

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs (CBVA) Meeting

Date: 4 April 2025

Time: 9:00 AM

Location: Ignacio, Colorado

Break: 10:32-10:49

Members Present

Shelia Scanlon, Chair

Sean Maday, Vice Chair

Howard Richards, Member

Raymond Taylor, Member

Jasmine Motupalli, Member

Longinos Gonzalez, Member

Absent

Lacey Golonka, Secretary - excused

Staff Present

Bruce Cowan - Director

Darin Collazo, Western Region One

Source Administrator

Lisa Stamm, CDVA Grants

Administrator

Eric Winterrowd, CDVA Veteran

Services Supervisor

Carissa Snyder, CDVA Operations

Coordinator

Beth Maxwell, Program Assistant

Sharon DeVita - Admin Assistant II

Katie McReynolds - Administrative
Assistant I

Guest

Dr. Tina Garcia, Paralyzed Veterans of
America (PVA, United Veterans
Coalition (UVC)

Richard Nagley - American Legion,
Veterans Coalition of the San Luis
Valley

Marsha Unruh - Home Front Military
Network

Travis Gale - Kit Carson County Veteran
Service Officer

Jim Cressman - Veteran

Raymond Baker - Veteran

Bruce Valdez - Veteran

Gordon Hammond - Veteran

Linda Baker - Tribal Council Member

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Krista Richards - Daughter of a Veteran

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the March meeting were approved by all with the changes previously emailed. Mrs. Motupalli made the motion. Mr. Richards seconded. Motion carried.

Standing Reports

Legislative Report - Bruce Cowan

The board was informed about the Claims Shark bill. This bill will limit the amount billed to a veteran for services, ensuring that no veteran is billed for more than five months of service connection payments.

Department of Military and Veteran Affairs Report - Bruce Cowan

The board was provided an update on the recruitment and retention program for the Colorado National Guard. This program offers free tuition to qualified guardsmen as a reward for their service.

UVC Updates - Dr. Tina Garcia:

The board was updated on the efforts the UVC is verifying the Disabled Veteran Small Business law is being upheld.

Director Report - Bruce Cowan

The cuts to the VA appear to be around 19%, which is 2% higher than the figure reported last month at the NASDVA conference. This increase raises concerns about the impact on veteran services and resources. The Look, Listen, and Learn tours have revealed that leadership is not fully aware of the position descriptions for county veteran service officers. This gap in understanding could affect the effectiveness of support for veterans at the local level.

In response to these challenges, the director and Veteran Service Supervisor are exploring digital platforms. These platforms would create a centralized location

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where county leadership, the county veteran service officers (CVSOs), and state employees can easily access essential information. This digital one-stop shop could help improve communication and ensure that all parties are informed and better equipped to serve veterans. The anticipated cuts to the grants budget will reduce the Veteran Assistance Grant (VAG) and there will be an increase the Veteran Trust Fund (VTF).

Veteran Services - Eric Winterrowd:

The Veteran Service team provided the board with an update on the outreach events that took place in March. They shared the team's accomplishments, including successful VA outreach events, the distribution of PIV cards to new CVSOs, the announcement of the new Claims and Benefit Manager, and the VBA decisions made in March. Additionally, the team informed the board about the Look, Listen, and Learn tour scheduled for May, as well as the upcoming meeting between the RVSOs and the Albuquerque VHA Director.

Looking ahead, the next outreach event planned for June, is CCI. The Policy and Procedure (P&P) is being updated for the 2026 fiscal year. The team also discussed concerns regarding vacant positions that have not yet been announced and the PIV cards becoming inactive after 30 days of inactivity. Spring Training was completed just before this meeting, and regional VSOs are planning to attend the NASCVSO appeals training.

Western Region One Source - Darrin Collazo:

An update was given on the growth and progress of the weekly and monthly events, including the DEERS program and various outreach efforts. The board was informed about the WROS specific outreach and the cross-divisional outreach with the cemetery.

Additionally, there was an update on the parking improvements and the library wall project, both of which are being funded by grants from the Veterans Trust Fund (VTF). These projects are important steps in enhancing the services and facilities available to veterans, ensuring their needs are met in a more efficient and accessible manner.

Grants - Lisa Stamm:

A new employee has joined the team to assist with the Honor Stipend Program. The Grants team has been focused on improving the efficiency of ongoing projects, including the Online Grant Management System, which has made the grant process faster and smoother. Currently, the execution rate for the Veterans Trust Fund (VTF) is at 50%, and the Veterans Assistance Grant (VAG) execution rate is at 76%. The application process for FY2026 is progressing well, with 10 training sessions conducted and 103 units of technical assistance provided to applicants. So far, 25 VTF applications have been submitted, totaling \$1,431,653.28, and 42 VAG applications have been received, totaling \$2,380,862.20. Reviews for these grant applications are scheduled for April 17 and 18.

The FY2026 survey results highlighted some challenges, such as difficulties in tracking diversity data and accurately reporting the number of veterans served, particularly in rural areas. Some applicants found the changes in the application format to be confusing, with unclear sections and new fields that were difficult to navigate. A few respondents mentioned that the shortened application process ended up being more complicated. Others experienced challenges in gathering necessary documents or attachments, and some found the email submission system outdated. Despite these issues, most respondents shared positive feedback about the process and noted that returning applicants found the process easier. The feedback also emphasized the need for clearer guidelines, simpler procedures, and more targeted assistance to better serve veterans, especially those in underserved areas.

Old Business:

Veterans Clearing House -Traffic to the site has stabilized. The board discussed possible marking campaigns to increase traffic to the site.

Veteran “protected class” - Mrs. Snyder will try again to obtain this information from the AG’s Office.

Women Veteran Subcommittee - no updates

Branding -The board discussed possible branding measures such as adding the clearing house link to their business cards.

New Business:

Travel Claims liquidation - no concerns

Reappointments for the board - Mr. Maday will be stepping down upon the completion of his term. Recommendation to renew Mr. Gonzales will be sent to the Colorado Congress.

Access to Prescriptions - Will wait until there is a new appointment in Washington D.C. to resend the board’s letter.

Board Remarks

The Board remarked on events they attended in March.

Statewide Veterans Issues:

Access to Prescriptions

Homelessness

Transportation

Veterans on the Fringes

Mental Health Service

Upcoming Meetings

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|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 18 April 2025 | VTF Subcommittee |
| 17 April 2025 | VAG Subcommittee |
| 09 May 2025 | JFHQ - VTF Grants |
| 06 June 2025 | Virtual |
| 11 July 2025 | Moffat or Routt County |
| 1 August 2025 | Garfield or Eagle County |
| 11 September 2025 | Training in Grand Junction |
| 12 September 2025 | Grand Junction |

Adjournment

Mr. Maday made the motion to adjourn. Mrs. Motupalli seconded. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 11:26 PM.