

HB 18 - 1343 – Continuation of the Colorado Veterans’ Service to Career Program

Representatives Lee and Carver

Please Vote YES on HB 18-1343

Purpose:

- This bill continues the Colorado Veterans’ Service to Career Pilot Program in the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment enacted in HB 16-1267 and includes funding for the pilot program that repeals January 1, 2019, and funding for the balance of FY 2018-19. The bill requires workforce development centers to partner with nonprofit agencies in applying for grants to develop and implement career services for veterans, spouses and eligible participants, including military personnel who are within six months of ending their military service.

Background

- House Bill 16-1267 was enacted to address employment issues that veterans face when returning to civilian life. They often find that they are unable to apply the skills learned in the military to civilian careers or have a hard time finding employment outside of the military. In 2015, the Veteran’s Administration Economic Opportunity Report estimated that veterans are 20% more likely to be unemployed than their non-military peers with roughly 400,000 unemployed veterans across the nation.
- The Colorado Veterans’ Service to Career Pilot Program established a grant program that consisted of a partnership between workforce development centers and nonprofit organizations to receive state funding to provide training services to veterans leaving the military so that they are able to find employment through the provision of the following services: skills training; apprenticeship and internship placement; job placement; and support services such as financial counseling, interviewing techniques, etc.
- The pilot program was funded with an initial \$500,000 and .4 FTE from the Marijuana Tax Cash Funds in FY 2016-17 and grants were awarded to three entities: Arapahoe-Douglas Workforce Center; El Paso County Workforce Center and Mt. Carmel Center of Excellence and Larimer County Workforce Center.
- Services offered through the pilot program were designed to enhance workforce center services not available under the federal act.

Intent of HB 18-1343

- The bill continues the pilot program by including a legislative declaration; adds new definitions such as “veteran” and veteran’s spouse”; and a person who is actively serving in the military and is within six months of being discharged under the conditions of less than honorable to the definition of “eligible participant” and “internship”. Amends the definition of “integrated service and support center”.
- The bill requires the workforce centers and nonprofit agencies to demonstrate that the services offered do not duplicate services provided under the federal act and complement other services offered under the program. It also requires the workforce centers to demonstrate how the services will be tailored to eligible participants with barriers to employment access such as veterans with bad conduct discharges, National Guard and Military Reserve veterans, Vietnam Era veterans, or those experiencing homelessness.
- New language is added that requires the Department of Labor and Employment to develop an evaluation methodology to measure program outcomes and effectiveness prior to initiating the bid process for awarding grants. The Department is required to award the grants no later than November 1, 2018. The grant awards shall include data tracking requirements to measure outcomes and effectiveness. Any unspent funds that the

Department has as of June 30, 2018, may be rolled forward to be used in FY 2018-19. The bill allows the expenditure of funds to allow the current grants to close out, while providing funding for grants awarded in November 2018.

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