

COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS
Act 192 of 1953

AN ACT to create a county department of veterans' affairs in certain counties, and to prescribe its powers and duties; to create the county veteran service fund and to provide for contributions to and expenditures from that fund; and to transfer the powers and duties of the soldiers' relief commission in those counties.

History: 1953, Act 192, Eff. Oct. 2, 1953;—Am. 2018, Act 210, Eff. Sept. 24, 2018.

The People of the State of Michigan enact:

35.621 County department of veterans' affairs; creation; administration; committee; appointment, qualifications, and terms of members; vacancies.

Sec. 1. (1) The county board of commissioners may create a county department of veterans' affairs. The county department of veterans' affairs shall be under the administration of a committee of 3 to 7 veterans, appointed by the county board of commissioners. Members appointed to the committee shall be residents of the county who have served honorably on active duty in the United States Armed Forces.

(2) Committee members appointed under subsection (1) shall include the following:

(a) At least 1 member representing a congressionally chartered veterans' organization within the county, to be appointed upon the recommendation of the posts of each chartered veterans' organization within the county.

(b) At least 1 independent member who may or may not be a member of a congressionally chartered veterans' organization within the county.

(3) Each committee member appointed under this section shall have demonstrated knowledge, skills, and experience in public service, business, or finance.

(4) If an opening on a committee of veterans occurs, the county board of commissioners shall provide notice of that opening to 1 or more newspapers within the county and to veteran service organizations within the county.

(5) Notwithstanding the provisions of any law to the contrary, a member of the county board of commissioners of a county is eligible for appointment under this section.

(6) Committee members appointed by the county board of commissioners under this section shall be appointed for a term of 4 years each. However, the terms for committee members first appointed shall be staggered so that not more than 2 vacancies are scheduled to occur in a single year. Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as original appointments for the unexpired terms.

History: 1953, Act 192, Eff. Oct. 2, 1953;—Am. 1958, Act 156, Eff. Sept. 13, 1958;—Am. 1968, Act 204, Imd. Eff. June 24, 1968;—Am. 1973, Act 153, Imd. Eff. Dec. 6, 1973;—Am. 1996, Act 108, Imd. Eff. Mar. 5, 1996;—Am. 2004, Act 11, Imd. Eff. Feb. 26, 2004;—Am. 2012, Act 235, Imd. Eff. June 29, 2012;—Am. 2016, Act 420, Eff. Apr. 4, 2017.

35.622 Soldiers' relief commission; abolition, transfer of powers and duties to county department of veterans' affairs.

Sec. 2. In any county in which the board of supervisors adopts the provisions of this act, section 2 of the act creating the soldiers' relief commission created under the provisions of Act No. 214 of the Public Acts of 1899, as amended, being section 35.22 of the Compiled Laws of 1948, is hereby declared to be inoperative and the powers and duties of commission are hereby transferred to the county department of veterans' affairs created under the provisions of this act, and wherever soldiers' relief commission is used in Act No. 214 of the Public Acts of 1899, as amended, and Act No. 235 of the Public Acts of 1911, as amended, being sections 35.801 to 35.804 of the Compiled Laws of 1948, it shall mean the county department of veterans' affairs herein created.

History: 1953, Act 192, Eff. Oct. 2, 1953;—Am. 1958, Act 156, Eff. Sept. 13, 1958.

35.623 Administrative committee of county department; selection of officers, expenses; veterans' service officer, appointment; offices.

Sec. 3. The committee shall select a chairman and a secretary. The committee is authorized to incur such expense as shall be necessary in carrying out the provisions of this act within the budget set up by the board of supervisors. The members of the committee shall be entitled to receive the same per diem and mileage in attending meetings as members of the board of supervisors. The committee shall appoint a veterans' service officer and such other employees as shall be necessary from time to time to carry out the provisions of this act. In the selection of the veterans' service officer hereby authorized, the committee shall consult with and request the assistance of any association or council of organized veterans in such county, and any

recommendation from such association or council of veterans as to the personnel to be appointed by said committee under the provisions of this act, while not binding on said committee, shall be given the greatest consideration. The board of supervisors shall furnish, equip and maintain reasonably adequate office facilities for the county department of veterans' affairs.

History: 1953, Act 192, Eff. Oct. 2, 1953.

35.623a County veteran service fund; creation; grant program; veteran service operations; eligibility; exemption; audit; retroactive applicability.

Sec. 3a. (1) The county veteran service fund is created within the state treasury.

(2) The state treasurer may receive money or other assets from any source for deposit into the fund. The state treasurer shall direct the investment of the fund. The state treasurer shall credit to the fund interest and earnings from fund investments.

(3) Money in the fund at the close of the fiscal year remains in the fund and does not lapse to the general fund.

(4) The Michigan veterans affairs agency is the administrator of the fund for auditing purposes.

(5) Money in the fund may be used to cover necessary administrative and implementation costs incurred by the Michigan veterans affairs agency, as specifically appropriated from the fund.

(6) The Michigan veterans affairs agency shall create and operate a grant program that provides grants to counties for allowable expenditures related to county veteran service operations. The Michigan veterans affairs agency shall make grants from the fund, upon appropriation, to each county that enters into a grant agreement with the Michigan veterans affairs agency and meets the conditions listed in subsection (8) for the sole use of supporting allowable expenditures made by the county's veteran service operations. A grant must be disbursed within 60 days after the date that the Michigan veterans affairs agency receives a completed and signed grant agreement from the county requesting the grant. The total disbursement for each grant must be determined by combining the following amounts:

(a) Except as otherwise provided in this subdivision, a base amount of \$50,000.00. In a fiscal year when money in the fund is insufficient to support the \$50,000.00 base amount, an amount equal to and not to exceed the total amount appropriated to the fund for the fiscal year beginning October 1 divided by 83. A disbursement under this subdivision must be used for 1 of the following purposes:

(i) Establishing new capacity and capabilities for a county to provide veteran service operations.

(ii) Enhancing and increasing existing veteran service operations through local county offices.

(b) A per capita amount according to the number of veterans residing in each county to support allowable expenditures related to county veteran service operations. The amount in this subdivision must be determined by dividing the amount remaining in the fund after accounting for all disbursements under subdivision (a) by the total number of veterans residing in this state and multiplying the resulting dollar amount by the number of veterans residing in the county receiving the grant. Population figures for veterans residing in this state and in each county of this state must be obtained from the most recent Geographic Distribution of VA Expenditures (GDX) Report published by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

(7) If the amount remaining in the fund after accounting for all disbursements under subsection (6)(a) is less than the amount obtained by multiplying \$1,000.00 by the number of counties receiving grants, the Michigan veterans affairs agency shall not perform a calculation under subsection (6)(b) and shall not disburse the portion of grant funds described under that subsection.

(8) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (10), to be eligible to receive a grant under subsection (6) in the fiscal year ending September 30, 2021, and each fiscal year thereafter, by no later than September 30 a county must satisfy all of the following as certified in a form and manner prescribed by the Michigan veterans affairs agency:

(a) Except as otherwise provided in this subdivision, maintain a minimum level of county funding for veteran service operations equal to the level of county funding for veteran service operations for the fiscal year immediately preceding October 1, 2018. For the fiscal years ending September 30, 2021 and September 30, 2022, maintain at least 70% of the total county funding for veteran service operations for the fiscal year immediately preceding October 1, 2018. If a county reduces the level of county funding for veteran service operations for the fiscal years ending September 30, 2021 or September 30, 2022, it shall not utilize grant funding awarded under subsection (6) to supplant those reductions.

(b) Demonstrate an effort to achieve both of the following:

(i) Establish remote access to the United States Department of Veterans Affairs computing systems.

(ii) Require county veteran service officers to obtain a PIV card.

(c) Submit quarterly reports to the Michigan veterans affairs agency in accordance with the reporting requirements determined by that agency.

(d) Provide no less than 20 hours per week toward veteran service operations. Upon request, the Michigan veterans affairs agency may grant an exemption from this requirement. In determining whether or not to grant an exemption under this subdivision, the Michigan veterans affairs agency shall consider necessary information and factors, including, but not limited to, the total veteran population of a county and any existing agreements that promote coordination of services between counties.

(e) Submit financial reports to the Michigan veterans affairs agency on a regular basis, as determined by that agency, demonstrating that the county expended the grant funds received under subsection (6) directly and solely for allowable expenditures related to county veteran service operations during the period of the report.

(9) If the Michigan veterans affairs agency determines, by audit or otherwise, that a county expended the grant funds received under subsection (6) for purposes other than for allowable expenditures related to county veteran service operations, the Michigan veterans affairs agency shall notify the county of its findings and recover any misused grant funds before issuing any new grants to the county.

(10) Retroactive to the fiscal year ending September 30, 2020, and for the fiscal years ending September 30, 2021 and September 30, 2022, the Michigan veterans affairs agency may suspend the requirements in subsection (8) to allow a county to utilize available money in a county veteran service fund for the purposes of forming an emergent need relief program to provide direct financial assistance through its veteran service operations in the county. In establishing an emergent need relief program, the Michigan veterans affairs agency and counties shall ensure all other available resources are applied before awarding assistance under this program.

(11) As used in this section:

(a) "Accredited veteran service officer" means an individual who has met the qualifications for accreditation under 38 USC 5904 and 38 CFR 14.629.

(b) "Allowable expenditures" means those expenditures determined by the Michigan veterans affairs agency to be necessary and proper to support veteran service operations in this state.

(c) "County veteran service fund" or "fund" means the fund created in subsection (1).

(d) "PIV card" means a personal identity verification card issued by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

(e) "Veteran service operations" means assistance and programming of any kind to meet the needs of veterans in this state. Veteran service operations include, but are not limited to, providing assistance, programming, and services for the purpose of assisting veterans in this state and providing advice, advocacy, and assistance to veterans, servicemembers, dependents, or survivors by an accredited veteran service officer to obtain United States Department of Veterans Affairs health, financial, or memorial benefits for which they are eligible.

History: Add. 2018, Act 210, Eff. Sept. 24, 2018;—Am. 2018, Act 514, Imd. Eff. Dec. 28, 2018;—Am. 2021, Act 34, Imd. Eff. June 24, 2021.

35.624 County department; powers and duties.

Sec. 4. The county department of veterans' affairs shall perform such duties and exercise such powers as shall be necessary in carrying out the provisions of this act and any and all other benefits to which veterans may be entitled as prescribed by the county department of veterans' affairs.

History: 1953, Act 192, Eff. Oct. 2, 1953.