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## **Aurora, Adams County launch pilot program supporting unhoused veterans**

AURORA, Colo. – The city of Aurora and Adams County have entered into a new partnership to connect unhoused veterans with employment and services. On June 28, Aurora City Council unanimously passed a resolution for a one-year pilot program, which has been in effect since July 1. Adams County passed the intergovernmental agreement on July 20.

The program is the result of many productive conversations between Aurora Mayor Mike Coffman, Adams County Commissioner Charles “Chaz” Tedesco, the Aurora Veterans’ Affairs Commission, the Adams County Veterans Advisory Commission, Bayaud Enterprises Inc., Adams County staff and Aurora city staff.

“We have an obligation to take care of those who have served this country, give them a chance to find a good paying job, and help them get a roof over their head,” Coffman said.

The program will assist up to eight veterans at a time, and over the course of six months, get them into long-term meaningful employment. Bayaud Enterprises Inc. uses a multi-pronged strategy to reach and recruit unhoused veterans. Any veterans who were not dishonorably discharged are eligible. Participants will be picked up from wherever they are currently staying in the Adams County portion of the city of Aurora and transported to an employment opportunity for 24 hours a week. Work assignments come from Aurora’s Parks, Recreation and Open Space Department.

The participants will be asked to complete an additional 15 hours each week in training, coaching, case management, and connecting with additional service providers. The veterans will also be connected with other agencies in the community to obtain other needs, such as housing.

Enrollees are paid \$80 per day through Dec. 31 and \$96 per day between Jan. 1, 2022, and June 30, 2022. They also receive \$8 per workday for food.

“Too often our veterans struggle with housing and employment after leaving the military,” Tedesco said. “This program is a step in the right direction for addressing these issues and giving our veterans a path to stable employment, with access to resources throughout the course of the program.”

The pilot will be one year in length and evaluations will be ongoing throughout the pilot’s progression.

The program costs \$288,018.44. Funding comes from marijuana programs, federal sources, and private grants. Aurora, through Adams County, contracts with Bayaud Enterprises Inc. to administer all aspects of the program.

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