



2021 Annual Report

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs

STATE OF COLORADO

COLORADO BOARD OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

Members

Pat Hammon, Chair
Sheila Scanlon, Vice Chair
Lacey Golonka, Secretary
Longinos Gonzalez
Sean Maday
Jasmine Motupalli
Raymond Taylor

Division of Veterans Affairs

155 Van Gordon St., Ste 201
Lakewood, Colorado 80228
Phone: 844-458-9767
FAX: 303-284-3163
David Callahan, Director

Jared Polis
Governor

Brigadier General
Laura L. Clellan
The Adjutant General



The Honorable Jared Polis
Governor, State of Colorado
200 East Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203

Senator Julie Gonzales
Veterans & Military Affairs Committee
Colorado Senate
200 East Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203

Representative Chris Kennedy
Veterans Military Affairs Committee
Colorado House of Representatives
200 East Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203

The Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs endeavors to connect with veterans across Colorado, and to that end our monthly meetings are held in different parts of the state when CVOID restrictions allow. In 2021, we were able to hold only one meeting in person, in Burlington, Colorado. All other meetings were held virtually. We anticipate the opportunity to meet in person again next year and plan to partner with local veterans service organizations to maximize veteran attendance and participation.

Access to health care including mental health, transportation to medical appointments, and sustainable housing continue to be issues of concern to Colorado veterans. Another issue of note is the need for a state women's veterans service officer, which this Board has discussed with the Division of Veterans Affairs.

The Board has added three new members this year, from Aurora, Superior, and Pagosa Springs. The other Board members live in Eagle, Colorado Springs, and the Denver metro area. Our members serve their communities as employer veteran representatives,

county veterans service officers, county commissioners and state employees. Annual training for the Board was held virtually in February 2021 with another to follow in February 2022.

The Veterans Trust Fund Grant continues to be highly utilized throughout the state to assist veterans in need, particularly in rural Colorado. The most common uses of the funds are for transportation, food, housing, and fuel. This year the Veterans Trust Fund Grant awarded \$663,590.63 to 23 grantee organizations, including all five Veterans Community Living Centers.

Financial reimbursement from the state in support of county veterans service offices continues to be a substantive provision for veterans service officers and the veterans they serve. Through communication and partnership with the Division of Veterans Affairs and Colorado Counties, Inc., more Colorado county veterans service officers are VA accredited than ever before. This enables our county veterans service officers to offer a broader array of services and more prompt service to Colorado veterans.

The Board extends its thanks to the Governor and to the General Assembly for the opportunity to continue to make Colorado a welcome home for our veterans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patricia J. Hammon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'P' and 'H'.

Patricia J. Hammon
Chair, Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs

Report: Annual Training for County Veteran Service Officers

The 2021 training for county veterans service officers was held at 6848 S. Revere Parkway in Centennial, September 21-24. The event was conducted in person and broadcast via WebEx to encourage maximum attendance. A variety of presenters provided instruction, including state veterans service officers, VA representatives, DMVA staff, state veterans community living centers, and veteran-oriented nonprofits.

Technical difficulties on the first day were overcome and the event proved very successful. The Division of Veterans Affairs intends to try to offer a hybrid model in succeeding years. The closing assessment was reviewed as a group to ensure a complete learning experience for all of the content.

Surveys completed by participants at the end of the conference will enable the Division to plan for next year's event, as well as what to include at the midyear training this spring. It is hoped that as COVID conditions improve, State Veterans Service Officers will be able to offer requested in-person training in their respective regions.

Compliments are due to Joanne Iglesias, Interim Director of the Division of Veterans Affairs, for organizing this pioneering event. DMVA staff were a huge help and their assistance was appreciated by all. Even in a partially remote environment, quality information and resources were able to be communicated to veterans service officers statewide.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patricia J. Hammon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Patricia J. Hammon
Chair, Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs
Eagle County Veterans Service Officer

STATE OF COLORADO

DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

Division of Veterans Affairs East
155 Van Gordon Street, Suite 201
Lakewood, CO 80228
(303) 914-5832 ~ (303) 914-5835 (Fax)

David Callahan
Director



Jared R. Polis
Governor

Brigadier General
Laura L. Clellan
The Adjutant General

COLORADO DIVISION OF VETERAN AFFAIRS

2021 REPORT ON SERVICE TO VETERANS

December 2021

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

Chair, Colorado Board of Veteran Affairs

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

Executive Summary

In federal Fiscal Year 2020-2021, Colorado veterans continued to make a positive impact on local economies with more than \$4 billion in benefits. The Colorado Division of Veterans Affairs assisted with facilitation of direct payments to veterans in the form of compensation and pension benefits exceeding \$2 billion. In other benefits, more than \$400 million went to education and employment readiness and more than \$1.5 billion was expended on medical care. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs reported the Colorado veteran population at 392,116, which is a decrease from last year by 2,029. This decrease indicates the loss of aging veterans, many to COVID, and is somewhat countered by an increase in Post 9-11 veterans leaving the military with the reduction in forces. We anticipate that expenditures for VA health care will continue to increase with the aging population of Vietnam-era veterans and with the necessary care provided for our veterans from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

Significant Activities and Accomplishments

In January 2021, the Division of Veterans Affairs began a reorganization process that consisted of uniting the two former East and West divisions into one statewide Division of Veterans Affairs. After assessment and study, it was decided that a regional organizational model would be employed as the best method of providing consistent service to veterans throughout Colorado. The Division now has state veterans service officers located in Field Service Offices in Aurora, Durango, Grand Junction, Pueblo, and Windsor, with specialty appeals assistance and administrative functions located in Grand Junction and Lakewood.

As widespread COVID vaccination became available, Division offices were able to resume in-person appointments with veterans with precautions in place. Virtual appointments remain available as well. The Board of Veterans Appeals rapidly developed a virtual hearing method to accommodate veterans awaiting administrative law hearings. These also continue to be available and have greatly reduced the travel burden previously experienced by veterans whose appeal actions require that type of hearing. Virtual claim submittal options also came into more widespread use, reducing the submittal of paper or faxed copies.

The annual training conference for county veterans service officers was held September 21-24, in-person and with a virtual option. This enabled attendance by county veterans service officers who had travel restrictions due to health or budget.

The Division continues to support its mission of assisting Colorado veterans in accessing their state and federal benefits by filing claims and processing benefit requests at all of our Field Service Offices.

Summary of Program Assessment

COLORADO DIVISION OF VETERAN AFFAIRS		
October 31, 2021		
	OFFICE ACTIVITIES	
ITEM	2020	2021
New Powers of Attorney	5,638	6,501
New Claims	9,255	9,632
Health Care Enrollment (statewide)	110,867	111,764
AMA Decision Reviews	2,096	2,394
Certified/Appealed to BVA	419	192
Referendum E Veteran Property Tax Exemption: Running Total	12,587	13,472

Short and Long Term Goals

The division's goals within the first quarter of 2022 are to fill the two remaining staff vacancies (Northwest Region Veteran Service Officer and Western Region One Source Administrative Assistant operating out of Grand Junction. Completion of capital construction projects at the Veterans Memorial Cemetery along with grounds crew professional development are additional goals to be accomplished during the first quarter of 2022. Second and third quarters of 2022 will be focused on the training, certification and accreditation of newly appointed state and county veteran service officers. Fourth quarter and beyond will be dedicated to expanding and maturing relationships with local, county, state and federal Veteran serving organizations.

Challenges and Opportunities

Maintaining high levels of customer service during a significant reorganization effort that included a 73% turnover of staff remained a constant challenge during 2021. This challenge however was overcome with the assistance of our many partners in stepping up to meet the needs of our state's Veterans and their families. This experience actually resulted in enhancing and building stronger relationships with our local, county, state and federal partners. COVID presented some additional challenges in conducting Veteran community events and Stand Downs across the state in which many were downscaled or postponed during 2021. COVID however also provided an opportunity to develop and mature our virtual capability and capacity to connect with more veterans across the state.

DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS REPORT ON THE COLORADO STATE VETERANS AFFAIRS TRUST FUND FOR FY 20-21

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, 2020 - June 30, 2021.

Funds Received: The Veterans Trust Fund (VTF) received a Long Bill appropriation of \$846,836 for FY 20-21. This does not include \$157,862 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 \$36,651 for administration. Of the total non-administrative appropriation, \$10,000 was allocated for Board travel, and \$15,000 allocated to the State Veterans Cemetery in Grand Junction. A total of \$781,408.42 was awarded in grants to nonprofit organizations and Veterans Community Living Centers throughout the State. Of those grant funds awarded, \$587,449.43 was expended, resulting in a 75% 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: 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 (7.2%), homelessness prevention and intervention (55.5%), emergency needs (28.9%), medical/mental health services not provided and/or covered through the VA (4.2%), and other needed services such as food and gas or other assistance (4.2%).

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 \$654,308.14 in grant funds to support veterans and their needs.

- Bruce McCandless Veterans Community Living Center in Florence was awarded \$52,000 and expended \$39,132.77 for an entertainment system; Veterans Community Living Center in Rifle was awarded \$40,814 and expended \$39,993 for the purchase of a handicap accessible van; Fitzsimmons Community Living Center in Aurora was awarded \$24,750 and expended the full amount for a Scandent system, and the Veterans Community Living Center at Homelake, in Monte Vista was awarded \$51,924.42 and expended the full amount for privacy curtains and recliners in veteran's rooms.
- Non-Profit Veterans Service Organizations expended the remaining amount of grant funds. The services provided were located throughout the state, with 70% of the grantees in rural areas and 30% in metro 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. Grantees spent a higher percentage of grant funds on housing support (both homeless intervention and homeless prevention) and emergency assistance which are becoming the common needs addressed through the grant. For the fourth year in a row, grantees report spending a higher percentage on these items due to the increasing costs of housing in the State.

During FY 2020-2021, the (duplicated) number of veterans served by grantees was 973 with 734 unique individuals (unduplicated) receiving services and support. This number was lower than the previous year, as COVID-19 impacted the number of veterans served overall as will be further detailed below.

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, 97.6% of the veterans rated the services favorably (strongly agree and agree) with 55% indicating a decrease in urgent needs, 50% noting an increase in well-being and 45% citing an increase in overall family well-being as a result of the program. Additional specific outcomes noted include gaining housing stability (36%), decreasing basic needs such as food (49%), and increased access to health care (22%). Notably, 27% cited an increase in overall mental health support, even though mental health services are not a focus of the VTF programs. Many veterans write personal notes of appreciation on the surveys.

Evaluation of the Operation of the Program: The most significant impact on the grant program was COVID. Yearlong influences on expenditures were both needs created by COVID and other needs unpredictably met by COVID relief funding, making this a unique grant year. 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. Transportation programs were essentially shut down for a period of time as VA Health Clinics were not scheduling appointments for an extended period of time. Many appointments continued to be shifted to telehealth rather than in person. Most stand downs were cancelled. Many of the individuals that operate the grant program are considered high risk individuals, thus were not able to address veteran needs with a number of individuals personally impacted by COVID. Some programs did find a way to operate remotely via telephone and email contact. Many veterans eligible to be served were reluctant to seek assistance or did not have the ability to operate remotely via computer, emails and video. Process improvements remain a primary focus in terms of the grant program operations. A survey of grantees, seeking input on the effectiveness of trainings, the responsiveness to grantees and suggestions for changes was conducted. The input provided demonstrated that the grant program is meeting the grantee needs and providing a high level of support. The increase in the number of grantee trainings via webinars and one-on-one sessions have continued. 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 underperforming grantees were released to high performing grantees continued to prove successful. Unfortunately, some grantees were unwilling to release funds although they continued to be unable to perform on the grant. The training of Board members to determine an organization's capacity and to make funding decisions accordingly is ongoing. The Board began the process of conducting non-monitoring contacts (remotely) to grantee organizations to learn more about the area(s) they serve and the needs and the capacity of their programs. The Board gained some valuable insights from this process which may lead to better decision-making on grant awards. As always, we continue to expand outreach to eligible entities to increase the

saturation throughout the state.

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

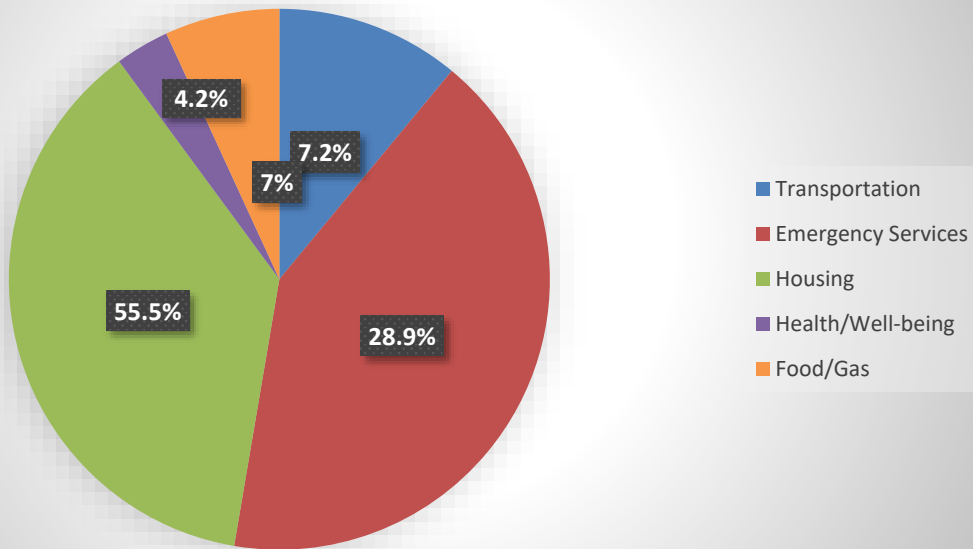
In Closing: Over the past seventeen years the Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and the Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs, through the Colorado Veterans Trust Fund, have provided direct benefits ranging from emergency assistance, housing assistance, work clothes, rent assistance, 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 FY2022-2023.

FY2020-2021 Veterans Trust Fund Grantees

Grantee	Location	Purpose	Amount Awarded
VFW Post 12063	Westcliffe	Vet Assistance	\$75,750
VFW Post 5231	Cortez	Vet Assistance ***modification increase	\$50,000-original \$85,000-final award
VFW Post 8661	Conifer	Transport/Vet Assistance	\$8,400
American Legion Post 9	La Junta	Transport/Vet Assistance ***modification decrease	\$29,920-original \$21,920-final award
American Legion Post 9-11	Palmer Lake	Vet Assistance	\$4,000
American Legion Post 44	Steamboat Springs	Transportation/Vet Assistance ***modification increase	\$5,000-original \$6,250-final award
American Legion Post 103	Littleton	Vet Assistance	\$30,000
American Legion Post 11	Trinidad	Vet Assistance ***modification decrease	\$27,000-original \$13,500-final award
American Legion Post 88	Hot Sulphur Springs	Vet Assistance	\$35,000
American Legion Department of CO	Denver	Vet assistance	\$30,000-original award \$0-final award (returned grant)
Dept. of Colorado VFW	Lakewood	Vet Assistance	\$50,000

VFW Post 4061	Canon City	Van Purchase-Transportation	\$41,000
DAV Chapter 44	Cortez	Vet Assistance	\$50,000
American Legion Post 67	Berthoud	Vet Assistance	\$27,000
VFW Post 3641	Pueblo	Veterans Assistance ***modification increase	\$20,100-original award \$35,100-final award
American Legion Post 75	Cortez	Veterans Assistance	\$40,000
American Legion Post 62	Craig	Transport/Vet Assistance	\$6,000
VFW Post 5843	Meeker	Transportation ***modification decrease	\$9,000-original award \$3,000-final award
American Legion Post 22	Northglenn	Vet Assistance ***modification increase	\$25,000-original \$40,000-final award
American Legion Post 18	Greeley	Vet Assistance	\$35,000
American Legion Post 2	Pueblo	Vet Assistance ***modification decrease	\$17,500-original \$10,000-final
CO Veterans Community Living Center	Rifle	Vehicle	\$40,814
Bruce McCandless SVCLC	Florence	Entertainment system	\$52,000
SVCLC at Homelake	Monte Vista	Privacy curtains, Recliners	\$51,924.42
SVCLC Fitzsimons	Aurora	Scandent system	\$24,750
Total			\$781,408.42

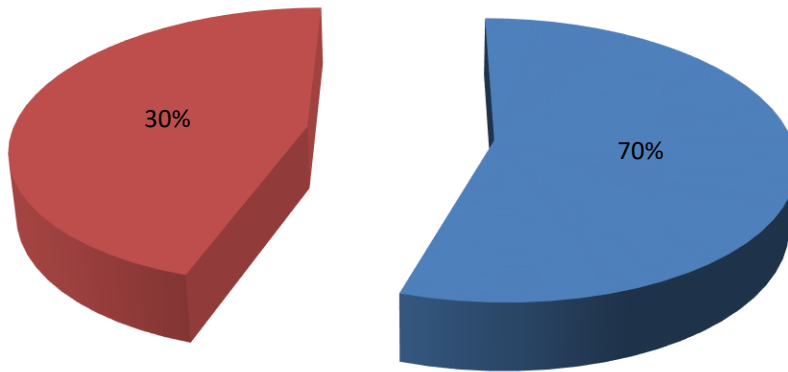
Types of Services Provided



Location of Grantees

Urban

Rural



STATE OF COLORADO

DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS COLORADO DIVISION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

155 Van Gordon Street, Suite 201
Lakewood, CO 80228

Phone: (303) 914-5832, Fax: (303) 303-914-5835

David Callahan
Director

Gail Hoagland
Grant Administrator



Jared Polis
Governor

Brigadier General
Laura L. Clellan
The Adjutant General

Veterans Assistance Grant 2020-2021 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 2020-2021. 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.

The grant program received requests in the amount of \$2,361,529.33 from a total of 47 applicants. A total of 29 non-profit organizations and governmental entities throughout the state were awarded grants totaling \$947,300. The direct services provided through the grants include the provision of shelter and housing (26.4%), emergency assistance (17.3%), transportation (4.1%), health and well-being services (19.4%), mental health services (15.7%), substance abuse treatment (11.8%) and other forms of assistance (3.7%). These "other services" include Veteran Stand Downs. A total of 2487 veterans were served during the grant period. Of those, 1484 were unduplicated, unique individuals of which 289 were female veterans. The allocation to administer the grant program was \$50,000, of which \$43,444 was spent. The administration of the grant was impacted as a number of planned site monitoring visits had to be cancelled. This resulted in some funds not utilized.

A total of \$756,746.72 was expended by the grantees, resulting in an 80% execution rate. The execution rate was impacted by a number of significant factors. Yearlong influences on expenditures were both needs created by COVID and other needs unpredictably met by COVID relief funding, making this a unique grant year. 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. The entire grant period was impacted, otherwise, there is confidence that the execution rate would have been in the high 90% range. Many of the grantees demonstrated creativity and resiliency in adapting and finding ways of serving veterans during the pandemic.

Of note, one grantee, a residential substance abuse treatment program, adjusted the program to ensure social distancing, and surprisingly, has remained COVID free. Transportation programs were impacted by the VA shifting to telehealth appointments and essentially stopping in person appointments. Contactless assistance was a prevalent service delivery method.

Some programs were unable to adjust to the changing environment. For instance, one program funded to provide a Stand Down was unable to do so safely, and decided to return their grant funds. Others, particularly in rural areas without reliable, stable internet access could not operate in a remote environment as readily as those in metro areas. Still others experienced staffing issues as the pandemic directly impacted those providing the services. As a result, a number of grant awards were modified to reduce the amount to some and increase awards to others that were able to provide continuity of service.

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, 95.7% of the veterans rated the services favorably with 89% of veterans indicating an increase in overall well-being for themselves and 54% reported an increase in wellbeing for their families. Another 53% reported that the services increased their mental health support and 56% noting a decrease in urgent needs. 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. An additional measure of housing stability was reported by 36%, and increased access to health care was noted by 54%. It should be noted that alternative health and dental services are included in this measure.

Of the total grantees, 60% are located within a metro area and 40% within rural areas.

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.

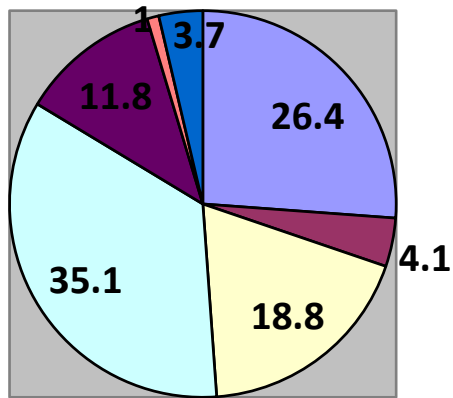
FY2020-2021 Veterans Assistance Grantees

Grantee	Location	Purpose	Amount Awarded
La Puente Home, Inc.,	Alamosa	Veteran Assistance	\$25,000
Alamosa County Veterans Services	Alamosa	Emergency/Veteran Assistance/Transportation	\$55,000
Grand County Veterans Services	Hot Sulphur Springs	Veteran Assistance/ Mental Health	\$25,500
CO Veterans Health & Wellness	Colorado Springs	Mental Health ***modification increase	\$10,000-original award \$20,000-after modification
Pikes Peak Workforce Center	Colorado Springs	Employment/ Veteran Assistance ***modification decrease	\$30,000-original award \$20,000-after modification
Saguache County VSO	Saguache	Veteran Assistance	\$5,500
Mountain Resource Center	Conifer	Emergency Assistance/ Mental Health/Educ. and Employment	\$15,000
Operation Revamp	Grand Junction	Veterans Arts Program/Health and Wellness/Mental Health	\$50,000
Sobriety House, Inc.	Denver	Substance Use/Abuse Treatment	\$90,000
City of Aurora Veterans Commission	Aurora	Stand Down	\$20,000-initial award \$0-retained grant

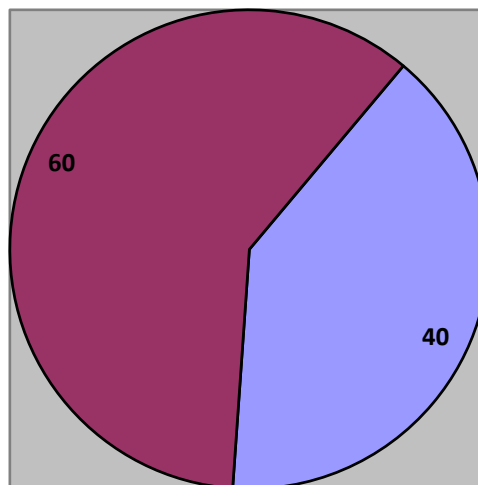
Women Marines Association CO1	Aurora	Veteran Assistance	\$4,000
BPO Elks #1319	Lamar	Transportation/Vet Assistance	\$18,000-original award \$8,000-after modification
Warrior Wellness Foundation	Colorado Springs	Equine Assisted Therapy	\$40,000
University of Colorado, Denver Heroes Clinic	Aurora	Dental care ***modification increase	\$40,000-original award \$55,000-after modification
Pueblo Veterans Council	Pueblo	Stand Down	\$8,000
Pitkin County Human Services	Aspen	Veteran Assistance	\$20,000
Costilla County	San Luis	Veteran Assistance/ Mental Health ***modification increase	\$10,000-original award \$20,000-after modification
Healing Warriors Program	Ft. Collins	Alternative Health/Mental Health Therapies	\$50,000
Douglas County Office of Veteran Affairs	Castle Rock	Vet Assistance/Mental Health	\$12,500
Colorado Coalition for the Homeless	Denver	Emergency Assistance/Employment	\$3,800
Veterans Puppy for Life	Denver	PTSD Dog Program	\$45,000
City/County of Denver DHS	Denver	Veteran Assistance/Mental Health ***modification decrease	\$50,000-original award \$20,000-after modification

Veterans for Veterans of Archuleta County	Pagosa Springs	Housing/ Emergency Assistance/Stand Down ***modification increase	\$75,000-initial award \$85,000-after modification
Home Front Military Network	Colorado Springs	Emergency Assistance/ Housing	\$65,000
Posada	Pueblo	Veterans Assistance	\$30,000
Mt. Carmel Veteran Service Center	Colorado Springs	Veteran Assistance	\$35,000
Park County DHS	Fairplay	Veteran Assist/Trans./Mental Health	\$15,000
El Paso County Homeless Veterans Coalition	Colorado Springs	Stand Down, Homeless Transition Program, Veterans Assistance	\$65,000
Pueblo Veterans Ritual Team	Pueblo	Transportation Program/Vehicle Purchase	\$35,000
Total (after modifications)			\$947,300

Types of Services



- Housing
- Transportation
- Emergency Serv.
- Health/Mental Health
- Substance abuse
- Educ./Employ



- Rural
- Metro



November 4, 2021

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, Workforce Development Program's (WDP) accomplishments for Program Year 2020 (PY 2020). WDP is dedicated to providing Colorado's veterans with outstanding employment and training services and to provide 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 U.S. Department of Labor/VETS Veterans Program Letters (VPL), specifically [VPL 01-20](#) (replaces VPL 03-14), which outlines the duties and responsibilities of the Local Veteran Employment Representative (LVER) and the Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialist. These 26 individuals are strategically located within county and state operated workforce centers serving the highest veteran populations.

The mission of the JVSG program is to provide eligible transitioning service members, veterans, eligible spouses, and wounded warrior caregivers 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) 318-8558 or colin.schneider@state.co.us.

Sincerely,

William Dowling
Director, Employment & Training Division



Program Year 2020 Report on Service to Veterans July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021

Annual Report to the Department of Military and Veteran Affairs



Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE)

Program Year (PY) 2020 Report on Service to Veterans

July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021

**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. CDLE effectively uses the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JMSG) 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
- Translating military experience to civilian knowledge, skills, and abilities
- Navigating online job boards and career fair resources
- Targeted job searches by industry
- Providing labor market information and wage data
- Identifying community-based education and training opportunities
- Providing services remotely due to COVID-19

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

As can be seen in the following chart, 23,561 veterans registered for employment assistance during PY 2020 through CDLE's statewide database, Connecting Colorado. Connecting Colorado provides a web-based platform to help match 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, or receive in-person or virtual staff assisted services through their local workforce center depending on current COVID-19 rates. Of note:

- There was only a slight increase in the number of veterans seeking staff assisted employment services despite the large number of registrants, likely due to the impact of COVID-19.



- There was a slight increase in the percentage of veterans who received staff assisted services. During PY 2020, 12,892 (55%) of the 23,561 currently registered veterans received staff assisted services through their local workforce center.
- Veterans who receive staff assisted services are more likely to have higher rates of entered employment, employment retention, and average wages. For this reason, 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	Ages 18-24	Ages 45-54	Ages 55+	Post 9/11	Disabled Vets <30%	Special Disabled >30%	Recently Separated
PY 2020	23,561	10,529	4,921	8,070	6,806	6,763	5,241	2,822
Received Staff Assisted Service	12,892	5,248	2,825	4,809	4,048	4,012	3,124	1,485
Percent	55%	50%	57%	60%	59%	59%	60%	53%
PY 2019	21,328	9,559	4,695	7,069	9,232	6,782	5,330	2,849
Received Staff Assisted Service	12,487	5,113	2,877	4,494	5,071	4,070	3,177	1,561
Percent	59%	53%	61%	64%	55%	59%	60%	55%

Source: CC 9002, PY 2020 (7/1/2020 - 6/30/2021, report run 10/11/2021)

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

U.S. Code Title 38, Veterans' Benefits, requires CDLE to provide priority of service to veterans for all Employment and Training programs funded by the U.S. 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 (WIAO), ahead of, or, earlier in time than non-veterans, notwithstanding any other legal provisions. 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. Connecting Colorado places new job postings on a hold for up to 24 hours, which gives a veteran job seeker an opportunity to view new job openings before they are visible to non-veterans. As a result, in PY 2020 the workforce centers referred 36% of registered veteran job seekers to job openings compared to 29% of non-veterans.

During PY 2020, Connecting Colorado posted 593,233 job openings from 10,427 employers. Most of these job openings were a result of CDLE’s active participation with Job Central, a public service employment website owned and managed by leading U.S. 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, CDLE employs 17 full-time Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists and 6 full-time Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LVER) staff who are assigned to workforce areas around the state. The primary role of DVOPs 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 utilize 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 1,084 registered veterans, 1,082 (99.8%) 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 provides a breakout by the types of barriers for the veterans who received staff assisted services from a DVOP during PY 2020.

Colorado Veteran Demographics of Veterans Serviced by DVOP Specialists PY2020						
Total Vets	Post 9/11	Disabled Vets <30%	Special Disabled >30%	Recently Separated	Homeless	Female
1,084	497	575	482	162	91	151
<i>Source: CC Vets 200, PY 2020 (7/1/2020 - 6/30/2021, report run 10/14/2021)</i> <i>*Participants can be counted in multiple categories</i>						

DVOPs 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. DVOPs 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'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. LVERs 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 on job training, apprenticeships, and work experience opportunities offered by private employers.



JVSG performance measures can change and are effective October 1 of each year with the start of the new Federal Fiscal Year (FFY). Here are the performance measures that started October of 2020.

See Performance Measures chart on last page.

Performance Measures U.S. DOL VETS			
Negotiated Performance Indicators	Negotiated Goal	Actual Outcome	Goal Met Y/N
Jobs For Veterans State Grant Funded Services <i>(Table Source: ETA-9173 for JVSG)</i>			
Employment Rate - 2nd Quarter After Exit <i>(Source: Item D.1, Total Current Period column)</i>	50.6%	55.9%	Yes
Employment Rate - 4th Quarter After Exit <i>(Source: Item D.2, Total Current Period column)</i>	49.7%	53.3%	Yes
Median Earnings - 2nd Quarter After Exit <i>(Source: Item D.3, Total Current Period column)</i>	\$5,625	\$7,280	Yes
<i>Data Source: WIOA Quarterly Performance Report, rolling 4 Quarters (7-1-20 to 6-30-21, run 10-14-2021)</i>			



COLORADO
Department of Local Affairs
Division of Property Taxation

December 21, 2021

Pat Hammon, Chairperson
Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
Colorado Board of Veterans
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 2020, payable in 2021. 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 2020 tax year, property taxes paid in 2021;

The total number of disabled veteran exemptions granted is; **7793**

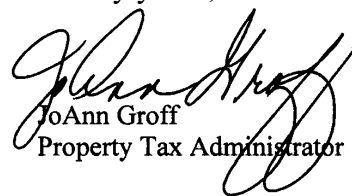
The actual value of the exempted properties is; **\$742,599,741.00**

The total exempted property taxes for qualified disabled veterans is; **\$4,775,061.90**

We have not yet verified the status of the 2021 tax year applicants; those applications are currently under review. Exempt property tax amounts will be calculated after those taxes are due in January 2022.

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



Annual Report to Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs Colorado Division of Housing

Rental Assistance Programs Serving Veterans

VASH program details: The HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program combines Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) rental assistance for homeless veterans with case management and clinical services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

Program benefits: Veterans in the program receive a housing rental voucher to help cover the cost of privately-owned housing.

Number of veterans currently served by DOH VASH vouchers: 878 currently housed, 397 available VASH vouchers in the state.

Other DOH housing voucher programs: The Division of Housing provides other state and federally funded housing rental vouchers. Currently, an additional 126 veterans are served by these voucher programs.

Number of veterans currently served with other vouchers: 91

Fort Lyon Supportive Residential Community

Program Details: Fort Lyon Supportive Residential Community is a two year housing program for Coloradans experiencing homelessness and struggling with substance abuse. It combines vocational, educational, and life skills programming with community-based treatment to help people reach recovery and stability in their housing and lives after exiting the program.

Program benefits to veterans: The Fort Lyon program prioritizes veterans, meaning that any veteran referred to the program is moved to the top of the waiting list.



COLORADO
Department of Revenue
Executive Director's Office

Physical Address:
1375 Sherman Street
Denver, CO 80203

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 17087
Denver, CO 80217-0087

July 1, 2021

Mr. Jack Rudder, Chairman
Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs
Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
1355 S. Colorado Blvd., Building C, Suite 113
Denver, CO 80230

Dear Chairman Rudder,

Pursuant to C.R.S. 28-5-703, below you will find a list of veteran services that are provided by the State of Colorado, Department of Revenue.

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

The department 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

While deployed outside the U.S., a member of the U.S. Armed Forces is eligible for the exemption of registration fees and the specific ownership tax is reduced to \$1.00 for their vehicles registered in Colorado. The service member must (1) show that they are 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 their motor vehicle registration at the time they are serving outside the U.S., the department 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

With the implementation of the Colorado Driver License, Record, Identification, and Vehicle Enterprise Solution (DRIVES) system on August 6, 2018, the Department has implemented enhanced 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.

The Department is actively working with our vendor and the County Clerk and Recorders to expand e-Services both for vehicle transactions as well as credentials. As these services are deployed, mydmv.colorado.gov will be updated.

Military Identifier on Identification Documents

This program allows eligible applicants to have a military identifier added to their credential for no additional fee. The applicant may choose between the Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, National Guard, or Navy. Space Force will be a future option once developed based on the implementation timeline of HB 21-1231. The eligible applicant must present either their 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 years or until 90 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.

Veteran Designation on Identification Documents

This program allows eligible applicants to have a veteran identifier added to their credential for no additional fee. The eligible applicant must present either their valid military identification card or a DD214 per C.R.S. 42-2-114(11) and 42-2-303 (4).

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 will be exempt from late fees, 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, per C.R.S. 42-3-112(3)(b).

County Issuance of Qualified Exempt Military License Plates

To improve service to veterans who are eligible to receive a qualified exempt military license plate (Air Force Cross, Distinguished Service Cross, Distinguished Flying Cross, Disabled Veteran, Former Prisoner of War, Medal of Honor, Navy Cross, Pearl Harbor Survivor, Purple Heart, World War II Veteran or Silver Star), the department has worked with county clerk and recorders to have these plates issued from county motor vehicle offices. This service is now offered by 50 county motor vehicle offices and continues to be offered at the state office in Lakewood. Prior to this service being offered by the counties, veterans and service members who qualified to receive these license plates were required to have the issuance of these plates be completed at the Division of Motor Vehicles office in Lakewood. Eligible veterans and service members are encouraged to contact their county motor vehicle office to see if their county participates in this program.

The Division of Motor Vehicles has special accommodations for veterans registering vehicles in Colorado and obtaining vehicle license plates as follows:

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).

Person with Disability Military License Plates

On August 5, 2015, the department began issuing persons-with-disabilities military license plates for any military license plate, and increased the number of persons-with-disabilities license plates that an individual can be issued from one to two. To receive a persons-with-disabilities military license plate, the qualifying applicant must demonstrate that they meet the requirements for the military license plate and also meet the persons-with-disabilities requirements under C.R.S. 42-3-204, C.R.S. 42-3-213(1)(h) and C.R.S. 42-3-218(2)(b).

U.S. Air Force License Plate

This plate may be issued to a serving member, honorably discharged, or retired member of any component of the U.S. Air 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. Air Force. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of \$50.00 and the required taxes and fees per C.R.S. 42-3-213(17).

U.S. Army License Plate

This plate may be issued to any person upon presenting a DD214 form issued by the U.S. Government, an honorable discharge from the U.S. Army, or sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the applicant is an active, reserve or retired member of the U.S. Army. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of \$50.00 and the required taxes and fees per C.R.S. 42-3-213(12).

U.S. Army Fourth Infantry Division License Plate

This plate may be issued to a person who supports the U.S. Army Fourth Infantry Division. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of \$50.00 and the required taxes and fees per C.R.S. 42-3-213(20).

U.S. Army Special Forces License Plate

This plate may be issued to a person who has received an honorable discharge or is an active or reserve member of the U.S. Army Special Forces upon presenting proof of honorable discharge or retirement or proof that the applicant is currently an active or reserve member of the U.S. Army Special Forces. The applicant must submit orders or DD214 form that shows an awarded prefix "3" or suffix "S" or a designation of "5G," 18/180 Series MOS, Special Forces Tab, OSS, or UNPIK-8240. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of \$50.00 and the required taxes and fees per C.R.S. 42-3-213(18).

House Bill 17-1149 effective August 9, 2017, removed the suffix "S" from the applicant's orders or DD214 form as proof that the applicant qualifies to be issued the U.S. Army Special Forces license plate.

Bronze Star Medal License Plate

This plate may be issued to any person who has been awarded the Bronze Star medal. The applicant must present to the department a copy of the military order awarding the Bronze Star and a DD214 form issued by the U.S. Government showing that the applicant received the award. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of \$50.00 and the required taxes and fees per C.R.S. 42-3-213(14)(a).

Bronze Star with the "V" Medal License Plate

This plate may be issued to any person who has been awarded the Bronze Star with the "V" for valor distinction medal. The applicant must present to the Department a copy of the military order awarding the Bronze Star with the "V" and a DD214 form issued by the U.S. Government showing that the applicant received the award. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of \$50.00 and the required taxes and fees per C.R.S. 42-3-213(14)(b).

Civil Air Patrol License Plate

This plate may be issued to any person that supports the Civil Air Patrol. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of \$50.00 and the required taxes and fees per C.R.S. 42-3-213(27).

U.S. Coast Guard License Plate

This plate may be issued to retired, honorably discharged, active, auxiliary, or reserve members of the U.S. Coast Guard upon presenting a DD214 form issued by the U.S. Government or other evidence sufficient to demonstrate that the applicant has an honorable discharge or proof that the applicant is currently an active, auxiliary, or reserve member of the United State Coast Guard. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of \$50.00 and the required taxes and fees per C.R.S. 42-3-213(16).

Distinguished Flying Cross License Plate

This plate may be issued to a natural person who has been awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross upon presenting a copy of the military order awarding the Distinguished Flying Cross or any other evidence. The first set of plates per applicant is exempt from the one-time fee normally associated with specialty license plates and payment of the required taxes and fees is required. Subsequent sets of plates per applicant will be issued upon payment of a one-time fee of \$50.00 and the required taxes and fees per C.R.S. 42-3-213(25).

Disabled Veteran License Plate

This plate may be issued to qualified applicants who provide documentation of authorization from either the Veteran's Administration or their branch of military service to support that they are 50 percent or more permanently disabled due to a service-connected injury. One set of plates may be issued without paying specific ownership tax and registration fees. Additional plates may be obtained upon payment of a one-time \$50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees per C.R.S. 42-3-104 and 42-3-213(5).

Fallen Service Member License Plate

This plate is issued to the current or past spouse, child, sibling, grandparent, or parent of a person who died in the line of duty while serving in the armed forces. The applicant for a Fallen Service Member license plate will be required to provide a DD214 form for the Fallen Service Member and other sufficient documentation to prove eligibility. The plate types include Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine and Navy. The first set of plates per applicant is exempt from the one-time fee normally associated with specialty license plates and payment of the required taxes and fees is required. Subsequent sets of plates per applicant will be issued upon payment of a one-time fee of \$50.00 and the required taxes and fees per C.R.S. 42-3-213(15).

Former Prisoner of War License Plate

This plate may be issued to individuals that were on active duty with the U.S. Armed Forces during a period of armed conflict and were incarcerated by an enemy of the U.S. One set of plates may be issued without paying specific ownership tax and registration fees. Additional plates may be obtained upon payment of a one-time \$50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees. If a deceased former prisoner of war was issued a Former Prisoner of War license plate, the surviving spouse may retain the registration of the Former Prisoner of War license plate by paying all required taxes and fees per C.R.S. 42-3-104 and 42-3-213(3).

Honorably Discharged Veteran License Plate

This plate may be issued to any person who has received an honorable discharge from any branch of the U.S. Armed Services or who is retired from a branch of the Armed Services. The applicant must present the form DD214 or their honorable discharge documents to obtain this plate. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of \$50.00 and the required taxes and fees per C.R.S. 42-3-231(4).

Korean War Veteran License Plate

This plate may be issued to any natural person upon providing proof that he/she was a member of the U.S. Armed Forces between June 27, 1950 and January 31, 1955. The applicant must present the form DD214 or other military separation papers that indicate the dates of time served in the Armed Forces. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of \$50.00 and the required taxes and fees per C.R.S. 42-3-213(9).

Medal of Honor License Plate

This plate may be issued to qualified applicants who are a recipient of the Medal of Honor. The applicant must present to the department a letter of verification from the appropriate branch of the U.S. Armed Forces that the applicant has been awarded a Medal of Honor. These individuals may obtain one set of plates without paying the specific ownership tax and registration fees. Additional plates may be obtained upon payment of a one-time \$50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees per C.R.S. 42-3-213(7).

Medal of Valor License Plates

These plates may be issued to a natural person who has been awarded a military award for valor. When applying for this plate, the applicant must present a copy of the military order awarding the military award for valor, which includes the following awards:

Navy Cross	Air Force Cross
Distinguished Service Cross	Silver Star

These individuals may obtain one set of plates without paying the specific ownership tax and registration fees. Additional plates may be obtained upon payment of the one-time \$50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees per C.R.S. 42-3-104 and 42-3-213(10).

National Guard License Plate

This plate may be issued to an individual that provides proof that he/she is an active or retired member of the Colorado National Guard. An applicant shall submit a proof of eligibility form prepared by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs verifying active or retired status. If the owner of a vehicle registered with a National Guard license plate ceases to be an active member of the Colorado National Guard and has not qualified for retirement from the Colorado National Guard, such person shall return the special license plates to the Department upon expiration of the registration. Upon retiring from the Colorado National Guard, a person wishing to retain such special license plates shall submit a verification of retired status that is issued by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to establish eligibility for retention of the plate. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of \$50.00 and the required taxes and fees per C.R.S. 42-3-218.

Navy Seal License Plate

This plate may be issued to a natural person who has received an honorable discharge, is retired, or is an active or reserve member of the United States Navy Seals. To qualify for the plate, an applicant must submit a DD214 form issued by the United States Government and a certification from the UDT/SEAL Association, Inc., the Rocky Mountain Chapter of the UDT/SEAL Association, Inc., or a successor organization. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of \$50.00 and the required taxes and fees per C.R.S. 42-3-213(26).

North American Aerospace Defense (NORAD) Command Commemorative License Plate

This plate may be issued to any person who desires to commemorate the North American Aerospace Defense Command's 50th anniversary. This plate was a limited issue commemorative plate that was only issued from July 1, 2008 through January 1, 2010. Plates issued within this period may continue to be used after January 1, 2010, until they become damaged, destroyed, lost, stolen or unreadable. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of \$50.00 and the required taxes and fees per C.R.S. 42-3-213(19).

Operation Desert Shield/Storm License Plate

This plate may be issued to a natural person who provides a DD214 form issued by the United States Government or other evidence sufficient to demonstrate that the applicant is a veteran of the armed services who served between August 2, 1990, and February 28, 1991. The plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of \$50.00 and the required taxes and fees per C.R.S. 42-3-213(24).

Pearl Harbor Survivor License Plate

This plate may be issued to qualified applicants who were members of the U.S. Armed Services on December 7, 1941, and were stationed and present at Pearl Harbor located on the island of Oahu, during the hours of 7:55 a.m. to 9:45 a.m. (Hawaii Time) or offshore at a distance not to exceed three miles from the island. Additionally, this individual must have received an honorable discharge from the U.S. Armed Services and hold a current membership in a national organization of survivors of the attack on Pearl Harbor. Applicants may obtain one set without paying the specific ownership tax and registration fees. Additional plates may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of \$50.00 and the required taxes and fees per C.R.S. 42-3-104 and 42-3-213(6).

Purple Heart License Plate

This plate may be issued to qualified applicants who have been awarded a Purple Heart medal for wounds received in combat at the hands of an enemy of the United States. An applicant must present a copy of the military order awarding the Purple Heart medal or other sufficient evidence that indicates that the applicant received the Purple Heart medal. These individuals may obtain one set of plates without paying specific ownership tax and registration fees. Additional plates may be

obtained upon payment of a one-time \$50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees per C.R.S. 42-3-104 and 42-3-213(2).

Submarine Service License Plate

Implemented with House Bill 18-1244 effective January 1, 2019, this plate may be issued to qualified applicants who provide proof that he/she has received an honorable discharge, is retired, or is an active or reserve member of the Submarine Service of the United States Navy. An applicant must present a form DD 214 issued by the United States Government or other evidence sufficient to demonstrate the applicant is a veteran, active or reserve member of the Submarine Service of the United States Navy. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time \$50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees per C.R.S. 42-3-213(30).

U.S. Marine Corps License Plate

This plate may be issued to an applicant who provides proof that he/she has received an honorable discharge, is retired or is an active or reserve member of the U.S. Marine Corps. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time \$50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees per C.R.S. 42-3-213(8).

U.S. Navy License Plate

This plate may be issued to an applicant who provides proof that he/she has been honorably discharged, is retired or is an active or reserve member of the U.S. Navy. The applicant must submit the DD214 or other evidence to demonstrate that they are a qualified applicant. The plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time \$50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees per C.R.S. 42-3-213(13).

Veteran of Afghanistan War License Plate

This plate may be issued to an applicant who provides proof that he/she was a member of the U.S. Armed Services between October 7, 2001 and the end of the Afghanistan conflict. The applicant must submit the DD214 or other evidence to demonstrate that they are a qualified applicant. The plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time \$50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees per C.R.S. 42-3-213(21).

Veteran of Iraq War License Plate

This plate may be issued to an applicant who provides proof that he/she was a member of the U.S. Armed Services between March 20, 2003 and the end of the Iraq conflict. The applicant must submit the DD214 or other evidence to demonstrate that they are a qualified applicant. The plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time \$50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees per C.R.S. 42-3-213(22).

Vietnam Veterans License Plate

This plate may be issued to an applicant who provides proof of service in the U.S. Armed Forces during the Vietnam engagement, specifically, August 7, 1964 to May 7, 1975. Proof of service includes the DD214 or other evidence to demonstrate this requirement. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time \$50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees per C.R.S. 42-3-213(11). House Bill 18-1361 changed the eligibility end date from January 27, 1973 to May 7, 1975 effective August 8, 2018.

World War II Veteran License Plate

This plate may be issued to an applicant who provides proof that he/she was a veteran of the U.S. Armed Services between September 16, 1940, and July 25, 1947. The applicant must submit the DD214 or other documents to demonstrate that they are a qualified applicant. These individuals may obtain one set of plates without paying specific ownership tax and registration fees. Additional plates may be obtained upon payment of a one-time \$50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees per C.R.S. 42-3-104 and 42-3-213(23).

U.S. Army 10th Mountain Division License Plate

This plate may be issued to an applicant who provides proof that he/she was honorably discharged, retired, reserve, or active member of the 10th Mountain Division of the United States Army. The applicant must submit a DD214 form issued by the United States Government or other evidence sufficient to demonstrate that the applicant is a veteran, a reserve member, or an active member of the 10th Mountain Division of the United States Army. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time \$50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees per C.R.S. 42-3-213(29).

USS Colorado Submarine License Plate

This plate may be issued to any person who supports the USS Colorado Submarine (SSN-788). This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time \$50.00 fee and required taxes and fees per C.R.S. 42-3-213(28).

U.S. Woman Veteran License Plate

This plate may be issued to a woman who has received an honorable discharge form, or is retired from, the United States Armed Forces. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time \$50.00 fee and required taxes and fees per C.R.S. 42-3-213(31).

As of January 1, 2021, the Department records indicate that 159,112 vehicles were registered in the State of Colorado with one of the military plates listed above.

During the calendar year 2020, the Department hired 24 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.

Sincerely,

Heidi
Humphreys

Digitally signed by Heidi Humphreys
DN: cn=Heidi Humphreys, o=Colorado
Department of Revenue, ou=EDO,
email=heidi.humphreys@state.co.us,
c=US
Date: 2021.08.15 11:49:40 -0600

Heidi Humphreys
Deputy Executive Director

Status Report
Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado
November 1, 2020 through October 31, 2021
to the Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs
October 18, 2021

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 (formerly D Road), 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 a 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 or were donated to science. In 2011, two new columbaria were added to the cemetery, providing an additional 336 niches. In 2015, a substantial expansion project added another 1,979 gravesites, including four new columbaria providing an additional 672 niches, and improved infrastructure at the cemetery. In the 2020 Capital Construction project, eight new columbaria were built adding an additional 1,344 niches, along with improvements to the irrigation and retention ponds. Two of these columbaria are double sided, designed 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 six columbaria are located at the east and west ends of the northernmost, center and southernmost windrows that cross the property. 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 1)*

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. The below aerial photo has been updated to include the Capital Construction addition of 8 new columbaria.

Figure 1



3. Organization

The organizational structure of the cemetery includes an Administrator, Cemetery Support Assistant, three full-time grounds persons and one lead grounds person. The cemetery has been approved again as a VA Work Study site, and there is currently a US Marine Corps veteran from Colorado Mesa University filling the position. In addition, the cemetery was approved as a VA CWT program participant, and we have a West Point Graduate and US Army veteran providing assistance.

Through these VA programs, the cemetery receives 45 hours a week in assistance at no cost to the department. All employees currently report to the Administrator with oversight by the Cemetery Support Assistant.

Currently one grounds position is vacant and administration awaits the posting of the position by Human Resources. In addition the cemetery was recently approved for a temporary, part-time admin II position for 9 months. A candidate has been chosen for this position and is awaiting background clearance.

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
- Making 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

Interaction with veterans, spouses, dependents, to include:

- Responding to inquiries
- Distributing forms
- Completing early registrations, i.e., early determinations of eligibility
- Conducting tours
- Assisting with records requests

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 map 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 and registers
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 distributing reimbursement requests for US Department of Veterans Affairs

Monitoring and, when necessary, taking action with regard to systems and equipment warranties and 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
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 Hall

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

National Cemetery Administration and other USVA agencies
Veterans Service Organizations
Veterans Service Officers
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

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

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, 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 with 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

Gifts and donations to include:

Processing financial gifts and donations for memorial plaques, niche vases and general cash donations, and distributing associated funds

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 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 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 inspect of on-site and equipment fire extinguishers and scheduling of yearly servicing
Monthly inspection of on-site AED units, and scheduling of yearly manufacturer 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

Vehicle and equipment maintenance to include:

Change oil	Replace filters
Lubricate as needed	Sharpen/balance blades
Clean equipment	
Effect minor repairs	
Schedule more extensive repairs and servicing	

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

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 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 pumps
- 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	Aerating	Mowing
Seeding	Fertilizing	
Weeding	Pruning	
Pest control	Trimming	
Irrigating	Planting	

5. Extra-Curricular Activities

In addition to their daily functions, staff at the cemetery 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 director is a permanent member of its Board of Directors. As such, she 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 3,500 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 27 active members, has had to decline numerous invitations because of a lack of resources, and the recent passing of 2 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 a cannon shot. We have provided Military Honors Quarterly for sixty-four 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

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

Veterans Caregiver Summit

Fall Festival Parade

Veterans Community Resource events

Wreaths Across America Program

Local School Presentations

Veterans Stand-downs

Town Hall meetings

6. Burial Operations

Gravesite Utilization (Figure 2).

Based on the total interments as of October 13, 2021, the average interment rate is 1.6/day, or 7/week, since the opening of the cemetery in 2002.

Currently, cremation is the preferred disposition, making up 71% of all interments. 68% of those opting for cremation choose a columbarium niche over an in-ground niche.

INTERMENT LOCATIONS									
		Total Available	In Use	Remainder Available	Percent In Use	Percent Available	Average Monthly Use	Months Remaining to Zero	Approx. Date of Zero
	Wall Niche	3213	1931	1282	60.10%	39.90%	8.30	154.42	6/19/2034
	In-Ground Niche	1730	902	828	52.14%	47.86%	3.88	213.52	4/27/2039
	Single Vault	733	284	449	38.74%	61.26%	1.22	367.74	12/27/2051
	Double Vault	1748	818	930	46.80%	53.20%	3.52	264.45	7/3/2043
	Conventional	576	25	551	4.34%	95.66%	0.11	5,126.50	11/10/2442
	Memorial Garden Plot	775	217	558	28.00%	72.00%	0.93	598.11	11/28/2070
		8,775	4,177	4,598					
	Cemetery Opened : 9/5/2002								

Figure 2

(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 - 2021 Interments by Month (Figure 3)

CY 2020 had 332 interments, down from 339 in CY 2019. Interments for CY2021 are running at a pace that, if it keeps up, will total ~ 401.

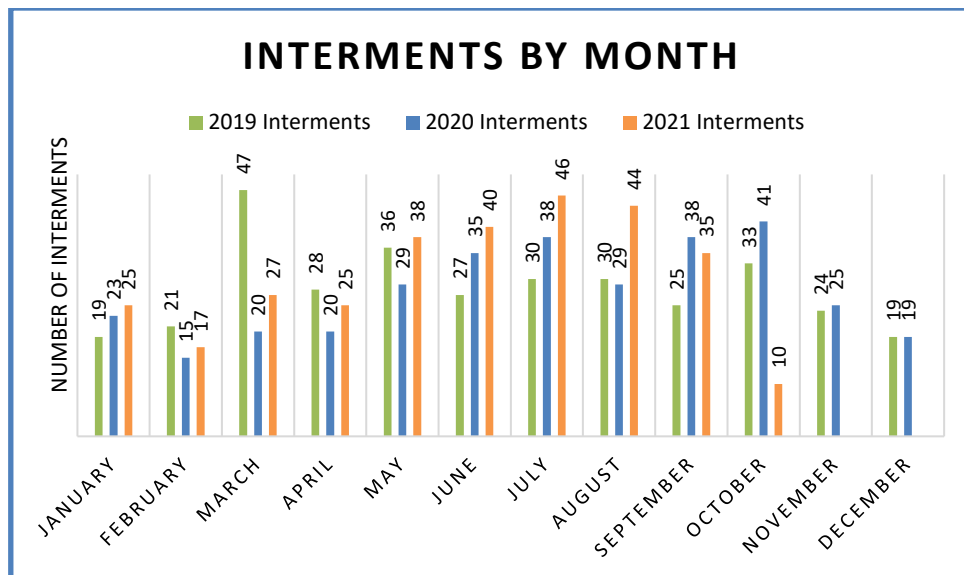


Figure 3

Interments by Year (Figure 4)

The interments of 5,219 veterans, spouses and/or dependents are broken down by year below

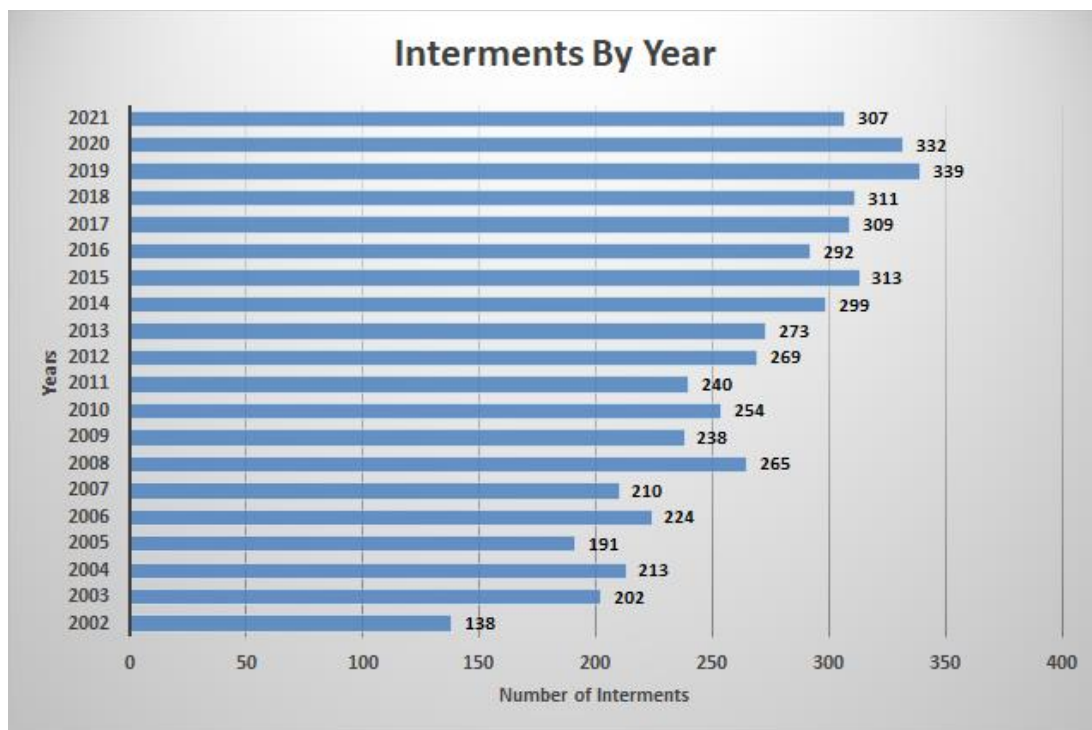


Figure 4

7. Customer Satisfaction

For **2020 / 2021** The Division transitioned to online surveys utilizing Qualtrics. All surveys are anonymous; however, many respondents sign their names. 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 survey are shown below (these are typical of the majority of responses):

Comments from Customer Satisfaction Survey

1. “Angela was exceptional in her knowledge and her commitment to serving others especially in time of need. Because this particular facility is so busy there appears to me that more staff members are needed to providing quality and timely service to veterans and their families. Thank you, Carlos Jimenez”
2. “The Honor Guard service was very respectful. The cemetery staff were very helpful. My dad's service in the Navy was from 1948-1972. My father would have been very proud of the service, headstone that he shares with my mother, and the plaque and tree dedicated to them. When people thanked him for his service he always said, "I would do it again", he loved his country. Thank you for the way you honored him!”
3. “Steve provides valuable information in a clear, professional manner.”
4. “Angela was an amazing helpful contact for our father’s service and arranging a tree plaque for our parents. She was the absolute best. Thank you so much!”
5. “The help we have received while planning for my Dad's interment has been fabulous. Angela is very knowledgeable and made navigating the last few steps very easy and stress free. Thank-you!”
6. “Angela and her staff are highly dedicated to maintain the cemetery as hallowed grounds. We all truly appreciate all they do on a daily basis.”

All responses are kept on file at the cemetery and are available to anyone wishing to review them. The cemetery has historically maintained a log at the front desk where visitors were invited to share their opinions. Due to COVID disinfecting procedure, this log, (along with other materials), have been removed from the front desk to ease the cleaning in the office. The transition to Qualtrics has resulted in a substantial reduction of submitted surveys.

In addition to the State Qualtrics survey, the NCA produced its yearly Cemetery Satisfaction Survey report for the Colorado State Veterans Cemetery. This report was compiled by surveying all families and funeral directors of Colorado State Cemetery interments. The report compares the Colorado cemetery results to those of all state cemeteries throughout the nation. The Veterans Memorial Cemetery ranked at, or above, the national average in providing superior service to our veterans. This report was previously forwarded to CBVA upon its receipt in November 2020, but is available by contacting the cemetery office.

8. Early Registrations

In an attempt 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 Early Registration, a service not usually provided at most veterans cemeteries. Four years ago, the National Cemetery Administration started a similar program to pre-determine eligibility in a National Cemetery. The NCA's turn-around time is approximately twelve months from the date of mailing to receipt of acknowledgement.

Early Registration 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 paper, (e.g., DD214). If the veteran's home of record was not in Colorado, proof of current Colorado residency is required.

The cemetery determines the veteran's eligibility for interment and keeps copies of the paperwork on file so that, when the time comes, it will be one less thing for the family to worry about. For those who have not completed early registration, instances where eligibility for interment could not be immediately determined, (e.g., the family could not find the discharge paper). Although the cemetery has the ability to expedite the receipt of documentation, a delay of interment still exists until eligibility could be determined.

The ancillary benefit to the cemetery of such a program, is that it allows cemetery staff to estimate future interments 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 14, 2021, 2,187 veterans have completed the early registration. This represents 5,094 likely interments, including these veterans, their spouses and eligible dependents.

9. Issues and Concerns

Water Issues

(Silt Buildup) Lower pond/Upper Pond/Stream Bed

The new Silt trap was completed in Phase II of the Capital Construction project. The size and location of the silt trap has been redesigned to aid in effective use and cleaning. The needed equipment to allow cemetery staff to treat and clean the trap and stream area, was also acquired with the project. The previous silt trap was decommissioned. Please see Capital Construction notes in section 12.

Flooding of Administration Building Crawl Space

There were no new developments with this issue during the timeframe covered by this report.

Cemetery Funding

In March of 2021, The Department of Veteran Affairs changed the submittal process for reimbursement applications. The required forms are uploaded online through Direct Upload directly to Pensions and Claims. This provides an additional layer of security, as well as immediate access to all documents by the claims processors. This has made the submittal process slightly more time consuming.

Burial reimbursements from the VA were increased to \$806.00 per veteran in October, 2020. This is up from \$796.00 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 \$16,947.00 for this reporting period.

In September 2021, we discovered that a previously instated restriction on reimbursements requests had been lifted, and the cemetery will be allowed to seek reimbursement for previously non-reimbursable interments. At this time, the amount of eligible revenue is undetermined. Due to lack of administrative staffing, this project is on hold.

Equipment Replacement/Repair

Through the Capital Construction project, the cemetery was able to purchase a silt vacuum, one commercial mower, one UTV, a John Deer Tractor, a front wheel dumper, two large shipping containers that were modified for equipment storage, and a compact utility loader. Much of this equipment was purchased with additional implements, allowing the equipment to serve many functions. Of these items, the UTV remains on order due supply issues.

At this time, we foresee future needs to include; additional commercial mowers, and a UTV.

Personnel Issues and Needs

The cemetery staff currently consists of five FTE's, two in the office, one lead grounds crew member and two (2) level 1 ground crew members. There is a current vacancy for one, level 1 grounds. Cemetery administrator is awaiting Human Resources to send qualifying applicants to interview.

A part-time, temporary Administrative Assistant II position has been approved for 9 months. This position will be assisting in the development and implementation the Honor Guard Stipend that was approved through Bill 21-015. This bill requires the department pay a stipend to local veteran's service organizations for providing an honor guard detail at the funeral of an honorably discharged veteran. A candidate for this position has been selected, and is awaiting background clearance.

With the additional responsibilities of Bill 21-015, the cemeteries growth in yearly interment numbers, additional families to serve, the increased interest in early registration, along with the extensive reimbursement research (as mentioned in ‘Cemetery Funding’), and the NCA compliance activities, an additional permanent FTE in the office is required. A permanent position would assure that the additional programs, research and documentation will be done thoroughly and accurately, not to mention, continue the superior customer service that our families are accustomed to. This position would lead to more in-person communication with families, a more timely response to inquiries and development of updated record keeping and data storage. As interments consistently increase yearly, so does the number of columbaria niches and headstones to maintain. There will be future need to increase the grounds crew by an additional FTE to continue to maintain the cemetery.

Roadway and Sidewalks

Concrete maintenance is a continued need at the cemetery. A donation was made to the cemetery in August 2020 in the amount of \$25,000 which was used to mitigate tripping hazards and repair a sinking pillar in the cemetery’s assembly area. Even with this repair, there are additional hazards throughout the cemetery. These 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.

In-Ground Gravesites

We did not experience any issues with in-ground gravesites due to heavy snow and freezing during the 2020 - 2021 winter season. Our winter was mild and remained easy to excavate with the mini-excavator or by hand digging graves.

The shallow vaults previously installed in section 2D as part of the 2015 capital construction project, were corrected in 2021 by the contractors who did the initial installation. To correct this issue, the sod was removed, and additional 12”-18” of topsoil was added, and new sod was placed. This was done at no cost to the cemetery. We appreciate the continued positive partnership with our contractors.

Stonework

A combination of water and weather conditions continue to create damage to those older Columbarium with stone veneer. Repairs on Columbarium 9 were completed October 11th of this year, at the cost of \$1,125.00. This mirrors the expense to damages previously reported to Columbarium 8, which took place in October 2020 costing \$1,700.00.

It has been determined that the sloped precast tops that were added as a design change to the newest columbarium, would benefit these older units, and impede future damages. In February 2021, these additions were priced out at \$25,000 for the four older columbaria. The possible coverage of this expense by the Capital Construction project remains contingent on remaining funds.

Please see Capital Construction notes in section 12

Painting

An Eagle Scout Project of painting the front fence remains unfinished. The cemetery has been utilizing public service through the Mesa County Community Corrections, to assist with the completion.

Main Line Irrigation System Breaks

We continued to experience major breaks in the irrigation system water lines this past year. This is due to the age of the system, its heavy usage and, in some cases, faulty installations. It continues to be a fairly costly spring ritual.

Burial Operations Support System (BOSS)

BOSS is up and running with times of limited access. This can create delays in timely marker ordering. See NCA Audit below.

The new Dyna Touch Kiosk Operating System was purchased, installed and fully operational by March of 2021. This was paid for by Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs (CBVA) approved funds. This much needed addition is fully functional and is automatically updated daily with cemetery interment information. The new software also provides the benefit of visitors being able to fully access the NCA website for information and research. We appreciate the continued support of CBVA.

NCA Audit

The National Cemetery Administration (NCA), triennial compliance audit that was previously scheduled for September 2020, took place at the cemetery on August 10th and 11th of 2021. The auditors reviewed; all operating procedures, gravesite layout plans, register of burial sections, complain/compliment logs, accident/injury logs, maintenance and landscaping management plans, headstone & niche cover ordering, setting, and destroying. The collection of information took place through documentation review, observation and interview.

In the exit meeting with the lead auditor, comments were made that this Colorado cemetery “excels in providing exceptional service to its Veterans” and “if only all State Cemeteries were this nice”. The cemetery rated well with the new NCA scoring measures, rating 100% for medium priority level compliance, 94% in the high priority compliance, but fell short at 67% in the critical level compliance. These deficiencies were expected by staff, and reported below with explanation and corrective action:

- 1) *Measure 1.2a: “The percent of headstones and/or markers that are at the proper height, alignment and plumb.”*

Due to the vaults in section 2D being placed too shallow, and corrective measures not being made in a sufficient amount of time, the biggest deficiency found, was headstone alignment. The cemetery was aware of the needed corrective measures, but unable to address the timely process due to

insufficient grounds staffing. Corrective action to include partnering with Ft. Logan National Cemetery for grounds staff training.

2) *Measure 1.1: “The percent of marker, headstone and niche cover requests that are inscription approved and entered into BOSS within 10 calendar days of interment.”*

Due to lack of staffing, and increased interments/customer service needs, limited time for BOSS training, and intermittent BOSS access, office staff have been unable to tend to BOSS entries in a timelier manner. Corrective action to include daily scheduled time for BOSS entry and training with the addition of the PT Admin 2 position.

3) *Measure 2.1b: “The percent of headstones, markers and niche covers received damaged, incorrectly inscribed, or of poor quality that are reported and recorded in BOSS within four calendar days of delivery.”*

Due to lack of staffing, and increased interments/customer service needs, limited time for BOSS training, and intermittent BOSS access, office staff have been unable to tend to BOSS entries in a timelier manner. Corrective action to include daily scheduled time for BOSS entry and training with the addition of the PT Admin 2 position.

4) *Measure 1.1a: “Gravesite locations match current layout plan and registry.”*

The existing record keeping process that has been historically utilized, allowed for human error in recording second interments. The process of transitioning these records to computer maps began in March of 2020, but due to lack of office staffing, it was not completed in time for the audit. This transition process allowed for discovery and correction of previous errors, however those sections that had yet to be reviewed and recorded digitally, were found to have inaccuracies. Corrective action to include the continuation of computer mapping through file review with the addition of the PT Admin 2 position.

A reported correct action plan must be submitted for the above deficiencies to the NCA no later than November 22nd 2021.

Rainbird Irrigation System

The Rainbird Irrigation computer and updated software was purchased in May of 2021 with the assistance of CBVA approved funding. With the inclusion of technical assistance, the system was easily installed and altered to include the new irrigation added during the capital construction project. Additional training on the new software with grounds and office staff will take place this winter.

GJ Regional Center

The Regional Center is still operational at this time. The status of the facility once it is vacated is of concern. As of this date and time, there has been no formal announcement as to who our new neighbors might be. 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 zero dollar exchange has not been approved as of this date and time.

10. Monuments and Memorial Benches

There are no additional monuments or benches added for this reporting period. A bronze appreciation plaque was hung in the assembly area for a family's donation of \$25,000. This substantial donation was utilized for repair to tripping hazards, and the sinking pillar in the cemetery's assembly area.

11. COVID Operations Update

At this time the cemetery is fully operational, with posted recommendations of mask usage by visitors and family members.

Military honors and committal services are being held for 250 or fewer attendees without restriction.

Employees are wearing masks inside of state facilities.

A formal Memorial Day celebration for 2021 was canceled due to an uptick in COVID cases in Mesa County. At the time, gathering restrictions would not allow for the historical attendance numbers, which can be up to 1,600 visitors. A small numbers of cemetery staff, honor guard members, musicians, and community partners gathered for an informal ceremony to carry out the customary traditions of honoring veterans on this day.

12. Saluting Branches

After the cancellation of Saluting Branches in 2020, the cemetery was once again, allowed to participate in this beneficial program this past summer. The event was held on September 22nd, and resulted in the removal of 23 trees, stump grinding, tree pruning, placement of tree stakes, fertilizers, deer guards, watering receptacles and the planting of 50 new trees throughout the cemetery. Participants for this day included 31 volunteers and 7 employees/interns. There was a raffle of donated items where Vermeer's contribution of a pruning saw and climbing rope were given away. Donations for breakfast, lunch, refreshments, and ice cream were generously provided by Jimmy Johns, Meadow Gold Dairy and Chick-Fil-A. Only three trees were donated by a local nursery, and the remaining trees were purchased through the landscape budget in the capital construction project. The previously established partnerships with Colorado State University, local tree care companies, city arborists and US Bank made the event a successful one that will continue to benefit the cemetery for years to come.

13. Capital Construction

In September, 2018, the cemetery received \$2.5M in state funding to increase the columbaria interment capacity, add corresponding infrastructure, regrade and replace liners in the irrigation retention ponds and stream, and to build a new silt mitigation system. The project also included funding for new and replacement equipment, including the needed silt vacuum extractor and a front dump hopper with attachments. In addition, 1% of the supply cost of the project was allocated to Art in Public Places, intended to bring additional art into the cemetery.

The work was broken into two substantial phases consisting of the addition of eight Columbaria with landscape, necessary irrigation, sidewalks and benches as Phase I. During Phase I, a portion of the landscape budget was retained as to assure adequate funding for Phase II. In October, damages discovered to an existing columbaria, brought awareness to design improvements that could mitigate future repair expenses. These changes were made and these new units were placed with a cast cap.

This phase was completed in April 2021, with the first interment taking place in the new columbarium that same month.

Work on Phase II of this project began at the end of October, 2020. In order to minimize time without irrigation this phase was scheduled for a period that irrigation is unavailable, (October 2020 - March 2021). This phase includes draining, regrading, relining and landscaping of the retention ponds and stream, along with the relocating and building of a more useful and easier to care for silt trap. The phase completed in time for the spring irrigation start-up. Leaks, over-flowing of the liner and bubbles under the liner were immediately discovered by cemetery staff. It was decided that mitigation of these issues, would take place in the fall of 2021, once irrigation was shut down again. At this time, the intended corrective actions are being presented. Scheduling of work and additional expense to the project is unknown.

If contingency funds remain after the stream corridor corrective actions have taken place, the cemetery is requesting consideration for:

- 1) Placement of the pre-cast columbarium caps, (as mentioned above), to be added to the existing older columbaria. This will deter future damages to these older units that are now failing due to water and weather conditions.
- 2) A three-rail metal fencing to limit access to the upper pond.

Equipment acquisition still has one UTV on order with and unknown delivery date. The delay of its receipt is due to supply issues with Kubota.

For Art in Public Places, a local bronze artist by the name of Scott Shaffer was chosen to produce a life size replica of a bald eagle that will be placed in December 2021. Scott has previously created two bronze sculptures that are placed here at the cemetery. His works include the 'Saluting Soldier' at the gates of the cemetery and the "Battlefield Cross" that stands just inside the entry to the cemetery.

A board determined that the funds from Art in Public Places be spent on a carillon bell system and requisition of an art piece to be added to the waterfall/committal area. A donation was made to the cemetery to enhance the budget for the carillon system, therefore allowing more funds to be spent on the art piece. At this time, the board is awaiting presentations by select artists. This is scheduled for October 21st.

The equipment acquisition associated with this project has allowed for a cab to be added to one of the grounds maintenance vehicles making it useful in all weather conditions. A front load tractor will be purchased to aid in burial operations, which will also reduce equipment movement and travel in burial areas. The silt vacuum for maintenance to all associated irrigation areas is the most crucial of these acquisitions. This piece of equipment will allow for the cemetery staff to properly care for the new improvements made in Phase II.

13. 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 19 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 new 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,

Angela Ingalls

Administrator

Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado

Grand Junction, Colorado