

DISABLED VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE

Enabling Laws

Act 1387 of 2005

History and Organization

Act 376 of 1951 provided appropriation to be expended by the Disabled Veterans Service Office for the purpose of assisting wartime veterans, their dependents, widows and orphans in preparation of their claims for benefits from federal, state and local agencies administering entitlements.

The purpose and mission of the Disabled Veterans Service Office is to render effective representation to the above referenced claimants before the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) and other governmental agencies. In keeping with the purpose of our creation, we are required to develop and prosecute claims, in writing, in person, and by video/teleconferencing with the agencies which serve our clients. We are the premier method of mass transportation of veterans to and from their outpatient appointments when no other options are available.

The Base Level provides our Agency with appropriation and general revenue funding for one (1) Secretarial position, Operating Expenses and Travel. The Disabled Veterans Service Office is located within the Disabled American Veterans, VA Regional Office, Building 65, Room 121, North Little Rock, AR.

The Disabled Veterans Service Office assists claimants in filing for benefits for:

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|----------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| 1. Compensation | 10. In-home health care | 19. Pre-COVA preparation |
| 2. Pension | 11. Domiciliary entrance | 20. Vocational Rehabilitation |
| 3. Education | 12. Champus/ChampVA | 21. Relief from VA co-pays |
| 4. Hospitalization | 13. Soldiers and Sailors Civil Relief Act | 22. Civil Service Claims |
| 5. Discharge correction | 14. All Arkansas laws affecting veterans | |
| 6. TAP/DTAP | 15. U.S. Insurance Programs | |
| 7. Injuries from treatment | 16. Unemployment Compensation | |
| 8. Injuries from training | 17. Widow's Benefits | |
| 9. Military Retirement | 18. Burial Benefits | |

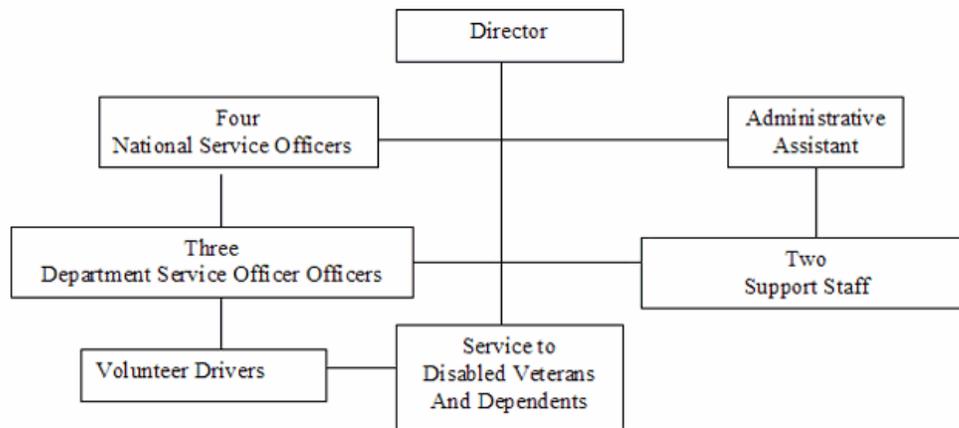
The table below reflects the Statistical Report for this Agency's activities from June 1, 2004 to May 30, 2006, which reflects over **\$4 million monthly and over \$122 million on a biennial basis**. The table also reflects that the Hospital Transportation Network (HTN) operations are also encompassed under the auspices of the Disabled Veterans Service Office. These functions are primarily located in the VA Medical Center, Little Rock and Fayetteville, AR.

<u>OFFICE STATISTICS</u>	<u>04-05</u>	<u>05-06</u>
Interviews	5,956	7,117
Rating Board Appearances	12,159	10,398
New Claims	5,511	6,279
Total Awards	5,333	5,497
Cases Reviewed	13,410	12,461
Monthly Entitlements	\$ 4,107,412	\$ 4,711,503

Annual Entitlements	\$ 58,153,168	\$ 64,072,622
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<u>HOSPITAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK</u>	<u>04-05</u>	<u>05-06</u>
Drivers	178	184
Hours	32,507	39,217
Miles	768,457	793,978
Patients Transported	17,075	19,623

<u>DISABLED TRANSITION ASSISTANCE</u>	<u>04-05</u>	<u>05-06</u>
Service Members Interviewed	252	538
Files Reviewed	187	441



Agency Commentary

The Disabled Veterans Service Office is responsible for ascertaining benefits for veterans, their dependents, widows and orphans. This service is accomplished by assisting such claimants in filing for benefits through the appropriate agency, explaining laws, advising and assisting in procuring and presenting evidence to support such claim, explaining decisions rendered, personally representing claimants in hearings, and preparing briefs in the appeal process before the appropriate agency.

Base level appropriation and general revenue funding for this appropriation consists of \$31,587 in both FY08 and FY09 for salary related expenses for one (1) secretarial position, as well as for operations and travel costs.

The Disabled Veterans Service Office will maintain all past services rendered as referenced in the Agency History and Organization Report and continue to seek new and innovative methods to provide extended service to our clientele. Maintaining the current level of activity, the Agency brings over \$122 million into the State biannually. In addition, volunteer hours provide service work of over \$200,000 to the State's citizens and provide twenty-four (24) vehicles to the Department of Veterans Affairs, saving over \$190,000 in transportation costs.

Expanding our "outreach" efforts has been a major effort. The Service Officers will continue to travel throughout the State, making 20 local visits to outlying towns and servicing over 1,500

veterans and the families of veterans in their hometowns.

The Service Officers Training Conference is an annual event in which all Chapter and County Veterans Service Officers are invited to attend. New benefits that are available are brought forward, and training classes are conducted to ensure that these officers are abreast of all regulations. Each Service Officer who successfully completes this training receives "certification" at the end of the Conference.

REQUESTS: The Agency seeks to continue at the current level with the request for an additional **\$700** each year to be allocated for Travel. The need for additional travel is to allow the Director to attend the Mid-Winter Conference which is held in Washington D.C. each year. All elements of travel are increasing, including gas, room expenses, flights and food. Because this request was not approved last biennium, the Agency Director had to cover the closing two days of the last Mid-Winter Conference himself.

Also, we are requesting an additional **\$300** in Operating Expenses for each year. This would restore the previous level we had, which had to be blocked in the FY07 Annual Budget to cover matching for our secretarial position. Additionally, stamps have gone up, supplies have increased and our workload is increasing, due to additional demands for our services as needed by veterans of the War on Terrorism and Iraqi Freedom.

With the **\$700** increase in Conference and Travel Expenses, and the **\$300** increase in Operating Expenses, our total request is \$32,587 in appropriation and general revenue funding each year.

Audit Findings

DIVISION OF LEGISLATIVE AUDIT
AUDIT OF :
DISABLED VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2004

Findings	Recommendations
None	None

Employment Summary

	Male	Female	Total	%
White Employees	0	1	1	100 %
Black Employees	0	0	0	0 %
Other Racial Minorities	0	0	0	0 %
Total Minorities			0	0 %
Total Employees			1	100 %

Publications

A.C.A 25-1-204

Name	Statutory Authorization	Required for		# Of Copies	Reason (s) for Continued Publication and Distribution
		Governor	General Assembly		
None	N/A	N	N	0	N/A

Agency Position Usage Report

FY2004-2005						FY2005-2006						FY2006-2007					
Authorized in Act	Budgeted			Unbudgeted	% of Authorized Unused	Authorized in Act	Budgeted			Unbudgeted	% of Authorized Unused	Authorized in Act	Budgeted			Unbudgeted	% of Authorized Unused
	Filled	Unfilled	Total	Total			Filled	Unfilled	Total	Total			Filled	Unfilled	Total	Total	
1	1	0	1	0	0.00%	1	1	0	1	0	0.00%	1	1	0	1	0	0.00%

Analysis of Budget Request

Appropriation: 052 - Disabled Vets GR-Operations

Funding Sources: HUA - Miscellaneous Agencies Fund

The Disabled Veterans Service Office offers assistance to veterans in the preparation of their claims to the U.S. Government for compensation and other benefits, and is primarily supported by the Disabled American Veterans Service Office. The Office also provides transportation services to veterans for outpatient appointments when no other options are available. The State provides appropriation and general revenue funding for one clerical position, as well as for operating expenses and travel.

The Agency's Base Level request is appropriation and general revenue funding in the amount of \$31,587 in each year of the biennium with one (1) regular position. A cost of living increase is not incorporated in Base Level pending the outcome of the Classification and Compensation Study. The Base Level request for Regular Salaries is \$20,019 each year. FY07 salary levels have been held flat each year for the Agency's one (1) incumbent. Personal Services Matching reflects increases in the Base Level due to certain increases in Worker's Compensation rates. Personal Services Matching also includes a \$30 increase in the monthly contribution for State employee's health insurance for a total State match per budgeted employee of \$350/month.

The Agency Change Level Request includes additional appropriation and general revenue funding in the amount of \$1,000 each year and is comprised of the following:

Operating Expenses- Increase in appropriation and general revenue funding in the amount of \$300 in each year for office supplies. This request will restore the authorized amount from the 2005-2007 biennium and provide for increased operating costs related to the rising prices of office supplies and to an increased workload related to additional services requested by veterans of the War on Terrorism and Iraqi Freedom.

Travel and Conference Fees - Increase in appropriation and general revenue funding in the amount of \$700 in each year for travel expenses directly related to the Director's attendance of the Annual State Conference. Although in previous years this expense has been covered by the Disabled American Veterans Service Office, budget constraints no longer allow them to cover this expense. Because it is essential that the Director attend this Convention, the Agency considers this request to be a critical need of the Agency.

The Executive Recommendation provides for the Agency Request, which includes new general revenue above the Base Level as follows:

- \$300 each year of the biennium for Operating Expenses to provide for increased operating costs for office supplies and to provide for an increased workload due to the additional services requested by veterans of the War on Terrorism and Iraqi Freedom.
- \$700 each year of the biennium for Travel and Conference Fees for to enable the Director to attend the Annual State Conference.

Appropriation Summary

Appropriation: 052 Disabled Vets GR-Operations
Funding Sources: HUA - Miscellaneous Agencies Fund

Historical Data

Agency Request and Executive Recommendation

Commitment Item	2005-2006	2006-2007	2006-2007	2007-2008			2008-2009		
	Actual	Budget	Authorized	Base Level	Agency	Executive	Base Level	Agency	Executive
Regular Salaries 5010000	18,368	20,019	20,019	20,019	20,019	20,019	20,019	20,019	20,019
#Positions	1								
Personal Services Matching 5010003	8,043	8,482	8,198	8,848	8,848	8,848	8,848	8,848	8,848
Operating Expenses 5020002	1,834	1,550	1,834	1,550	1,850	1,850	1,550	1,850	1,850
Conference & Travel Expenses 5050009	1,123	1,170	1,170	1,170	1,870	1,870	1,170	1,870	1,870
Professional Fees 5060010	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Data Processing 5090012	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Capital Outlay 5120011	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	29,368	31,221	31,221	31,587	32,587	32,587	31,587	32,587	32,587
Funding Sources									
General Revenue 4000010	29,368	31,221		31,587	32,587	32,587	31,587	32,587	32,587
Total Funding	29,368	31,221		31,587	32,587	32,587	31,587	32,587	32,587
Excess Appropriation/(Funding)	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0
Grand Total	29,368	31,221		31,587	32,587	32,587	31,587	32,587	32,587

The FY07 Budgeted amount in Personal Services Matching exceeds the authorized amount due to matching rate adjustments during the 2005-2007 biennium.

Change Level by Appropriation

Appropriation: 052-Disabled Vets GR-Operations
Funding Sources: HUA - Miscellaneous Agencies Fund

Agency Request

Change Level		2007-2008	Pos	Cumulative	% of BL	2008-2009	Pos	Cumulative	% of BL
BL	Base Level	31,587	1	31,587	100.0	31,587	1	31,587	100.0
C01	Existing Program	1,000	0	32,587	103.1	1,000	0	32,587	103.1

Executive Recommendation

Change Level		2007-2008	Pos	Cumulative	% of BL	2008-2009	Pos	Cumulative	% of BL
BL	Base Level	31,587	1	31,587	100.0	31,587	1	31,587	100.0
C01	Existing Program	1,000	0	32,587	103.1	1,000	0	32,587	103.1

Justification

C01 Increase in appropriation and general revenue funding in the amount of \$700 for Conference Fees and Travel to allow the Agency Director to attend the annual Mid-Winter Conference in Washington DC. Also, increase in appropriation and general revenue funding in the amount of \$300 for Operating Expenses to restore the authorized amount from the previous biennium which was reduced out of base level because the appropriation was blocked in the FY07 AOP to allow the Agency to fully fund the salary and matching for the 1 full time position and to provide for increasing operating costs.