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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 03/02/13

SPONSOR Dodge LAST UPDATED _____ HB 495

SHORT TITLE Services for Homeless Veterans SB _____

ANALYST Esquibel

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY13	FY14		
	\$100.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Veterans' Services Department (VSD)

Human Services Department (HSD)

Mortgage Finance Authority (MFA)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 495 (HB 495) appropriates \$100 thousand in general fund revenue in FY14 to the Veterans' Services Department (VSD) to contract for services for indigent homeless veterans in rural areas of the state.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$100 thousand contained in HB 495 is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY14 shall revert to the general fund.

The Mortgage Finance Authority (MFA) has several programs that serve veterans including rental assistance and homeless programs. In FY13, the MFA received \$36 thousand in funding from the single statewide behavioral health entity contractor, Optum Health, which has been allocated for rental assistance programs for veterans in Bernalillo, Dona Ana, and Santa Fe Counties.

The VSD currently contracts with the New Mexico Veterans' Integration Center in Albuquerque and the Mesilla Valley of Hope in Las Cruces.

The House Appropriations and Finance Committee adopted the Executive recommendation for the VSD FY14 budget which totals \$3.46 million as reflected in HB2.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The VSD partnered with veteran service organizations and the City of Gallup in October 2012 to host a veteran "stand down" and more than 50 veterans and their families showed up for services. The VSD assisted veterans in applying for federal and state veterans' benefits. Other agencies assisted veterans in applying for job placement, housing, veterans' affairs (VA) and social security benefits. The Indian Health Service provided flu shots and local barbers offered haircuts. There were also locations that provided showers and free hot meals for veterans.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

Legislation pending in the 2013 Legislative Session would provide continued funding to the MFA for homeless and supportive housing programs that can be utilized by veterans. These bills include SB 50, Rapid Re-housing of Certain Homeless Persons, and SB 32, Long-Term Housing for Certain Persons.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

The Human Services Department (HSD) indicates a variety of state and federally funded behavioral health services for veterans are funded by the Behavioral Health Services Division, the single state authority for mental health and for substance abuse.

The HSD suggests HB 495 is vague and does not specify the types of services anticipated for indigent homeless veterans and could be amended to specify the types of services to be funded by the appropriation.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

The U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs (VA) estimates that 10 percent of all homeless people are veterans. There is no average homeless veteran since there are all ages and both men and women who have fallen through the cracks and ended up on the streets. This happens because of several reasons including PTSD, drug and alcohol abuse, loss of jobs, legal issues, and the inability for some veterans to transition from military life to civilian life.

RAE/svb:blm