

DIVISION OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

MISSION

The Division of Veterans' Affairs assists veterans, members of the armed forces and their families and dependents in securing benefits earned through military service. The Division coordinates veterans' programs and services offered by other State agencies, works closely with the Federal Department of Veterans' Affairs and advocates State and Federal actions to meet veterans' needs. The Division serves more than 1.4 million New Yorkers who are veterans, as well as their dependents and those on active duty.

ORGANIZATION AND STAFFING

The Division is headed by the Director who is appointed by the Governor. The Division's central office is in Albany, with regional offices in New York City, Malta in Saratoga County, and Buffalo. The Division is also supported by a network of approximately 60 community field offices in nearly all of the State's counties and New York City.

The Division will have a workforce of 128 during 2001-02. Approximately 86 percent of these positions are paid for by State tax dollars from the General Fund and 14 percent are supported by Federal Medicaid and Veterans' Education funds.

FISCAL BACKGROUND AND BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The 2001-02 recommendation of nearly \$11.5 million for the Division of Veterans' Affairs will fund veterans' counseling services at current levels. The Blind Veteran Annuity Assistance Program, increased in 2000-01, will be maintained at \$3.4 million. In addition, State aid is continued for local county and city veterans' service agencies, which defrays the operating costs of these organizations, and Federal appropriations are increased to match actual Federal support for the Veterans' Education Program.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

During 2001-02, the Division of Veterans' Affairs will operate three principal programs. The largest provides veterans' counseling and claims services through a statewide network of approximately 61 State Veterans' Counselors — all veterans — and 28 support staff. The counselors help veterans complete applications for benefits and services, file for Federal, State, local and private veterans' benefits, and access the services provided by Veterans' Affairs Medical Centers, senior centers, State Veterans' Homes and local nursing homes, public assistance offices and correctional facilities.

The Division of Veterans' Affairs continues to maintain its community outreach activities through senior citizens' seminars and similar forums for women veterans, and is the driving force behind the Interagency Veterans' Council, a consortium of Federal, State and local agencies and non-profit organizations that meets periodically to address and resolve problems and concerns within the veteran community. The Division is also collaborating with various state agencies to better identify veterans and their dependents on public assistance to assist them in securing Federal veterans' benefits to which they are entitled, and to advise senior citizens of veterans' benefits and services that could improve the quality of their lives.

The Division of Veterans' Affairs is responsible for securing a substantial portion of the more than \$900 million in recurring Federal VA payments made directly to New York State veterans and their dependents. During 1999, State Veterans' Counselors made more than 130,000 contacts — an average of over 2,100 annually per counselor — and

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provided some 250,000 services, filing nearly 11,000 applications for benefits for New York's veterans and their dependents. In doing so, State Veterans' Counselors obtained 4,500 VA benefits awards worth approximately \$44 million in Federal payments, most of which are recurring.

Effective October 1, 2000, the Blind Veteran Annuity Assistance Program, which serves more than 3,100 visually impaired veterans and unremarried surviving spouses, was enhanced by raising the value of the annuity from \$500 to \$1,000.

The agency will continue to maintain the New York State Vietnam Veterans' Memorial, which was created in 1984 as a living memorial to citizens who served in the Armed Forces during the war in Southeast Asia. The memorial includes a courtyard in honor of those killed or missing in action, an information resource room, and an art gallery that features a revolving art exhibit and educational programs. Memorial staff also provide educational outreach programs to school districts.

Staff of the Veterans' Education Program investigate and certify post-secondary educational and vocational institutions for eligibility for student veterans' education benefits.

ALL FUNDS APPROPRIATIONS (dollars)

Category	Available	Appropriations	Change	Reappropriations
	2000-01	Recommended 2001-02		Recommended 2001-02
State Operations	7,038,300	7,345,000	306,700	2,297,000
Aid To Localities	7,100,400	4,125,000	(2,975,400)	0
Capital Projects	0	0	0	0
Total	14,138,700	11,470,000	(2,668,700)	2,297,000

ALL FUND TYPES PROJECTED LEVELS OF EMPLOYMENT BY PROGRAM FILLED ANNUAL SALARIED POSITIONS

Full-Time Equivalent Positions (FTE)

Program	2000-01	2001-02	FTE Change
	Estimated FTEs 03/31/01	Estimated FTEs 03/31/02	
Administration			
General Fund	13	13	0
Higher Education			
Special Revenue Funds - Federal	13	13	0
Veteran Counseling Services Program			
General Fund	102	102	0
Total	128	128	0

**STATE OPERATIONS
ALL FUNDS FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS BY FUND TYPE
APPROPRIATIONS
(dollars)**

<u>Fund Type</u>	<u>Available 2000-01</u>	<u>Recommended 2001-02</u>	<u>Change</u>
General Fund	5,603,300	5,855,000	251,700
Special Revenue Funds - Federal	1,435,000	1,490,000	55,000
Total	7,038,300	7,345,000	306,700

Adjustments:

Transfer(s) From	
Special Pay Bill	
General Fund	(454,000)
Special Revenue Funds - Federal	(74,000)
Appropriated 2000-01	6,510,300

**STATE OPERATIONS
ALL FUNDS FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS BY PROGRAM
APPROPRIATIONS
(dollars)**

<u>Program</u>	<u>Available 2000-01</u>	<u>Recommended 2001-02</u>	<u>Change</u>
Administration			
General Fund	884,000	913,000	29,000
Higher Education			
Special Revenue Funds - Federal	1,171,000	1,226,000	55,000
Veteran Counseling Services Program			
General Fund	4,719,300	4,942,000	222,700
Special Revenue Funds - Federal	264,000	264,000	0
Total	7,038,300	7,345,000	306,700

**STATE OPERATIONS - GENERAL AND OFFSET FUNDS
SUMMARY OF PERSONAL SERVICE APPROPRIATIONS AND CHANGES
2001-02 RECOMMENDED
(dollars)**

<u>Program</u>	<u>Total Personal Service</u>		<u>Personal Service Regular (Annual Salaried)</u>	
	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Change</u>
Administration	779,000	0	779,000	0
Veteran Counseling Services Program	4,646,000	43,700	4,646,000	43,700
Total	5,425,000	43,700	5,425,000	43,700

**STATE OPERATIONS - GENERAL AND OFFSET FUNDS
SUMMARY OF NONPERSONAL SERVICE AND MAINTENANCE UNDISTRIBUTED
APPROPRIATIONS AND CHANGES
2001-02 RECOMMENDED
(dollars)**

<u>Program</u>	<u>Total Nonpersonal Service</u>		<u>Contractual Services</u>	
	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Change</u>
Administration	134,000	29,000	134,000	29,000
Veteran Counseling Services Program	560,000	179,000	495,000	179,000
Total	694,000	208,000	629,000	208,000

<u>Program</u>	<u>Maintenance Undistributed</u>	
	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Change</u>
Veteran Counseling Services Program	65,000	0
Total	65,000	0

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**STATE OPERATIONS - OTHER THAN GENERAL FUND AND OFFSET FUNDS
SUMMARY OF APPROPRIATIONS AND CHANGES
2001-02 RECOMMENDED
(dollars)**

<u>Program</u>	<u>Total</u>		<u>Personal Service</u>	
	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Change</u>
Higher Education	1,226,000	55,000	732,000	(18,000)
Veteran Counseling Services Program	264,000	0	0	0
Total	<u>1,490,000</u>	<u>55,000</u>	<u>732,000</u>	<u>(18,000)</u>

<u>Program</u>	<u>Nonpersonal Service</u>		<u>Maintenance Undistributed</u>	
	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Change</u>
Higher Education	494,000	73,000	0	0
Veteran Counseling Services Program	0	0	264,000	0
Total	<u>494,000</u>	<u>73,000</u>	<u>264,000</u>	<u>0</u>

**AID TO LOCALITIES
ALL FUNDS FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS BY FUND TYPE
APPROPRIATIONS
(dollars)**

<u>Fund Type</u>	<u>Available 2000-01</u>	<u>Recommended 2001-02</u>	<u>Change</u>
General Fund	7,100,400	4,125,000	(2,975,400)
Total	<u>7,100,400</u>	<u>4,125,000</u>	<u>(2,975,400)</u>

**AID TO LOCALITIES
ALL FUNDS FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS BY PROGRAM
APPROPRIATIONS
(dollars)**

<u>Program</u>	<u>Available 2000-01</u>	<u>Recommended 2001-02</u>	<u>Change</u>
Blind Veteran Annuity Assistance			
General Fund	3,400,000	3,400,000	0
Veteran Counseling Services Program			
General Fund	1,125,000	725,000	(400,000)
Community Projects			
General Fund	2,575,400	0	(2,575,400)
Total	<u>7,100,400</u>	<u>4,125,000</u>	<u>(2,975,400)</u>