



April 17, 2015

Dear County Veterans Service Officers:

In order to ensure Wisconsin's veterans continue to receive the best services possible, the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) and the Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) have worked together to clarify several issues relating to the administration of grants for County Veterans Services Officers (CVSOs) in 2015 and beyond. Details of these changes are as follows:

Hiring Process for CVSOs:

The Legislature's Joint Committee on Finance on April 17, 2015 adopted statutory language that amends Wis. Stat. 45.82(2) to effectively "grandfather" all CVSOs currently employed by counties as of April 15, 2015. WDVA will not require counties to provide any additional documentation that current CVSOs were hired in compliance with civil service or other requirements.

CVSOs hired after April 15, 2015, will be required to follow civil service procedures in the hiring of County Veterans Services Officers if the county wants to remain eligible for the annual CVSO grants. County executives, administrators, and administrative coordinators will be required to certify in writing to WDVA that their county has complied with the civil service hiring process when a new CVSO is hired.

Annual CVSO Grants: With regard to the CVSO hiring process, all counties will be eligible to receive their full 2015 grants under current law, though payment of the grants may be delayed until after enactment of the amendment that will retroactively exclude criteria under Wisconsin Statutes Chapters 59 and 63.

Beginning in 2016, the CVSO grants will be distributed to counties on a reimbursement basis. The following types of expenditures will be eligible for reimbursement:

- Information technology.
- Transportation for veterans and services to veterans with barriers.
- Special outreach to veterans.
- Training provided by the WDVA and USDVA for services to veterans.

Reimbursements will be made on a semi-annual basis. CVSOs will be required to provide documentation of the expenditures, but efforts will be made to minimize the administrative burden of this process. WDVA will develop administrative rules to implement these requirements.

Other Eligible Expenditures: For 2015, CVSO grants **may** be used to reimburse the cost of salaries and fringe benefits for employees. However, beginning with the 2016 grants, only **50 percent** of the grant amount may be used to reimburse salaries and benefits; in 2017, only **25 percent** of the grants may be used to reimburse salaries and benefits. After 2017, counties will be prohibited from using the CVSO grants for salaries and benefits.

Applicability: These requirements will apply to both County Veterans Service Officers and Tribal Veterans Service Officers.

WDVA and WCA appreciate the willingness of County Veterans Service Officers to provide input during the development of these new requirements. The work performed by CVSOs is very important to the men and women who have given of themselves for our state and our nation.

Further information will be forthcoming as the Legislature considers the Joint Committee on Finance's recommendations for the statutory changes outlined above.

Sincerely,



John A. Scocos
Secretary
Department of Veterans Affairs



Mark D. O'Connell
Executive Director
Wisconsin Counties Association