

# **COLORADO DIVISION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

## **POLICIES & PROCEDURES MANUAL**



**August 2024**

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## **1. Introduction**

**1.1 Purpose:** This document describes the policies and procedures of the Colorado Division of Veterans Affairs (DVA). These policies and procedures show that DVA and Colorado's county veterans service offices provide prompt and efficient service on a uniform basis to all Colorado veterans and their families, in accordance with the Colorado Revised Statutes.

**1.2 Scope:** The policies and procedures apply to all Veterans Service Officers (VSOs) who operate under the oversight of the Colorado Division of Veterans Affairs (VA Office of General Counsel POA 039) as well as the Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado, the Western Region One Source, the Veterans Trust Fund Grant, the Veterans Assistance Grant, and DVA Operations, in accordance with Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.) Title 28, Article 5, Parts 7 & 8.

## 2. Organizational Structure

**Division of Veterans Affairs (Division):** The Division is comprised of five programs that operate from various locations in the state and are overseen by a Division Director. These programs include Veteran Services, the Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado, the Western Region One Source, the state Veterans Grants Program, and Operations. Division offices operate on a 40-hours per week schedule that is flexible according to business needs.

A. Veterans Services – This unit is responsible for managing Veteran Services across the state through five programs: the Appeals Office, the Woman and Marginalized Veterans Coordinator, the Claims and Benefits Supervisor and six Regional Veteran Service Officers, a Veterans Service Officer Liaison, and the Training Officer. The state is divided into regions with a regional Veteran Service Officer assigned to each. The other programs cover the entire state.

B. Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado (VMC) – The VMC is located in Grand Junction and provides a dignified final resting place for eligible Colorado veterans and eligible dependents. The VMC is staffed with eight full-time state employees. Services are structured on a centralized concept of support, providing up to three services daily. The VMC Administrator manages cemetery operations and supervises two administrative staff and the grounds crew supervisor. The grounds crew supervisor coordinates the work effort of four ground crew team members.

C. Western Region One Source (WROS) – Also known as the Veterans One Stop, the WROS is located in Grand Junction and provides a variety of services to assist veterans and their eligible dependents. The WROS is staffed with four full-time state employees. Services are structured on a decentralized concept, allowing collaborative support for Veterans who may need to receive multiple services during one visit. Tenants consist of private and public nonprofit organizations that lease space at the WROS. The WROS Property Administrator manages daily operations and supervises three full-time state administrative staff in providing

front desk, facility, and DEERS services in support of veterans' services, service member benefits, and tenant needs.

D. Grants Office – Grant operations are conducted remotely with three full-time employees responsible for the administration of the Veterans Trust Fund Grant, the Veterans Assistance Grant, and the Veterans Mental Health Session Reimbursement Program.

E. Operations – Operations are structured on a decentralized concept of support with functions conducted out of the Centennial and Lakewood offices. The Lakewood and Grand Junction offices both provide administrative services. The operations coordinator manages the operational and administrative functions of the division and supervises three full-time employees.

### **3. Division of Veterans Affairs**

Details on the leadership and governance of the Division are in the subsections below.

#### **3.1 Director's Office**

The Director's Office provides supervision, oversight, and strategic direction for the Division. Responsibilities include:

- A. Develops and enhances policy and procedures and implements any changes in regulations and manuals in support of division operations.
- B. Develops legislative proposals, addressing stakeholder inquiries, and providing technical assistance on legislation.
- C. Establishes and maintains program integrity measures.
- D. Provides strategic guidance and organizational development.
- E. Liaises with the federal Veterans Administration.
- F. Oversees training and certification of VSOs accredited under DVA's POA.
- G. Manages the division's operational budget and resources.
- H. Develops and facilitates training and team professional development.
- I. Supervises Veteran Services Supervisor, VMC Administrator, WROS Administrator, Grants Administrator, and Operations Coordinator.

#### **3.2 Governance and Strategic Plan**

The DVA Director operates under the office of the Deputy Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. Under the guidance of the director's office, the DVA leadership team shall establish strategic goals for the upcoming state fiscal year no later than 01 April and shall use such goals to establish Wildly Important Goals and associated lead measures.



## **4. Veterans Services**

### 4.1. Division Roles and Responsibilities

#### A. Veteran Services Supervisor

1. Serves as the first line supervisor for the Appeals Specialist Supervisor, the Woman and Marginalized Veterans Coordinator, the Claims and Benefits Supervisor, the Veterans Service Officer Liaison, and the Training Officer.
2. Manages the budget and approves spending for the section.
3. Maintains accreditation as a Veteran Service Officer (VSO).
4. Ensures information on veteran benefits is distributed.
5. Represents the Division at local and national events/conferences.
6. Travels throughout the state to identify issues and briefs leadership on state operations as necessary.
7. Facilitates complaint process.

#### B. Claims and Benefits Management

##### 1. Supervisor

- a. Responsible for Regional VSOs to include supervision, meeting expectations of leadership, resources, and training.
- b. Develops systems and processes to further prompt and efficient services to all Colorado veterans on a uniform basis.
- c. Conducts periodic visits to each region to assess the current situation and needs of the region.
- d. Maintains VSO Accreditation and completes veteran claims to maintain proficiency.
- e. Coordinates coverage within a region when the Regional VSO is unavailable.
- f. Collects, analyzes, and presents information/data to leadership.
- g. Works as part of the Division team on assigned projects.

h. Attends functions and conducts outreach.

## 2. Regional Veterans Service Officers

a. Provide monitoring, direction, and assistance to County Veterans Service Officers.

b. Establish professional relationships with County Veterans Service Officers and county leadership.

c. Assist County Veterans Service Officers with training, certification, and accreditation.

d. Support to County Veterans Service Officers with training and outreach assistance upon request.

e. Maintain accreditation and maintain proficiency by completing claims for benefits.

## C. Appeals Office

1. Represents claimants in hearings before the Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA).

2. Performs appeal preparation with the claimant not less than two weeks prior to appeal, ensuring process is understood and the claimant has ability to attend.

3. Performs an after action debrief with the claimant, ensuring they understand the outcome or follow up action to complete appeal, such as submitting evidence.

4. Coordinates pre-determination hearings.

5. Conducts Higher Level Review conferences with the Decision Review Officers of the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA). Regional and County VSOs may also conduct those hearings.

#### D. Women and Marginalized Veterans Coordinator

1. Support regional concept development by expanding services for women and other marginalized veterans across the state of Colorado.
2. Coordinate and assist with all aspects of women and other marginalized and underrepresented Veterans groups with assistance/claims/outreach as needed or requested.

#### E. VSO Liaison

1. Liaise with the VBA and VHA in support of veteran services and assistance.
2. Liaise with state level Veteran Service Organizations in support of veteran services and assistance. Regional VSOs primary conduit for local and county veteran service organizations.
3. Partner with Regional VSOs to liaise with Military Transition programs, retiree offices and the National Guard.

#### F. Training Officer

1. Manage the division's training and certification program using the Training Database.
2. Develops and manages all division internal and external training materials.
3. Coordinates with Veterans Services Supervisor and CDVA Board for changes to training materials for new county veterans service officers.
4. Plan and facilitate VSO training conferences and coordinate other additional CEU trainings for VSOs.
5. Maintain training records via the division learning management system and VSO training data system.
6. Train State and County VSOs as needed.

## G. Other Veterans Services

### 1. Veterans Resource Information Clearinghouse

The Colorado Division of Veteran Affairs developed and maintains a clearinghouse to provide information concerning support, services, and other assistance available to veterans and their families from state and local governments, congressionally chartered veteran organizations, and non-profit organizations.

The Clearinghouse link is located on the CDVA website. Counties are encouraged to place the link on their county VSO websites. CDVA will also market the Clearinghouse to increase awareness among veterans.

### 2. Qualifying Letters for Disabled Veteran License Plates

Letters verifying that a veteran meets the qualifications for the issuance of Colorado Disabled Veteran plates through the DMV can be facilitated by the Division.

- a. The County or Regional Veteran Service Officer who receives the letter request should verify the veteran's eligibility for the benefit either through VBMS or the VSO hotline.
- b. County VSOs will contact their Regional Veterans Service Officer via email and provide the VetraSpec ID of the veteran if applicable.
- c. The letter will be provided as a non-editable PDF either in VetraSpec or via email to the requesting VSO.

### 3. Prompt and Efficient Service

Prompt and efficient service is defined as:

- a. No more than a two-week wait for a veteran appointment
- b. No more than a two-day turnaround for replies to contact of correspondence.

## H. Service Guidelines and Requirements

1. All state Veterans Service Officers have a duty to assist any claimant who is a Colorado resident. All VSOs shall work in the best interest of their clients.
2. The timeline to accommodate an appointment request is within two weeks of the inquiry.
3. The timeline to respond to correspondence is two business days.
4. All state Veterans Service Officers will utilize the state's Claims Management System.
5. All state Veterans Service Officers will obtain a VA PIV card within six months of employment or the publication of this document, whichever is later.

## 4.2. County Roles and Responsibilities

### A. Appointed County Veterans Service Officers

The Colorado Revised Statutes require each county to have an appointed County Veterans Service Officer. The appointee must be well-qualified based on education and experience and must meet the following criteria:

1. Be a Colorado resident
2. Have served in the United States Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, Space Force, or Coast Guard, or any auxiliary branch thereof, and have been honorably discharged therefrom, or be a discharged LGBT veteran per C.R.S. § 28-5-103, or be an officer released from active duty with the armed forces and placed on inactive duty.
3. Be a paid employee of the county working for it not less than 1,000 hours annually.
4. Be able to obtain and maintain VA accreditation with the Division through VA's Office of General Counsel.
5. Be able to obtain and maintain certification from the Division.
6. Utilize the Claims Management System prescribed by the Division.
7. Obtain a VA PIV card and utilize available VA systems.

### B. Additional County Veterans Service Officers

Additional county veterans service officers may be hired by the appointed county veterans service officer. These county veterans service officers:

1. Are not required to have served in the United States Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, Space Force, or Coast Guard, or any auxiliary branch thereof, and have been honorably discharged therefrom, or be a discharged LGBT veteran per C.R.S. § 28-5-103, or be an officer released from active duty with the armed forces and placed on inactive duty.
2. Are subject to all other requirements in 4.2(A).

### C. Appointment and Hiring: Division Support

In support of recruitment, appointment, and hiring of county veterans service officers, the Division will:

1. Provide a boilerplate VSO position description (Appendix E).
2. Recommend education and experience qualifications for the position
3. Assist County Commissioners with the selection process upon request.

### D. Term of Appointment

The appointment term is two years. At the expiration of the term or in the case of a vacancy, the Board of County Commissioners making appointments may reappoint the present incumbent or may consider new applicants.

### E. Appointment Verification

1. Each county is required to submit an annual Appointment Verification Form to Division Operations no less than 60 days after January 1 each year, to verify that the appointed County Veterans Service Officer has been appointed in compliance with state law (Appendix C).
2. If a new County VSO is appointed after the submission of the annual Appointment Verification, a new verification form will be submitted within 30 days.

### F. Assistance to Veterans

Any County Veterans Service Officer has a duty to assist any claimant who is a Colorado resident. All VSOs shall work in the best interest of their clients.

### G. Cooperation with the Division

All VSOs shall cooperate with the Division in the performance of their duties and shall assist the division in every reasonable way, including:

1. Rendering any reports requested by the Division.
2. Adhering to standard procedures established by the division in regard to the handling or processing of any veterans' cases or other matters.
3. Utilizing the Colorado Division of Veteran Affairs selected claims management system (as of August 2024, VetraSpec) and use the Division (039) as the POA.

## H. Prompt and Efficient Service

Prompt and efficient service is defined as:

1. No more than a two-week wait for a veteran appointment
2. No more than a two-day turnaround for replies to contact of correspondence.

### 4.3. VSO Accreditation, Certification, and Training

To be eligible to serve as a County Veterans Service Officer and a claimant's representative and to assist a veteran claimant with the preparation, presentation, or prosecution of a claim for VA benefit, a person must be certified by the state in accordance with the training and certification program and accredited by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

#### A. Accreditation Requirements

1. To be eligible for accreditation under the VA's Office of General Counsel, a County Veterans Service Officer must be a paid employee of the county working for it not less than 1,000 hours annually.
2. Volunteers and contracted employees are not eligible for accreditation.
3. All VSOs must complete VA TRIP (Training, Responsibility, Involvement and Preparation) Training and pass the required exam to be eligible for accreditation.
4. Upon completion of TRIP training, VSOs should submit their TRIP certificate and a correctly completed form VA 21, Request for Accreditation, to the Regional VSO.

#### B. Certification Requirements

Newly appointed and newly hired VSOs are required to obtain certification through the Division by completing the Division's training protocol. All VSO are required to maintain certification and by acquiring 16 continuing education units (CEUs) annually, tracked according to the state fiscal year.

##### 1. Division Responsibilities



- a. Provide sufficient training opportunities to encompass a minimum of 16 CEUs per year.
- b. Track training, certification status, and CEUs.
- c. Conduct monthly status reviews and notify VSOs who require certification/recertification.

## 2. County VSO Responsibilities

- a. Complete the Division's training protocol for initial certification.
- b. Complete 16 hours of CEUs annually to maintain certification. CEU credits may be obtained through the following sources:
  - Trainings provided by the Division
  - Trainings provided or endorsed by the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers.
  - Other trainings approved by the Training Officer
- c. Submit evidence of completed CEUs from any training not provided by the Division.

## 4.4 Appeals and Hearings

The following determines how every VSO shall process an appeal.

### A. Definition

According to the VA M21-5, with the implementation of the Appeals Modernization Act only issues at the Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA) are "appeals." Anything other is a Supplemental Claim (SCL) or a Higher-Level Review (HLR). A BVA appeal shall not be submitted when new and relevant evidence is available to submit.

### B. Division Role in BVA Appeals

The Appeals Office will facilitate the representation of the claimant during the appeal unless otherwise requested by the County VSO to be representative.

### C. County Role in BVA Appeals

1. Facts or argument for the claim to progress to the BVA shall be explained in the VetraSpec communication tab.
2. Define error in VA denial utilizing the 38 CFR or the VA M 21-1 manual.
3. Explain the process and anticipated timeframe to the claimant.
4. Ensure that the claimant understands to update change of contact information with both the VSO and the VA.
5. Collaborate with Division Appeals Specialist during entirety of appeal.

### D. Non-BVA Hearings

County VSOs seeking assistance from the Appeals Office with hearings in Higher Level Review or Pre-Determination hearings should email the Appeals Office upon submission of the hearing request.

#### 4.5 Complaint Process

A. All complaints will be recorded on a complaints log maintained by Operations. The Veteran Services Supervisor will be notified of complaints and ensure complaints are recorded.

#### B. Complaints against a Veteran

Complaints against a veteran will be brought to the attention of the Regional VSO, who together with CDVA will make a decision on how to proceed to include changing VSOs, moving claim to a Regional VSO, or revoking POA.

#### C. Complaints against a County VSO

Complaints against a County VSO will be handled in the following manner:

1. The Regional VSO will be notified of the complaint.
2. The Regional VSO with guidance from their supervisor investigates the complaint by:
  - a. Reviewing VetraSpec
  - b. Conducting interview
  - c. Reviewing County procedure
  - d. Conducting visits
  - e. Other methods as deemed necessary

#### D. Complaints against a State VSO

Complaints against a State VSO will be handled in the following manner:

1. The Veteran Services Supervisor will be notified of the complaint.
2. The Veteran Services Supervisor or designated representative with guidance from the Veteran Services Supervisor investigates the complaint by:
  - a. Reviewing VetraSpec
  - b. Conducting interview
  - c. Reviewing State procedure
  - d. Conducting visits
  - e. Other methods as deemed necessary

## E. Substantiated Complaints

Substantiated complaints will be handled in the following progressive manner:

1. First report - Discussion and retraining with the VSO
2. Second report - Discussion with County and/or Division leadership
3. Third report - Possible revocation of accreditation and/or loss of stipend
4. The Division reserves the right to escalate the progression based on the complaint and results of the investigation.

## **5. Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado**

The Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado provides for the interment of eligible veterans, spouses, and dependents. Its responsibilities include:

- A. To maintain the Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado (VMC) in a condition and state of appearance befitting the dignity of those interred herein.
- B. To manage the cemetery's early registration program.
- C. To manage the state Military Honors Stipend program.

### 5.1 Interments

Interments are scheduled Monday through Friday, excluding state and federal holidays.

#### A. Eligible Persons

1. Colorado Veterans and Members of the Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard, Air Force)
2. Some Colorado Members of Reserve Components and Reserve Officers Training Corps
3. Colorado Commissioned Officers, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
4. Public Health Service
5. World War II Merchant Mariners
6. Spouses and Dependents
7. Others - Such other persons or classes of persons as designated by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

### 5.2 Early Registration

Veterans can register before the time of need so that an early determination of eligibility can be made. Early registration can be completed by contacting the cemetery administration office. Please bring the veteran's discharge documentation (required). This information will be maintained at the Cemetery so that, at the time of need, it is readily available.

### 5.3 Military Honors Stipend Program

A local unit of a congressionally chartered Veterans Service Organization or its auxiliary is eligible under Colorado Statute 28-5-507 to receive a \$75 stipend for providing an honor guard detail at the funeral of an eligible honorably deceased veteran. Second, third, and fourth honors services performed on the same day can also receive up to an additional stipend of \$25 each for expenses incurred for mileage, transportation costs, and meals, not to exceed \$75 in total. Interested parties can apply online at <https://dmva.colorado.gov/veterans/veterans-memorial-cemetery>.

## **6. Western Region One Source**

The Western Region One Source in Grand Junction, CO offers a wide array of services and resources tailored to veterans, military service members, and their families.

Available services are:

### 6.1 DEERS Capabilities/Issuance of DoD ID Cards

- A. By appointment only; walk-ins on a case-by-case basis.
- B. Updates personnel and family member records in DoD systems.

### 6.2 Veterans Claims for Benefits

- A. State of Colorado Veterans Service Officer (by appointment only)
- B. Veteran Benefits Administration (walk-in only every Monday)

### 6.3 Notary Public

Available for various needs

### 6.4 Veteran Memorial Benefit Resources

- A. Veteran burial benefit information
- B. Veterans Memorial Cemeteries in Colorado
- C. Veteran Administration burial information.
- D. Burial at Sea information.

### 6.5 CHAMPVA and TRICARE

Member resources, plan information, enrollment assistance, and submission on behalf of veterans.

### 6.6 Operation Restoration

Assistance to change the discharge status of LGBTQ+ veterans.

## 6.7 Support Programs

- A. Host Gold Star Families Monthly Meetings and community partner
- B. Host Blue Star Mother's Monthly Meetings and community partner
- C. Caregiver Support program hosted by the VA Medical Center

## 6.8 Recreation and Weekly Events

Weekly Coffee Club where Veterans enjoy one another's comradery.



## **7. Grants Office**

The Grants Office oversees and manages the Veterans Trust Fund Grant, the Veterans Assistance Grant, and the Veterans Mental Health Session Reimbursement Program.

### 7.1 Veterans Trust Fund Grant

The VTF Grant was established to address the needs of veterans in Colorado. The Division is responsible for implementing and administering the program within the statutory requirements and Board guidelines. Its statutory purpose is to fund:

- A. Capital improvements or needed amenities for state veterans' community living centers.
- B. Costs incurred by state veterans' cemeteries
- C. Costs incurred by the Division
- D. Grants to veteran programs operated by nonprofit veterans' organizations (nationally recognized and with a 501(c)19 or 23 status) selected by the Board as grant recipients.

### 7.2. Veterans Assistance Grant

The Veterans Assistance Grant (VAG) was established to provide services that enhance the health and well-being of veterans in Colorado. Nonprofit organizations with 501(c)(3) status and governmental entities that serve Colorado veterans are eligible to apply. The Division is responsible for administering the program within the statutory requirements and Department guidelines. Its statutory purpose is to fund services that increase the overall well-being of veterans, including but not limited to:

- A. Mental health services
- B. Family counseling
- C. Job training
- D. Employment
- E. Housing

### 7.3. Veterans Mental Health Session Reimbursement Program

This program facilitates access to mental health services for veterans who live in a Veterans Community Living Center. It reimburses mental health-care providers for 26 mental health-care sessions per year with an eligible veteran.

### 7.4 Grants Office Responsibilities

- A. Development of the application processes.
- B. Conduct desk audits on all payments.
- C. Process budgets and budget modifications, reviewing expenditure reports, and work to expend 100% of the grant funds for its intended purpose.
- D. Fiscal management of financial transactions and regular monitoring of spending on grant awards.
- E. Conduct grantee on-site and virtual monitoring assistance on an as needed basis and as time permits.
- F. Conduct various trainings including application webinars and other technical assistance topics are provided throughout the fiscal year.
- G. Oversee the execution of claims reimbursements for the Veterans Mental Health Session Reimbursement Program.

## **8. Operations**

Operations serves to synchronize the business functions of the Division.

### 8.1 Office Responsibilities

- A. Serve as primary point of contact for public inquiries.
- B. Action or refer requests for assistance.
- C. Assist County assessors with the Property Tax Exemptions for Disabled Qualifying Veterans.
- D. Assist the Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs as needed.
- E. Maintain the director's schedule and calendar.
- F. Process County VSO voucher payments.
- G. Track and maintain VSO accreditation status across the state.
- H. Manage state's claim management system.
- I. Maintain the division's Wildly Important Goals and lead measure dashboards.

### 8.2 CVSO Voucher Payments

A. The Division is authorized to issue vouchers for the payment to the general fund of each county, to be disbursed upon the authority of the county commissioners thereof, only for the purposes outlined in Colorado Revised Statutes. Responsibilities include:

- 1. To annually establish the hourly rate of state-funded payments based on the available appropriation.
- 2. To submit payments for disbursement promptly.
- 3. To promptly notify the County Veterans Service Office of the amount of the reimbursement and the disbursement date.

B. County Responsibilities include:

- 1. To submit VSO hours worked via the CDVA Monthly Report (Appendix A) to the email address provided on the form no later than the 10<sup>th</sup> of the following month.

2. To submit the applications for semiannual payment (Appendix B) no later than the 10<sup>th</sup> of January and July, respectively. Timely applications are required in order for payment to be disbursed.

## **9. Systems and Databases**

### 9.1 Learning Management System (LMS)

This software application is used for the administration, documentation, tracking, reporting, automation, and delivery of educational courses, training programs, materials, tests, or learning and development programs. It is managed and maintained by CSU Global Talent Learning Management.

The LMS stored data consists of user profiles, courses, groups, branches and files assigned. Progress shows courses, tests, certificates, and timeline of LMS access and assignments.

### 9.2 Training Database

The VSO Training database is maintained on an excel document located on the State of Colorado DVA SharePoint. The database includes State, County, VSO Name, appointment/employment date, certification effective date, certification expiration date, accreditation number, accreditation date, accreditation expiration date, hours worked annually, state trainings attended, and NACVSO training.

### 9.3 Access to the Claims Management System

VetraSpec is the claims management system approved and utilized by the Division. It is the system required to be used by County Veterans Service Officers.

#### A. Storage of Veteran Information

The state claims management system is the primary means of storing veteran forms and personal information. Veteran information actively being gathered and submitted, upon completion of, shall be destroyed to minimize paper copies being misplaced, jeopardizing veterans' information. Any veteran information on hard copies shall be stored in locked cabinets and purged upon completion of claim process utilizing a paper shredder.

## B. Data Security

The Division adheres to State of Colorado requirements to involve the Office of Information Technology (OIT) in IT contracts and use OIT's standard vendor agreement in association with all contracts.

C. The initial access requirement is completion of Data Security Training. This training must be completed annually thereafter to maintain access to VetraSpec. The training is provided and tracked via the state LMS and is comprised of three sections:

### 1. DVA PII training

Personal Identifiable Information (PII) shall always be safeguarded by adhering to all rules, policies and procedures defined in new user and annual PII training.

### 2. Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

All users of division IT resources will read and acknowledge receipt of the division's AUP prior to accessing division IT resources.

### 3. Rules of Behavior (ROB)

All VSOs and supporting staff will adhere to the rules, policies and procedures defined in the division's Rules of Behavior.

## D. Other Access Requirements

Regional and County VSOs shall be granted access to case management systems and added to the user's access list upon completion of data security training requirements. Access to all available records will be granted to users who meet these requirements.

### 1. To support VSO access to the Claims Management system, DVA will:

- a. Add new VSOs to the LMS.
- b. Assign the required trainings.
- c. Provide the new user form for access request.
- d. Track the access date in the VSO database.

2. To support access to the Claims Management system, VSOs will:
  - a. Complete the required training.
  - b. Notify Regional VSO when training is complete.
  - c. Submit a complete New User form to request access.

#### E. Levels of Access

Accredited VSOs may request access to direct upload tools within the claims management system. This is available to new VSOs upon completion of the Division training protocol.

Administrative access to records in the state case management system can be granted to Division employees who work in a supervisory role. This includes access to confidential files and the ability to merge records. Any file can be made confidential upon written request to the Division.

Case management records will not be permanently deleted.

#### F. Deactivating Access

1. Access will be revoked if out of data security compliance requirements or upon termination of employment and recorded in the VSO Database.
2. VSOs and/or county leadership will notify Regional VSO of termination of employment. DVA will:
  - a. Deactivate access to the Claims Management system effective either immediately or upon separation date, whichever is later.
  - b. Track deactivation date in the VSO database.

## G. System Use

All claims processed by VSOs under POA 039 will utilize the state claim management system. To enhance uniform veterans services across the state, users will:

1. Verify veteran contact information at every interaction.
2. Consistently input the following:
  - a. Military service information.
  - b. Spouse and dependent information.
3. All forms completed, regardless of submission method, shall be saved in the claim management system.
4. Users will record each interaction with a client under the Communications tab.

## 9.4 VA Systems

Access to the VA Remote Desktop provides a VSO with valuable information to assist with providing efficient services. All VSOs are required to obtain a VA PIV card for VA systems access within six months of either accreditation or the publication of this document, whichever is later. Failure to timely obtain a PIV card may affect voucher payments and accreditation.

### A. Benefits of Remote Desktop

1. Veteran Benefit Management System (VBMS) - Provides the ability to track the claim process, view historical claim information, identify current ratings, and other valuable information.
2. SHARE – Provides ability to identify VA payment, to include historical amounts.
3. VA Outlook: Email/Teams Chat – Instrumental in communicating with Regional Offices because of being able to properly encrypt PII.



B. Process for acquiring VA Remote Desktop

1. Completion of VA TRIP training
2. Office of General Counsel Accreditation
3. Completion of VA Remote Desktop procedures

## **10. Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs**

### 10.1 Mission

The mission of Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs is to ensure that Colorado remains a healthy environment for those who have served and sacrificed for our country and their families. The board consists of seven volunteer members appointed by the governor and confirmed by the senate, all of whom are veterans and honorably released or separated from the Armed Forces of the United States, and each of whom serves a term of four years. The board serves without compensation but is reimbursed out of funds appropriated to the Division for expense incurred in the performance of its official duties. The board hold monthly meetings open to the public. Its statutory responsibilities are to:

- A. Advise the Adjutant General and the Colorado Division of Veterans Affairs on veteran matters.
- B. Advise and the Division and consult the Division in the administration and enforcement of veteran services programs.
- C. Annually report on the status of programs to the Governor and General Assembly.
- D. Recommend changes to rules, policies, programs, or statues related to veterans' programs, as it deems advisable or necessary.
- E. Award grants from the Veteran Trust Fund that are administered by the Division.
- F. With the Division, recommend grant awards from the Veterans Assistance Grant.
- G. Responsible with the Department on rules to maintain the Veterans compliance Cemetery of Western Colorado, in Grand Junction in compliance with applicable State and Federal statues and rules.
- H. Continually study existing veteran services programs and periodically study the problems of veterans and based on such studies, propose such programs or statutory changes as may deem advisable or necessary for veteran assistance by the State of Colorado.
- I. Advise any state entities that provide services to veterans or that have rulemaking authority over programs that specifically serve veterans.

J. Responsible for the state's Restoration of Honor program, which determines whether a veteran is an LGBT veteran per state law.

## 10.2 Duties

A. The CBVA will conduct an annual evaluation of the board's strategic plan and update as applicable to maintain a three-year outlook on strategic initiatives.

B. The CBVA annual evaluation will include:

1. Reviewing/approving the board's mission statement.
2. Reviewing/approving the board's vision statement.
3. Reviewing/approving the board's values.
4. Evaluate the board's strategic initiatives and key measures of success.

C. DMVA assists the board as requested with the development of their strategic plan.

D. CBVA will identify and prioritize decision items and legislative modifications for the upcoming legislative session and submit to the DMVA Chief Operating Officer and Legislative Liaison.

E. CBVA Annual Report

1. CBVA's annual report on the status of programs to the Governor and General Assembly is due every year no later than 31 December of each year.
2. The annual report will evaluate information reported at meetings and by state departments that support veterans.
3. The CBVA will study the different programs and offer recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly about program, policy, or statutory changes.
4. The CBVA will request fiscal year veteran reports from a minimum of the following departments:
  - a. Department of Natural Resources
  - b. Department of Human Services
  - c. Department of Public Health and Environment
  - d. Department of Labor and Employment
  - e. Department of Local Affairs

- f. Department of Revenue
- g. Department of Agriculture

5. The CBVA will request the following information from all Colorado State Departments supporting veterans:

- a. For each veteran program, the specific number of veterans who used that program for that fiscal year and whether the numbers increased or decreased from the year before.
- b. The significant accomplishments, challenges and successes of running that specific veteran program.
- c. Where applicable, report on the amount of appropriated funds executed to run that program.
- d. Any issues or concerns from the veterans served.
- e. Whether the department has enough resources to support veteran needs.
- f. Recommended changes to veteran programs, statutes, or services that support Colorado veterans. This includes any requested or proposed legislation.
- g. Number of veterans hired by that department that fiscal year and the percentage based upon the number of new hires.

#### F. Grant Programs

The Veterans Trust Fund (VTF) and Veterans Assistance Grants (VAG) are administered by the DMVA Grant Administrator with respective oversight provided by the Colorado Board of Veteran Affairs and DMVA.

1. Veterans Trust Fund: CO Revised Statute §C.R.S. 28-5-709

The Veterans Trust Fund grant is governed by the Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs and the Colorado Division of Veterans Affairs. The statute establishes the Board's authority over the VTF and directs the Board to require applicants to submit an application in a form adopted by the Board and to vote on each request for funds. The applications will be from nationally recognized organizations under

tax code c19 and c24. A majority of board votes is sufficient to approve a grant. The board approves guidelines and standards including the form of application, criteria for identifying qualified applicants, criteria for selecting appropriate grantees, the amounts of grants awarded, and standards for determining the effectiveness of Veteran programs that receive a VTF grant. The Veterans Trust Fund, in accordance with CO Revised Statute §28-5-709, moneys shall be used for:

- a. Capital improvements or needed amenities for existing or future Veterans community living centers
- b. Costs incurred by existing or future state veterans cemeteries
- c. Costs incurred by the division
- d. Veterans programs operated by nonprofit veteran's organizations that meet criteria adopted by the board and that are selected by the board as grant recipients.

The Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Colorado Division of Veterans Affairs, shall adopt guidelines that address, at a minimum, the following issues:

- a. The form of an application for use by nonprofit Veterans organizations in applying for grants pursuant to this section
- b. Criteria for identifying nonprofit Veterans organizations that may apply for and receive grants pursuant to this section
- c. Criteria for selecting appropriate Veterans programs to receive grants pursuant to this section
- d. The term and amounts of grants awarded to nonprofit Veterans organizations pursuant to this section
- e. Standards for determining the effectiveness of Veterans programs that receive grants pursuant to this section

The board shall prepare a report evaluating the implementation of this section, including the number and type of improvements or additions to Veteran nursing homes that have been made, the number and type of improvements to Veterans cemeteries, the number of Veterans served through the Veterans outreach program, the number and types of Veterans programs operated by nonprofit Veterans organizations that receive grants pursuant to this section, and the results achieved as a result of allocations made out of the trust fund.

The Chair of the Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs will appoint three board members to participate on the Veterans Trust Fund Grant Review Committee. This committee, in consultation with Colorado Division of Veterans Affairs, will review all applications and recommend to the Board the best qualified applicants and the amount and term of funding for final Board review and vote. Those recommendations will be reviewed by the Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Colorado Division of Veterans Affairs, and a final vote will be made.

## 2. Veterans Assistance Grant: CO Revised Statute HB §14-1205

Under the provisions of HB §14-1205, the Veterans Assistance Grant (VAG) Program, the Division of Veteran Affairs, in consultation with the Board of Veterans Affairs will adopt rules for the administration of the program. The board will have a standing VAG committee appointed by the Chair. The Committee shall assist the Adjutant General in adopting rules for the administration of the program in accordance with Colorado Revised Statute 28-5-712. They shall perform any other such actions as the rules may proscribe. The chair of the Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs (CBVA) will appoint one to two members of the board to participate on the Grant Program Review Committee. Members shall consist of at least one member from the Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs, and at least one person from Division of Veteran Affairs (DVA) Director, or their designee. As member/s of the Grant Program Review Committee, the CVBA board member/s will review grants to ensure they are granted to non-profit or governmental

entities that provide services to ensure the health and well-being of veterans, including for the following uses:

- a. Homeless Veteran Housing
- b. Veterans Mental Health
- c. Family Counseling
- d. Job Training
- e. Employment
- f. Veterans Services that provide other services to veterans. Examples are crisis services, such as temporary shelter, food, or other “immediate need” services.

The Grant Program Review Committee will forward its list of grant recommendations to the Executive Director’s Office. The Executive Director’s Office will make the final decision.

## **11. Policies and Procedures**

### 11.1 Document

The Division's Policies and Procedures document is reviewed and updated annually according to the state fiscal year. Please send feedback, comments, and suggestions to the Division via email at [cdvainfo@dmva.state.co.us](mailto:cdvainfo@dmva.state.co.us).

### 11.2 Compliance

In the interest of providing prompt, efficient, and uniform service to Colorado veterans, compliance with the policies and procedures state herein is required of all business units of the Division and of all County Veterans Service offices and employees. Lack of compliance can result in adverse action, including revocation of certification and accreditation and/or discontinuance of county voucher payments.



## **11. APPENDICES**

Appendix A: CDVA 26 Monthly Report

Appendix B: County VSO Payment Application

Appendix C: Appointment Memorandum

Appendix D: Disabled Veteran License Plate Verification

Appendix E: VSO Position Description



## Colorado Division of Veterans Affairs

### County Veterans Service Officer Monthly Report State Fiscal Year 2024-2025

**County:**

**Month:**

In compliance with C.R.S. § 28-5-707 and for the purposes of semiannual payment, we hereby certify that \_\_\_\_\_ hours have been worked by accredited veterans service officers and assistants in the month stated above.

In compliance with C.R.S. § 28-5-804 and for the purpose of providing prompt, efficient, and uniform service to Colorado veterans, we hereby certify the wait time for an appointment with our veterans service office was no more than \_\_\_\_\_ days in the month stated above.

This is verified as a true and accurate record. We acknowledge that the lack of timely submission of this form can result in delayed or missing payments.

\_\_\_\_\_  
County Veterans Service Officer Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
County Commissioner or Designee Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Designee Title (if signed by designee)

*Appendix A*

*CVA 26-County Veterans Service Office monthly report*

*August 2024 - supersedes all earlier versions*



**Colorado Division of Veterans Affairs**

**County Application for Semiannual Payment**

**State Fiscal Year 2024-2025**

**County:**

**Pay Period**      **July-December**      **January-June**

In compliance with C.R.S. § 28-5-707 and for the purpose of semiannual payment, we hereby state and certify the amount our Board of Commissioners has authorized to be disbursed in support of our county veterans service office for the period covered by this application.

A budget or other attachment may be included, or please provide details here:

*Appendix B*

*County Application for Semiannual Payment  
August 2024 – supersedes all previous versions*

We acknowledge that this application for payment is due semiannually no later the 10<sup>th</sup> day of January and July respectively, and the lack of timely submission can result in a missed payment.

County Commissioner or Designee

Date

Title of Designee (if applicable)

Please return this form no later than

the 10<sup>th</sup> of January or July to:

Colorado Division of Veterans Affairs

[cdvainfo@dmva.state.co.us](mailto:cdvainfo@dmva.state.co.us)

*Appendix B*

*County Application for Semiannual Payment*

*August 2024 – supersedes all previous versions*



## **County Veterans Service Officer**

### **Appointment Verification**

**County:**

**Appointee:**

**Appointment Date:**

We hereby certify that our County Veterans Service Officer (CVSO) is appointed in compliance with C.R.S. § 28-5-802, namely that the CVSO is:

- A resident of the state of Colorado, and
- An Honorably Discharged veteran of the Armed Forces of the United States or an LGBT veteran per the statute cited above, or officer released from active duty with the armed forces and placed on inactive duty therein, and
- Well-qualified based on their education and experience

In addition, we verify that this appointment has been made in consultation with the recommendations of the Colorado Division of Veterans Affairs, namely:

- ❖ Bachelor's degree
- ❖ A minimum of two years serving veterans

*Appendix C*

*County Veterans Service Officer Appointment Verification*

*August 2024 – supersedes all previous versions*

We acknowledge that by law each appointment is valid for a period of two years. At the expiration of term or in the event of a vacancy, the Board of Commissioners may either reappoint the incumbents or consider new applicants.

Acknowledged and signed,

County Commissioner or Designee

Date

Title of Designee (if applicable)

This form is due within 60 days of January 1, 2025 to:  
Colorado Division of Veterans Affairs  
cdvainfo@dmva.state.co.us

*Appendix C*

*County Veterans Service Officer Appointment Verification*

*August 2024 – supersedes all previous versions*



**STATE OF COLORADO**

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**DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**Division of Veterans Affairs  
155 Van Gordon Street, Suite 201  
Lakewood, CO 80228  
Phone: 303-914-5832  
Fax: 303-915-5835**

**Jared Polis  
Governor**

**Bruce Cowan  
Director**

**Major General  
Laura L. Clellan  
The Adjutant General**

RE:

Last four of SSN:

**SAMPLE**

The State of Colorado's Division of Veterans Affairs has verified through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Benefits (VBA) records that you are rated, as a result of your service to these United States of America, with a 50 percent or more rating for your service-connection, and it is considered a permanent disability. A loss of use of one or both feet or one or both hands, or for permanent impairment or loss of vision in both eyes that constitutes virtual or actual blindness is also recognized.

*Appendix D*

*Disabled Veteran License Plate Verification Letter  
August 2024 – supersedes all previous versions*

Please present this letter to your local Department of Motor Vehicles as verified evidence when requesting your Colorado Disabled Veteran license plate.

You will also be required to provide proof of ownership and/or a copy of your vehicle title, title receipt, or vehicle registration, and proof of current automobile insurance. Sincerely,

Bruce Cowan

Director, Colorado Division of Veterans Affairs

SAMPLE

*Appendix D*

*Disabled Veteran License Plate Verification Letter*

*August 2024 – supersedes all previous versions*



## **Sample VSO Job Description**

### **Job Summary**

Assists veterans and their dependents regarding benefits to which they are entitled through accomplishing intake conversation, identifying appropriate benefits, and assisting filing claims, providing supporting evidence and preparing appeals regarding benefits to which they are entitled.

### **Essential Job Functions**

- Experience and understanding of Veteran Affairs processes in filing claims.
- Ability to comprehend laws, eligibility criteria, and processes when representing claimants.
- Complete required training to achieve accreditation through Office of General Counsel.
- Effectively apply interview techniques to determine eligibility, need and situation.
- Counsels veterans and their dependents regarding benefits to which they are entitled.
- Prepares or assists in preparing, applications, claims and supporting documents.
- Gives presentations and speeches regarding veterans' benefits to groups.
- General understanding of how medical diagnosis are attained.

*Appendix E*

*Veterans Service Officer Position Description Example*

*August 2024 – supersedes all previous versions*

## **General Requirements**

- Attends meetings, classes and trainings as required or requested by Colorado Department of Military and Veteran Affairs,
- Communicates actively, clearly and regularly with Commissioners concerning veteran issues.
- Understanding of Privacy Act and PII regulations in order to protect Claimant information.
- Possess emotional intelligence and conflict resolution when interacting with veterans who are frustrated.
- Ethically strong in nature and professionalism when assisting claimants in vulnerable situations.
- Understands, observes, enforces and complies with all VA, state and county policies, procedures and protocols when performing job duties.
- Possesses excellent oral and written skills to communicate effectively.
- Establishes and maintains effective working relationships with County employees from same or different departments/offices, entities, vendors, members of the community and all customers.
- Observe all safety procedures and practices in order to prevent injuries or damage.
- Schedules meetings with community veterans organizations, community partners, neighboring counties to provide adequate information to ensure active communication.
- Effectively manages multiple projects at once.
- Effectively deals with stressful emotional/mental health situations.
- Easily adapts to sudden and unexpected changes in work assignments.

### *Appendix E*

#### *Veterans Service Officer Position Description Example*

*August 2024 – supersedes all previous versions*

## **Typical Qualifications**

### **Knowledge, Skills and Abilities**

- Ability to operate and or learn- standard office equipment, including computers, computer software, calculators, printers, copiers.
- Ability to perform routine office tasks.
- Ability to evaluate client needs and eligibility and recommend appropriate actions.
- Ability to establish and maintain effective relationships with clients and veterans' agencies staffs.
- Ability to deal with a variety of people and situations.
- Supervisory principles, procedures and methods including training, discipline, selection and evaluation.
- Knowledge of the principal and practice of interviewing and counseling.
- Working Knowledge of Veteran's Administration Benefits and programs.
- Ability to interview and provide information to assist program clients.

### Expert Proficiency:

- Effectively apply Veteran's Administration programs, rules, state and federal laws and regulations governing benefits for veterans.
- Proven success in processing Veterans' Administration claims.
- Ability to function as an active Veteran Advocate by identifying gaps in service and providing solutions through locating resources to fill those gaps.

## *Appendix E*

### *Veterans Service Officer Position Description Example*

*August 2024 – supersedes all previous versions*

## **Requirements**

Education: Bachelor's degree from an accredited four-year college or university in Social Sciences, Education or Philosophy field required.

Experience: A minimum of two years' experience working with veterans.

Other Must be an Honorably Discharged U.S. Veteran

Valid driver's license at the time of application and at time of hire required.

Must successfully pass a State and federal government background check.

*Appendix E*

*Veterans Service Officer Position Description Example*

*August 2024 – supersedes all previous versions*