

Veterans' Extended Outreach Grant Draft Bullets for Ways and Means Members

Proposal

Should the Legislature provide the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs additional dollars above and beyond monies distributed under ORS 406.454, the Agency proposes using those dollars in a Veterans' Extended Outreach Grant program to achieve the following outcomes:

- Target new veterans who have never filed a claim before with a special emphasis on Iraq/Afghanistan and Vietnam veterans;
- Must include significant outreach activities to find these veterans;
- Must include measureable outcome metrics (new POAs, Federal dollar recoveries, increased interviews, etc....); and
- Cannot simply supplement what already is being done by the county

Background

Currently, the Agency receives roughly \$3.49 million that it passes through to 34 of 36 counties to help fund County Veteran Services. Each county receives an initial base amount of \$10,400 a year, and additional expansion & enhancement monies that include a base amount of \$13,249 per year with the rest distributed by veteran population.

While this funding formula has been sufficient, there is always more demand for services than supply of available County Veteran Service Officers (CVSO), and there has been robust discussion regarding the equity of population-based funding formulas.

New Dollars

Should new dollars be added to CVSO funding, the fairest way to distribute those dollars is by base amount and grant process; not population. Agency policy opposes discriminating against a veteran based on where the veteran chooses to live. A veteran in Lakeview has as much right to benefits as a veteran in Lake Oswego.

Under this proposal, each county would receive a base amount, and then could apply individually or in regional county partnerships for a grant based on specified needs and outcomes. Obviously, smaller counties or regions would need less money in a grant than an urban county or region. With this balance in mind, a grant evaluation committee made up of ODVA and CVSO members could fairly and equitably distribute funds in a way that focuses on finding new veterans and bringing new federal dollars to Oregon. These outcome goals have long been articulated by the Legislature in both the House and Senate Veterans Committees.

Budget Note

A budget note could accompany the allocation determining the size of the base amount provided to each county; urban and rural representation on the grant committee; and even grant size limits based on population base if appropriate.