

DISABLED VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE

Enabling Laws

Act 524 of 2007

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 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:

- | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 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 July 1, 2006 to May 30, 2008, which reflects nearly \$5 million monthly and over \$144 million on a biennial basis. The table also reflects that the Hospital Transportation Network (HTN) operations are 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>2006-2007</u>	<u>2007-2008</u>
Interviews	6,411	6,770
Rating Board Appearances	6,083	9,974
New Claims	4,773	4,734
Total Awards	7,557	6,842
Cases Reviewed	10,676	14,114
Monthly Entitlements	\$4,771,719	\$4,804,377
Annual Entitlements	* \$73,926,149	* \$71,048,707

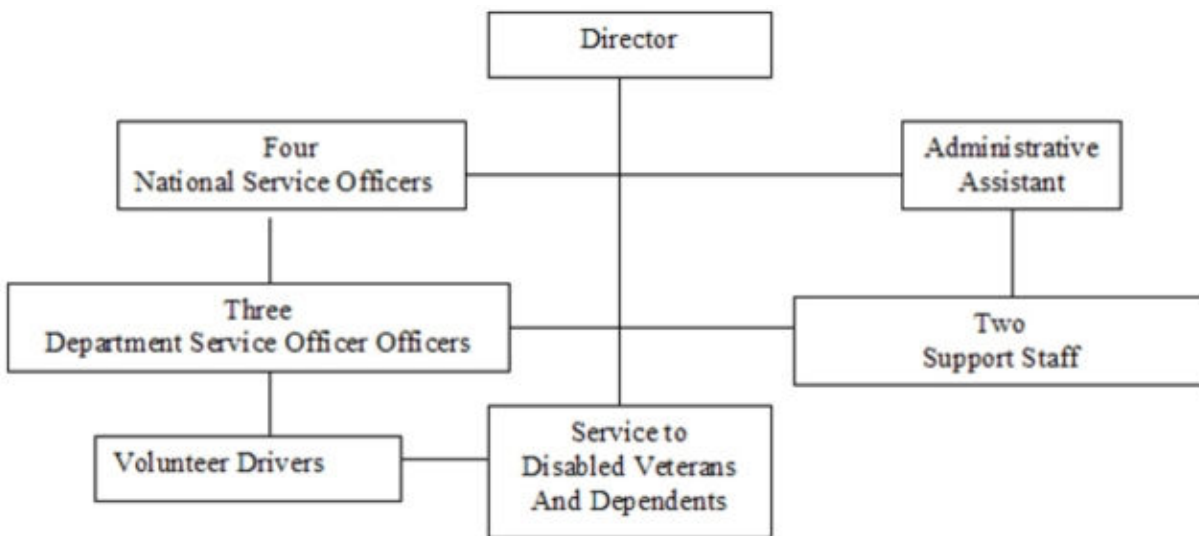
*Annual Entitlements include retro benefits

Hospital Transportation Network

Drivers	100	94
Hours	23,520	21,517
Miles	493,788	427,067
Patients Transported	15,636	11,605

Disabled Transition Assistance

Service Members Interviewed	302	646
Files Reviewed	224	529



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.

FY2009 appropriation and general revenue funding for this appropriation consists of \$32,583 in Regular Salaries with related Personal Services Matching for one (1) Administrative Specialist II position, as well as for Operating Expenses and Conference and Travel Expenses.

The Disabled Veterans Service Office will maintain all past services rendered as referenced in the History and Organization Section of the presentation and continue to seek new and innovative methods to provide extended service to our clientele. All services listed in the History and Organization Report are to be continued. Maintaining the current level of activity, the Agency brings over \$144 million into the State

each biennium. In addition, volunteer hours provide service work of over \$110,000 to the State's citizens. The Disabled Veterans' Service Office also provides eleven (11) vehicles to the Department of Veterans Affairs, saving over \$102,600 in transportation costs.

Expanding our "outreach" efforts has been a major effort. The Service Officers will continue to travel throughout the State, making 25 local visits to outlying towns and servicing over 1,200 veterans and their families.

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 discussed, 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. Over 100 service officers receive Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Certification on a biennial basis.

In addition to Base Level, the Agency is requesting the following:

- As the demand for our services continues to increase, the cost to provide these services also increases. We are experiencing inflation in prices for office supplies as well as for postage. This agency suffered a tremendous loss when funds had to be transferred from our maintenance and operating account to cover the salary increase and matching expenses. Therefore, this agency seeks restoration in Operating Expenses to the previous level of \$1,850 by requesting an \$846 increase each year of the biennium.
- Funds also had to be transferred out of our Conference and Travel line to cover the salary increase and matching expenses. The primary use of funds in the Conference and Travel line is for the Director to attend the Mid-Winter Conference which is held in Washington D.C. each year. This event is critical in receiving the training necessary to provide veterans with better services. Since all elements of travel are continuously increasing, from gas, room expenses, flights and food, this agency seeks restoration to the previous level of \$1,870 by requesting an \$846 increase each year of the biennium.

Audit Findings

DIVISION OF LEGISLATIVE AUDIT
AUDIT OF :
DISABLED VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE

FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2006

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

FY2006 - 2007						FY2007 - 2008						FY2008 - 2009					
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.

Base Level salary for the classified position reflects the recommendations of the Pay Plan Study. A 2.3% Cost of Living Allowance is reflected in the second year of the biennium. The Base Level request for Regular Salaries may include board member Stipend payments and Career Service payments for eligible employees. Personal Services Matching includes a \$75 increase in the monthly contribution for State employee's health insurance for a total State match per budgeted employee of \$425.

The Agency's Base Level request includes appropriation and general revenue funding in the amount of \$35,198 in FY2010 and \$35,842 in FY2011 with one (1) Regular position.

The Agency's Change Level Request includes additional appropriation and general revenue funding in the amount of \$1,692 each year and is comprised of the following:

Operating Expenses - Increase in appropriation and general revenue funding in the amount of \$846 each year of the biennium for office supplies. This request will restore the Operating Expenses line item to the 2007-2009 authorized level and provide for escalated operating costs caused by higher prices and increased workload.

Conference and Travel Expenses - Increase in appropriation and general revenue funding in the amount of \$846 each year for travel expenses directly related to the Director's attendance of the Annual State Conference. This request will restore the Conference and Travel Expenses line item to the 2007-2009 biennium authorized level.

The Executive Recommendation provides for Base Level.

Appropriation Summary

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

Historical Data

Agency Request and Executive Recommendation

Commitment Item		Historical Data			Agency Request and Executive Recommendation			Agency Request and Executive Recommendation		
		2007-2008 Actual	2008-2009 Budget	2008-2009 Authorized	2009-2010			2010-2011		
					Base Level	Agency	Executive	Base Level	Agency	Executive
Regular Salaries	5010000	21,055	21,761	20,827	23,171	23,171	23,171	23,703	23,703	23,703
#Positions		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Personal Services Matching	5010003	9,082	8,794	9,036	9,999	9,999	9,999	10,111	10,111	10,111
Operating Expenses	5020002	1,838	1,004	1,850	1,004	1,850	1,004	1,004	1,850	1,004
Conference & Travel Expenses	5050009	705	1,024	1,870	1,024	1,870	1,024	1,024	1,870	1,024
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		32,680	32,583	33,583	35,198	36,890	35,198	35,842	37,534	35,842
Funding Sources										
General Revenue	4000010	32,680	32,583		35,198	36,890	35,198	35,842	37,534	35,842
Total Funding		32,680	32,583		35,198	36,890	35,198	35,842	37,534	35,842
Excess Appropriation/(Funding)		0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0
Grand Total		32,680	32,583		35,198	36,890	35,198	35,842	37,534	35,842

Actual and Budget amounts in Regular Salaries and Personal Services Matching exceed Authorized amount due to adjustments during the 2009-2011 biennium.

Change Level by Appropriation

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

Agency Request

Change Level		2009-2010	Pos	Cumulative	% of BL	2010-2011	Pos	Cumulative	% of BL
BL	Base Level	35,198	1	35,198	100.0	35,842	1	35,842	100.0
C01	Existing Program	1,692	0	36,890	104.8	1,692	0	37,534	104.7

Executive Recommendation

Change Level		2009-2010	Pos	Cumulative	% of BL	2010-2011	Pos	Cumulative	% of BL
BL	Base Level	35,198	1	35,198	100.0	35,842	1	35,842	100.0
C01	Existing Program	0	0	35,198	100.0	0	0	35,842	100.0

Justification

C01	The Agency requests an increase in appropriation and general revenue funding of \$846 in each year of the biennium for Operating Expenses to cover the costs of office supplies. The Agency also requests an increase in appropriation and general revenue funding of \$846 in each year of the biennium for Conference and Travel Expenses to cover the costs of a training conference and increases in travel costs.
-----	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------