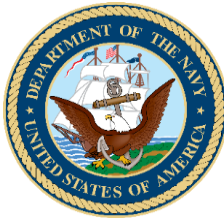


Governor's FY20 Budget Amendments – Office of the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs



Virginia Department of Veterans Services



- **Benefits (Item 466): 5 new FTEs & \$500,000** = 4 Veterans Service Representatives (VSRs) and 1 claims specialist; funding for additional VSR trainings.
- **Virginia Veteran & Family Support (VVFS) (Item 466): 8 new FTEs & \$634,000** = 8 Resource Specialists (RS).
- **Veterans Education, Transition, and Employment (VETE) (Item 466): 4 new FTEs and \$461,000** = Regional Virginia Transition Assistance Program (VTAP) coordinators in Hampton Roads and Northern Virginia; a Southwest V3/VTAP coordinator; a training and credentialing manager; funding to send out “welcome home” packets to transitioning service members; and a part-time customer service administrator for the Virginia Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP).
- **Virginia War Memorial (Central Appropriations): \$513,800** = DGS-provided building/grounds maintenance and utilities at the Virginia War Memorial; the 28,000 sq. ft. expansion opens September 2019.
- **2nd Deputy Commissioner (Item 468): 1 FTE and \$140,000**

DVS Total: 18 new FTEs and \$1,734,692 GF

Governor's FY20 Budget Amendments – Office of the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs



Department of Military Affairs (DMA)

- **Tuition Assistance (Item 414): \$1,500,000** = to assist with recruitment and retention of Virginia National Guard Members – a needed incentive in order to meet end strength goals.
- **Cyber-Security Assessments (Item 416): \$150,000** = needed to provide security assessments for local governments and state agencies.
- **Improving Readiness Centers (C-33): \$12 Million (\$9Million NGF and \$3 Million in bond proceeds)** = to match federal funds that become available for repair, improvement, or expansion of readiness centers.

DMA Total: \$1,650,000 GF (\$12M NGF and bond proceeds)

Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs Total: \$3,384,692 GF
(\$12M NGF and bond proceeds)

Next Steps/Looking to the Future:

- **Targeted Realignment of DVS Benefits Veterans Service Representatives (VSRs) and Appeals Attorneys' Salaries – \$426,275** = to realign the salaries of the Northern Virginia VSRs, the Richmond/Charlottesville VSRs, and the appeals attorneys (including Senior Appeals Attorneys).
- VSRs help veterans file claims with the VA
 - Northern Virginia VSRs: To \$54,000/year (VSRs statewide make in the upper-lower/mid \$40,000s)
 - Richmond and Charlottesville VSRs: to \$48,000/year
 - VSRs are overworked and underpaid; the training they receive is invaluable. They can go to the VA or a private Veterans Service Organization and make significantly more to do the same job.
- Appeals Attorneys represent veterans in their VA appeals cases :
 - Appeals Attorneys: to \$67,000/year (starting salaries currently between \$48,000 - \$54,000)
 - Senior Appeals Attorney: to \$75,000/year (currently makes ~\$64,000 and supervises)
 - Increasing salaries of current staff will improve retention rates and is less expensive than employing contract attorneys. There is also no equivalent skill set currently available within the OAG.
 - The need to increase the salaries is not just out of fairness, but also to stay competitive. If a VSR leaves, it takes months to get a new one trained; meanwhile veterans claims are delayed. If an attorney leaves (many have already for money), then veterans appeals cases are not able to best be worked and heard by the VA.