

# 2023 Critical Needs Veterans Services

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**Justice Services**  
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# Department's Strategic Plan Goals

- The El Paso County Veterans Service Office is responsible for assisting residents of the State of Colorado who served honorably in the United States Army, Air Force, Coast Guard, Navy, Marine Corps or any other armed service of the nation.
- The primary purpose of the office is to provide personalized local service to veterans and other claimants, and to assist them in cutting through the maze of red tape frequently involved in direct dealings with federal government agencies.



# Department's Operating Indicators

- CRS 28-5-801. “Establishment of veterans service offices. (1) The board of county commissioner of each county in this state shall establish a county veterans service office and shall appoint a county veterans service officer for such county...”
- Over 92,000 veterans in El Paso County, not including surviving family members and transitioning active service members.
- 6,000 – 8,000 client contacts monthly.
- Over \$18,000 annually for EPC Veteran Service Office clients compared to \$9,200 EPC population average.
- Over \$800,000 in retro-active payments already received this year.



# Budgetary Highlights

- County leadership approved an Assistant Veteran Service Officer position which carries a client workload and supervisory responsibilities.
- In 2022, we were authorized an additional Administrative Technician to provide service at the main office and at Mt. Carmel Veteran Service Office.



# Critical Needs and Justification

This request is for an Appeals Specialist/Associate VSO position:

- The Colorado Division of Veterans Affairs currently has only one Appeals Specialist covering the entire state. There is a 3-5 year wait for a client to have a hearing with a Veteran's Law Judge, requiring interaction and preparation at the local level.
- 25-30% of current federal appeal hearings in Colorado are EPC Veterans.



# Critical Needs and Justification

- The PACT Act has increased EPC workload significantly since being signed into law August 10, 2022, pushing our appointment wait times from 3-4 weeks to 6 plus weeks.
- Since 2021, there has been a 72% increase in appointments for EPC Veterans Service Office.
- Having our own Appeals Specialist would provide better individual customer service and positive outcomes for EPC veterans. This additional VSO also would be able to absorb regular claim workload when not conducting a hearing.



# Base Budget & Critical Needs

<u>Description</u>	<u>2023 Base Budget</u>	<u>2023 Critical Needs/Requests</u>	<u>2023 PBB Requested</u>
<b>Veteran Services</b>	<b>691,394</b>	<b>60,207</b>	<b>751,601</b>

**Funding Request 2023**

**On Going:**

- Appeals Specialist \$59,758

**One time:**

- License setup \$449







Questions?