

# DISABLED VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE

## Enabling Laws

Act 640 of 2003

## History and Organization

Act 376 of 1951 appropriated \$5,000 annually 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 Base Level provides our Agency with appropriation and general revenue funding for one (1) secretarial position, maintenance and operations, and travel.

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), the Social Security Administration 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 presently the only veterans' service organization in the State who represents claimants before the Social Security Administration, and we are also the premier method of mass transportation of veterans to and from their outpatient appointments when no other options are available.

The Disabled Veterans Service Office is located within the Disabled American Veterans, VA Regional Office, Building 65, Room 121, North Little Rock, AR.

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

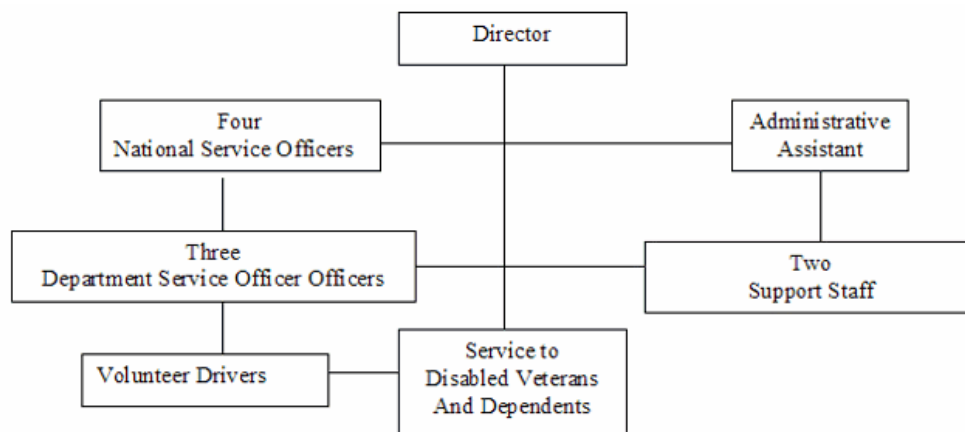
- |                            |                             |                               |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Compensation            | 10. In-home health care     | 17. SS DIB claims             |
| 2. Pension                 | 11. Domiciliary entrance    | 18. Pre-hearing SS interviews |
| 3. Education               | 12. Champus/ChampVA         | 19. Pre-COVA preparation      |
| 4. Hospitalization         | 13. Soldiers and Sailors    | 20. Vocational Rehabilitation |
| 5. Discharge correction    | Civil Relief Act            | 21. Relief from VA co-pays    |
| 6. TAP/DTAP                | 14. All Arkansas laws       | 22. Civil Service Claims      |
| 7. Injuries from treatment | affecting veterans          | 23. DOL Discrimination claims |
| 8. Injuries from training  | 15. U.S. Insurance Programs | 24. Burial Benefits           |
| 9. Military Retirement     | 16. Unemployment            | 25. Widows benefits           |
|                            | Compensation                | 26. DEA/Dep Education         |

The table below reflects the Statistical Report for this agency's activities from June 1, 2002 to May 30, 2004, which reflects over \$3 million monthly and over \$100 million on a biennium 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.

<u>OFFICE STATISTICS</u>	<u>02-03</u>	<u>03-04</u>
Interviews	5,048	5,032
Rating Board Appearances	11,401	10,459
New Claims	6,164	3,763
Total Awards	4,756	5,032
Cases Reviewed	12,319	11,495
Monthly Entitlements	\$ 3,735,095	\$ 3,495,108
Annual Entitlements	\$ 52,521,237	\$ 53,540,748

<u>HOSPITAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>
Drivers	276	282
Hours	32,111	37,231
Miles	711,579	719,012
Patients Transported	18,509	18,959

<u>DISABLED TRANSITION ASSISTANCE</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>
Service Members Interviewed	172	221
Files Reviewed	176	224



## **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 \$30,492 in FY06 and \$31,221 in FY07 for Salaries and Matching for one secretarial position, as well as for Operations and Travel costs.

The Disabled Veterans Service Office will maintain all past services rendered and continue to seek new and innovative methods to provide extended service to our clientele. All claims listed in the History and Organization Report are to be continued. Maintaining the current level of activity, the Agency brings over \$100 million into the State biannually. In addition, volunteer hours provide service work of over \$200,000 to the State's citizens and provide seventeen (17) 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.

REQUEST: The agency seeks to continue at the current level of operations with the request for an additional \$500 each year to be allocated for Travel. The need for additional travel is to allow the Director to attend the State Convention each year. In the past, this expense has been covered by the Department of Disabled American Veterans. However, due to their budget cuts this expense can no longer be covered. The Convention lasts four days, and it is essential the Director attend this Convention.

With the \$500 added for Travel each year, our total request is \$30,992 for FY06 and \$31,721 for FY07.

## **Audit Findings**

DIVISION OF LEGISLATIVE AUDIT  
AUDIT OF :  
DISABLED VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2003

<u>Findings</u>	<u>Recommendations</u>
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

## **Analysis of Budget Request**

**Appropriation / Program:** 052 - Disabled Vets GR

**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 Base Level request for this Agency is \$30,492 for FY06 and \$31,221 for FY07 and includes graduated salary increases of 3% to 1.5% each year over FY05 salary levels, along with related Personal Services Matching costs for the 1 Base Level position. This includes a \$600 minimum increase for employees earning \$20,000 or below. Included in Personal Services Matching is a \$40 increase in the monthly contribution for State employee's health insurance for a total State match of \$320 per month.

The Agency is requesting the following change level:

**Travel/Conference Fees:** Increase in appropriation and general revenue funding in the amount of \$500 in each year for travel expenses directly related to the Director's attendance of the Annual State Convention. 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 Base Level Request.

## Appropriation / Program Summary

**Appropriation / Program:** 052 Disabled Vets GR  
**Funding Sources:** HUA-Miscellaneous Agencies Fund

### Historical Data

### Agency Request and Executive Recommendation

Commitment Item	2003-2004	2004-2005	2004-2005	2005-2006			2006-2007		
	Actual	Budget	Authorized	Base Level	Agency	Executive	Base Level	Agency	Executive
Regular Salaries 5010000	18,237	18,819	19,497	19,419	19,419	19,419	20,019	20,019	20,019
<b>#Positions</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
Personal Services Matching 5010003	6,590	7,452	6,813	8,069	8,069	8,069	8,198	8,198	8,198
Operating Expenses 5020002	1,878	1,834	3,747	1,834	1,834	1,834	1,834	1,834	1,834
Travel-Conference Fees 5050009	1,139	1,170	1,170	1,170	1,670	1,170	1,170	1,670	1,170
Professional Fees and Services 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
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,844</b>	<b>29,275</b>	<b>31,227</b>	<b>30,492</b>	<b>30,992</b>	<b>30,492</b>	<b>31,221</b>	<b>31,721</b>	<b>31,221</b>
<b>Funding Sources</b>									
General Revenue 4000010	27,844	28,131		30,492	30,992	30,492	31,221	31,721	31,221
Merit Adjustment Fund 4000055	0	1,144		0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>27,844</b>	<b>29,275</b>		<b>30,492</b>	<b>30,992</b>	<b>30,492</b>	<b>31,221</b>	<b>31,721</b>	<b>31,221</b>
Excess Appropriation/(Funding)	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>27,844</b>	<b>29,275</b>		<b>30,492</b>	<b>30,992</b>	<b>30,492</b>	<b>31,221</b>	<b>31,721</b>	<b>31,221</b>

## Change Level by Appropriation

**Appropriation / Program:** 052-Disabled Vets GR  
**Funding Sources:** HUA-Miscellaneous Agencies Fund

### Agency Request

Change Level		2005-2006	Pos	Cumulative	% of BL	2006-2007	Pos	Cumulative	% of BL
<b>BL</b>	<b>Base Level</b>	30,492	1	30,492	100.0	31,221	1	31,221	100.0
C01	Existing Program	500	0	30,992	101.6	500	0	31,721	101.6

### Executive Recommendation

Change Level		2005-2006	Pos	Cumulative	% of BL	2006-2007	Pos	Cumulative	% of BL
<b>BL</b>	<b>Base Level</b>	30,492	1	30,492	100.0	31,221	1	31,221	100.0
C01	Existing Program	0	0	30,492	100.0	0	0	31,221	100.0

### Justification

C01	Request to increase appropriation and general revenue funding in the amount of \$500 in each year for Travel/Conference fees, to allow the Director to travel within the State of Arkansas to the State Convention each year. It is essential for the Director to attend this four day convention.
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