

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs (CBVA) October Meeting

Date: 08 October 2025

Location: La Junta

Time: 10:32 AM

Break: 12:13-12:30 PM

Members Present

Sheila Scanlon, Chair

Jasmine Motupalli, Member

Raymond Taylor, Vice Chair

Longinos Gonzalez, Member

Howard Richards, Member

Sheldon Smith, Member

Members Absent

Lacey Golonka Secretary- Excused

Staff Present

Bruce Cowan - Director

James Poteet, Appeals Specialist

Angela Ingalls, Veterans Memorial

Carissa Snyder - CDVA Operations

Cemetery of Western Colorado

Coordinator

Administrator

Sharon DeVita -CDVA Operations

Darin Collazo, Western Region One

Katie McReynolds - CDVA Operations

Source Administrator

Glen Marciniak Regional Veteran

Lisa Stamm, CDVA Grants Administrator

Service Officer

Christina Tozzie - CDVA Grants

Joo Kang, DMVA Budget Director

Eric Winterrowd, CDVA Veteran

Services Supervisor

Guests

Pat Hammon - VCLC Board of

Richard Nagley - American Legion, San

Commissioners, UVC Representative

Luis Veteran Coalition

Alternate

Gar Williams - Director, Veterans

Coalition of the San Luis Valley

CBVA - October Minutes - Approved

Kaysie Schmidt, Otero County
Administrator
Marsha Unruh, Program Director, Home
Front Military Network
Ric Ward, Otero County Veteran Service
Officer, American Legion Post 9 La
Junta
Michael Marks - Veteran

Don Richards - Post Commander of 125
Kiowa County, Veteran
Brad Row-County Veteran Outreach
Coordinator of the Arkansas Valley
Sargent Fox Suicide prevention grant
program
Paul Velasquez Veteran and City
Council Person

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the September meeting were approved by all with the changes previously emailed. Ms. Motupalli made the motion. Mr. Taylor seconded. Motion carried.

Public Comments

Mr. Williams expressed concern that assigning a single County Veterans Service Officer (CVSO) to serve four counties could result in diminished service quality for veterans. This prompted a discussion on how CVSOs might effectively coordinate service delivery and outreach efforts in collaboration with Regional VSOs, ensuring continued accessibility for veterans in neighboring counties.

Mr. Nagley raised concerns regarding the Veterans Community Living Centers (VCLCs), citing the appearance of red flags indicative of potential abuse. The Board discussed these issues and acknowledged that the VCLCs have responded to these concerns.

Standing Reports

Grants - Lisa Stamm:

Ms. Kang presented a comprehensive overview of the budgets for Fiscal Years 2023, 2024, and 2025, emphasizing key allocations and notable trends across the three-year period.

The board also discussed the grant budget, specifically the need to increase spending authority to enable the use of funds in a future fiscal year. This measure is intended to ensure timely and effective execution of allocated resources.

Looking ahead, Ms. Kang recommended initiating a plan in Fiscal Year 2027 to request a statutory change that would take effect in Fiscal Year 2028, allowing for more flexible future fund utilization. She further advised requesting additional spending authority, supported by documentation of historical and current Veteran Assistant Grants fund execution rates, to substantiate the need.

Mr. Ward delivered a presentation on the American Legion Post 9's utilization of grant funds to support medical transportation services for veterans. To date, the Post has facilitated 73 rides, covering a cumulative distance of over 14,000 miles.

Ms. Stamm provided an update on the separate training sessions conducted with the Veteran Community Living Center. She also distributed the new Veteran-Focused Training (VFT) materials and accompanying report, which will be presented for a vote at the November meeting. The updated application will include a request for data specific to Colorado veterans, aimed at identifying service gaps and informing future program development.

Legislative Report - Bruce Cowan

The Board was informed that the Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) has appointed a new Legislative Liaison. Additionally, it was noted that the Governor's Office has expressed no opposition to the proposed transfer of excess

funds from the Veterans Trust Fund (VTF) to the Veterans Assistance Grant (VAG) Fund. There was also no opposition to including comfort items as allowable goods under the VTF.

VCLC Board of Commissioners Minutes - Pat Hammon:

Mrs. Hammon reported that projected costs for Fiscal Year 2025 are lower than those for 2024. She highlighted that the Veterans Community Living Centers (VCLCs) are placing greater emphasis on developing partnerships with home health agencies and local County Veterans Service Officers (CVSOs). Staffing needs were identified at the Rifle, Colorado location, particularly for dietary personnel and Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs).

Mrs. Hammon also noted that each VCLC undergoes five annual audits to identify and address operational challenges and root causes. Additionally, the issue raised during public comments has been resolved.

UVC Updates - Pat Hammon:

Mrs. Hammon reported that the United Veterans Council (UVC) is currently focused on developing a new strategic plan. She also noted that an audit has been requested to address concerns regarding the limited number of contracts awarded to businesses owned by disabled veterans.

Director Report - Bruce Cowan

Director Cowan outlined four primary objectives currently guiding his strategic focus. First, he aims to facilitate civic roundtables to enhance communication and collaboration between county leadership and County Veterans Service Officers (CVSOs). Second, he is developing a comprehensive marketing initiative to inform veterans about the benefits and grant opportunities available to them. Third, he is

working toward the establishment of a Southern Region One Source center in Durango to improve regional access to services. Lastly, he is prioritizing the identification of service gaps, with particular attention to incarcerated veterans—estimated at 1,400 to 1,600 statewide—and to veterans who may now be eligible for benefits under the PACT Act but are unaware of their eligibility.

Veteran Services - Eric Winterrowd:

Mr. Winterrowd provided an update on the CDVA Fall Training held September 16-18 in Colorado Springs, noting that over 100 County Veterans Service Officers (CVSOs) were in attendance.

CDVA continues its outreach and support efforts for veterans at FCI Englewood. Additionally, Mr. Winterrowd highlighted upcoming events focused on women and minority veterans, including a collaborative event in Durango with the State of New Mexico, recognizing the healthcare service overlap in southern Colorado, and a Women Veterans Recognition Day in partnership with the Denver VA, which will focus on processing sensitive claims.

Western Region One Source - Darin Collazo:

Mr. Collazo reported that the Western Region One Source (WROS) hosted five events in September, including a well-attended Stand Down event. He also noted that WROS had the honor of hosting The Adjunct General (TAG), Major General Laura Clellan, during the same month. Additionally, Mr. Collazo informed the Board that the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) will be unavailable until the conclusion of the current government shutdown.

Veterans Memorial Cemetery (VMC) of Western Colorado - Angela Ingalls

Ms. Ingalls reported that the ongoing federal government shutdown has delayed the processing of burial and vault reimbursement payments, as well as the fulfillment of headstone and niche cover orders. She is also exploring the use of artificial wreaths for Wreaths Across America as a cost-saving measure.

In September, fifty volunteers participated in the Saluting Branches event. Additionally, a Survivor Symposium was held at the Mesa County Workforce Center. On September 26th, the U.S. Marine Corps Jeep was delivered to the cemetery, drawing community supporters and media attention to welcome the new addition.

Ms. Ingalls is also considering the creation of a 501(c)(3) foundation to support the cemetery, which would allow for donations to be used for wreath replacements and other needs.

Old Business

Clearing House - Eric Winterrowd

This was discussed in Mr. Winterrowd's report.

Concept paper - Bruce Cowan

This was a motion to move the concept paper to the next legislative session. Mr. Taylor made the motion. "On an annual basis, determine if excess Veteran Trust fund monies are available as determined by the board shall be transferred to the Veteran Assistant Grant Fund." Ms. Motupalli seconded the motion, discussion and vote, motion was approved unanimously.

Women Veterans Subcommittee - Sheila Scanlon

There was brief discussion regarding the scheduling and structure of future meetings.

Legislation for next Legislative Session

CBVA - October Minutes - Approved

There were no new items proposed for consideration in the upcoming legislative session.

Branding - Sheila Scanlon

The Board expressed interest in using the Department of Military and Veteran Affairs (DMVA) Webmaster to assist the board. to support rebranding efforts.

Prescription Letter - Sheila Scanlon

The letter was signed and sent to the National Department of Health and Human Services in Washington, D.C.

Transportation Grant - Director Bruce Cowan

The Board discussed how counties might leverage state staff personnel to assist with the application process and administration for the transportation grant, aiming to improve access and streamline submissions.

Southern Region One Source - Director Bruce Cowan

A site visit to Durango is scheduled for October 27-28, 2025. Mr. Taylor, Mr. Richards, Mrs. Scanlon, Director Cowan, and Mr. Knox will travel to assess a potential location for the Southwest Region One Source (SWROS).

Albuquerque VHA collaboration with Colorado Division of Veteran Affairs - Raymond Taylor

The Board discussed the need to contact the director in Albuquerque to arrange a meeting. Mr. Taylor will serve as the liaison for coordinating with the Albuquerque director.

New Business:

VTF Application to be reviewed in November

Board Remarks

The board remarked on events they attended in September.

Statewide Veterans Issues:

Access to Prescriptions
Veterans on the Fringes
Homelessness
Mental Health Service

Transportation
Food Security
Closing of pharmacies that provide VA
prescription services to rural areas.

Upcoming Meetings

27-28 October 2025
14 November 2025
12 December 2025
13 December 2025
09 January 2026
12 February 2026
04 March 2026
10 April 2026
08 May 2026
05 June 2026

Durango, Colorado
VCLC in Walsenburg, Colorado
Longmont, Colorado
Wreaths Across America
Virtual
VCLC in Florence
VCLC Denver, Colorado
Buena Vista, Colorado
Joint Force Headquarters
VCLC Rifle, Colorado

Adjournment

Mr. Richards made the motion to adjourn. Mr. Taylor seconded. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 12:58 PM.