

## CHAPTER 197

## VETERANS; REWARDS, PRIVILEGES

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**197.05 FUND, HOW EXPENDED.**

(a) The state soldiers' assistance fund shall be administered by the commissioner of veterans affairs and shall be used to locate and investigate the facts as to any Minnesota resident or resident alien residing in Minnesota who served in the military or naval forces of the United States and who is indigent or suffering from any disability whether acquired in the service or not; to assist the person and the person's dependents as hereinafter provided in establishing and proving any just claim the person may have against the United States government, or any other government or state for compensation, insurance, relief, or other benefits; to provide emergency hospitalization, treatment, maintenance, and relief for any person suffering from disability who was a bona fide resident of the state at the time the need arose and the person's dependents, as hereinafter provided; and to cooperate with other state, municipal, and county officials and civic or civilian agencies or organizations in carrying out the provisions of sections 197.03 to 197.07. The commissioner shall limit financial assistance to veterans and dependents to six months, unless recipients have been certified as ineligible for other benefit programs.

(b) For purposes of this section, "resident" means a person living in Minnesota for at least 30 days with the intention of residing in the state and not for any temporary purpose. An applicant may verify a residence address by presenting a valid state driver's license, a state identification card, a voter registration card, a rent receipt, a statement by the landlord, apartment manager, or homeowner verifying that the individual is residing at the address, or other form of verification approved by the commissioner.

(c) The fund is appropriated to be used in the manner determined by the commissioner of veterans affairs for these purposes.

**History:** 2003 c 18 s 1

**197.065 ACCESS TO DATABASE.**

Notwithstanding section 13.46, subdivision 2, the commissioner of veterans affairs may electronically access the MAXIS database maintained by the Department of Human Services for the purpose of verifying eligibility status of applicants for benefits under the state soldiers assistance program.

**History:** 2003 c 25 s 2

**197.608 VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE GRANT PROGRAM.**

Subdivision 1. **Grant program.** A veterans service office grant program is established to be administered by the commissioner of veterans affairs consisting of grants to counties to enable them to enhance the effectiveness of their veterans service offices.

Subd. 2. **Rule development.** The commissioner shall consult with the Minnesota Association of County Veterans Service Officers in formulating rules to implement the grant program.

Subd. 2a. **Grant cycle.** Counties may become eligible to receive grants on a three-year rotating basis according to a schedule to be developed and announced in advance by the commissioner. The schedule must list no more than one-third of the counties in each year of the three-year cycle. A county may be considered for a grant only in the year of its listing in the schedule.

Subd. 3. **Eligibility.** (a) To be eligible for a grant under this program, a county must employ a county veterans service officer as authorized by sections 197.60 and 197.606, who is certified to serve in this position by the commissioner.

(b) A county that employs a newly hired county veterans service officer who is serving an initial probationary period and who has not been certified by the commissioner is eligible to receive a grant under subdivision 2a.

(c) Except for the situation described in paragraph (b), a county whose veterans service officer does not receive certification during any year of the three-year cycle is not eligible to receive a grant during the remainder of that cycle or the next three-year cycle.

Subd. 4. **Grant process.** (a) The commissioner shall determine the process for awarding grants. A grant may be used only for the purpose of enhancing the operations of the County Veterans Service Office.

(b) The commissioner shall provide a list of qualifying uses for grant expenditures as developed in subdivision 5 and shall approve a grant only for a qualifying use and if there are sufficient funds remaining in the grant program to cover the full amount of the grant.

Subd. 5. **Qualifying uses.** The commissioner shall consult with the Minnesota Association of County Veterans Service Officers in developing a list of qualifying uses for grants awarded under this program.

Subd. 6. **Grant amount.** The amount of each grant must be determined by the commissioner and may not exceed:

- (1) \$1,400, if the county's veteran population is less than 1,000;
  - (2) \$2,800, if the county's veteran population is 1,000 or more but less than 3,000;
  - (3) \$4,200, if the county's veteran population is 3,000 or more but less than 10,000;
- or
- (4) \$5,600, if the county's veteran population is 10,000 or more.

The veteran population of each county shall be determined by the figure supplied by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, as adopted by the commissioner.

Subd. 7. **Recapture.** If a county fails to use the grant for the qualified use approved by the commissioner, the commissioner shall seek recovery of the grant from the county and the county must repay the grant amount.

**History:** 1Sp2003 c 1 art 2 s 65

## 197.75 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE, WAR ORPHANS AND VETERANS.

Subdivision 1. **Benefits; eligibility.** The commissioner of veterans affairs shall spend a biennial appropriation for tuition of veterans, and for tuition, fees, board, room, books and supplies of the children of veterans who have died as a result of their service in the Armed Forces of the United States as determined by the United States Veterans Administration or other instrumentality of the United States, in the University of Minnesota, a state university, a community college, a technical college, or any other university of higher learning within the state accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, a law college approved by the Supreme Court, a nursing school approved by the state Board of Nursing, or in a trade, business, or vocational school in the state approved by the state Department of Education, or in a theological seminary, for any course which such veteran or child may elect. Not more than \$750 shall be expended for the benefit of any individual veteran, and not more than \$750 in any fiscal year shall be expended for the benefit of any child under this section, and the need for the benefit shall be established and determined by the commissioner of veterans affairs. No child of any veteran shall make application for the benefits provided in this section unless the child resided in Minnesota for at least two years immediately prior to the date of the application. Children of veterans eligible for benefits according to this section shall be admitted to state institutions of university grade free of tuition until they receive a bachelors or equivalent degree. Payments of

benefits shall be made directly to the institution in which the course of instruction is given or to the individual on forms prescribed by the commissioner.

*[For text of subds 2 to 6, see M.S.2002]*

**History:** 2003 c 130 s 12

**197.78 STATE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS UNAVAILABLE THROUGH FEDERAL PROGRAMS.**

Subdivision 1. The commissioner of education shall foster and support educational programs for the benefit of veterans to assure that no Minnesotan shall be deprived of earned veterans benefits by virtue of the unavailability of programs for which the veteran is entitled to enroll and receive subsistence, tuition, and other benefits under federal programs. It shall be the responsibility of the commissioner to measure the demand for veterans service educational programs based on the criteria mandated by federal veterans benefits laws and to authorize, promote, and make grants within appropriated amounts to assure such program availability.

**History:** 2003 c 130 s 12