2023 Special Session I

Budget Bill - HB6001 (Enrolled)

Department of Veterans Services

Item 470	First Year - FY2023	Second Year - FY2024
Veterans Benefit Services (46700)	**$36,352,661**	**$36,310,462**
Case Management Services for Veterans Benefits (46701)	$14,229,375	$15,600,170
Virginia Veteran and Family Support Services (46702)	$14,561,635	$14,655,105
Veterans Education, Transition, and Employment Services (46703)	$6,765,151	$5,258,687
Veterans Services Fund Administration (46704)	$796,500	$796,500
Fund Sources:		
General	$29,720,899	$29,678,700
Special	$1,478,078	$1,478,078
Dedicated Special Revenue	$796,500	$796,500
Federal Trust	$4,357,184	$4,357,184

Authority: Title 2.2, Chapters 20, 24, 26, and 27, Code of Virginia.

A. 1. Out of this appropriation, up to $100,000 in the first year and up to $100,000 in the second year from the general fund shall be provided to address the costs associated with support of a grant program to create employment opportunities for veterans by assisting Virginia employers in hiring and retaining veterans. The Department of Veterans Services shall develop program guidelines to ensure that the funding mechanism effectively attracts maximum participation of firms to increase the number of veterans hired.

2. Such funds shall be used to provide grants beginning July 1, 2015, to any business located in Virginia with 300 or fewer employees which has hired a veteran on or after July 1, 2014, with the following additional requirements: (a) each such veteran shall have been hired within five years of the date of his or her discharge from active military service and (b) each such veteran shall have been continuously employed by the business in a full-time job for at least one year. The grant shall equal $1,000 per qualifying business for each veteran who has been hired, and who qualifies under the provisions of this item, up to a maximum grant of $10,000 per business in the fiscal year.

3. Grants shall be issued in the order that each completed eligible application is received. In the event that the amount of eligible grants requested in a fiscal year exceeds the funds available in the Fund, such grants shall be paid in the next fiscal year in which funds are available.

4. The Department shall report no later than October 1 of each fiscal year after the program is implemented on the demand for the program, and any shortage of funding resulting from requests in excess of the available appropriation.

B. Any general fund appropriation for the Virginia Veteran and Family Support Services service area which remains

unexpended at the end of the first year shall be reappropriated and allotted for expenditure for the second year.

C.1. Notwithstanding § 23.1-608, Code of Virginia, the department shall provide the State Council of Higher Education in Virginia the information these schools need to administer the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependent Education Program. The department shall retain the responsibility to certify the eligibility of those who apply for financial aid under this program.

2. No surviving spouse or child may receive the education benefits provided by § 23.1-608, Code of Virginia, and funded by this or similar state appropriations, for more than four years or its equivalent.

D. Included in the amount provided for this item is $24,000 the first year and $24,000 the second year from the general fund for the Angel Wings for Veterans program.

E. Out of the amounts for this item, $118,000 the first year and $118,000 the second year from the general fund is provided to create a new assistant program manager for the Virginia Women Veterans Program.

F. Out of this appropriation, $5,000,000 the first year and $5,000,000 the second year from the general fund is provided to establish a program for prevention and intervention of suicide and opiate addiction for service members, veterans, and their families in the Commonwealth. The Department shall collaborate with federal, state, local and community organizations, public and private institutions, and other service providers to develop programs to prevent suicide among service members and address opiate addiction suffered by service members and veterans. The Department shall coordinate with the Department of Health, Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, and Department of Criminal Justice Services, where applicable, to promote the use of evidence-based practices and alignment with other suicide and opiate misuse prevention and intervention programs administered by the Commonwealth. The Department shall report to the Governor, the Chairs of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees, the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs, and the Director, Department of Planning and Budget, on the method of delivery for these services, the type of services provided, including crisis intervention, behavioral health focused prevention, treatment and recovery support, and on the successes, challenges and opportunities with the program on or before November 1, 2023.

G. Out of this appropriation, $250,000 the first year from the general fund is provided to Hero's Bridge for Hero's Bridge Village to support affordable housing and supportive services for veterans.

H. Out of the appropriation for this item, $2,500,000 the first year and $3,750,000 the second year from the general fund to expand services, including but not limited to opening additional veterans benefits offices in areas where the need for services is greatest, hiring of benefits staff in both new and established offices, and for additional positions in the Virginia Veteran and Family Support Services and Veterans Education, Transition, and Employment Services program areas as needed. The Department shall submit a report on how the funding was allocated and the additional services provided, as well as planned funding allocations and how those expenditures contribute to the Department's strategic goals and desired outcomes, to the Governor, the Chairs of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees, the Secretary of Finance, and the Director, Department of Planning and Budget, by October 1, 2022.

I. In purchasing and maintaining a new customer relationship management system, the Department shall consider functionality available through the integrated e-referral system managed by the Virginia Department of Health in order to leverage existing systems and avoid duplication to the maximum extent practicable.