

# ***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 1.1 million New Yorkers who are veterans, as well as their dependents and those on active duty.

## ***ORGANIZATION AND STAFFING***

The Division is headed by a Director who is appointed by the Governor. The Division's central office is in Albany, with regional offices in New York City and Buffalo. The Division staffs a network of approximately 70 community based access points in nearly all of the State's counties and New York City. The Division will have 112 employees in 2006-07.

## ***FISCAL BACKGROUND AND BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS***

The Executive Budget recommends \$14.9 million for the Division of Veterans' Affairs to fund administration, veterans' services and benefits. The Blind Veteran Annuity Assistance Program has been increased slightly to accommodate the potential for changes in the number of beneficiaries. State aid is continued for county and city veterans' service agencies and Federal appropriations for the Veterans' Education Program are maintained. The Office of General Services will continue to provide administrative support, permitting the Division to focus on its main mission, serving the State's veterans and their families.

## ***PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS***

The largest of the Division of Veterans' Affairs four programs, the Veterans' Counseling Program, provides benefits counseling and claims services through a statewide network of State veterans' counselors. The counselors — who are all veterans — and support staff help veterans complete and file applications for Federal, State, local and private veterans' benefits. Veterans' counselors also help veterans access the services provided by Veterans' Affairs Medical Centers, senior centers, State Veterans' Homes, local nursing homes and public assistance offices.

The Division of Veterans' Affairs is responsible for securing a substantial portion of the more than \$1.25 billion annually in recurring Federal VA compensation and pension payments made directly to New York State veterans and their dependents. State veterans' counselors file nearly 8,000 benefit claims annually that result in approximately \$64 million in new and recurring Federal benefits. The average compensation award for each veteran represented by State veterans' counselors exceeds \$11,500 annually. State veterans' counselors also assist constituents in obtaining additional veterans benefits, including VA medical care, various other Federal, State and local economic assistance, tax exemptions and a variety of other benefits offered in recognition of military service. Additionally, with the enactment of New York Patriot Plans in 2003, 2004, and 2005, State veterans' counselors help to ensure that active duty military personnel and their families receive the supplemental benefits to which they are now entitled.

The Blind Veteran Annuity Program provides visually impaired veterans and eligible surviving spouses with monthly assistance. In 2006-07, this program will assist more than 4,300 recipients. Legislation approved in 2004 provides for an annual cost of living increase tied to Federal increases in veterans' compensation in order to maintain the value of the benefit paid to each recipient.

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The Veterans' Education Program certifies post-secondary educational and vocational programs as providing quality education and training to veterans eligible for Federal G. I. education benefits. The program staff reviews and approves thousands of programs for use by veterans, ensuring a wide variety of career training and educational opportunities for veterans and eligible dependents and survivors.

The Division of Veterans' Affairs continues to maintain its community outreach activities through senior citizens' seminars and similar forums for women veterans. In addition, it 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 also collaborates with other 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.

### ALL FUNDS APPROPRIATIONS (dollars)

Category	Available 2005-06	Appropriations Recommended 2006-07	Change	Reappropriations Recommended 2006-07
State Operations	8,487,000	8,530,000	43,000	2,082,000
Aid To Localities	6,130,000	6,330,000	200,000	750,000
Capital Projects	0	0	0	0
Total	14,617,000	14,860,000	243,000	2,832,000

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

#### Full-Time Equivalent Positions (FTE)

Program	2005-06 Estimated FTEs 03/31/06	2006-07 Estimated FTEs 03/31/07	FTE Change
Administration			
General Fund	10	9	(1)
Higher Education			
Special Revenue Funds - Federal	12	12	0
Veteran Counseling Services Program			
General Fund	91	91	0
Total	113	112	(1)

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

Fund Type	Available 2005-06	Recommended 2006-07	Change
General Fund	6,212,000	6,230,000	18,000
Special Revenue Funds - Federal	2,275,000	2,300,000	25,000
Total	8,487,000	8,530,000	43,000

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

Program	Available 2005-06	Recommended 2006-07	Change
Administration			
General Fund	844,000	802,000	(42,000)
Higher Education			
Special Revenue Funds - Federal	1,775,000	1,800,000	25,000
Veteran Counseling Services Program			
General Fund	5,368,000	5,428,000	60,000
Special Revenue Funds - Federal	500,000	500,000	0
Total	<u>8,487,000</u>	<u>8,530,000</u>	<u>43,000</u>

## STATE OPERATIONS - GENERAL FUND SUMMARY OF PERSONAL SERVICE APPROPRIATIONS AND CHANGES 2006-07 RECOMMENDED (dollars)

Program	Total		Personal Service Regular (Annual Salaried)	
	Amount	Change	Amount	Change
Administration	690,000	(47,000)	690,000	(47,000)
Veteran Counseling Services Program	4,938,000	0	4,938,000	0
Total	<u>5,628,000</u>	<u>(47,000)</u>	<u>5,628,000</u>	<u>(47,000)</u>

## STATE OPERATIONS - GENERAL FUND SUMMARY OF NONPERSONAL SERVICE AND MAINTENANCE UNDISTRIBUTED APPROPRIATIONS AND CHANGES 2006-07 RECOMMENDED (dollars)

Program	Total		Contractual Services	
	Amount	Change	Amount	Change
Administration	112,000	5,000	112,000	5,000
Veteran Counseling Services Program	490,000	60,000	490,000	110,000
Total	<u>602,000</u>	<u>65,000</u>	<u>602,000</u>	<u>115,000</u>

Program	Maintenance Undistributed	
	Amount	Change
Administration	0	0
Veteran Counseling Services Program	0	(50,000)
Total	<u>0</u>	<u>(50,000)</u>

## STATE OPERATIONS - OTHER THAN GENERAL FUND SUMMARY OF APPROPRIATIONS AND CHANGES 2006-07 RECOMMENDED (dollars)

Program	Total		Personal Service	
	Amount	Change	Amount	Change
Higher Education	1,800,000	25,000	1,055,000	0
Veteran Counseling Services Program	500,000	0	0	0
Total	<u>2,300,000</u>	<u>25,000</u>	<u>1,055,000</u>	<u>0</u>

Program	Nonpersonal Service	
	Amount	Change
Higher Education	745,000	25,000
Veteran Counseling Services Program	500,000	0
Total	<u>1,245,000</u>	<u>25,000</u>

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

<b>Fund Type</b>	<b>Available 2005-06</b>	<b>Recommended 2006-07</b>	<b>Change</b>
General Fund	6,130,000	6,330,000	200,000
Total	<u>6,130,000</u>	<u>6,330,000</u>	<u>200,000</u>

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

<b>Program</b>	<b>Available 2005-06</b>	<b>Recommended 2006-07</b>	<b>Change</b>
Administration			
General Fund	200,000	200,000	0
Blind Veteran Annuity Assistance			
General Fund	5,000,000	5,200,000	200,000
Veteran Counseling Services Program			
General Fund	930,000	930,000	0
Total	<u>6,130,000</u>	<u>6,330,000</u>	<u>200,000</u>