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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 02/25/21

SPONSOR Pope LAST UPDATED \_\_\_\_\_ HB \_\_\_\_\_

SHORT TITLE VSD Responsibility for Homeless Veterans SB 275

ANALYST Klundt

### ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY21	FY22	FY23	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
<b>Total</b>		≤\$76.6	≤\$76.6	≤\$153.2	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

#### Responses Received From

Veterans' Services Department (VSD)

### SUMMARY

#### Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 275 (SB275) authorizes the Veterans' Services Department (VSD) to assist veterans who are experiencing, or at risk for experiencing, homelessness to access services and to provide assistance to organizations offering services to those veterans. No appropriation is contained in this bill.

### FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

VSD reported the operating budget would not be sufficient to absorb the financial cost of developing a new program to provide assistance to veterans who are homeless or at risk of experiencing homelessness. The department reported that due to the increased workload, an additional FTE may be required for program development and contract management. The average cost including benefits for an FTE at VSD in FY21 was \$76.6 thousand.

In addition, the bill does not contain additional general fund to provide housing assistance services to veterans so it is therefore assumed the department is intended to seek federal or other non-general fund resources to support this program.

## SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The U.S. Department of Veteran’s Affairs (VA) “specialized programs for homeless Veterans serve hundreds of thousands of homeless and at-risk Veterans each year. Independently and in collaboration with federal the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provide housing vouchers with VA supportive services to help Veterans who are homeless and their families find and sustain permanent housing. Through public housing authorities, HUD provides rental assistance vouchers for privately owned housing to Veterans who are eligible for VA health care services and are experiencing homelessness. VA case managers may connect these Veterans with support services such as health care, mental health treatment and substance use counseling to help them in their recovery process and with their ability to maintain housing in the community. Among VA homeless continuum of care programs, HUD-VASH enrolls the largest number and largest percentage of Veterans who have experienced long-term or repeated homelessness. At the end of FY 2019, there were 90,749 Veterans with active HUD-VASH vouchers and 83,684 vouchers in use.”

HUD conducts an estimate of homeless veterans at a point-in-time (PIT). According to the latest set of data derived from the 2019 PIT Estimate, New Mexico’s Veteran Homeless Population in the U.S. was estimated to be 257 with an estimated 3,000 near homelessness. Covid-19 has also contributed to New Mexico’s near homeless population. Homeless veterans have been impacted with limited personal protective equipment and additionally, their access to mental health, health care, safe housing and employment pose an ongoing challenge.

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