY 2022 (7/1/2022 - 6/30/2023, report run 9/21/2023)

\*Participants can be counted in multiple categories

DVOP Specialists conduct outreach to identify eligible SBE veterans and other eligible persons who, without the receipt of intensive services, would be unable to obtain employment on their own. DVOP Specialists expand the scope of their outreach and its effectiveness by working in partnership with a wide range of public and private agencies and organizations. This includes involvement in the

“Homeless Veteran Stand Downs” that take place in Pueblo, Colorado Springs, Grand Junction, Denver, and Fort Collins, where homeless veterans can receive winter clothing, personal hygiene products, haircuts, hot meals, flu shots, dental exams, and mental health resources, as well as employment services.

The LVER Specialist’s primary role is to conduct employer relations and advocate on behalf of veterans regarding the valuable knowledge, skills, and abilities they bring to the workforce. LVER Specialists accomplish this through virtual and in-person customized hiring events, networking events, job fairs, job search workshops, employer panels, and personal visits to local businesses. These events are designed to bring groups of veterans and employers together to fill employer vacancies while providing veterans with vocational and career guidance as well as information for on-the-job training, apprenticeships, and work experience opportunities offered by private employer.

JVSG performance measures are subject to change and are effective October 1 of each year with the start of the new Federal Fiscal Year (FFY). Below are the performance measures that started October of 2022.

<b>Performance Measures US DOL VETS</b>			
<b>Negotiated Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Negotiated Goal</b>	<b>Actual Outcome</b>	<b>Goal Met Y/N</b>
<b>Jobs For Veterans State Grant Funded Services</b> (Table Source: ETA-9173 for JVSG)			
<b>Employment Rate - 2nd Quarter After Exit</b> <i>(Source: Item D.1, Total Current Period column)</i>	<b>50.6%</b>	<b>58.9%</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Employment Rate - 4th Quarter After Exit</b> <i>(Source: Item D.2, Total Current Period column)</i>	<b>49.7%</b>	<b>58.6%</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Median Earnings - 2nd Quarter After Exit</b> <i>(Source: Item D.3, Total Current Period column)</i>	<b>\$5,625</b>	<b>\$10,230</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Data Source: WIOA Quarterly Performance Report, rolling 4 Quarters (7-1-22 to 6-30-23, run 9-21-2023)			

During the 2022 Program Year, the State has provided a number of services to veterans through the Jobs for Veterans State Grant, our partners, their local training programs, and job referrals through Connecting Colorado. Even though a few categories of veterans have decreased, the overall number of veterans has increased, and the number of services provided to each individual has increased, as well. This increase is likely associated with the expanded availability of in-person and virtual services as well as seamless program integration that gives customers more options and greater flexibility to receive the services they are looking for. With the increased number of services to veterans, the State also continues to exceed all three of our performance measures, namely, employment after exit (Q2 and Q4, respectively) and median earnings. These outcomes are the result of the great partnerships between the State and our local Workforce Center partners.

Despite the services and support that the State provides to veterans, there are other challenges that veterans face. The best way to assist veterans is to address all issues concerning them and to help stabilize their current situation. In this “holistic” approach the JVSG program provides assistance through referrals to partner agencies and nonprofits to help veterans find overall stability in their lives. Over the years, we have found that there are a number of issues that veterans and their families face. The top 3 issues that we hear from veterans are related to:

- Mental health
- Veteran employment
- Housing

Most remaining reported issues are financially-related hardships due to the increased costs of living, transportation, and energy,

which can be more dependent on location and family size. Any changes that help veterans with these issues will likely help stabilize their lives and expand their opportunities to obtain a sustainable career and prosper.



**COLORADO**

Department of  
Natural Resources

July 5, 2023

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs  
Department of Military and Veterans Affairs  
Patricia Hammon, Chair  
1355 South Colorado Blvd.  
Building C, Suite 113  
Denver, CO 80230

Dear Ms. Hammon:

Per your annual request, under State Statute and Wildlife Commission regulation, the Division of Parks and Wildlife offers, the following types of licenses and services to our states' veterans or active military:

C.R.S. 33-12-106 – **(1)** (a) Any resident who displays on the resident's vehicle a Colorado disabled veteran's license plate pursuant to section 42-3-304 (3)(a) or a purple heart special license plate pursuant to section 42-3-213 (2) must be allowed free entrance to any state park or recreation area, not to include campgrounds, on any day of the year such park or area is open. For the purpose of this section, display of such license plates entitles the disabled veteran and passengers in such veteran's vehicle to enter such park or recreation area free of charge. **(b)** Any resident who presents the documents necessary to satisfy the requirements of section 42-3-304 (3)(a) at a regional office or the central office of the division, or at such other locations as may be determined by the division, may obtain a transferable annual parks pass free of charge from the division.



C.R.S. 33-12-108 established the Keep Colorado Wild Pass that offers an annual state parks pass for \$29 to all Coloradoans that can be purchased at the time of registering a motor vehicle with the Colorado Department of Revenue. Colorado residents with any of the applicable fee-exempt military license plates, Colorado Disabled Veterans license plates, or Purple Heart license plates may access Colorado State parks for free – receiving the Keep Colorado Wild Pass at no cost. The following license plate types receive a Keep Colorado Wild Pass at no charge: Air Force Cross, Disabled Veteran, Distinguished Flying Cross, Distinguished Service Cross, Disabled Woman Veteran, Medal of Honor, Navy Cross, Purple Heart, Prisoner of War, Pearl Harbor, and Silver Star. Further data on how many Keep Colorado Wild Passes were issued to these license plate holders can be obtained through the Department of Revenue.

Commission Regulation – P-7 #701.4 A disabled resident may obtain an Independence annual parks pass pursuant to 33-12-106 (1) (b), C.R.S. An Independence annual parks pass shall be issued following the Division's receipt of a completed application from a qualified resident of the state. The pass will only remain valid as long as the individual maintains their Colorado residency as defined in 33-10-102 (21), C.R.S. a. In order to qualify for an Independence annual parks pass, a resident must provide the following written proof to the Division: (1) DD 214 Form or other documentation indicating the veteran received an Honorable Discharge from a branch of the Armed Services of the United States, AND (2) A qualification letter, on official stationary/letterhead, from the Veteran's Administration, Department of Veteran's Affairs, or the branch of service from which the veteran is receiving compensation that states one of the following: a. 50% or greater, service-connected permanent disability; b. Loss of use of one or both feet; c. Loss of use of one or both hands; or a d. Loss of vision in both eyes

For pass holders who are 65 years of age or older, the pass provides a \$3.00 discount on camping, except on weekends and holidays. The applicant must be a Colorado resident and submit an application to our Denver office. If the applicant is on VA disability, they may contact the

Veteran's Administration to request a letter of documentation as to their disability. In return, The Veteran's Administration can provide a form letter which will fulfill the required documentation.

C.R.S. 33-12-106 – (2.3) The commission may promulgate rules to allow free entrance to any state park or recreation area, not to include campgrounds, yurts, or other amenities and services offered, for veterans on one day each year. The commission may determine by rule which day veterans are allowed free entrance to state parks and recreation areas.

Commission Regulations – CCR 445 -#700-2(j) Any vehicle occupied by a current, reserve or honorably discharged member of any United States military service, on the State observance of Veteran's Day. At least one form of past or present military identification shall be presented at the Park entrance. Acceptable forms of military identification include:

- DD214;
- Active, retired or veteran military cards;
- The display of military license plates.

C.R.S. 33-12-106 (2.4) (a) The commission shall promulgate a rule to allow veterans, including active duty personnel, free entrance to any state park or recreation area, not to include campgrounds, yurts, or other amenities and services, for the month of August each year. The commission may promulgate a rule setting evidence standards to show a person is a veteran and issue a sticker or other device that identifies a person as a veteran for future entrance. The commission may also charge a fee for issuing the sticker or other device that identifies a person as a veteran, but the fee must be based on the direct and indirect cost of issuing the sticker or other device.

In addition to those very specific programs, Veterans may also qualify for:

Veterans 64 years of age or older who are Colorado residents may also qualify for the Aspen Leaf (Senior Citizen) Annual Pass at a cost of \$70 per year.

C.R.S. 33-4-104 – (1) Any active or retired member of the United States armed forces while stationed as a resident patient at any United States armed forces hospital or convalescent station located within Colorado, any resident patient at a veterans administration hospital may obtain a fishing license free of charge, valid for taking fish during the period of residency only, under rules and regulations of the commission.

Any Colorado resident on active duty outside this state with any branch of the armed forces of the United States may obtain, from the division of wildlife, a fishing license free of charge, valid for taking fish while such person is in this state on temporary leave from such duty, but not to exceed a total of thirty days during any year.

Any resident of this state who has received a purple heart for service in the United States armed forces or who is a disabled veteran may obtain from the division of wildlife, free of charge, a lifetime resident combination small game hunting and fishing license.

Commission Regulation #206(B)(4)(g) Wounded Warrior Hunting Licenses – The Director may make certain deer, elk, and pronghorn licenses available to qualified participants in any United States Armed Services wounded Warrior programs.

Applicants must be members of the United States Armed Forces, who are residents of, or stationed in, Colorado returning from post-September 11, 2001 overseas contingency operations who have been so severely injured during combat, including combat-related support activities that they will require years of intense, ongoing care or assistance. Additionally, applicants must be members of a United States Armed Services Wounded Warrior

program, as defined in 33-4-102(1.9) C.R.S., and must be assigned to a military medical treatment facility at the time of application for this program.

Commission Regulation-#206(B)(4)(i)(1)(ee) In lieu of applying through the regular limited license draw, any active duty member of the United States Armed Forces who is stationed at any military facility in Colorado and actively deployed outside the United States, or any active duty member of the United States Armed Forces who is a Colorado resident and is deployed outside the United States, shall, upon their return to the United States, be eligible to apply for preference points for any limited license draw that occurred during their absence.

Applications for preference points shall be made on forms provided by the Division and filed within six months upon the member's return to the United States.

Commission Regulation- #206(B) (6) (d) Any active duty member of the United States Armed Forces stationed at any military facility in Colorado and actively deployed outside the United States, or any active duty member of the United States Armed Forces who is a Colorado resident and is deployed outside the United States, shall be allowed a preference for the purchase of leftover licenses prior to their sale to the general public.

Between January 1<sup>st</sup> and June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the Division issued 2981 free Independence Parks Passes, 759 free lifetime fishing licenses, and 1081 free combination small game and fishing lifetime licenses to veterans with disabilities. At this time in the year, we have not yet received requests for military leftover license privileges or requests for military applications for preference points. These requests are typically received between July to December. These numbers are smaller than previous years since they only cover 6 months of 2023. In the future, as we change the cycle to match the fiscal year, the numbers will increase to reflect similar numbers of previous years.

We look forward to continuing to serve those who have sacrificed so much. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or require additional information.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dan Gibbs', with a stylized, cursive script.

Sincerely,

Dan Gibbs

Executive Director





**COLORADO**

**Department of Local Affairs**

Division of Property Taxation

June 22, 2023

Pat Hammon, Chairperson  
Department of Military and Veterans Affairs  
Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs  
1355 South Colorado Blvd., Building C, Suite 113  
Denver, Colorado 80230

Dear Ms. Hammon:

Per your request, I have provided below the number of properties, actual value, and the exempted taxes for disabled veterans who received the Disabled Veterans Property Tax Exemption in 2022, payable in 2023. My office administers the program to determine if a veteran has applied on more than one property in the state or illegally claimed an exemption. Additionally, my office provides information and support for county offices and taxpayers regarding the program. At this time, we do not provide any other direct services to veterans in Colorado.

For the 2022 tax year, property taxes paid in 2023;

The total number of disabled veteran exemptions granted is; **10,266**

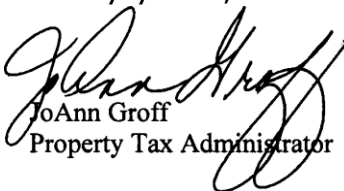
The actual value of the exempted properties is; **\$1,002,379,948.00**

The total exempted property taxes for qualified disabled veterans is; **\$6,343,655.32**

We have not yet verified the status of the 2023 tax year applicants; those applications are currently under review. Exempt property tax amounts will be calculated after those taxes are due in January 2024.

Should you have questions regarding the program or any other activities of the Division of Property Taxation please contact me.

Sincerely yours,

  
JoAnn Groff  
Property Tax Administrator

JAG:mes

Governor Jared S. Polis | Rick M. Garcia, Executive Director |  
JoAnn Groff, Property Tax Administrator 1313 Sherman St.,  
Room 419, Denver, CO 80203 P 303.864.7777 F 303.864.7799  
[www.dola.colorado.gov](http://www.dola.colorado.gov) Strengthening Colorado Communities







COLORADO

Department of Revenue

Executive Director's Office

Physical Address:

1375 Sherman Street

Denver, CO 80203

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 17087

Denver, CO 80203

July 10, 2023

Mrs. Patricia Hammon, Chair  
Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs  
Department of Military and Veterans Affairs  
155 Van Gordon Street Suite 201  
Lakewood, CO 80228

Dear Chair Hammon,

Thank you for your request related to services provided to veterans by the Colorado Department of Revenues (DOR). Below is a summary of new and existing veteran services we support.

During the calendar year 2022, the DOR hired 51 veterans. We continue to be grateful for the services provided by our veterans and we, as individuals, are mindful of their contributions to our country and ourselves when we render them service.

Military Special License Plates: As of June 30, 2023, the DOR records indicate that 164,416 vehicles were registered in the State of Colorado with one of the military special license plates.

## **New Programs and Military License Plates**

- Keep Colorado Wild Pass: SB21-249 implemented the Keep Colorado Wild pass providing for a reduced fee State Parks pass to be included in a vehicle annual registration and to allow for continuous funding of State Parks and other related programs. Under this new program, any military license plate that is statutorily exempt from taxes and fees under Title 42 is also exempt from the \$29 Keep Colorado Wild pass. This means veteran's with these fee exempt plates can also get the Keep Colorado Wild pass free of charge when they register or renew their plates. This may be an opportunity for us and the Department of Natural Resources, Parks and Wildlife to educate veterans about this great new program.

### New military special license plates

These plates were created and offered to veterans since the DOR's last letter:

U.S. Space Force License Plate: This plate may be issued to a serving member, honorably discharged or retired member of any component of the U.S. Space Force upon presenting a DD214 form issued by the U.S. Government or any other evidence sufficient to demonstrate that the applicant is a serving member, honorably discharged or retired member of any component of the U.S. Space Force. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of \$50.00 and the required taxes and fees per.

U.S. Navy Seabees License Plate: Beginning January 1, 2024, this plate may be issued to an honorably discharged veteran or retired, active, or reserve member of a construction battalion of the U.S. Navy upon presenting a DD214 form issued by the U.S. Government or any other evidence sufficient to demonstrate that the applicant qualifies for the license plate. The license plate is statutorily exempt from all registration, taxes, and fees on one license plate per applicant. A second or more

license plates per applicant may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of \$50.00 and the required taxes and fees.

## **Existing Services and Programs**

### Service Members Civil Relief Act and the Military Spouse Residency Relief Act

The DOR continues to ensure that service members and their qualifying spouses under the protection of the Service Members Civil Relief Act and the Military Spouse Residency Relief Act continue to receive the services, protections and tax exemptions afforded to them by these acts.

### Deployed Military Motor Vehicle Taxes and Fees

A member of the U.S. Armed Forces is eligible for the exemption of registration fees and pays a \$1.00 specific ownership tax for their vehicles registered in Colorado while the service member is deployed outside the U.S. The service member must (1) show that he/she is serving outside the U.S.; AND (2) file a signed affidavit that the motor vehicle will not be operated on a highway while they are serving outside the U.S. If the service member has credit remaining on his/her motor vehicle at the time they are serving outside the U.S., the DOR shall place that amount of credit into a "holding" account for the service member to apply to the payment of specific ownership tax and registration fees on any vehicle owned by the service member upon the return to the U.S. per C.R.S. 42-3-107(10)(b) and 42-3-314.

### Colorado VETS-2-TRUCKS Program

This program is designed for individuals who are currently serving, are close to military discharge, or were discharged within the last 90 days. They must have experience driving heavy military trucks with a safe driving record for at least the last two years. These veterans may qualify for a Colorado Commercial Driver License (CDL) without having to take the commercial driver skills test.

### e-Services

The DMV continues to provide e-Services that offer first time registrations, registration renewals, license plate replacements, and persons with disability military license plates to be performed online across all 64 counties. This also allows service members stationed outside of Colorado to maintain their vehicle registrations. E-Services can be accessed at [mydmv.colorado.gov](http://mydmv.colorado.gov).

### Military Identifier on Identification Documents

This program allows eligible applicants to have a military identifier added to their regular or commercial driver license or identification card for no additional fee. The applicant may choose between the Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, National Guard, Navy, or Space Force. The eligible applicant must present either his/her valid military identification card or a DD214 per C.R.S. 42-2-114(10) and 42-2-303(5).

### Deployed Military License Extensions

Per C.R.S. 42-2-118(2), every license which is, at the time of its expiration, held by a member of the armed forces of the United States, then serving on active duty outside of Colorado, does not expire, but is extended for three (3) years or until nine (9) days after the licensee returns to Colorado. No action is required for the extension, but eligible service members can update their account and receive an extension sticker if they submit an extension request by mail or online.

### Expedited Driver License Services

Expedited service in state driver license offices is offered to active military members in uniform. A sign in each office states the following:

*We Support Our Military*

*Members of the Armed Forces in Uniform will be provided expedited service.*

### Registration Late Fee

The owner of a vehicle who is active military serving outside of Colorado when the registration grace period expires, if the vehicle has not been operated on any public highway in Colorado between the time the registration period expired, including the grace period and the time the vehicle is registered will be exempt late fees per C.R.S. 42-3-112(3)(b).

### Authorization of Military Special License Plates for Motor Vehicles Owned by Trusts

The Department of Revenue is required to issue certain military special license plates for a motor vehicle owned by a trust if the trust is created for the benefit of a natural person who is qualified to receive the special license plate and the trust name includes a natural person who is qualified to receive the special license plate per C.R.S. 42-3-213(1)(g).

### Military Special License Plates

The DOR has special accommodations for veterans registering vehicles in Colorado and obtaining vehicle license plates; a complete listing and guide of all military special license plates can be found at the Division of Motor Vehicles website: <https://dmv.colorado.gov/license-plates-military>

We are not aware of any issues and/or concerns among the veterans that we serve. The DOR looks forward to working with the Board on any legislative or other efforts to assist our veterans.

Sincerely,

Mark Farrandino  
Executive Director  
Colorado Department of Revenue

Digitally signed by Mark Ferrandino

Date: 2023.07 10

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