

Fiscal impact reports (FIRs) are prepared by the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) for standing finance committees of the NM Legislature. The LFC does not assume responsibility for the accuracy of these reports if they are used for other purposes.

Current FIRs (in HTML & Adobe PDF formats) are available on the NM Legislative Website (legis.state.nm.us). Adobe PDF versions include all attachments, whereas HTML versions may not. Previously issued FIRs and attachments may be obtained from the LFC in Suite 101 of the State Capitol Building North.

FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Madalena **ORIGINAL DATE** 2-14-2007
LAST UPDATED _____ **HB** 1128
SHORT TITLE Native American Veterans Outreach Services **SB** _____
ANALYST Dearing

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY07	FY08		
	\$30.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Indian Affairs Department (IAD)

Veterans' Services Department (VSD)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 1128 appropriates \$30 thousand from the general fund for expenditure in FY08 to Veterans' Services department for a veterans' outreach program for Native Americans in the Rio Grande corridor, including the nineteen pueblos.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$30 thousand contained in House Bill 1128 is a recurring expense to the General Fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY08 shall revert to the General Fund.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

According to the New Mexico Veterans' Services Department, there are more than 180,000 veterans in New Mexico, of which 15,000 are Native American.

Federal and state veterans service officers cite cultural/language differences, and the rural vicinity of tribal communities as barriers for effective Native American veteran outreach effectiveness. Department outreach consists of registering New Mexico veterans and their families for state benefits and assisting veterans with claims for federal Veteran Administration compensation, pension, education, medical care, and death benefits.

In the 2005 legislative session Senate Bill 190 appropriated fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000; \$47,500 after sanding) to establish an outreach program to assist Native American veterans to obtain information and file for state and federal benefits offered to veterans residing on tribal lands. The funding has since been considered a recurring program and the department received \$50 thousand in FY06 and has budget that amount in FY07. The FY08 executive recommendation includes \$50 thousand as well. House Bill 1128 carries a provision stipulating Native American veterans' in the Rio Grande corridor; it is unknown whether these veterans were eligible under the Senate Bill 190 funding.

The department's outreach effort discovered that, Native Americans are under represented regarding applying for State and federal VA benefits and services." In FY 2006, the department conducted nine Native American veteran conferences on tribal lands reaching approximately 1,600 Native American veterans and their families.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

The department has several performance measures which would be positively impacted with the appropriation in House Bill 1128. Specifically, the department has measures regarding % NM veterans impacted by department programs and # of veterans served by field officers.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

The Veterans' Services department would be the fiscal agent for the appropriation in House Bill 1128.

PD/mt