



Joint Budget Committee

Staff Budget Briefing FY 2026-27

Military and Veterans Affairs

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Additional Resources

To find the online version of the briefing document search the General Assembly’s website for [budget documents](https://leg.colorado.gov/content/budget/budget-documents) (leg.colorado.gov/content/budget/budget-documents).

Overview of Military and Veterans Affairs

The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs has approximately 5,000 Army and Air National Guard members trained and ready for federal active duty abroad and for preserving life and property during natural disasters and civil emergencies at home in Colorado.

Executive Director's Office

- Provides general administrative support to Department divisions including: human resources, budgeting, accounting, and administrative support;
- Provides safekeeping of public arms, military records, and relics and banners of the State;
- Administers the National Guard Tuition Assistance Program; and
- The Adjutant General, as the commander of the State's military forces, provides day-to-day command and control, guidance, policies and procedures, administrative support, and logistics support to the Army National Guard, the Air National Guard, and the Civil Air Patrol.

Army & Air National Guard

- Maintains a reserve of trained forces for the U.S. Armed Forces called to active duty by the President;
- Protects life and property during natural disasters and civil emergencies when activated by the Governor; and
- Maintains all military equipment for the State's military forces.

Civil Air Patrol

- Operates as a civilian auxiliary of the United States Air Force;
- Provides volunteers for search and rescue missions, and assists federal and state organizations in disaster or emergency efforts; and
- Operates a Civil Air Patrol cadet program, and provides aerospace education.

Division of Veterans Affairs

- Provides assistance to veterans seeking benefits by acting as a power of attorney for veterans and acting as a liaison between counties and the federal government;
- Provides training and payments to County Veterans Service Officers;
- Administers the Western Slope Veterans' Cemetery and its associated fund;
- Through the Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs, disperses the Colorado State Veterans Trust Fund to provide grants for veterans' programs throughout Colorado; and
- Operates the Veterans' One Stop Center (Western Region OneSource) in Grand Junction.

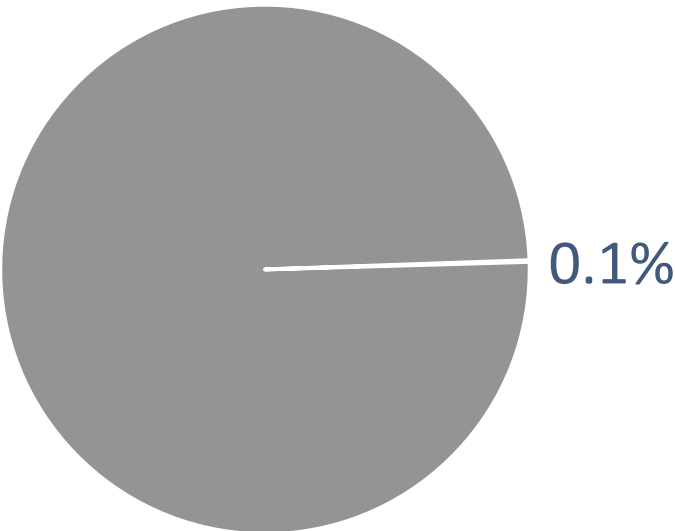
Recent Appropriations

Military and Veterans Affairs

| Funding Source | FY 2023-24 | FY 2024-25 | FY 2025-26 | FY 2026-27 [1] |
|------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| General Fund | \$15,286,685 | \$17,740,551 | \$18,015,198 | \$17,697,355 |
| Cash Funds | 2,011,125 | 2,288,239 | 2,573,123 | 2,438,368 |
| Reappropriated Funds | 65,557 | 51,198 | 26,042 | 26,042 |
| Federal Funds | 132,002,139 | 129,251,408 | 134,274,426 | 135,190,707 |
| Total Funds | \$149,365,506 | \$149,331,396 | \$154,888,789 | \$155,352,472 |
| Full Time Equivalent Staff | 2,491.6 | 2,274.7 | 2,337.9 | 2,338.8 |
| [1] Requested appropriation. | | | | |

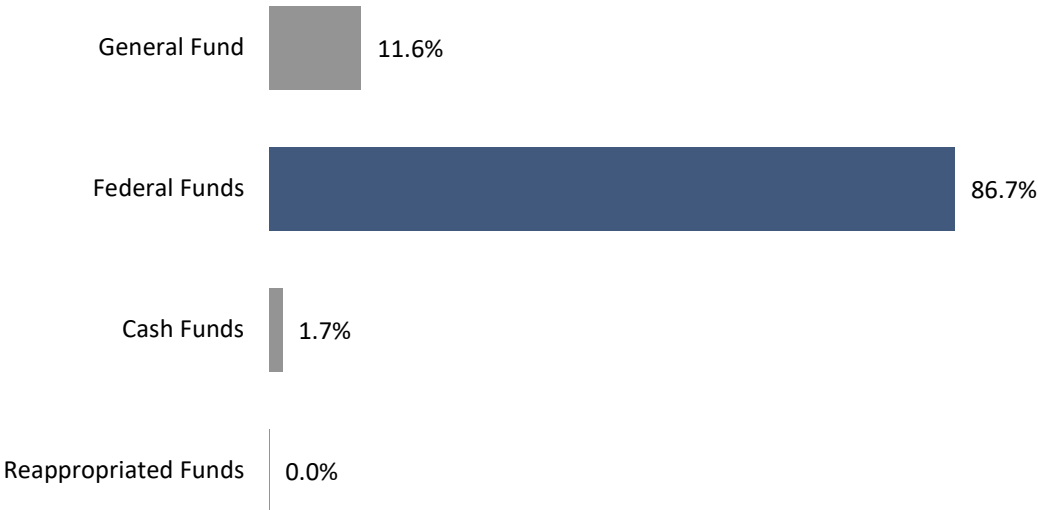
Graphic Overview

Department's Share of Statewide General Fund



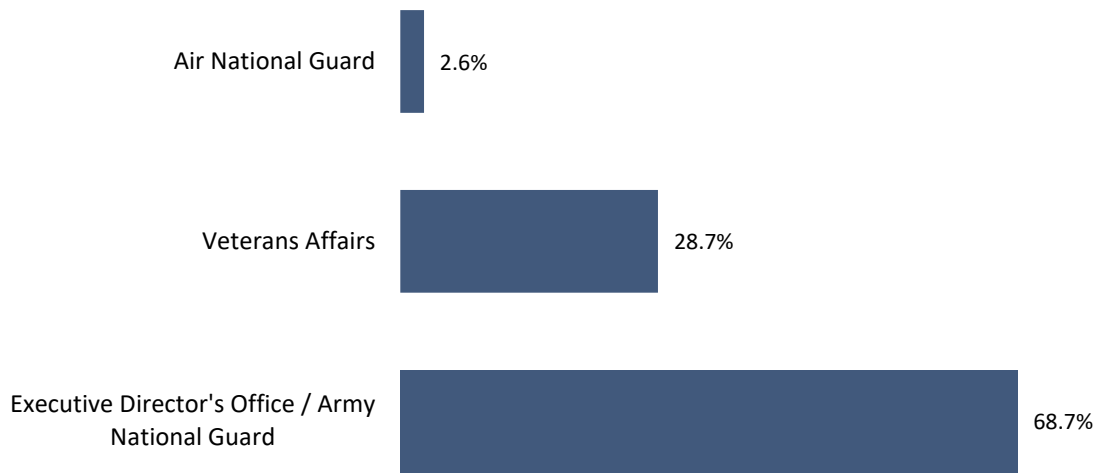
Based on the FY 2025-26 appropriation.

Department Funding Sources



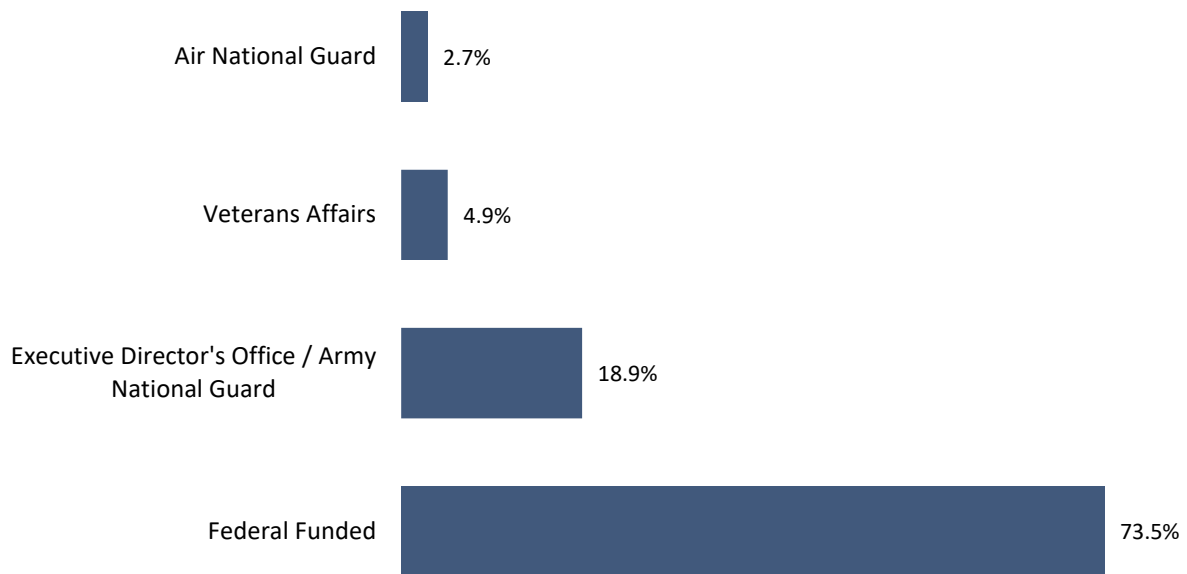
Based on the FY 2025-26 appropriation.

Distribution of General Fund by Division



Based on the FY 2025-26 Appropriation

Distribution of Total Funds by Division



Based on the FY 2025-26 Appropriation

Cash Funds Detail

Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Cash Funds Detail

| Fund Name | FY 2025-26 Approp. | Note | Primary Revenue Sources | Primary Uses in Dept. |
|---|-----------------------|------|--|--|
| Colorado State Veterans Trust Fund | \$1,730,236 | [1] | Annual transfer of 1 percent of the money from the Master Tobacco Settlement Agreement | Grants to veteran's programs operated by nonprofit veterans' organizations; Community Living Centers capital improvements, amenities for existing or future veteran's nursing homes. |
| Western Slope Veterans' Cemetery Fund | 352,100 | [1] | Gifts, grants, contributions, and donations from any persons. Federal Government entitlement reimbursements per burial | Operation and maintenance of the Western Slope Veterans Memorial Cemetery |
| Veterans One Stop Center Cash Fund | 201,411 | [2] | Rental income; gifts grants and donations | Operation and overhead of the Western Region One Source Center |
| Veterans Assistance Grant Program Cash Fund | 157,886 | | A Transfer of 5 percent of the moneys from the Senior Property Tax | Grants to non-profit and governmental agencies providing services to Veterans |
| Military Real Estate Proceeds Cash Fund | 66,000 | [2] | Sale or lease of DMVA properties | Rent, hire, purchase, take conveyance of buildings, lands, tenements, and appurtenances as may be deemed for use by the National Guard |
| Electric Vehicle Service Equipment Fund | 50,000 | | Fees for electric vehicle charging stations | Defray the costs associated with operating electric vehicle services equipment |
| Various | 8,820 | | | Various |
| Total: | \$2,573,123 | | | |

[1] Exempt from TABOR.

[2] At least partially TABOR exempt. Some revenue deposited in these funds are statutorily exempt from TABOR pursuant to Section 24-77-102 (17)(b), C.R.S.

General Factors Driving the Budget

Federal funds comprise 90.0 percent of the Department's FY 2025-26 budget. The majority of federal funds for the Department are never realized in the state accounting system and are therefore largely estimates provided for informational purposes only. The largest line item for the Department, National Guard Service Members, is completely federally funded. If federal funds are removed, General Fund comprises 85.1 percent of the Department's remaining budget. The Division of Veterans Affairs is the only Division within the Department that does not receive a majority of funding from federal funds.

Colorado National Guard

The federal government fully funds the training and salary of National Guard troops and provides the majority of the funding for the construction of armories and other military buildings. Under the cooperative agreements with the federal government, the State provides funding for 50.0 percent of maintenance and utilities costs at the fifteen armories located on state land, and between 20.0 and 25.0 percent of costs at four other facilities. The State also funds most of the central administrative costs for the National Guard.

Colorado National Guard expenditures are driven by the number of Guard personnel authorized by the U.S. National Guard Bureau, or the "federal force structure," and the state's ability to fill the force structure. Combined with the associated facilities maintenance and utility needs, this determines the amount of federal funds flowing into and through the Department. Colorado has both Army National Guard and Air National Guard units.

The table below shows the recent authorized strength and active membership of the Colorado National Guard.

Colorado National Guard Authorized Strength and Membership

| Authorized Strength | FY 18-19 | FY 19-20 | FY 20-21 | FY 21-22 | FY 22-23 | FY 23-24 | FY 24-25 |
|---------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Army National Guard | 3,851 | 3,892 | 3,882 | 3,909 | 3,585 | 3,872 | 3,863 |
| Air National Guard | 1,637 | 1,629 | 1,658 | 1,655 | 1,620 | 1,621 | 1,626 |
| Total Authorized Strength | 5,488 | 5,521 | 5,540 | 5,564 | 5,205 | 5,493 | 5,489 |

| National Guard Members | FY 18-19 | FY 19-20 | FY 20-21 | FY 21-22 | FY 22-23 | FY 23-24 | FY 24-25 |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Army National Guard | 3,789 | 3,778 | 3,810 | 3,647 | 3,474 | 3,467 | 3,639 |
| Air National Guard | 1,592 | 1,730 | 1,708 | 1,608 | 1,605 | 1,596 | 1,656 |
| Total Members | 5,381 | 5,508 | 5,518 | 5,255 | 5,079 | 5,063 | 5,295 |
| <i>Percentage of Slots Filled</i> | <i>98.1%</i> | <i>99.8%</i> | <i>99.6%</i> | <i>94.4%</i> | <i>97.6%</i> | <i>92.2%</i> | <i>96.5%</i> |

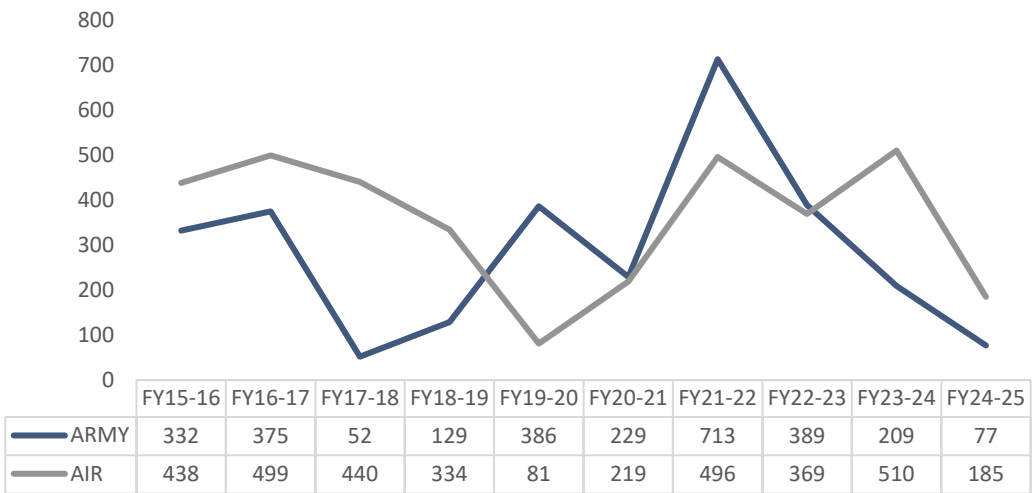
The budget shows federal funds for informational purposes only. The budget includes rough estimates of federal outlays for military personnel and more precise estimates of the federal share of expenditures to maintain and operate National Guard facilities in cooperation with the state. The amount of state support required for National Guard operations is driven by the creation or expansion of readiness centers, State decisions on the level of staff support for those facilities, changes in federal policies on cost-sharing with states, and State policies on compensation and operating costs for the Department's civilian administrative staff.

When Colorado National Guard units are activated for federal service, they are deployed by the Army or the Air Force. All costs for activation are paid by the Army or Air Force; and do not appear in the Long Bill. In fiscal year

2024-2025, federal deployments included 145 service members from the Air National Guard’s 140th Wing, who were deployed to the United Arab Emirates to support Gulf States. Additionally, 21 service members from the Colorado National Guard were deployed to the Pacific region, and 3 members were sent to the Horn of Africa to assist with active missions in that area.

The table below shows the number of National Guard members activated for federal duty since FY 2015-16.

Colorado Army & Air National Guard member activations by fiscal year



The Governor may activate guard units for state active duty to protect life and property during natural disasters and civil emergencies. When the Governor activates units, the State must pay the costs. The Governor may also activate National Guard troops for missions in other states. When this happens, the State requesting support must pay for the unit costs. For FY 2024-25 state activations included:

- Disaster emergency due to the Elk and Lee Fires in Rio Blanco and Garfield Counties;
- Disaster emergency due to the Oak Fire in Archuleta County;
- Disaster Emergency Due to the Crosho Fire in Routt County; and
- Activation for cyber security defense and election support.

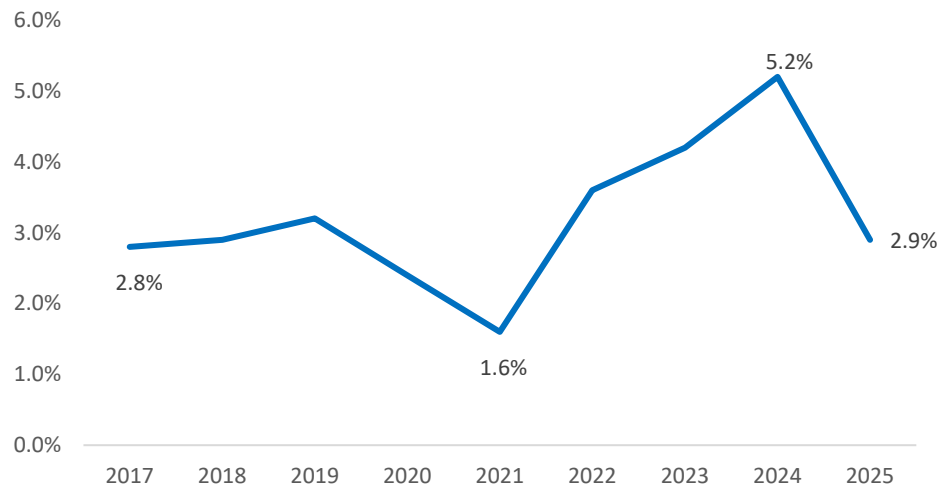
Division of Veterans Affairs

The Division of Veterans Affairs (DVA) budget includes state support to assist veterans in obtaining federal veterans’ benefits, state support for grants to governmental and nonprofit entities that provide mental health, family counseling, job training, employment, housing, and state funding for the Veterans’ OneSource Center and Western Slope Veterans’ Cemetery in Grand Junction.

About half of the state General Fund money appropriated in this Division supports staff who assist veterans in obtaining benefits. Veterans may apply directly to the federal government for benefits, but many use help from a third party, such as a benefits officer supported by county or state government or a nonprofit, to ensure they receive the federal benefits they have earned. The state veterans’ service operations staff assists veterans with claims before the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and supports county veterans’ service officers with training and other resources. County veterans’ services officers are located throughout the state, and associated county costs are partially reimbursed by the Division.

The Department focuses on a customer service mentality to increase the number of Colorado veterans assisted in obtaining benefits. While service provision has grown in recent years, new claims decreased in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19-related restrictions. However, in 2022, service provision recovered, and in 2023 and 2024, service reach grew. In 2025, the Division saw regression to the mean in service provision levels and a return to a more historical level of service provision. The figure below shows the percentage of new claims filed by the Division of Veterans Affairs relative to the estimated Colorado veteran population.

New Claims as A Percentage of the Total Veteran Population



Summary of Request

Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

| Item | Total Funds | General Fund | Cash Funds | Reapprop. Funds | Federal Funds | FTE |
|------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|---------------|---------|
| FY 2025-26 Appropriation | | | | | | |
| SB 25-206 (Long Bill) | \$159,326,002 | \$17,452,411 | \$2,573,123 | \$5,026,042 | \$134,274,426 | 2,337.9 |
| Other legislation | -4,437,213 | 562,787 | 0 | -5,000,000 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Total | \$154,888,789 | \$18,015,198 | \$2,573,123 | \$26,042 | \$134,274,426 | 2,337.9 |
| FY 2026-27 Requested Appropriation | | | | | | |
| FY 2025-26 Appropriation | \$154,888,789 | \$18,015,198 | \$2,573,123 | \$26,042 | \$134,274,426 | 2,337.9 |
| R1 General Fund reductions | -321,254 | -321,254 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| R2 Cemetery cash fund transfer | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Employee comp common policies | 1,466,707 | 354,913 | 24,896 | 0 | 1,086,898 | 0.0 |
| Operating common policies | -699,650 | -527,268 | -1,765 | 0 | -170,617 | 0.0 |
| Impacts driven by other agencies | 134,750 | 134,750 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.9 |
| Provider rate common policy | 41,016 | 41,016 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Technical adjustments | -157,886 | 0 | -157,886 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Total | \$155,352,472 | \$17,697,355 | \$2,438,368 | \$26,042 | \$135,190,707 | 2,338.8 |
| Increase/-Decrease | \$463,683 | -\$317,843 | -\$134,755 | \$0 | \$916,281 | 0.9 |
| Percentage Change | 0.3% | -1.8% | -5.2% | 0.0% | 0.7% | 0.0% |

Changes are assumed to be ongoing unless otherwise noted.

R1 General fund reductions: The Department asks to decrease General Fund across various line items in the Executive Director's Office and Division of Veterans Affairs as a budget balancing measure.

Year 1: Reduction of \$321,254 General Fund

The proposed reductions will impact several areas across the Department, including Personal Services, IT Asset Maintenance, and the Army National Guard Cooperative Agreement within the Executive Director's Office. Additionally, Veterans Service Operations in the Division of Veterans Affairs and the Operations and Maintenance Agreement for Buckley/Greeley will also be impacted. The Department chose these line items and amounts to minimize the effect on operations and to avoid impacting FTE.

R2 Cemetery cash fund transfer: [legislation] The Department asks for a cash fund transfer to maintain the solvency of the Western Slope Cemetery Cash Fund (WSCCF) and support cemetery operations. The WSCCF is faced with a declining fund balance.

Year 1: One-time transfer of \$100,000 from the Colorado State Veterans Trust Fund (CSVTF) to the Western Slope Cemetery Cash Fund.

Employee compensation common policies: The request includes a net increase of \$1.5 million for employee compensation common policies. A common policy refers to general policies applied consistently to all departments.

Employee compensation common policies

| Item | Total Funds | General Fund | Cash Funds | Federal Funds | FTE |
|--|-------------|--------------|------------|---------------|-----|
| Health, life, and dental | \$603,316 | \$114,298 | \$25,906 | \$463,112 | 0.0 |
| Salary survey | 534,366 | 204,062 | 6,864 | 323,440 | 0.0 |
| Unfunded liability amortization payments | 137,026 | 13,959 | -7,484 | 130,551 | 0.0 |
| Shift differential | 127,207 | 0 | 0 | 127,207 | 0.0 |
| Step plan | 57,668 | 21,868 | 0 | 35,800 | 0.0 |
| Paid family and medical leave insurance | 6,165 | 628 | -337 | 5,874 | 0.0 |
| Short-term disability | 959 | 98 | -53 | 914 | 0.0 |
| Total | \$1,466,707 | \$354,913 | \$24,896 | \$1,086,898 | 0.0 |

Operating common policies: The request includes a net decrease of \$699,650 total funds for operating common policies.

Operating common policies

| Item | Total Funds | General Fund | Cash Funds | Reapprop. Funds | Federal Funds | FTE |
|---|-------------|--------------|------------|-----------------|---------------|-----|
| State accounting system (CORE) | \$43,923 | \$43,923 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | 0.0 |
| Office of Information Technology services | 39,772 | 39,772 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Workers' compensation | 21,574 | 10,787 | 0 | 0 | 10,787 | 0.0 |
| Digital trunked radios | 10,067 | 10,067 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| PERA direct distribution | 4,265 | 170,199 | -1,765 | 0 | -164,169 | 0.0 |
| Capitol Complex leased space | 4,171 | 4,171 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Risk management & property | -763,205 | -763,205 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Vehicle lease payments | -34,471 | -17,236 | 0 | 0 | -17,235 | 0.0 |
| Legal services | -25,746 | -25,746 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Total | -\$699,650 | -\$527,268 | -\$1,765 | \$0 | -\$170,617 | 0.0 |

Impacts driven by other agencies: The request includes a net increase of \$134,750 for requests from other state agencies. These are also called “non-prioritized requests.” The amount shown in the table below applies only to this department and does not necessarily reflect the total value of the request.

Impacts driven by other agencies

| Item | Total Funds | General Fund | Cash Funds | Reapprop. Funds | Federal Funds | FTE |
|---|-------------|--------------|------------|-----------------|---------------|-----|
| NP SB24-205 AI compliance | \$130,439 | \$130,439 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | 0.9 |
| NP IT accessibility | 20,000 | 20,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| NP State accounting system (CORE) staff | 6,078 | 6,078 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| NP Statewide enable AI | 1,034 | 1,034 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| NP IT operating offset | -16,855 | -16,855 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| NP IT efficiencies | -5,946 | -5,946 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Total | \$134,750 | \$134,750 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | 0.9 |

Provider rate common policy: The request includes an increase of \$41,016 related to common policy provider rate adjustment.

Technical adjustments: The request includes a decrease of \$157,866 cash funds for a technical adjustment related to sunseting the Veterans Assistance Grant Program Cash Fund.

Issue: Colorado National Guard Tuition Waiver

This issue brief provides an update on the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Tuition Waiver program, which resulted from legislation sponsored by the Joint Budget Committee, SB 25-247 (Tuition Waiver & Colorado National Guard Members), passed during the 2025 legislative session. The Department reports an increase in recruitment numbers and fulfillment of end strength, partially attributing this rise to the benefits of the tuition waiver. However, a review of the legislation by the Attorney General found that the language of SB 25-247 does not require institutes of higher education to absorb any growth associated with the waiver program. This interpretation differs from what staff understood was the Committee's intent when sponsoring the legislation.

Summary

- The Colorado National Guard Tuition Waiver is a key tool for recruiting and retaining members of the Colorado National Guard (CONG). Prior to FY 2025-26, the General Assembly appropriated funds to the Department to provide tuition assistance of up to \$5,000 per semester to qualified National Guard members. In response to market conditions and the tuition waiver programs available in other states, the Joint Budget Committee (JBC) sponsored legislation, SB 25-247, to provide funding for a tuition waiver for CONG members attending public institutions of higher education.
- The Department has reported some initial success with the implementation of the tuition waiver program. The DMVA noted an increase in meeting its end strength objective, attributing part of this success to the enhanced tuition benefit. In FY 2024-25, the fulfillment of end strength objective rose to 96.5 percent, up from 92.2 percent in the previous fiscal year.
- The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs requested clarification from the Attorney General regarding the statutory language in SB25-247 in response to inquiries from Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs). Specifically, they sought to determine whether IHEs are required to cover any costs related to the increase in tuition waivers that exceed the baseline funding but remain within the institution's cap. The Attorney General concluded that the statute does not require IHEs to absorb any of these costs up to the institutional cap. This finding does not align with what the staff believe was the legislative intent of the Committee.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Department discuss the status of the CONG Tuition Waiver during the hearing process and provide information on early outcomes for the tuition waiver. Additionally, staff recommends that the Department discuss the problem with the current statutory language and options for resolving it through a statutory change, a funding increase, or other approaches.

Background

Prior to FY 2025-26 the Colorado National Guard offered a recruiting and retention benefit that awarded Service Members in good standing up to \$5,000 in tuition assistance per semester as a recruiting and retention benefit. The tuition assistance program was administered by the DMVA and received a \$1.4 million General Fund appropriation for FY 2024-25.

A member of the National Guard is eligible for state funded Tuition Assistance of at least 50 percent of tuition, but no more than 100 percent, so long as:

- The person is a current member of the Colorado National Guard;
- The National Guard member has not received tuition payments for more than 132 semester hours;
- The National Guard member's assistance from all sources, including the federal government, does not exceed 100 percent of the cost of tuition; and
- The member is determined eligible based on the Department rules. These rules determine eligibility based on the member's service record and academic standing.

During the FY 2025-26 budget process the DMVA made a request, R1 (Colorado National Guard Tuition Waiver), to substantially modify the recruiting and retention benefit, and transition the benefit from a tuition assistance program to a tuition waiver for CONG service members at state universities. According to the Department, this request would provide a significant boost to recruiting and retention efforts for the CONG and make the CONG more competitive with neighboring peer states.

In the original budget request, the Department proposed that Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) cover the full cost of tuition and absorb the expense. This proposal was modeled after tuition waiver programs in Colorado that involve public colleges and universities. Eligible students from specific demographics who meet the applicable criteria can attend public colleges and universities without paying tuition. The Department sought to model the tuition waiver program after these programs. These groups include:

- State programs for youth who were previously homeless or in foster care. In these programs, the state and institution share equally in costs after other forms of financial aid are used.
- Employee tuition programs in which institutions pay the full cost.

SB 25-247 (Colorado National Guard Tuition Waiver)

The JBC chose not to approve the DMVA's original request for a tuition waiver. Instead, they established a tuition waiver program funded by an increased General Fund appropriation of approximately \$1.8 million. The legislation introduced a funding formula with growth caps designed to reduce risk for both institutions of higher education (IHEs) and to manage the state's General Fund commitments. Under the tuition waiver model implemented through SB25-247, as interpreted by the staff, IHEs would be required to cover a relatively small portion of the tuition costs for CONG service members, primarily any growth that exceeds the baseline funding amount.

To effectively address questions raised by Institutions of Higher Education, the Department submitted a request for a legal opinion from the Attorney General's Office on July 16, 2025. The issue in question is: "If the actual tuition waived by the IHEs exceeds the \$1,770,987 appropriation but remains below the \$2,213,733 statutory cap outlined in (b)(IV)(C), are the IHEs responsible for covering the difference in costs?"

The relevant statute¹ is cited below:

(B) if the difference between the calculated tuition for base member enrollment, as described in subsection (3)(b)(ii) of this section, and the annual appropriation is less than twenty-five percent, the department of military and veterans affairs may prorate funding and distribute funds to each designated institution of higher education proportionately.

¹ Section 23-7.4-302 (IV)(B), C.R.S.

On August 22, 2025, the Attorneys General provided the Department with an informal legal opinion stating that, “No, the plain language of SB25-247 does not require institutions of higher education to cover any difference in cost between the annual appropriation provided to the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) for the tuition waiver program and the calculated tuition for base member enrollment. This calculation is not a tuition cap.” (The legal opinion is attached in Appendix B).

Staff’s understanding of the Committee's intent with this legislation was that the institutions of Higher Education would absorb the difference between the baseline funding and the institutional cap. In light of the Attorneys General opinion, staff see several possible courses of action by the JBC:

1. Run legislation that clarifies that Institutions of Higher Education absorb the cost difference between the baseline funding in the model and the institutional cap.
2. Increase funding to the Tuition waiver line in the DMVA, and fully fund the program as it currently exists in statute.
3. No action. If no action is taken, the difference between the appropriation and the obligation for FY 2026-27 will likely exceed 25 percent, in which case the legislation states, “...the tuition waiver program is suspended and the designated institutions of higher education shall distribute remaining tuition waiver funds on a first-come, first-serve basis until the tuition waiver funds are exhausted.”
4. In light of the current budget climate rewrite legislation to amend how the benefit works.

Staff again recommends that the Department discuss the status of the CONG Tuition Waiver during the hearing process and provide feedback to the JBC on these possible courses of action, as well as any others that the DMVA may deem more appropriate or actionable.

Budget Reduction Options

The Executive Budget Request includes reductions of \$321,254 General Fund for the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs representing 1.8 percent of the current General Fund appropriations in this section of the budget.² This issue brief reviews these proposals and additional options identified by staff.

Summary

The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs represents 0.1 percent of total state General Fund appropriations in FY 2025-26. The Executive budget request includes proposed reductions of \$321,254, representing 1.8 percent of the General Fund appropriations in this section of the budget. Additionally, there are common policy adjustments and impacts from other agencies that also affect the General Fund. Overall, the Department's total General Fund request represents a decrease of 1.8 percent.

General Fund relief options offered by staff in this department include refinancing grant programs within the Division of Veterans Affairs. This action aims to lessen the General Fund obligations to the Veterans Assistance Grant Program while simultaneously increasing funding for the Colorado State Veterans Trust Fund. Although this would result in a neutral adjustment in the overall level of grant funding available to support veterans, it is expected to provide approximately \$500,000 in relief to the General Fund.

Additional options include a one time \$2.0 million transfer from the CSVTF to General Fund, as well as \$770,000 in possible General Fund reductions to recent funding for recruiting and retention initiatives.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Department discuss its budget proposals and staff options for General Fund relief during the budget hearing. Staff also recommend the discussion include the potential impacts of cuts to General Fund support for recruiting and retention initiatives. Additionally, staff suggests that the Department address the consequences of a \$2.0 million transfer from the Colorado State Veterans Trust Fund (CSVTF) to the General Fund.

Discussion

Funding History FY 2018-19 to FY 2025-26

The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, represents 0.1 percent of total state General Fund appropriations in FY 2025-26. As reflected in the table below, General Fund in this section of the budget has

² Current FY 2025-26 appropriations do not include mid-year reductions in executive orders.

increased by 23.5 percent since FY 2018-19 after adjusting for inflation. This is more than the statewide increase of 13.6 percent over the same period.³

FY 2018-19 to FY 2025-26 Appropriations Comparison - Adjusted for Inflation

| Fund | FY 2018-19 Nominal | FY 2018-19 Adjusted | FY 2025-26 | \$ Change from FY 2018-19 Adjusted | % Change from FY 2018-19 Adjusted |
|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| General Fund | \$11,206,594 | \$14,583,909 | \$18,015,198 | \$3,431,289 | 23.5% |
| Total Funds [1] | \$26,473,793 | \$34,452,162 | \$41,088,789 | \$6,636,627 | 19.3% |

[1] excludes federal funded programs division which is comprised entirely of informational federal funds

Budget Requests for General Fund Relief

The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs budget request includes a proposal for General Fund relief totaling \$321,254. The \$321,254 expenditure reduction equates to a 1.8 percent decrease in General Fund appropriations.

Budget Requests for General Fund Relief

| Option | General Fund | Other Funds | Bill? Y/N | Description |
|----------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|---|
| Revenue Enhancements | | | | |
| n/a | | | | |
| Subtotal - Revenue | \$0 | \$0 | | |
| Expenditure Reductions | | | | |
| R1 General Fund Reductions | -\$321,254 | \$0 | N | These reductions would impact Personal Services, IT Asset Maintenance, and the Army National Guard Cooperative Agreement within the Executive Director's Office. Additionally, Veterans Service Operations in the Division of Veterans Affairs and the Operations and Maintenance Agreement for Buckley/Greeley will also be reduced. The Department states that these proposed reductions will have minimal operational impact and will primarily rely on vacancy rates. |
| Subtotal - Expenditures | -\$321,254 | \$0 | | |
| Net General Fund Relief | \$321,254 | | | |

Additional Options for JBC Consideration

The table below summarizes options identified by JBC staff that the Committee could consider in addition to or instead of the options presented in the budget request.

A General Fund reduction of 5.0 percent to the sections of the budget covered in this briefing would require a reduction of \$900,759.

³ Fiscal year 2018-19 appropriations are adjusted for inflation, calculated based on the Legislative Council Staff September 2025 forecast, which reflects an increase in the Denver-Aurora-Lakewood consumer price index of 30.1 percent between FY 2018-19 and FY 2025-26.

Additional Options for General Fund Relief

| Option | General Fund | Other Funds | Bill? Y/N | Description |
|--|--------------|--------------|-----------|---|
| Revenue Enhancements | | | | |
| State Veterans Trust Fund transfer to General Fund | \$2,000,000 | -\$2,000,000 | Y | The CSVTF is used primarily to fund grants to veteran's programs. The request proposes to transfer approximately 47.9 percent of the end-of-year fund balance to the General Fund. This is a one-time option. |
| Subtotal - Revenue | \$2,000,000 | -\$2,000,000 | | |
| Expenditure Reductions | | | | |
| Refinance grant programs that support veteran groups. | -\$500,000 | \$500,000 | Y (rec) | Reduction of \$500,000 to the Veterans Assistance Grant Program and corresponding increase to the State Veterans Trust Fund expenditures line This grant funding-neutral realignment would not change the dollar amount for Veterans services and would save \$500,000 in General Fund. |
| Reduce Operating Expenses line in the Executive Director's Office. | -\$770,000 | \$0 | | Reduction would reduce funding in the EDO Operating Expense line item with targeted reductions primarily to recruiting and retention bonuses as well as a reduction in funds for training and professional development. |
| Subtotal - Expenditures | -\$1,270,000 | \$500,000 | | |
| Net General Fund Relief | \$3,270,000 | | | |

Revenue Enhancements

Colorado State Veterans Trust Fund Transfer to General Fund

Description: Bill to transfer \$2.0 million from the Colorado State Veterans Trust Fund (CSVTF) to the General Fund.

Key Considerations: The transfer would not negatively affect any existing program. However, it would reduce the amount available in future years to support Veteran cemeteries, non-profits, and nursing homes that support Colorado Veterans. This budget-balancing measure is a one-time option.

Additional background: The CSVTF is funded through Tobacco Master Settlement funds and receives 1 percent annually of this distribution. Pursuant to Section 28-5-709, C.R.S., the total Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement funds may be used for:

- Capital improvements or needed amenities for state veterans nursing homes;
- Costs incurred by state veteran cemeteries;
- Costs incurred by the Division of Veterans Affairs to administer the program; and
- Grants to veteran programs operated by nonprofit veterans' organizations that meet criteria adopted by the Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs and selected by that Board as grant recipients.

Starting in fiscal year 2024-25, the Committee approved additional funding beyond the TMSA distribution to intentionally reduce the fund balance. This initiative aims to provide further support to veterans in Colorado and draw down the funds balance.

The table below shows the projected fund balance of the Colorado State Veterans Trust Fund through FY 2027-28 including the \$2,000,000 General Fund Transfer as well as additional spending authority to the Colorado State

Veterans Trust Fund expenditures line item to offset a proposed General Fund reduction to the Veterans Assistance Grant Program.

Colorado State Veterans Trust Fund

| CSVTF | FY 2022-23 Actual | FY 2023-24 Actual | FY 2024-25 Actual | FY 2025-26 Estimate | FY 2026-27 Estimate | FY 2027 -28 Estimate |
|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Beginning Balance | \$4,246,487 | \$4,530,384 | \$4,673,969 | \$4,534,439 | \$4,200,354 | \$1,282,701 |
| Revenue | 1,012,575 | 1,109,847 | 996,286 | 1,049,468 | 1,006,657 | 1,006,657 |
| Expenditures | -728,678 | -966,262 | -1,135,816 | -1,383,553 | -1,424,310 | -1,424,310 |
| GF Transfer | | | | | -2,000,000 | |
| Grant Refinance | | | | | -500,000 | -500,000 |
| Ending Fund Balance | \$4,530,384 | \$4,673,969 | \$4,534,439 | \$4,200,354 | \$1,282,701 | \$365,048 |

Point to Consider

In recent years, the Colorado General Assembly has transferred money from various DMVA cash funds to the General Fund. In fiscal year 2020-21, to help balance the state budget, the Assembly transferred a total of \$8.9 million from these funds to the General Fund. These transfers were authorized by three bills: HB 20-1406 (Cash Funds Transfer to General Fund), HB 20-1380 (Moving Tobacco Litigation Settlement Money to General Fund), and HB 20-1381 (Cash Fund Transfers to General Fund). The table below lists the amounts and sources of the cash fund transfers for fiscal year 2020-21.

FY 2020-21 DMVA Statutory Transfers to the General Fund

| Source Fund | Net GF Revenue | Other Funds Revenue Impact | Total |
|---|----------------|-------------------------------|-------|
| Sales of Real Estate Acquired for Military Purposes | \$4,908,395 | -\$4,908,395 | \$0 |
| Colorado State Veterans Trust Fund | 3,000,000 | -3,000,000 | 0 |
| Veterans Assistance Grant Program Cash Fund | 1,000,000 | -1,000,000 | 0 |
| TOTAL | \$8,908,395 | -\$8,908,395 | \$0 |

The Department has stated that diverting these funds could impair the DMVA's ability to conduct real estate transactions in a timely, effective, and favorable manner. Additionally, it could diminish the Department's capacity to provide sufficient long-term funding to non-profits and institutions that support Colorado's veteran population.

Expenditure Reductions

Refinance grant programs that support veteran groups.

Description: The budget option would reduce the General Fund appropriation to the Veterans Assistance Grant Program by \$500,000 and increase cash fund spending authority from the CSVTF. This adjustment would result in a net-neutral change in funding for Veterans programs, while providing a General Fund reduction of \$500,000.

Key Considerations: This funding realignment could be supported for at least two fiscal years, if the Committee chose to do a \$2 million transfer from the State Veterans Trust Fund to General Fund or potentially five years in the absence of the cash fund to General Fund Transfer.

Additional background: The Veterans Assistance Grant Program was created in House Bill 14-1205 (Veterans Assistance Grant Program) to provide grants to nonprofit organizations and governmental agencies that provide services to veterans. Please see section above for description of the Colorado State Veterans Trust Fund.

There are several key differences between the Veterans Assistance Grant Program and the State Veterans Trust Fund. One of the main differences between the Veterans Trust Fund (VTF) and the Veterans Assistance Grant (VAG) is their eligibility criteria for organizations seeking funding. Under the VAG program, eligible organizations primarily include 501(c)(3) entities and city or county government units. These organizations are typically well-established, traditional non-profits that have the infrastructure, resources, and staff capacity to manage complex, multifaceted programs.

VTF-funded programs are aimed at smaller organizations that rely heavily on volunteers, such as local chapters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), American Legion, and Disabled American Veterans (DAV) in Colorado. To qualify for VTF funding, organizations must have a 501(c)(19), 501(c)(23), or occasionally a 501(c)(4) designation.

The primary goal of VTF funds is to support veterans by addressing their immediate needs through services like emergency financial assistance, employment support, transportation to medical appointments, and support for surviving spouses. Unlike VAG programs, VTF initiatives are predominantly managed by volunteers, which can limit their capacity to handle grant writing and reporting effectively. *Consequently, if the JBC chooses to pursue this option, staff recommend JBC sponsored legislation to help expand the eligibility criteria for VTF-funded programs so that organizations currently supported by VAG are not adversely impacted by the funding realignment.*

Reduce DMVA Operating Expenses Line Item in the EDO

Description: This budget option would reduce funding for the Operating Expenses line item in the Executive Directors' Office primarily focusing on reductions to recruiting and retention initiatives. Additional General Fund savings is available through cuts to training and professional development funding.

Key Considerations: The General Fund appropriation to the Operating Expenses Line Item in the EDO has grown significantly in the last five years, rising by almost 200 percent over this span. This increase has been driven almost entirely by the implementation and funding for recruiting and retention bonuses to CONG service members. In the last two years the General Assembly has provided funding totaling approximately \$700,000 for this initiative. Additionally, there is approximately \$70,000 in this line item dedicated to training and professional development.

Additional background: In FY 2024-25 the JBC approved the Department's request (R1, CONG Recruiting and Retention) for \$500,000 General Fund to support Colorado National Guard recruiting efforts. In FY 2025-26 in response to the program's success and demand the Department requested an additional \$500,000 General Fund (R2, Recruitment and Bonus Expansion), of which the JBC partially approved providing \$200,000 in additional funding for the recruiting and retention program.

In response to challenges the CONG faced in recruitment and retention, and the ongoing inability to successfully fulfill the federal force structure, the Department made these requests for additional funds to enhance recruiting and retention and ultimately increase the end strength of the Colorado National Guard. Compromised end strength has negative implications for the CONG's capabilities when deployed for wildfire mitigation, public emergencies, federal deployments, and surge capability. Additionally, federal investments in infrastructure and

new units are prioritized by end strength, and guard units with higher end strength receive more federal support than those with lower end strength.

The CONG has reported recent improvements in both its Army and Air National Guard end strength, increasing from 92.2 percent in October 2024 to 96.5 percent in October 2025. This growth represents an overall increase of 4.6 percent in CONG membership. The DMVA attributes a significant portion of this growth to increased funding for recruitment and retention, as well as the tuition waiver benefit.

Footnotes and Requests for Information

Update on Long Bill Footnotes

The General Assembly includes footnotes in the Long Bill to:

5. set forth purposes, conditions, or limitations;
6. explain assumptions; or
7. express legislative intent.

This section discusses a subset of the footnotes relevant to the divisions covered in the briefing. For a full list of footnotes, see the end of each departmental section of the [2026 Long Bill](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb25-206) (<https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb25-206>).

- 74 Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Executive Director and Army National Guard, Personal Services, Operating Expenses, Vehicle Lease Payments, and Army National Guard Cooperative Agreement -- In addition to the transfer authority provided in Section 24-75-108, C.R.S., the Department is authorized to transfer up to 20.0 percent of the total General Fund appropriations in these line items between these line items. Transfers to or from the Vehicle Lease Payments line item may be used solely to address changes in the portion of costs covered by federal authorities for vehicle lease

Comment This flexibility was added for FY 2019-20 to help the Department make more efficient use of its appropriations. Additional information will be available ongoing regarding how this flexibility is used and the impact on Department expenditures.

- 75 Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Division of Veterans Affairs, Colorado State Veterans Trust Fund Expenditures – This appropriation remains available for expenditure until the close of the FY 2026-27 state fiscal year.

Comment: This footnote was added in FY 2023-24 to provide one year roll-forward authority to State Veterans Trust Fund Expenditures.

Update on Requests for Information

The Joint Budget Committee may submit requests for information (RFIs) to departments. The Joint Budget Committee must prioritize the requests per Section 2-3-203 (3), C.R.S.

This section discusses a subset of the RFIs relevant to the divisions covered in the briefing. For a full list of RFIs, see the [letters requesting information](https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/rfi_fy_2025-26.pdf) (https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/rfi_fy_2025-26.pdf).

Requests Affecting Multiple Departments

- 9 All Departments – The Departments are requested to provide by November 1 of each fiscal year responses to the following:

- a. Based on the Department's most recent available record, what is the FTE vacancy and turnover

rate: (1) by department; (2) by division; (3) by program for programs with at least 20 FTE; and (4) by occupational class for classes that are located within a larger occupational group containing at least 20 FTE.

b. To what does the Department attribute this turnover/vacancy experience?

c. Do the statewide compensation policies or practices administered by the Department of Personnel help or hinder the department in addressing vacancy or turnover issues?

Comment: The Department's response will be discussed in the briefing for Total Compensation.

Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Requests

Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Executive Director's Office, Appropriation to the Colorado National Guard Tuition Waiver Fund – The Department is requested to provide to the Joint Budget Committee, by November 1 of each year, information concerning the total amount of payments to each institution of Higher Education for the tuition waiver program as well as the number of CONG members at each institution of Higher Education participating in the program. Additionally, in collaboration with the Department of Higher Education, DMA should identify the full or part-time student status of CONG members receiving a tuition waiver and their financial aid eligibility status. Finally, the Department should indicate all numbers utilized in the formula for the calculation of the appropriation requested for the tuition waiver program for the current budget year. All data provided should be anonymized.

Comment: Please find the Department's response attached in Appendix B, as well as additional information in the Issue Brief beginning on page 11.

Department Annual Performance Report

Departments must publish an **Annual Performance Report**⁴ for the *previous state fiscal year* by November 1 of each year. This report summarizes the Department's performance plan and most recent performance evaluation. In addition, departments develop and submit a **Performance Plan**⁵ for the *current fiscal year* to the Joint Budget Committee and the relevant Joint Committee of Reference by July 1 of each year.

Per statute⁶, the Joint Budget Committee must consider performance plans submitted by departments and may prioritize budget requests intended to enhance productivity, improve efficiency, reduce costs, and eliminate waste. To find the performance plans, search the Office of State Planning and Budgeting website and select the [performance plan](http://www.colorado.gov/pacific/performancemanagement/department-performance-plans) (www.colorado.gov/pacific/performancemanagement/department-performance-plans).

⁴ Section 2-7-205, C.R.S.

⁵ Section 2-7-204 (3)(a), C.R.S.

⁶ Section 2-7-204 (6), C.R.S.

Appendix A: Numbers Pages

Appendix A details the actual expenditures for the last two state fiscal years, the appropriation for the current fiscal year, and the requested appropriation for next fiscal year. Appendix A organizes this information by line item and fund source.

Appendix A: Numbers Pages

| | FY 2023-24 Actual | FY 2024-25 Actual | FY 2025-26 Appropriation | FY 2026-27 Request | Request vs. Appropriation |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
|--|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|

Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Michael Loh, Adjutant General

(1) Executive Director and Army National Guard

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Personal Services | <u>2,523,164</u> | <u>3,543,640</u> | <u>3,066,550</u> | <u>3,186,071</u> * |
| FTE | 27.2 | 29.2 | 29.4 | 30.3 |
| General Fund | 2,093,223 | 2,954,736 | 2,646,050 | 2,765,571 |
| Cash Funds | 0 | 0 | 4,260 | 4,260 |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Federal Funds | 429,941 | 588,904 | 416,240 | 416,240 |
| Health, Life, and Dental | <u>755,617</u> | <u>378,127</u> | <u>2,188,185</u> | <u>2,791,501</u> |
| FTE | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| General Fund | 709,936 | 378,127 | 872,373 | 986,671 |
| Cash Funds | 45,681 | 0 | 43,912 | 69,818 |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 1,271,900 | 1,735,012 |
| Short-term Disability | <u>7,049</u> | <u>8,868</u> | <u>10,157</u> | <u>11,116</u> |
| FTE | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| General Fund | 6,796 | 8,868 | 4,118 | 4,216 |
| Cash Funds | 253 | 0 | 196 | 143 |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 5,843 | 6,757 |

Appendix A: Numbers Pages

| | FY 2023-24 Actual | FY 2024-25 Actual | FY 2025-26 Appropriation | FY 2026-27 Request | Request vs. Appropriation |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Paid Family Medical Leave Insurance | <u>36,099</u> | <u>17,716</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | |
| FTE | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | |
| General Fund | 36,099 | 17,716 | 0 | 0 | |
| Cash Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| S.B. 04-257 Amortization Equalization Disbursement | <u>243,898</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | |
| FTE | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | |
| General Fund | 235,099 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Cash Funds | 8,799 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| S.B. 06-235 Supplemental Amortization Equalization Disbursement | <u>211,799</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | |
| FTE | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | |
| General Fund | 203,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Cash Funds | 8,799 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| AED/SAED Unfunded PERA Liability | <u>0</u> | <u>235,086</u> | <u>1,450,964</u> | <u>1,587,990</u> | |
| FTE | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | |
| General Fund | 0 | 235,086 | 588,336 | 602,295 | |
| Cash Funds | 0 | 0 | 27,946 | 20,462 | |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 834,682 | 965,233 | |

Appendix A: Numbers Pages

| | FY 2023-24 Actual | FY 2024-25 Actual | FY 2025-26 Appropriation | FY 2026-27 Request | Request vs. Appropriation |
|--------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Step Plan | <u>0</u> | <u>40,495</u> | <u>123,286</u> | <u>57,668</u> | |
| FTE | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | |
| General Fund | 0 | 40,495 | 55,488 | 21,868 | |
| Cash Funds | 0 | 0 | 2,289 | 0 | |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 65,509 | 35,800 | |
| CORE Payroll | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>6,078</u> | |
| FTE | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | |
| General Fund | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6,078 | |
| PERA Direct Distribution | <u>42,016</u> | <u>262,590</u> | <u>285,383</u> | <u>289,648</u> | |
| FTE | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | |
| General Fund | 41,356 | 258,061 | 115,717 | 285,916 | |
| Cash Funds | 660 | 4,529 | 5,497 | 3,732 | |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 164,169 | 0 | |
| Salary Survey | <u>270,783</u> | <u>95,002</u> | <u>400,578</u> | <u>534,366</u> | |
| FTE | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | |
| General Fund | 261,311 | 95,002 | 161,050 | 204,062 | |
| Cash Funds | 9,472 | 0 | 7,659 | 6,864 | |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 231,869 | 323,440 | |

Appendix A: Numbers Pages

| | FY 2023-24 Actual | FY 2024-25 Actual | FY 2025-26 Appropriation | FY 2026-27 Request | Request vs. Appropriation |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Paid Family Leave | <u>17,716</u> | <u>26,603</u> | <u>65,294</u> | <u>71,459</u> | |
| FTE | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | |
| General Fund | 17,716 | 26,603 | 26,475 | 27,103 | |
| Cash Funds | 0 | 0 | 1,258 | 921 | |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 37,561 | 43,435 | |
| Shift Differential | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>127,207</u> | |
| FTE | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | |
| General Fund | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Cash Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 127,207 | |
| Temporary Employees Related to Authorized Leave | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | |
| FTE | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | |
| General Fund | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Cash Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Workers' Compensation | <u>106,097</u> | <u>136,682</u> | <u>137,377</u> | <u>158,951</u> | |
| FTE | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | |
| General Fund | 50,012 | 63,848 | 64,173 | 74,960 | |
| Cash Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Federal Funds | 56,085 | 72,834 | 73,204 | 83,991 | |

Appendix A: Numbers Pages

| | FY 2023-24 Actual | FY 2024-25 Actual | FY 2025-26 Appropriation | FY 2026-27 Request | Request vs. Appropriation |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Operating Expenses | <u>334,071</u> | <u>976,175</u> | <u>1,140,031</u> | <u>1,140,031</u> | |
| FTE | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | |
| General Fund | 297,342 | 964,558 | 1,044,031 | 1,044,031 | |
| Cash Funds | 36,729 | 11,617 | 96,000 | 96,000 | |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Information Technology Asset Maintenance | <u>221,078</u> | <u>207,343</u> | <u>232,817</u> | <u>132,817</u> | |
| FTE | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | |
| General Fund | 221,078 | 207,343 | 232,817 | 132,817 | |
| Cash Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Legal Services | <u>46,497</u> | <u>62,380</u> | <u>106,028</u> | <u>80,282</u> | |
| FTE | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | |
| General Fund | 46,497 | 62,380 | 106,028 | 80,282 | |
| Cash Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Payment to Risk Management and Property Funds | <u>528,070</u> | <u>857,295</u> | <u>1,268,201</u> | <u>504,996</u> | |
| FTE | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | |
| General Fund | 528,070 | 857,295 | 1,268,201 | 504,996 | |
| Cash Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |

Appendix A: Numbers Pages

| | FY 2023-24 Actual | FY 2024-25 Actual | FY 2025-26 Appropriation | FY 2026-27 Request | Request vs. Appropriation |
|------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Vehicle Lease Payments | <u>86,613</u> | <u>98,555</u> | <u>135,712</u> | <u>101,241</u> | * |
| FTE | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | |
| General Fund | 20,445 | 20,620 | 64,366 | 47,130 | |
| Cash Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Federal Funds | 66,168 | 77,935 | 71,346 | 54,111 | |
| Leased Space | <u>8,968</u> | <u>26,934</u> | <u>63,893</u> | <u>63,893</u> | |
| FTE | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | |
| General Fund | 8,968 | 26,934 | 63,893 | 63,893 | |
| Cash Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Capitol Complex Leased Space | <u>49,659</u> | <u>46,847</u> | <u>60,973</u> | <u>65,144</u> | |
| FTE | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | |
| General Fund | 49,659 | 46,847 | 60,973 | 65,144 | |
| Cash Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Payments to OIT | <u>485,030</u> | <u>811,311</u> | <u>764,306</u> | <u>784,371</u> | * |
| FTE | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | |
| General Fund | 485,030 | 811,311 | 764,306 | 784,371 | |
| Cash Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |

Appendix A: Numbers Pages

| | FY 2023-24 Actual | FY 2024-25 Actual | FY 2025-26 Appropriation | FY 2026-27 Request | Request vs. Appropriation |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| IT Accessibility | <u>228,036</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>20,000</u> | * |
| FTE | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | |
| General Fund | 228,036 | 0 | 0 | 20,000 | |
| Cash Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| CORE Operations | <u>52,571</u> | <u>13,492</u> | <u>12,261</u> | <u>56,184</u> | |
| FTE | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | |
| General Fund | 52,571 | 13,492 | 12,261 | 56,184 | |
| Cash Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Statewide training | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | |
| FTE | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | |
| General Fund | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Cash Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Digital Trunk Radio | <u>54,597</u> | <u>55,260</u> | <u>53,688</u> | <u>63,755</u> | |
| FTE | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | |
| General Fund | 54,597 | 55,260 | 53,688 | 63,755 | |
| Cash Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |

Appendix A: Numbers Pages

| | FY 2023-24 Actual | FY 2024-25 Actual | FY 2025-26 Appropriation | FY 2026-27 Request | Request vs. Appropriation |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Annual Depreciation-Lease Equivalent Payment | <u>87,994</u> | <u>87,994</u> | <u>87,994</u> | <u>87,994</u> | |
| FTE | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | |
| General Fund | 87,994 | 87,994 | 87,994 | 87,994 | |
| Cash Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Civil Air Patrol Operations | <u>70,350</u> | <u>70,335</u> | <u>70,365</u> | <u>70,365</u> | |
| FTE | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | |
| General Fund | 70,350 | 70,335 | 70,365 | 70,365 | |
| Cash Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Local Armory Incentive Plan | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>20,000</u> | <u>20,000</u> | |
| FTE | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | |
| General Fund | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Cash Funds | 0 | 0 | 20,000 | 20,000 | |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Statewide Indirect Cost Collections | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>163,923</u> | <u>163,923</u> | |
| FTE | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | |
| General Fund | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Cash Funds | 0 | 0 | 4,688 | 4,688 | |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 1,042 | 1,042 | |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 158,193 | 158,193 | |

Appendix A: Numbers Pages

| | FY 2023-24 Actual | FY 2024-25 Actual | FY 2025-26 Appropriation | FY 2026-27 Request | Request vs. Appropriation |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Appropriation to the Colorado National Guard Tuition | | | | | |
| Fund | <u>2,718,558</u> | <u>2,628,686</u> | <u>1,770,987</u> | <u>1,770,987</u> | |
| FTE | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | |
| General Fund | 1,421,157 | 1,421,157 | 1,770,987 | 1,770,987 | |
| Cash Funds | 1,297,401 | 1,207,529 | 0 | 0 | |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Army National Guard Cooperative Agreement | <u>23,844,891</u> | <u>19,453,219</u> | <u>15,603,656</u> | <u>15,790,938</u> | |
| FTE | 84.1 | 84.1 | 84.1 | 84.1 | |
| General Fund | 1,945,703 | 2,501,156 | 2,240,170 | 2,226,244 | |
| Cash Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Federal Funds | 21,899,188 | 16,952,063 | 13,363,486 | 13,564,694 | |
| TOTAL - (1) Executive Director and Army National Guard | 33,031,221 | 30,140,635 | 29,282,609 | 29,738,976 | 1.6% |
| FTE | <u>111.3</u> | <u>113.3</u> | <u>113.5</u> | <u>114.4</u> | <u>0.8%</u> |
| General Fund | 9,172,045 | 11,225,224 | 12,373,860 | 11,996,933 | (3.0%) |
| Cash Funds | 1,407,794 | 1,223,675 | 213,705 | 226,888 | 6.2% |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 1,042 | 1,042 | 0.0% |
| Federal Funds | 22,451,382 | 17,691,736 | 16,694,002 | 17,514,113 | 4.9% |

Appendix A: Numbers Pages

| | FY 2023-24 Actual | FY 2024-25 Actual | FY 2025-26 Appropriation | FY 2026-27 Request | Request vs. Appropriation |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| (2) Division of Veterans Affairs | | | | | |
| Veterans Service Operations | <u>1,475,626</u> | <u>1,839,425</u> | <u>1,836,476</u> | <u>1,846,669</u> | |
| FTE | 18.5 | 19.0 | 19.0 | 19.0 | |
| General Fund | 1,431,800 | 1,794,041 | 1,789,496 | 1,794,949 | |
| Cash Funds | 43,826 | 45,384 | 46,980 | 51,720 | |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Veterans Mental Health Services | <u>14,320</u> | <u>228,171</u> | <u>260,143</u> | <u>259,065</u> | |
| FTE | 1.6 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 2.0 | |
| General Fund | 14,320 | 228,171 | 260,143 | 259,065 | |
| Cash Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| County Veterans Service Officer Payments | <u>1,340,381</u> | <u>1,367,121</u> | <u>1,367,189</u> | <u>1,408,205</u> * | |
| FTE | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | |
| General Fund | 1,340,381 | 1,367,121 | 1,367,189 | 1,408,205 | |
| Cash Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Colorado State Veterans Trust Fund Expenditures | <u>880,052</u> | <u>1,039,680</u> | <u>1,683,256</u> | <u>1,683,256</u> | |
| FTE | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | |
| General Fund | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Cash Funds | 880,052 | 1,039,680 | 1,683,256 | 1,683,256 | |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |

Appendix A: Numbers Pages

| | FY 2023-24 Actual | FY 2024-25 Actual | FY 2025-26 Appropriation | FY 2026-27 Request | Request vs. Appropriation |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Veterans Assistance Grant Program | <u>1,031,367</u> | <u>1,331,349</u> | <u>1,257,886</u> | <u>1,100,000</u> | |
| FTE | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | |
| General Fund | 892,207 | 1,331,349 | 1,100,000 | 1,100,000 | |
| Cash Funds | 139,160 | 0 | 157,886 | 0 | |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Western Slope Veterans Cemetery | <u>585,591</u> | <u>884,813</u> | <u>759,945</u> | <u>784,827</u> | |
| FTE | 7.6 | 7.8 | 7.8 | 7.8 | |
| General Fund | 340,287 | 566,919 | 489,956 | 509,630 | |
| Cash Funds | 245,304 | 317,894 | 269,989 | 275,197 | |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Grand Junction Veterans One-Stop Center | <u>299,776</u> | <u>430,176</u> | <u>386,749</u> | <u>385,678</u> | |
| FTE | 4.1 | 4.1 | 4.1 | 4.1 | |
| General Fund | 105,968 | 205,627 | 160,442 | 159,371 | |
| Cash Funds | 152,391 | 174,549 | 201,307 | 201,307 | |
| Reappropriated Funds | 41,417 | 50,000 | 25,000 | 25,000 | |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| TOTAL - (2) Division of Veterans Affairs | 5,627,113 | 7,120,735 | 7,551,644 | 7,467,700 | (1.1%) |
| FTE | <u>32.3</u> | <u>33.4</u> | <u>33.4</u> | <u>33.4</u> | <u>0.0%</u> |
| General Fund | 4,124,963 | 5,493,228 | 5,167,226 | 5,231,220 | 1.2% |
| Cash Funds | 1,460,733 | 1,577,507 | 2,359,418 | 2,211,480 | (6.3%) |
| Reappropriated Funds | 41,417 | 50,000 | 25,000 | 25,000 | 0.0% |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.0% |

Appendix A: Numbers Pages

| | FY 2023-24 Actual | FY 2024-25 Actual | FY 2025-26 Appropriation | FY 2026-27 Request | Request vs. Appropriation |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
|--|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|

(3) Air National Guard

Provides ready forces to the U.S. active armed services and provides ready forces for the preservation of life and property during natural disasters and in Colorado.

Operations and Maintenance Agreement for Buckley/

| | | | | |
|----------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Greeley | <u>3,772,091</u> | <u>4,612,301</u> | <u>3,126,844</u> | <u>3,218,104</u> |
| FTE | 28.0 | 28.0 | 28.0 | 28.0 |
| General Fund | 332,985 | 448,626 | 474,112 | 469,202 |
| Cash Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Federal Funds | 3,439,106 | 4,163,675 | 2,652,732 | 2,748,902 |

Buckley Cooperative Agreement/Air Traffic Control

| | | | | |
|----------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Buckley | <u>1,003,731</u> | <u>1,196,990</u> | <u>737,692</u> | <u>737,692</u> |
| FTE | 7.0 | 7.0 | 7.0 | 7.0 |
| General Fund | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Cash Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Federal Funds | 1,003,731 | 1,196,990 | 737,692 | 737,692 |

Security for Space Command Facility at Greeley

| | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| FTE | <u>781,974</u> | <u>850,527</u> | <u>390,000</u> | <u>390,000</u> |
| General Fund | 6.0 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 6.0 |
| Cash Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Federal Funds | 781,974 | 850,527 | 390,000 | 390,000 |

Appendix A: Numbers Pages

| | FY 2023-24 Actual | FY 2024-25 Actual | FY 2025-26 Appropriation | FY 2026-27 Request | Request vs. Appropriation |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| TOTAL - (3) Air National Guard | 5,557,796 | 6,659,818 | 4,254,536 | 4,345,796 | 2.1% |
| <i>FTE</i> | <u>41.0</u> | <u>41.0</u> | <u>41.0</u> | <u>41.0</u> | <u>0.0%</u> |
| General Fund | 332,985 | 448,626 | 474,112 | 469,202 | (1.0%) |
| Cash Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Federal Funds | 5,224,811 | 6,211,192 | 3,780,424 | 3,876,594 | 2.5% |

Appendix A: Numbers Pages

| | FY 2023-24 Actual | FY 2024-25 Actual | FY 2025-26 Appropriation | FY 2026-27 Request | Request vs. Appropriation |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
|--|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|

(4) Federal Funded Programs

This section provides an estimate of federal funds authorized for Colorado National Guard operations.

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------|----------|--------------------|--------------------|--|
| National Guard Service Members | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>113,800,000</u> | <u>113,800,000</u> | |
| FTE | 2,307.0 | 2,087.0 | 2,150.0 | 2,150.0 | |
| General Fund | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Cash Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 113,800,000 | 113,800,000 | |

| | | | | | |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|
| TOTAL - (4) Federal Funded Programs | 0 | 0 | 113,800,000 | 113,800,000 | 0.0% |
| FTE | <u>2,307.0</u> | <u>2,087.0</u> | <u>2,150.0</u> | <u>2,150.0</u> | <u>0.0%</u> |
| General Fund | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Cash Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Reappropriated Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Federal Funds | 0 | 0 | 113,800,000 | 113,800,000 | 0.0% |

| | | | | | |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|
| TOTAL - Department of Military and Veterans Affairs | 44,216,130 | 43,921,188 | 154,888,789 | 155,352,472 | 0.3% |
| FTE | <u>2,491.6</u> | <u>2,274.7</u> | <u>2,337.9</u> | <u>2,338.8</u> | <u>0.0%</u> |
| General Fund | 13,629,993 | 17,167,078 | 18,015,198 | 17,697,355 | (1.8%) |
| Cash Funds | 2,868,527 | 2,801,182 | 2,573,123 | 2,438,368 | (5.2%) |
| Reappropriated Funds | 41,417 | 50,000 | 26,042 | 26,042 | 0.0% |
| Federal Funds | 27,676,193 | 23,902,928 | 134,274,426 | 135,190,707 | 0.7% |

Appendix B: Department Response to Tuition Waiver RFI

DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

6848 South Revere Parkway
 Centennial, Colorado 80112
 Phone 720-250-1500
<https://dmva.colorado.gov/>

Jared Polis
 Governor

Major General Robert B. Davis
 The Adjutant General

November 3, 2025

Senator Jeff Bridges
 Chair, Joint Budget Committee
 200 East 14th Avenue, 3rd Floor
 Denver, CO 80203

Dear Senator Bridges,

The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs is pleased to submit its response to Request for Information (RFI) which reads as follows:

Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Executive Director's Office, Appropriation to the Colorado National Guard Tuition Waiver Fund - The Department is requested to provide to the Joint Budget Committee, by November 1 of each year, information concerning the total amount of payments to each institution of Higher Education for the tuition waiver program as well as the number of CONG members at each institution of Higher Education participating in the program. Additionally, in collaboration with the Department of Higher Education, DMA should identify the full or part-time student status of CONG members receiving a tuition waiver and their financial aid eligibility status. Finally, the Department should indicate all numbers utilized in the formula for the calculation of the appropriation requested for the tuition waiver program for the current budget year. All data provided should be anonymized.

1. Total amount of payments to each institution of Higher Education for the tuition waiver program.

As of October 30, 2025, the amount projected for Fall 2025 is \$927,723.

| Designated Institution of Higher Education | Fall 2025 |
|--|-----------|
| Adams State University | \$ 6,408 |

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| ARAPAHOE COMMUNITY COLLEGE | \$ 4,611 |
| COLORADO MESA UNIVERSITY | \$ 9,143 |
| COLORADO MOUNTAIN COLLEGE | \$ 3,210 |
| Colorado Northwestern Community College | \$ 6,229 |
| COLORADO SCHOOL OF MINES | \$ 51,967 |
| COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY | \$ 163,407 |
| COLORADO STATE UNIV GLOBAL CAMPUS | \$ 86,000 |
| COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY-PUEBLO | \$ 17,299 |
| COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF AURORA | \$ 6,560 |
| COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF DENVER | \$ 5,463 |
| Front Range Community College Westminster Campus | \$ 19,912 |
| METROPOLITAN STATE UNIV OF DENVER | \$ 98,808 |
| Pikes Peak State College | \$ 29,732 |
| PUEBLO COMMUNITY COLLEGE | \$ 3,701 |
| RED ROCKS COMMUNITY COLLEGE | \$ 9,545 |
| Trinidad State Junior College | \$ 1,400 |
| UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER | \$ 182,192 |
| UCCS - UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO AT COLO SPRINGS | \$ 89,977 |
| University of Colorado- Denver Anschutz | \$ 100,472 |
| UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO | \$ 13,111 |
| Western Colorado University | \$ 18,578 |
| Total | \$ 927,723 |
| Highlighted is the requested amount from the applicant, waiting for a report from DIHE. | |

2. The number of CONG members at each institution of Higher Education participating in the program.

| Designated Institutions of Higher Education | Enrollment Total Fall 2025 |
|---|----------------------------|
| Adams State | 1 |
| Arapahoe Community College | 4 |
| Colorado Northwestern Community College | 1 |
| Community College of Auroa | 3 |
| Community College of Denver | 4 |
| Front Range Community College | 8 |
| Morgan Community College | 1 |
| Pikes Peak State College | 9 |
| Pueblo Community College | 3 |
| Red Rocks Community College | 2 |
| Trinidad State Junior College | 1 |
| Colorado Mesa College | 3 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| Colorado Mountain College | 1 |
| Colorado School of Mines | 8 |
| CSU- Global | 31 |
| CSU- Pueblo | 4 |
| CSU Ft.Collins/Online | 31 |
| Metropolitan State University | 30 |
| University of Colorado- Boulder | 24 |
| University of Colorado- Colorado Springs | 18 |
| University of Colorado- Denver | 22 |
| University of Northern Colorado | 4 |
| Western Colorado University | 4 |
| Total | 217 |

3. Full or part-time student status of CONG members receiving a tuition waiver and their financial aid eligibility status.

Of the 217 approved applicants, 92 (42%) are part-time and 125 (58%) are full-time. Part-time is defined as 11 credit hours or less, while full-time is 12 credit hours or more.

The current demand and its approval status are detailed in the table below.

| | |
|--|------------|
| Approved | 217 |
| Approved-Not Enrolled | 2 |
| Approved-Tuition is Covered by other funding sources | 8 |
| Denied Due to Enrollment Cap | 32 |
| Denied Due to Missing Required Documents or Not Eligible | 10 |
| Total Applicants | 269 |

Notably, denied applicants due to enrollment cap constitute approximately 15% of the total approved applicants.

Currently, the department does not collect information regarding the type or amount of financial aid students receive. However, students are still required to submit a FAFSA or CASFA application as part of the Tuition Waiver application process. In the previous Tuition Assistance program, institutions utilized the Request for Authorization Adjustment Form (RAAF) to deduct financial aid applied toward tuition. Under the current process, institutions no longer report the following financial aid components to us:

College Opportunity Fund (COF)

Pell Grants

State Grants

Scholarships

Other tuition-based financial aid

Instead, institutions now only report the total amount of tuition due for each student.

4. All numbers utilized in the formula for the calculation of the appropriation requested for the tuition waiver program for the current budget year.

For the FY2025-26 appropriation, the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs calculated the amount based on the average fall semester member enrollment from the Tuition Assistance program at designated higher education institutions. This average was derived from the Fall 2022, 2023, and 2024 semesters.

Tuition Waiver Model

| College | Average Tuition per year | Tuition excluding fees | # of Students (Ave from last 3 years) | Cost Impact |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Community Colleges | \$5,073 | (fees not included) | 26 | \$131,898 |
| Adams State | \$9,775 | \$9,343 | 2 | \$18,686 |
| Colorado Mesa | \$7,704 | (fees not included) | 5 | \$38,520 |
| Colorado Mountain College | \$6,240 | (fees not included) | 1 | \$6,240 |
| Colorado Mines | \$18,930 | (fees not included) | 2 | \$37,860 |
| Colorado State Ft Collins | \$13,373 | \$12,023 | 25 | \$300,575 |
| CSU Pueblo | \$7,400 | (fees not included) | 2 | \$14,800 |
| CSU Global | \$9,000 | (fees not included) | 32 | \$288,000 |
| Metro State | \$7,308 | (fees not included) | 30 | \$219,240 |
| CU Boulder | \$14,002 | \$12,652 | 21 | \$265,692 |
| CU Denver | \$11,772 | \$11,144 | 17 | \$189,448 |
| CU Colorado Springs | \$9,712 | \$9,276 | 20 | \$185,520 |
| Northern Colorado | \$12,416 | \$11,200 | 6 | \$67,200 |
| Western State | \$7,308 | (fees not included) | 1 | \$7,308 |
| Total | | | 190 | \$1,770,987 |

In addition, see National Guard Recruiting and Retention update as of Oct. 1, 2025

Colorado Air Guard

- Authorized Strength: 1626
- Membership: 1656
- End Strength: 101.8%
- Membership Growth since October 1, 2024: 3.7%

Colorado Army Guard

- Authorized Strength: 3863
- Membership: 3639
- End Strength: 96.4%

- Membership Growth since October 1, 2024: 4.8%

Sincerely,

Joo Kang
Budget Director
Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

Cc:

Representative Shannon Bird, Vice-Chair, Joint Budget Committee
Representative Rick Taggart, Joint Budget Committee
Senator Judy Amabile, Joint Budget Committee
Senator Barbara Kirkmeyer, Joint Budget Committee
Representative Emily Sirota, Joint Budget Committee

Craig Harper, Joint Budget Committee, Staff Director
Jon Catlett, Joint Budget Committee, Staff
Samantha Krejcik, Office of State Planning and Budgeting, Staff

[Appendix 1 - Tuition Waiver Question for the Record and AG opinion](#)



September 2, 2025

Senator Jeff Bridges
Chair, Joint Budget Committee
200 East 14th Avenue, 3rd Floor
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Mr. Chair,

The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (the Department) is requesting a Question for the Record regarding the legislative intent behind Senate Bill 25-247, Tuition Waiver for Members of the Colorado National Guard.

Background

- On July 16, 2025, the Department requested the legal opinion of the Attorney Generals' Office on the following issue: "In the event that the actual tuition waived by the IHEs exceeds the \$1,770,987.00 appropriation but remains below the \$2,213,733.75 statutory cap outlined in (b)(IV)(C), are the IHEs responsible for bearing that difference in cost?". (opinion query attached as part of this Request)
- On August 22, 2025 the Attorney Generals provided the Department with an informal legal opinion which held that, "No, the plain language of SB25-247 does not require IHEs to bear any difference in cost between the amount that is annually appropriated to the DMVA for the tuition waiver program and the calculated tuition for base member enrollment, which is just a calculation, not a tuition cap." (legal opinion attached to this Request).
- As part of their Informal Opinion the Attorney Generals sites a fiscal note related to SB 25-247 dated June 18, 2025 which states in part, "Subject to annual appropriations, the DMVA must reimburse the schools for the tuition costs of enrolled members." (fiscal note attached with this Request).

Question for the Record

Because this informal opinion and related fiscal note place the full cost of the tuition waiver program on the DMVA, the Department is formally requesting a Question for the Record (QFR). The DMVA wants to confirm whether the Joint Budget Committee intended for 100% of the program's costs to be paid from funds appropriated to the Department.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or need additional information.

Thank you,

Nicholas Severn
Chief Financial Officer

Cc:

Representative Shannon Bird, Vice Chair, Joint Budget Committee

Representative Emily Sirota, Joint Budget Committee

Representative Rick Taggart, Joint Budget Committee

Senator Barbara Kirkmeyer, Joint Budget Committee

Senator Judy Amabile, Joint Budget Committee

Craig Harper, Joint Budget Committee, Staff Director

Jon Catlett, Joint Budget Committee, Senior Legislative Budget & Policy Analyst

Opinion Request

Background:

Included with this request is a copy of Senate Bill 25-247 which modifies CRS 23-7.4-302 from a Tuition Assistance program to a Tuition Waiver program for Colorado National Guard members. This statute provides free tuition for National Guard members at Colorado's public Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) provided demand for the program does not exceed certain statutory use limits or "caps". The two limits provided are an enrollment cap (3)(B)(I)(A) & (B) and more relevant to this issue, a tuition amount cap outlined in (b)(IV)(C):

"(C) IF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE CALCULATED TUITION FOR BASE MEMBER ENROLLMENT, AS DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (3)(b)(II) OF THIS SECTION, AND THE ANNUAL APPROPRIATION IS MORE THAN TWENTY-FIVE PERCENT, THE TUITION WAIVER PROGRAM IS SUSPENDED AND THE DESIGNATED INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION SHALL DISTRIBUTE THE REMAINING TUITION WAIVER FUNDS ON A FIRST-COME, FIRST-SERVE BASIS TO MEMBERS UNTIL THE TUITION WAIVER FUNDS ARE EXHAUSTED."

The annual appropriation to DMVA to support this program for FY25-26 is \$1,770,987.00. Twenty-five percent (25%) more than that appropriated amount would come to \$2,213,733.75 – we estimate this to be the overall tuition cap at which point the waiver program would be statutorily suspended. This creates a possible \$442,746.75 difference between appropriated amount and potential tuition liabilities incurred by the IHEs.

The \$1,770,987.00 appropriation was determined by the legislature using the criteria outlined in (3)(b)(II) – the average fall semester participation in the Tuition Assistance Program for the last 3 state fiscal years – to be distributed by DMVA to the IHE to help offset some of the costs of the Tuition Waive Program. No additional funds were appropriated to DMVA to cover any additional costs for this program.

Issue:

In the event that the actual tuition waived by the IHEs exceeds the \$1,770,987.00 appropriation but remains below the \$2,213,733.75 statutory cap outlined in (b)(IV)(C), are the IHEs responsible for bearing that difference in cost?

PHIL WEISER
Attorney General

NATALIE HANLON LEH
Chief Deputy Attorney General

SHANNON STEVENSON
Solicitor General

TANJA WHEELER
Associate Chief Deputy Attorney
General



STATE OF COLORADO
DEPARTMENT OF LAW

RALPH L. CARR
COLORADO JUDICIAL CENTER
1300 Broadway, 10th Floor
Denver, Colorado 80203
Phone (720) 508-6000

State Services Section

August 22, 2025

C O N F I D E N T I A L M E M O R A N D U M

A T T O R N E Y C L I E N T P R I V I L E G E D
A T T O R N E Y W O R K P R O D U C T

TO: Nicholas Severn, Chief Financial Officer
Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

CC: Sarah Edwards, Chief Operating Officer
Department of Local Affairs

FROM: LeeAnn Morrill
First Assistant Attorney General
Public Officials Unit / State Services Section

RE: Informal Legal Opinion – Tuition Waiver Program Created by
Senate Bill 25-247

I. Introduction

This informal legal opinion is provided in response to your question presented below. This informal opinion represents that of the authoring attorney only and does not reflect the formal legal or policy opinion of the Colorado Attorney General of Colorado. This informal opinion relates only to the legal questions presented by your request. The authoring attorney did not research or consider any other legal questions other than those presented by your request.

II. Question Presented

If the actual amount of tuition waived by state institutions of higher education (“IHEs”) exceeds the \$1,770,987.00 annual appropriation made to the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (“DMVA”) for FY25-26, but remains below the \$2,213,733.75 tuition cap imposed by Senate Bill 25-247 (“SB25-247”), are IHEs responsible for bearing that difference in cost?

III. Short Answer

No, the plain language of SB25-247 does not require IHEs to bear any difference in cost between the amount that is annually appropriated to the DMVA for the tuition waiver program and the calculated tuition for base member enrollment, which is just a calculation, not a tuition cap. Rather, the plain language of SB25-247 provides that the program is subject to annual appropriations, so the de facto tuition cap for FY25-26 is \$1,770,987.00, and if the difference between the calculated tuition for base member enrollment and the annual appropriation is less than twenty-five percent, the DMVA may prorate funding and distribute funds to each designated IHE proportionately. Additionally, the General Assembly made a FY25-26 annual appropriation for the tuition waiver program only to the DMVA, and the fiscal note prepared by Legislative Council Staff for SB25-247 indicated that the bill does not change the expenditure or revenue of IHES and no change in appropriations to IHEs is required.

Background Facts and Law

SB25-247, which is codified at C.R.S. § 23-7.4-302, was signed into law by the Governor and took effect on May 1, 2025. The bill changed what previously was a tuition assistance program to a tuition waiver program for Colorado National Guard members. The waiver program provides free tuition for National Guard members at Colorado's public IHEs provided that the number of members attending with a tuition waiver does not exceed the enrollment cap imposed by C.R.S. § 23-7.4-302(3)(b)(I)(A) & (B).

For each designated IHE, the bill requires the DMVA to “determine the base member enrollment . . . by calculating the average fall semester member enrolment at the designated [IHE] for the previous three fall semesters.” C.R.S. § 23-7.4-302(3)(b)(II). The bill then specifies what happens if there is a difference between the calculated tuition for base member enrollment, as described in subsection (3)(b)(II), and the annual appropriation for the waiver program. Specifically, the bill provides that:

(B) IF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE CALCULATED TUITION FOR BASE MEMBER ENROLLMENT, AS DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (3)(b)(II) OF THIS SECTION, AND THE ANNUAL APPROPRIATION IS LESS THAN TWENTY-FIVE PERCENT, THE DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS MAY PRORATE FUNDING AND DISTRIBUTE FUNDS TO EACH DESIGNATED INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION PROPORTIONATELY.

(C) IF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE CALCULATED TUITION FOR BASE MEMBER ENROLLMENT, AS DESCRIBED

IN SUBSECTION (3)(b)(II) OF THIS SECTION, AND THE ANNUAL APPROPRIATION IS MORE THAN TWENTY-FIVE PERCENT, THE TUITION WAIVER PROGRAM IS SUSPENDED AND THE DESIGNATED INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION SHALL DISTRIBUTE THE REMAINING TUITION WAIVER FUNDS ON A FIRST-COME, FIRST-SERVE BASIS TO MEMBERS UNTIL THE TUITION WAIVER FUNDS ARE EXHAUSTED.

C.R.S. § 23-7.4-302(3)(b)(IV)(B) & (C).

SB25-247 provides that the DMVA “shall administer the tuition waiver program,” and that the program is “[s]ubject to annual appropriations[.]” C.R.S. § 23-7.4-302(3)(a). For FY25-26, the General Assembly made an annual appropriation of \$1,770,987.00 to the DMVA for the program, and twenty-five percent (25%) more than that amount is \$2,213,733.75. *See* SB25-247, § 2; *see also* Exhibit A – Legislative Council Staff Fiscal Note for SB25-247, pp. 2-3.

The General Assembly did not make a FY25-26 annual appropriation to any of the IHEs for the waiver program and the fiscal note prepared by Legislative Council Staff for SB25-247 indicated that “[t]he bill does not change the expenditure or revenue of [IHEs]” and “no change in appropriations [to IHEs] is required.” *See* SB25-247, § 2; Exhibit A – Legislative Council Staff Fiscal Note for SB25-247, pp. 2-3.

IV. Legal Analysis and Discussion

When interpreting a statute, the primary task “is to ascertain and give effect to the intent of the legislature.” *W. Colo. Motors, LLC v. Gen. Motors, LLC*,

411 P.3d 1068, 1074 (Colo. App. 2016). Where statutory language is clear, the statute is interpreted according to its plain and ordinary meaning “without resort to other statutory construction aids.” *Id.* Statutory provisions must be read as a whole giving “consistent, harmonious, and sensible effect to all parts.” *Id.* The legislature’s choice of language must be respected by “not add[ing] words to a statute or subtract[ing] words from it.” *Dep’t of Revenue v. Agilent Techs., Inc.*, 441 P.3d 1012, 1016 (Colo. 2019).

Applying these principles to the statutory provisions discussed here, nothing in the plain language of SB25-247 requires IHEs to bear any difference in cost between the amount that is annually appropriated to the DMVA for the tuition waiver program and the calculated tuition for base member enrollment, as described in C.R.S. § 23-7.4-302(3)(b)(II). *W. Colo. Motors, LLC*, 411 P.3d at 1074. To read an implied duty on the part of IHEs to do so would improperly add language to the statute in contravention of the General Assembly’s chosen language. *Agilent Techs., Inc.*, 441 P.3d at 1016. And notably, the “calculated tuition for base member enrollment” that the DMVA is required to calculate under subsection (3)(b)(II) is just a calculation, not a “tuition cap” as described in the question presented. Rather, the plain language of SB25-247 provides that the program is “subject to annual appropriations,” C.R.S. § 23-7.4-302(3)(a), so the de facto tuition cap for FY25-26 is \$1,770,987.00 because that is the amount

the General Assembly appropriated to the DMVA for the program. *See* SB25-247, § 2; Exhibit A – Legislative Council Staff Fiscal Note for SB25-247, pp. 2-3.

Furthermore, the General Assembly’s chosen language specifies what happens if there is a difference between the calculated tuition for base member enrollment, as described in subsection (3)(b)(II), which must be respected.

Agilent Techs., Inc., 441 P.3d at 1016. In the scenario contemplated by the question presented here where the difference between the calculated tuition for base member enrollment and the annual appropriation is less than twenty-five percent, SB25-247 expressly provides that the DMVA “may prorate funding and distribute funds to each designated IHE proportionately.” C.R.S. § 23-7.4-302(3)(b)(IV)(B). To read an implied duty on the part of IHEs to bear any difference in cost in that scenario would improperly add language to the statute in contravention of the General Assembly’s chosen language. *Agilent Techs., Inc.*, 441 P.3d at 1016.

Finally, the conclusion reached by this informal legal opinion is further supported by the fact that the General Assembly made a FY25-26 annual appropriation for the tuition waiver program only to the DMVA. *See* SB25-247, § 2. And notably, the fiscal note prepared by Legislative Council Staff for SB25-247 indicated that “[t]he bill does not change the expenditure or revenue of [IHEs]” and “no change in appropriations [to IHEs] is required.” Exhibit A – Legislative Council Staff Fiscal Note for SB25-247, pp. 2-3.



Fiscal Note
Legislative Council Staff
Nonpartisan Services for Colorado’s Legislature

SB 25-247: TUITION WAIVER & COLORADO NATIONAL GUARD

Prime Sponsors:

Sen. Bridges; Kirkmeyer
Rep. Bird; Taggart

Fiscal Analyst:

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Bill Outcome: Signed into Law
Drafting number: LLS 25-0932

Version: Final Fiscal Note
Date: June 18, 2025

Fiscal note status: The fiscal note reflects the enacted bill, which is recommended by the Joint Budget Committee as part of the 2025 Long Bill package.

Summary Information

Overview. The bill requires that institutions of higher education waive tuition for members of the Colorado National Guard, and requires that the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs reimburse schools for the cost.

Types of impacts. The bill is projected to affect the following areas on an ongoing basis:

- State Expenditures

Appropriations. For FY 2025-26, the enacted bill includes an appropriation of \$562,787 to the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.

Table 1
State Fiscal Impacts

| Type of Impact | Budget Year FY 2025-26 | Out Year FY 2026-27 |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| State Revenue | \$0 | \$0 |
| State Expenditures (General Fund) | \$562,787 | \$1,770,987 |
| Transferred Funds | \$0 | \$0 |
| Change in TABOR Refunds | \$0 | \$0 |
| Change in State FTE | 0.0 FTE | 0.0 FTE |

Summary of Legislation

Under current law, the Department of Veterans and Military Affairs (DMVA) operates a tuition assistance program for members of the Colorado National Guard that covers at least half the cost of tuition at an institution of higher education. The bill requires that a member receive up to 100 percent of the cost of tuition. Each institution must provide a full tuition waiver to members enrolled at their school. Subject to annual appropriations, the DMVA must reimburse the schools for the tuition costs of enrolled members. The department may request adjustments to the annual appropriation based on changes to enrollment or the cost of tuition.

Assumptions

It is estimated that the full cost to waive tuition for members of the Colorado National Guard is \$1,770,987 in FY 2025-26, based on three-year average attendance at each institution of higher education. The Long Bill for FY 2025-26 includes \$1,202,200 for tuition assistance, consistent with tuition assistance appropriations under current law. This bill changes the assistance program to a full tuition waiver, and includes an appropriation for the difference between the Long Bill appropriation and the full cost to the DMVA.

State Expenditures

The bill increases costs in the DMVA by about \$563,000 beginning in FY 2025-26, paid from the General Fund. Based on current participation in the program, this increase represents the amount required to reimburse state institutions of higher education for the full cost of tuition.

The full cost of the program is estimated to be \$1.8 million per year, which includes \$1.2 million in funding currently appropriated for the program (based on the FY 2025-26 Long Bill) and the \$563,000 increase in appropriations included in this bill. It is estimated that spending on the program will continue at this level in FY 2026-27, and that future increases in either enrollment or tuition will be addressed during the annual budget process.

Institutions of Higher Education

The bill does not change the expenditure or revenue of state institutions of higher education. Under current law and practice, members receiving tuition assistance from DMVA receive at least half of the tuition cost, and other sources of financial aid or personal spending covers the remainder. Schools receive the full amount of tuition both under current law and pursuant to this bill. No change in appropriations is required.

Effective Date

This bill was signed into law by the Governor and took effect on May 1, 2025.

State Appropriations

For FY 2025-26, the enacted bill includes a General Fund appropriation of \$562,787 to the Colorado National Guard Tuition Cash Fund. The cash fund is continuously appropriated to the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to reimburse schools for tuition waivers.

State and Local Government Contacts

Joint Budget Committee Staff

The revenue and expenditure impacts in this fiscal note represent changes from current law under the bill for each fiscal year. For additional information about fiscal notes, please visit the [General Assembly website](#).