

CVSO Enhancement Grant Process Explanation Fiscal Year 2010

Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs
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Purpose

The purpose of the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs County Veteran Service Offices Enhancement Grant program is to enhance benefits, programs, and services provided to Minnesota veterans. The department wishes to work closely with potential grantees to encourage open communication and cultivate a sense of partnership.

History

The 2006 Minnesota State Legislature provided funding for the department to create an Enhancement Grant program for CVSOs, MACV and Vinland Center. In 2007, permanent funding was added to the program and the Minnesota Association of County Veteran Service Officers was made eligible for the program, while MACV and Vinland Center were removed.

Funds Available

For the Fiscal Year (FY) 2010, \$750,000 is available in grant monies.

Grant-making Policy

The Department of Veterans Affairs is empowered to act on grant requests; they are responsible for the review and approval of grant applications as outlined in Session Law 2007 Chapter 45, Article 2, Section 1(b).

Grant Cycle

Applications will be accepted beginning Monday, July 20, 2009. The application process closes on Friday, October 2, 2009, 4:30pm. Grant awardees will be determined by Wednesday, November 25, 2009. All applications will be evaluated for alignment with the department's programmatic goals and measurable outcomes.

Grant Eligibility

As prescribed in law, those grants that foster regional collaboration and meet the programmatic goals will be given priority. Again, the application for a grant is welcomed by all 87 County Veteran Service Officers and the Minnesota Association of County Veterans Service Officers. To be eligible for the grant, the

applying CVSO must be certified unless that CVSO has been employed for less than one year with the county or has received a waiver for certification.

Grant-making Process

The grant-making process is designed to allow the department to provide each potential grantee with fair and thoughtful guidance by allowing each office to be placed on a timely track for submission, review, and consideration. The decision committee may request a site visit or meeting at any stage within the process.

Grant selection will be made on the following guidelines:

- Outreach to Veterans;
- Reintegration of Combat Veterans;
- Collaboration with other social service agencies, educational institutions, and other relevant community resources;
- Reduce Homelessness Among Veterans;
- Digital Records Management;
- Transportation Program;
- Marketing/Advertising ;
- Staff Management and Training; and,
- Provide measurable outcomes.

If a grant is declined, it will not be done so based upon the value of the organization or its programs. Decisions will be based on the current focus and priorities of the department. The department's priorities will evolve and the focus may change based on veterans needs.

Grant Procedure

Step 1:

Application – Any office wishing to apply for a grant will need to complete the “FY2010 Enhancement Grant Application” form. Information provided in the application form will assist the department in the grant process

Application Deadline: Postmarked or E-mailed by October 2, 2009, 4:30pm.

Step 2:

Grantors Decision – The department will review all of the information provided on the “FY2010 Enhancement Grant Application” form by Wednesday, November 25, 2009. All applicants will receive notification as to the status of their grant during the week of December 7 – 11, 2009.

Step 3:

Mid-Grant Review – At the mid-point of the grant cycle, grant recipients will be expected to provide a report on the progress of the grant. The “Mid-Grant Review” form will be made available via the department's website.

The report will need to be completed by a date set in the grant awardees' original grant letter.

Step 4:

End-Grant Report – At the end of the grant cycle, the grant recipients will be expected to submit a final report detailing the outcome of the grant. A uniform “End-Grant Report” form will be available on the department's website. The report will need to be completed by a date set in the grant awardees original grant letter.

Step 5:

Return of Unused Funds - When you have reached the end of your grant cycle, your county has 30 days to return any unexpended funds over \$2.00 made payable to Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs.

Best Practices

As set out in state law, the Commissioner is to develop a description of best practices for the use of the grants. To meet the “best practice” requirement each CVSO office must:

- Conduct annual town-hall meeting;
- Submit a fully developed claim for state and federal benefits;
- Assist subordinates in fully developing claims before submission;
- Host Veterans Benefits Seminars;
- Attend and update all Veteran Service Organizations in each county at least once annually;
- Implement a Management Information System to develop a veteran data base to collect and report on key performance information;
- Provide county specific performance information to their respective county boards twice yearly;
- Work with MACV to on programs directed at the reductions of homeless veterans; and
- Must work with local businesses on advertising and marketing.

Best practices are those procedures and policies that allow organizations to improve performance of self, colleagues and staff, and business practices.