



Legislative Council Staff

Nonpartisan Services for Colorado's Legislature

Fiscal Note

Drafting Number: LLS 21-0058
Prime Sponsors: Sen. Garcia
Rep. Ortiz

Date: March 04, 2021
Bill Status: Senate SVMA
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Bill Topic: **VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION PILOT PROGRAM**

Summary of Fiscal Impact:

<input type="checkbox"/> State Revenue	<input type="checkbox"/> TABOR Refund
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State Expenditure	<input type="checkbox"/> Local Government
<input type="checkbox"/> State Transfer	<input type="checkbox"/> Statutory Public Entity

The bill creates a suicide prevention pilot program for post 9/11 veterans in El Paso County. The bill increases state expenditures in FY 2021-22 through FY 2024-25.

Appropriation Summary: For FY 2021-22, the bill requires an appropriation of \$1,681,600 to the Department of Human Services.

Fiscal Note Status: The fiscal note reflects the introduced bill.

Table 1
State Fiscal Impacts Under SB 21-129

		Budget Year FY 2021-22	Out Year FY 2022-23
Revenue		-	-
Expenditures	General Fund	\$1,681,600	\$2,963,200
Transfers		-	-
TABOR Refund		-	-

Summary of Legislation

The bill creates the Veteran Suicide Prevention Pilot Program in the Department of Human Services (DHS) to reduce the suicide rate among post 9/11 veterans by providing free behavioral health services. The department must develop an individualized treatment plan for each veteran accessing services. The pilot program is established in El Paso County and may expand to other areas at any time. The DHS may contract with a qualified nonprofit organization to administer the pilot program.

At the department's annual SMART Act hearing, DHS must report on the program's effectiveness and include recommendations for changes and/or continuation. The program is repealed June 30, 2025.

State Expenditures

The bill increases state expenditures in the DHS by about \$1.7 million in FY 2021-22 (a one half year impact), and by about \$3.0 million in FY 2022-23. New costs continue through FY 2024-25 and the program's repeal. State expenditures are displayed in Table 2 and described below.

Table 2
State Expenditures Under SB 21-129

Cost Components	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23
Department of Human Services		
Contracted Services	\$1,281,600	\$2,563,200
Marketing, Outreach and Education	\$200,000	\$200,000
Professional Program Evaluation	\$200,000	\$200,000
Total	\$1,681,600	\$2,963,200

Contracted services. The DHS will contract with a nonprofit organization to administer the program and provide treatment to veterans. In FY 2007-08, the department operated a similar pilot program at a cost of about \$3,000 per client. Increased for inflation, the current cost per client is about \$3,600. The number of post 9/11 veterans is unknown but the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that 26 percent of veterans are post 9/11 veterans. For El Paso County, this equates to about 21,700 post 9/11 veterans. A 2019 report by the Colorado Health Institute on veteran suicide estimates that 7.3 percent of veterans report poor mental health, and national studies indicate that about 45 percent of adults with a mental health issue seek treatment in a given year. For El Paso County, this equates to 712 clients annually at a per client treatment cost of \$3,600. For FY 2021-22, contracted services assumes a one half year impact.

Marketing, outreach and education. During the first year of the program, the department and program administrator will design and develop marketing materials for the program and begin outreach and education with affected communities. These costs include maintenance of a dedicated phone and email hotline, and ongoing advertisement in the El Paso County media market.

Professional program evaluation. The DHS will contract for professional evaluation services to assist in the design of the pilot program, to outline evaluative data collection needs, and to work with the administrator and affected clients to prepare a pilot evaluation. Professional evaluation will inform the department's recommendations to the state legislature.

Effective Date

The bill takes effect 90 days following adjournment of the General Assembly sine die, assuming no referendum petition is filed.

State Appropriations

For FY 2021-22, the bill requires a General Fund appropriation of \$1,681,600 to the Department of Human Services

State and Local Government Contacts

Human Services