

DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS REPORT ON THE COLORADO STATE VETERANS AFFAIRS TRUST FUND FOR FY2024

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 2024 covering the period from July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024.

Funds Received: The Veterans Trust Fund (VTF) received a Long Bill appropriation of \$1,182,658 for FY2024. This does not include \$50,000 of additional spending authority of the Tobacco Master Settlement funds authorized for the Western Region One Source (WROS). The Division of Veteran Affairs was authorized to expend \$43,826 for administration of the grant; the actual expenditures were \$43,826 for administration. Of the total non-administrative appropriation, \$15,000 was allocated for Board travel, and \$61,500 allocated to the State Veterans Cemetery in Grand Junction for improvements. \$39,512 was allocated for a Veterans Service Officer Claims Management System, and \$187,000 for a Statewide Veteran Identification Project. A total of \$856,295.00 was awarded in grants to nonprofit organizations and Veterans Community Living Centers throughout the State. Of those grant funds awarded, \$741,337.96 were expended, resulting in an 87% execution rate.

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 veterans 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 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 veterans' transportation programs to medical centers and/or clinics, childcare, 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.

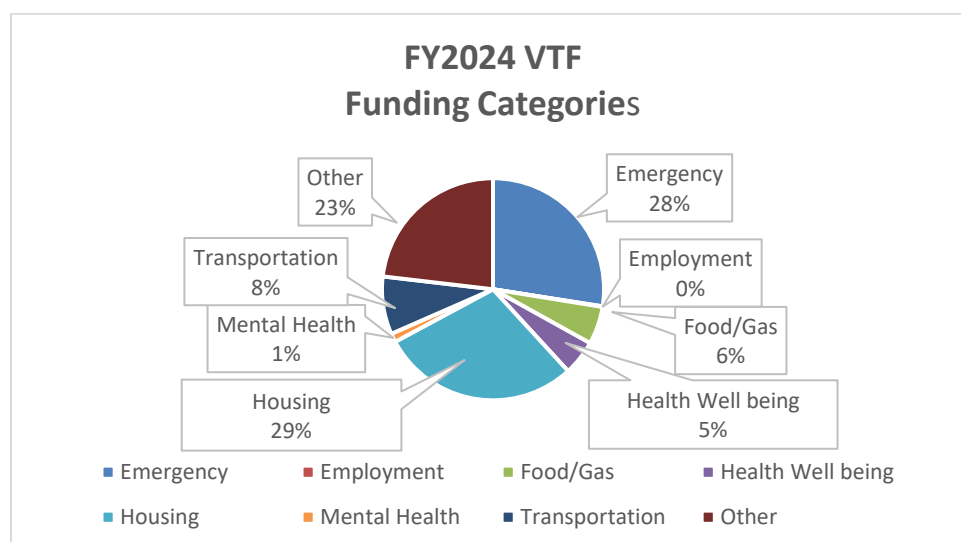
Eligible Population: Veterans within the state of Colorado with an other than dishonorable discharge. There are no income eligibility requirements, although demonstrated need for assistance is required.

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.

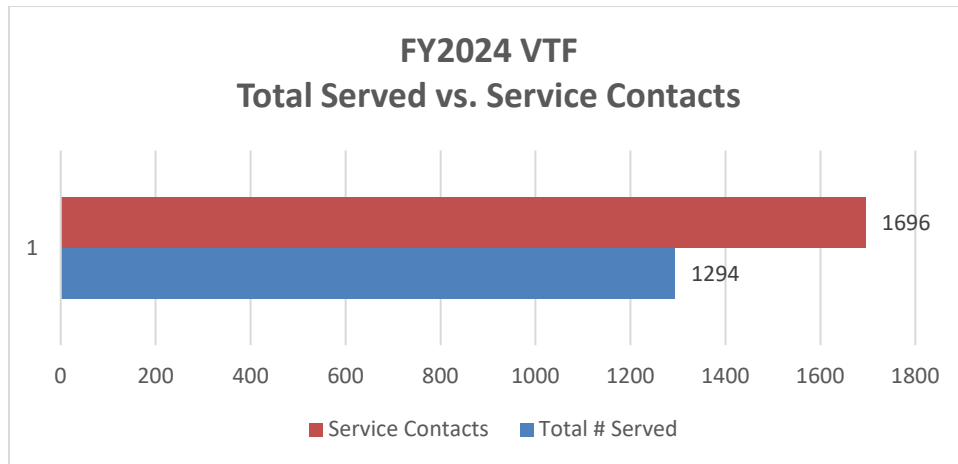
Non-Profit Veterans Service Organizations and State Veterans Community

Living Centers: these organizations expended \$741,337.96 in grant funds to support veterans and their needs.

- The Veterans Community Living Center at Homelake in Monte Vista was awarded \$92,210.00 for a park pavilion for the veteran residents. The Veteran Community Living Center Fitzsimmons was awarded \$28,150.00 for activity room chairs. The Veteran Community Living Center McCandless was awarded \$36,269.00 for an outdoor railroad garden, therapy dog, coffee bar items, and a scendent subscription. The Veteran Community Living Center Spanish Peaks was awarded \$11,209.00 for vital sign monitors and patio furniture. The Veteran Community Living Center Rifle was awarded \$63,407.00 to update dining room furniture.
- 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 (29%) went towards housing assistance. Housing assistance includes help with rental and mortgage payments. Other funding went towards emergency financial assistance (28%), transportation to medical appointments (8%), food and gas assistance (6%), health and well-being (5%), mental health assistance (1%), and other expenses (23%).

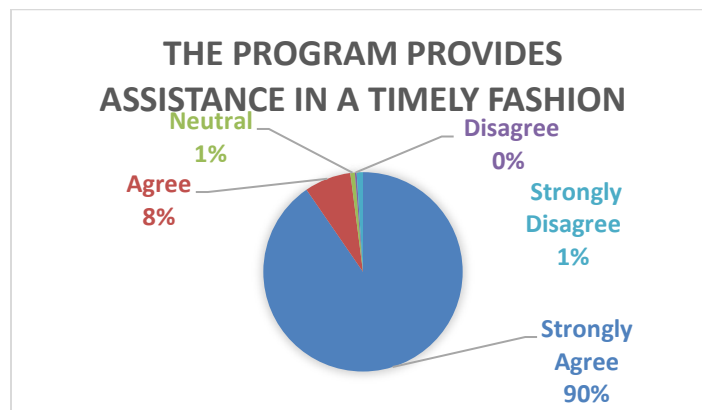


- During FY2024, 1,294 veterans were served through the Veterans Trust Fund grant program, of which 892 were unduplicated and 402 duplicated. There was a total of 1,696 service contacts made. 90% of the veterans assisted were men and 10% were women. The number of women veterans served has significantly increased. Training and outreach to women veterans served helped raise the total amount of women served.

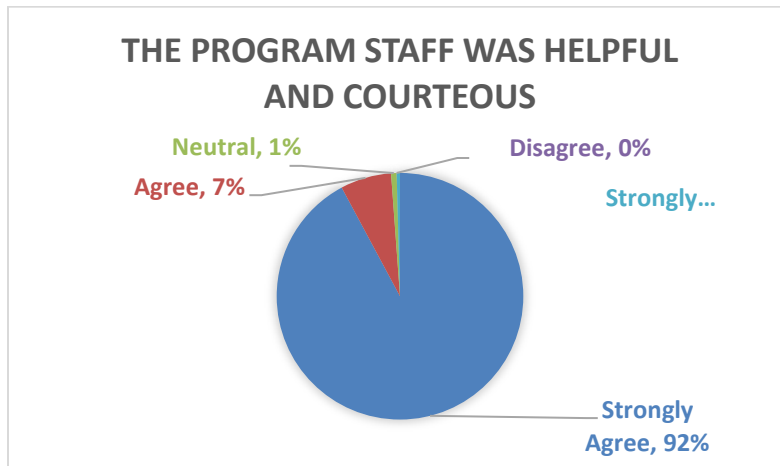


Program Effectiveness: A service recipient survey is utilized to measure the effectiveness of the services provided by the grantees and to measure the outcomes or impact of the services. The survey utilizes a standard Likert scale to rate the grantee program effectiveness and changes in well-being. Results from the current reporting period are listed below:

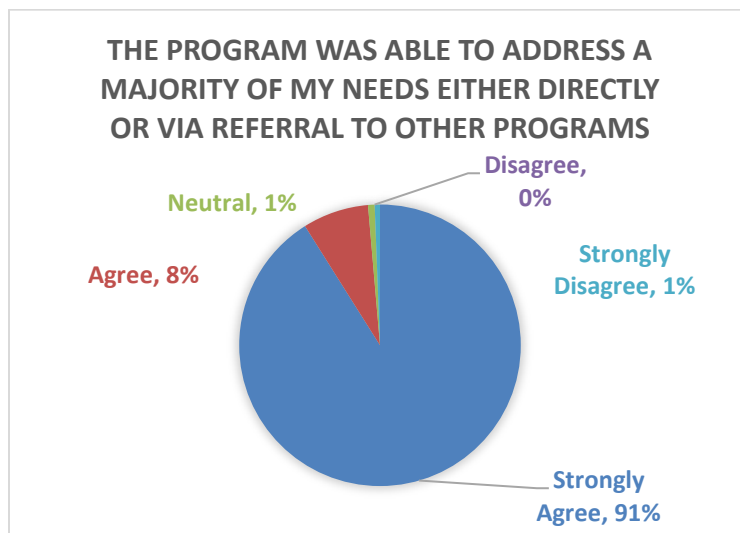
- 99% percent of the veterans surveyed agreed that the program provided assistance in a timely fashion.



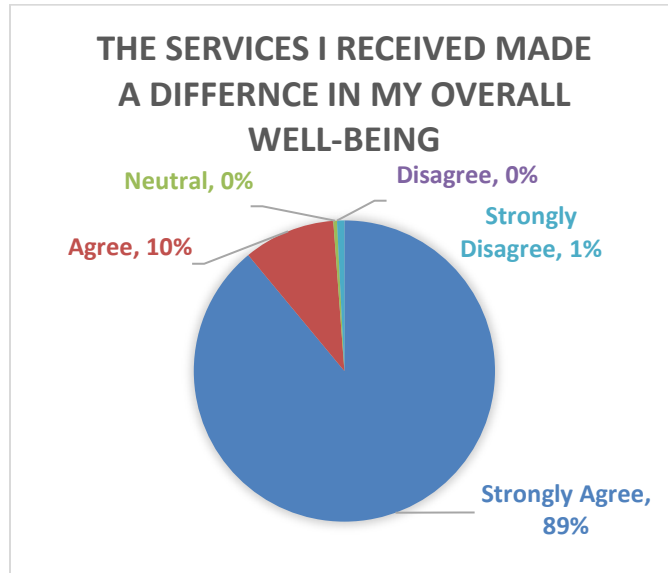
- 99% of veterans surveyed agreed that program staff were helpful and courteous.



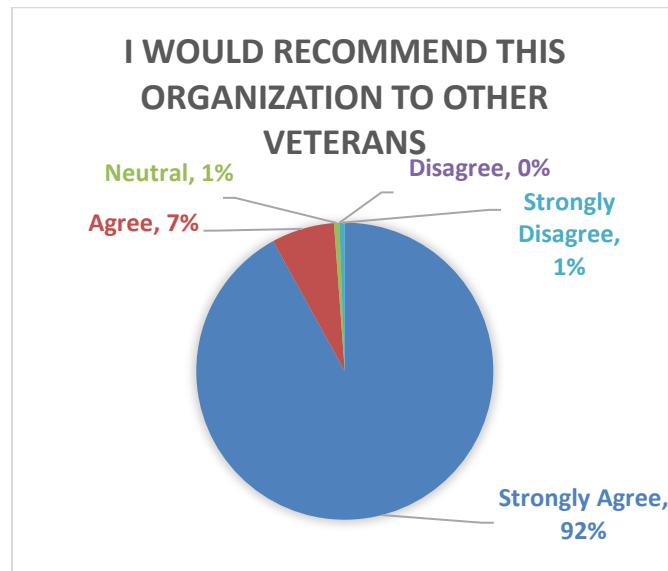
- 99% of veterans surveyed agreed that the program was able to address a majority of their needs, either directly or through referral to other programs.

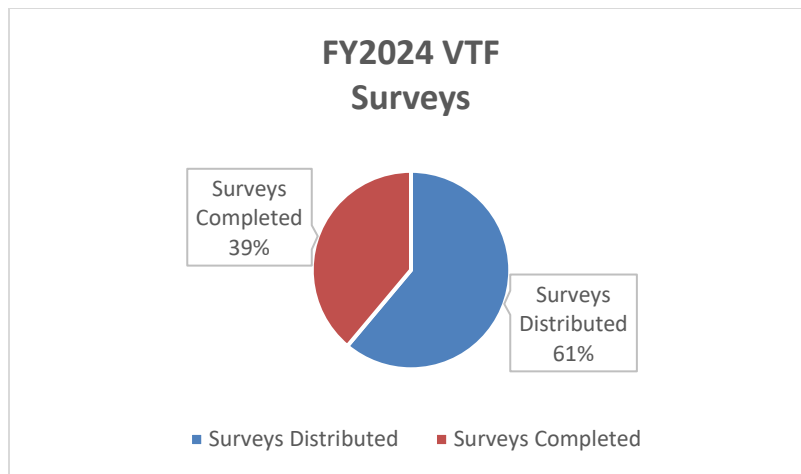


- 99% of veterans surveyed agree that the services they received made a difference in their overall well-being.



- 99% of veterans surveyed would recommend the organization to other veterans.





Evaluation of the Operation of the Program: The grant programs continued to address housing stability needs for veterans not eligible for relief fund assistance, emergency financial assistance, transportation to medical appointments, Stand Down events, and recreational activities.

Process improvement 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. The Grant Manager conducted 11 application trainings.

Grantee input was sought several times throughout the reporting period. Office hours were held on a weekly to bi-weekly basis to cover unmet training needs, provide technical assistance, and allow grantees to learn about one another and their programming. Office hours have increased communication among grantees and have improved grant management and execution rates. Specific training topics were included during each office hour session. Topics consisted of reimbursement documentation, reporting requirements, referrals, underserved veterans, application training, and overall grant management.

The Grant Manager provided 1:1 technical assistance to numerous grantees over the fiscal 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.

In April of 2024, a Grant Specialist was hired to focus on the grantee reimbursements. Due to the additional staff person, grantees received reimbursements within a 10-business day turnaround.

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 continued 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. Due to the increased outreach efforts, seven new applicants applied for VTF funding.

Grantee Success Stories:

American Legion Post 62

The American Legion Post 62, located in Moffat County, helps veterans with housing, emergency financial assistance, heating costs, and any other unforeseen emergency assistance which may arise for veterans in need.

Veteran Trust Fund monies were able to help a veteran in need, who after abdominal surgery, lost his career as a plumber. His car was not running due to much needed repairs. Not having a car created a hardship for this veteran as he could not get to work. American Legion Post 62 was able to pay for his auto repairs, through VTF funding, and now he has reliable transportation to get to and from his place of employment.

VFW Post 5231

VFW Post 5231 assists veterans in need of material and financial assistance including housing, emergency car repairs, food security, gas, and health and well-being in Montezuma County.

On September 16, 2023, the VFW Post 5231 held their annual Stand Down event. The Veterans Trust Fund grant provides monies to ensure the success of this event. The event is designed to help veterans find the help they need while understanding that everyone runs into difficulties. The event served 220 veterans. During the event, veterans received medical help, housing assistance, employment assistance, coats, blankets and sleeping bags, and food.

VFW Post 4031

VFW Post 4031, serving La Plata County, provides financial assistance to local veterans to pay for rent or temporary housing, vehicle repair, utility bills, small appliances, groceries, and other emergency needs.

VFW Post 4031 helped a veteran with the Veteran Trust Fund grant that was experiencing housing instability. Through grant funds, they were able to assist him with warm clothing, boots, and food. With the help and support, this veteran was able to turn his life around and now has many months of sobriety behind him. Grant funds were also used to help this veteran refurbish his bike, enabling him to get around town and have some mode of transportation.

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

In Closing: Over the past nineteen 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 to tens of thousands of veterans throughout the State, ranging from emergency assistance, housing assistance, employment related assistance, utility assistance, and transportation to Veterans Affairs medical facilities. We respectfully request the full amount of funding of 1% of the total Tobacco Master Settlement for FY2025.

FY2024 Veterans Trust Fund Grantees

Grantee	Location	Purpose	Amount Awarded
American Legion Post 0009	Bent, Crowley, Otero counties, Kiowa, Prowers, Pueblo	Transportation, Emergency Financial Assistance	\$25,000.00
American Legion Post 11	Las Animas County	Emergency Financial Assistance, Mental Health Services, Transportation	\$26,000.00
VFW Post 12063	Custer, Fremont, Huerfano, and Pueblo County	Emergency Financial Assistance	\$60,000.00 Modified Budget
Westcliffe Post #170 American Legion	Custer, Fremont, Pueblo, Huerfano counties	Emergency Financial Assistance	\$40,000.00
American Legion Post 2	Pueblo, Huerfano, Las Animas	Emergency Financial Assistance, Emergency Medical and Dental Care	\$30,000.00 Modified Budget
American Legion Post 22	Adams, Jefferson, Weld, Boulder, Larimer	Housing, Emergency Financial Assistance	\$60,000.00
American Legion Post 44	Routt, Hayden, Oak Creek, Steamboat Springs, Yampa,	Transportation, Emergency Financial Assistance	\$4,200.00

	Moffat, Jackson Counties		
American Legion Post 62	Moffat, Rio Blanco, Routt, counties	Financial Assistance, Transportation	\$8,000.00
Justin Bauer Memorial American Legion Post 67	Larimer, Bellevue, Berthoud, Drake, Estes Park, Fort Collins, Glen Haven, Laporte, Livermore, Loveland, Masonville, Red Feather Lakes, Timnath, Wellington	Financial Assistance, Stand Down Event	\$32,000.00
American Legion Post 75	Montezuma, Dolores, La Plata counties	Financial Assistance, Stand Down Event, Transportation, Mental Health Services	\$45,000.00
American Legion Post 88	Grand, Summit, Jackson, Chaffee, Eagle, Routt, Park counties	Financial Assistance, Transportation, Health Care	\$35,000.00
Disabled American Veterans Chapter 44	Montezuma, Dolores, LaPlata counties	Financial Assistance, Recreation Passes	\$65,000.00
Disabled American Veterans Chapter 21	Denver Metro Area, Adams,	Housing, Transportation,	\$22,500.00

	Arapahoe, Douglas, Elbert	Electric Wheelchair lifts, Canteen Books for VA Patients	
Disabled American Veterans Chapter 48	La Plata, San Juan, Archuleta, Mineral, Montezuma, Dolores Counties	Financial Assistance, Mental Health, Recreation Passes, Transportation	\$35,000.00
Veteran Community Living Center Fitzsimmons	Denver metro, state-wide	Chairs for Activity Rooms	\$28,150.00
Veteran Community Living Center Homelake	Rio Grande, Alamosa, Mineral, Conejos, Costillo, Saguache	Park Pavilion for Veteran Residents	\$92,210.00
Veteran Community Living Center McCandless	Fremont County	Outdoor Railroad Garden, Therapy Dog, Coffee Bar Items, Scandent Subscription	\$36,269.00
Veteran Community Living Center Rifle	Rifle, Western Slope	Tabletops, Bases, and Chairs for Dining Room Tables	\$63,407.00
Veteran Community Living Center Spanish Peaks	Southeast Region/Huerfano County	Vital Sign Monitors, Patio Furniture	\$11,209.00
VFW Post 2788	Fremont, Custer, Pueblo Counties	Financial Assistance, Stand Down Event,	\$15,000.00

		Housing, Mental Health, Medical, Transportation	
Lee Marts VFW Post 3571	Delta County	Financial Assistance	\$3,500.00
VFW Memorial Bldg Post 4031	La Plata, Archuleta, Dolores, Mineral, Montezuma, San Juan Counties	Financial Assistance, Post Relief Fund	\$20,000.00
VFW Post 4051	Colorado Springs and El Paso County	Financial Assistance, Mental Health, Transportation, Well-being	\$25,000.00
VFW Post 5843	Northwestern Colorado, Rio Blanco County	Transportation, Financial Assistance	\$3,850.00
VFW Post 5231	Montezuma County, Mesa, Montrose, Dolores, La Plata Counties	Stand Down Event, Transportation, Financial Assistance	\$70,000.00
TOTAL AWARDED <i>(This amount reflects mid-year budget modifications)</i>			\$856,295.00