

AK LEGISLATURE FINANCE COMMITTEES FILES 2007-2008 3157

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When it comes to veterans' health care, CRs are more than a budget category; they are the cause of harmful delays in diagnostic testing, hospital admissions, medical equipment purchases and filling vacant medical staff positions. CRs also have a dollar cost: medical center directors are forced to fill the gaps with high-priced private agency nurses, private physicians and diversion of patients to non-VA facilities. Similarly, the VA is a leader in state-of-the-art patient lifting equipment and a model for other health care systems, yet many of its own hospitals and nursing homes lack the funds to purchase patient lifting equipment, resulting in nurse back injuries, lost work time and workers compensation claims.

The exemplary quality of VA health care is also impacted by roller coasting discretionary funding. The VA attempts to implement laudable initiatives addressing polytrauma, suicide prevention and hospital infections, but fails to add sufficient staff to maximize their potential benefits.

### Oversight of VA Spending

The significant funding increases provided to the VA in FY 2008 make it all the more urgent to curb improper spending practices that have recently come to light. AFGE also remains concerned about the growing share of VA's budget that is being diverted from direct patient care to new layers of management at hospitals and offices of the Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs).

AFGE Local 3028 applauds Congress for adding quarterly reporting requirements to the VA appropriations process after billion dollar shortfalls came to light several years ago.

However, we are disappointed (though not surprised) at the limited value of the information the VA provides.

We urge Congress to strengthen oversight of spending practices that were recently the focus of government investigations, specifically:

More than two years ago, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that VA had spent substantial medical dollars on privatization studies in violation of Title 38. It also found that the VA lacked the ability to track and restore the misspent dollars in order to comply with the Anti-Deficiency Act. Subsequent to that report, the VA has failed to take steps improve its tracking abilities, and instead, has engaged in more illegal contracting out.

- Last fall, the VA's Inspector General found that the VA made false reports to Congress about patient wait times, repeatedly understating how long injured veterans waited for care.

Congress held hearings last year in response to disclosures that top and mid-level managers received very large bonuses, despite their poor track records in health care budgeting and managing disability claims. Yet, high performing employees on the front lines of health care and claims processing rarely receive bonuses, even when recruitment and retention problems exist.

AFGE has the "eyes and ears" on the ground to play a valuable role in ensuring that VA appropriations are properly spent. However, over the last seven years, the VA has shut employee representatives out of meetings and policy setting groups and has largely ignored our rights to information under the Freedom of Information Act and federal labor law.

### *Congressional Action Needed:*

- Enact H.R. 2514, Assured Funding for Veterans Health Care Act to fund VA health care with mandatory dollars based on current need and health care costs.
- Require the VA to carry out GAO's recommendation to implement a mechanism to track all costs associated with conducting cost comparison and Business Process Reengineering studies, and provide quarterly reports to Congress on all costs associated with these studies.
- Increase oversight of the VA's bonus policies to ensure that bonuses at all levels are aligned with performance and set at equitable levels for all employees. Require regular disclosure of bonus awards to Congress and employee representatives.

### *Veterans Benefits Administration*

Last year, with a backlog of disability claims exceeding 600,000 cases, lawmakers considered a number of proposals for major reform of the VBA claims processing system. AFGE is keeping a watchful eye on troubling proposals that may have unintended consequences, such as presumptive benefits, use of artificial intelligence to adjudicate claims and withholding work credits for VBA regional offices until all appeals are exhausted.

Rather than coming up with a quick fix, lawmakers should better utilize easier solutions that are close at hand:

**Training:** It takes at least two to three years for a new Veterans Service Representatives (VSR) to operate at a fully productive, independent level, and VSRs with fewer than five years of experience still need ongoing training and intense. Government investigators have linked training deficiencies to backlogs and decision inconsistencies, and found a direct correlation between the frequency of classroom instruction and payment levels. Nevertheless, managers push new employees into case production before they are fully trained or rotated between all four VBA teams, and they cut short opportunities for older employees to update their skills or confer with colleagues on new laws and best practices.

AFGE supports VBA's centralized training programs but more needs to be done to ensure that all employees receive quality and consistent training.

**Production standards:** In light of the growing number of claimants with multiple claims and complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury claims, there is a greater need than ever for VBA to conduct a scientifically based time and measurement study of the claims process so that sufficient staff hours and expertise are available to process the wide range of pending claims. Currently, managers facing intense production pressures from their managers push employees to move cases that are not fully developed, or to handle cases without adequate supervision.

**Skills Certification Testing:** These pressures also take their toll on VSRs who are not giving adequate time to prepare for the skills certification test that allows them to be promoted to a GS-11. In addition, some trainers lack sufficient expertise on the test topics. Unfortunately, after

having an active role in designing the test, employee representatives are no longer included in certification testing discussions.

**VSR Classification:** VBA needs to update the career ladder for VSRs so that they have the same promotion opportunities as their peers who process claims for other federal agencies. VBA has already completed a VSR Reclassification Study but has taken no further action. VBA is facing an aging workforce nearing retirement, and high attrition among new employees. It should take immediate steps to be competitive with other agencies.

VBA rarely includes employee representatives in decisions impacting training, skills certification testing or revisions of the claims process. AFGE greatly appreciates the House VA Committee's invitations to present our views at hearings and a recent roundtable. In addition, we thank HVAC Chairman Filner for requesting a GAO investigation of VBA training. It is a loss to veterans and VBA's dedicated workforce that employee representatives were not invited to testify before either of the Dole-Shalala or Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission.

#### *Congressional Action Needed:*

- VBA should undertake meaningful workforce succession planning, and Congress should investigate the causes of high attrition and early retirements among VBA employees.
- VBA should conduct a scientific time and measurement study of the claims process, and the time and skills required to process different types of cases, for proper staffing and realistic production quotas.
- Congress should increase oversight of VBA training to ensure quality, consistency and completion of all needed training throughout regional offices. A joint VBA-stakeholder team should develop a national training plan.
- Employee representatives should be brought back in to groups setting policies for claims processing, training and performance standards.
- Rotation of VSRs through all claims processing teams should be mandatory and monitored.
- VBA should develop a cadre of effective, competent trainers with formalized training skills and adequate subject matter expertise.

#### *Decision Review Officer*

The Alaska VA Regional Office is without these vital VBA staff personnel on site. The responsibility of this function is "outsourced" to the VBA Regional Office in Salt Lake City, Utah. This process puts Alaska veterans at a disadvantage for not having the ability to have a determination on their appeal claims being provided locally and/or deprives Alaska veterans the possibility of having a direct face-to-face appeal hearing.

The DRO program was first pilot tested in 1997, with permanent implementation in 2000. From 1997 until the present time, a number of things have changed with the DRO position, notably the introduction of the post-decision review process, as codified in 38 CFR 3.2600, and the creation of the Claims Process Improvement (CPI) structure. This white paper clarifies the:

- Role of the DRO in the appeal process;
- De novo review expectations;
- Functions of the DRO.

### Who is The Decision Review Officer?

The DRO is a valuable VA resource. An individual in this position should possess expert knowledge and well-developed skills and abilities regarding all Compensation and Pension program operations. The DRO should also have strong interpersonal and oral communication skills, and use these skills in working with veterans and their representatives. The position itself describes an individual, not necessarily the actual job duties which are involved. While DROs are typically synonymous with appeals, the DRO may also work in other environments, namely a Rating Team, where they fulfill second signature review, training, mentoring and other needs of the Service Center.

### The Appeal Process

There is only one function in the appeal process *requiring* involvement of the DRO:

- If an appellant elects a post decision review, the DRO must provide a de novo review and new decision.

All other functions of the appeals process can be accomplished by any knowledgeable, experienced RVSR (Rating Veterans Service Representative), or in the case of authorization issues, a SVSR (Senior Veterans Service Representative - Super Senior GS-12), Sr. VCE (Senior Veterans Claims Examiner GS-11) or VSR. What sets the DRO apart is the special review authority and his or her expert job knowledge.

Nothing precludes the DRO from working any other component of the appeal process, however such utilization is determined by Service Center Management based on the needs of the Regional Office (RO).

### Post Decision Review Process and the De Novo Review

The post decision review process is designed to be an optional appeal route, which kicks in at the beginning of the appeal at the notice of disagreement (NOD) stage. If elected by the appellant, the DRO is required to take a fresh look at the same evidence and provide a new decision. The "review" in de novo review ultimately requires an actual new decision. It does not mean that a complete file review is required, but rather a complete review of the pertinent evidence and information used in the decision in disagreement, accompanied by a new decision.

The new decision can be in many forms, depending upon the outcome of the DRO's assessment. The result may be a new rating granting the benefit sought, a Statement of the Case (SOC) giving the reasons for the continued denial of benefits, or a combination of decisions or documents somewhere in between. In all cases, however, the decision must be "new."

The special review authority allows for a de novo review *only* when a timely NOD has been submitted *and* the claimant has timely elected the post decision review process. This fresh look at the same evidence can be used only once.

While the DRO also has the option to develop for additional evidence, any decision based on new evidence requested as part of the de novo review fulfills the requirement for a new decision. The DRO also conducts formal hearings, as requested.

### *Functions of the DRO*

The primary function of a DRO working on an Appeal Team is appeal resolution. The DRO is tasked with getting involved early in the disagreement, contacting the appellant and/or their representative, preferably in person or by phone, to clarify any issues, engage in frank discussions about possible resolutions while providing an honest and realistic assessment to the veteran.

Extensive development should not be a hallmark of appeals resolution. This would tend to indicate less than complete development in the initial rating which led to the disagreement.

The DRO needs to provide a realistic assessment of the appeal to the veteran. Prolonged development which affords no value to the process or any hope of changing the decision should be avoided. Once the DRO has insured that the necessary claims development is complete and has exhausted all plausible avenues of resolution, the appeal simply needs to be moved forward to the next stage and ultimately to the Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA) to ensure that the veteran is afforded timely appellate review.

Other duties which are tasked to the DRO include providing feedback to RVSRs on appeal cases, providing feedback to local management about trends, training needs and overall quality, and training and mentoring other employees. It is anticipated that a number of these duties will be handled by DROs working in a Rating Team.

### *Other Appeal Issues*

There are no provisions in the regulations or the manual which require the DRO to keep jurisdiction of an appeal after they have conducted the de novo review and made a decision. Some ROs may find it helpful to limit DRO jurisdiction after an initial appeal decision has been made, such as a new decision granting a benefit or an SOC, and subsequently hand this work over to RVSRs assigned to the Appeals Team. The DRO would then focus their efforts on continued upfront resolutions, where their skills provide the most value in the appellate process.

Additionally, while the DRO is a designated authorizing official for certification of cases to the Board of Veterans Appeals, the DRO is not the only employee who can certify cases. The Service Center Manager has broad discretionary authority to designate other employees well versed in the appellate process, such as senior RVSRs and Appeals Team Coaches, to these duties.

### *Alternate Resolution*

A DRO is empowered to call clear and unmistakable error, with single signature authority, on any case under appeal, subject to the provisions of 38 CFR 3.105(a). An election of the post-decision review process is not required.

Direct communication and conferencing with the veteran and their representative is not an exclusive feature of the post decision review process. The DRO, RVSR, SVSR, Sr. VCE or VSR can and should contact an appellant when there is reason to believe that some measure of appeal resolution can be achieved.

### *Informal Conferences*

As defined by M21-1 Part IV, Chapter 35, an informal conference can be any form of communication directly between the DRO and the appellant and or his representative, provided it is documented properly. One of the features of this process is to make these discussions more informal and start a dialogue about the appeal, addressing the specific contentions and attempting to focus the appeal, providing explanatory information and determining if other evidence exists which would support the issue on appeal. DROs are expected to make judicious use of informal conferences to resolve appeals, or minimally, to achieve efficient, expedient appellate review.

The key difference between an informal conference as a procedural tool, and other forms of direct communication is that an informal conference requires a course of agreed upon action. While the actual course of action is not prescribed and contingent on the nature of the discussions, other forms of direct communication are open ended, dependent wholly on the facts of the case and any new information developed or conveyed in the course of discussions.

### *Congressional Action Needed:*

- Congress should mandate that the State of Alaska has the required FTEE for the DRO position physically located in Alaska.

# ALASKA VETERANS POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE (AK VET PAC) 2/20/08

Vietnam Veterans of America/Alaska Veterans of Modern Warfare/Alaska Military Order of the Purple Heart Anch Alaska Veterans Foundation, Inc. Alaska Veterans Business Alliance

The purpose/function of this newsletter is to let you know who in Juneau and Washington, DC are supporting veterans by their actions and not just more talk. It will also help you keep up with legislation or executive actions of interest to veterans in Alaska and assist you in participating in them.

## HB44 – FINDING ALASKA'S VETERANS

Originally introduced as HB44 by Rep Guttenberg, Dah!strom, Kerttula, and Lynn in January 2007, it remains in the House Special Committee on Military and veterans' Affairs pending a hearing. We have been working with a number of interested parties on any concerns and have address all informed questions on ensuring the lists protection with some new language. We have asked that this critical legislation be rewritten to address the lists confidentiality concerns.

The PFD application is the only instrument that can provide this *voluntary* information annually and does no harm to the PFD process while providing significant help to likely thousands of Alaskan veterans and their families. We have not found any other means to accomplish this goal, and the return on this small effort will be in the tens of millions of dollars a year to our veterans and their families. The bill number will be announced with its reintroduction.

Alaska has just less than 80,000 veterans (2000 US Census 74,500), the highest per capita in the nation. But given new federal and state privacy laws, we are no longer able to find our veterans using driver's licenses and agency lists. We found a way to do this voluntarily with the cooperation of the Permanent Fund Board.

Why is it important to find our veterans and their families? Hundreds of millions of dollars in direct payments and services to our veterans and their families await their request. Currently, the Veterans Administration in Alaska serves less than 20% of our veterans, yet this and other programs, generate over a billion dollars in revenue to Alaska annually. By providing our veterans and their families the annual booklet of VA services and a listing of Alaska services, we can directly improve the lives of thousands of Alaskan veterans and their families. These are rights and services earned by service and sacrifice, not welfare.

If you consider that every veteran has at least two family members in Alaska, this single group represents at least one third of our state's population.

Very simply, the PFD Application asks, "Are you an American veteran?" This is a voluntary question that in no way affects the dividend itself. Annually collected from all Alaskans, this information would be provided via a simple computer program to the Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs so that they can mail out state/federal veteran benefits booklets and information. Any Alaskan veteran who wishes to avail themselves of these services would do so through the regular processes of the Veterans Administration or other federal or state agency showing they meet the requirements of that program.

This weekly update is provided as a free service to all veterans and their families who may be concerned with state and federal legislation that may impact their lives. If you discover any errors or omissions, please contact Ric Davidge and inform him of such. E-mail: [ricdavidge.ak@gci.net](mailto:ricdavidge.ak@gci.net) office (907) 222-6927 fax (907) 222-6933

## Congressionally-Chartered Veterans Service Organizations (By Date of Charter)

<u>Service Organization</u>	<u>Date of Charter</u>
<u>Navy Mutual Aid Association</u>	<u>Jul. 28, 1879</u>
<u>The American Red Cross</u>	<u>Jan. 5, 1905</u>
<u>The American Legion</u>	<u>Sept. 16, 1919</u>
<u>National Amputation Foundation, Inc.</u>	<u>1919</u>
<u>American War Mothers</u>	<u>Feb. 24, 1925</u>
<u>Disabled American Veterans</u>	<u>June 17, 1932</u>
<u>Veterans of Foreign Wars</u>	<u>May 28, 1936</u>
<u>Marine Corps League</u>	<u>July 4, 1937</u>
<u>United Spanish War Veterans</u>	<u>April 22, 1940</u>
<u>Navy Club of the United States of America</u>	<u>June 6, 1940</u>
<u>American Veterans Committee</u>	<u>1944</u>
<u>American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor</u>	<u>Mar. 21, 1946</u>
<u>AMVETS (American Veterans)</u>	<u>July 23, 1947</u>
<u>American G.I. Forum</u>	<u>March 1948</u>
<u>Military Chaplains Association of the USA</u>	<u>Sept. 20, 1950</u>
<u>Legion of Valor of the USA, Inc.</u>	<u>July 4, 1955</u>
<u>Congressional Medal of Honor Society</u>	<u>July 14, 1958</u>
<u>Veterans of World War I</u>	<u>July 18, 1958</u>
<u>Military Order of the Purple Heart</u>	<u>Aug. 26, 1958</u>
<u>Blinded Veterans Association</u>	<u>Aug. 27, 1958</u>
<u>Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc.</u>	<u>June 1960</u>
<u>National Association for Black Veterans, Inc.</u>	<u>July 1969</u>
<u>Swords to Plowshares: Veterans Rights Organization</u>	<u>Dec. 23, 1974</u>
<u>Air Force Sergeants Association</u>	<u>Nov. 18, 1997</u>
<u>Paralyzed Veterans of America</u>	<u>Aug. 11, 1971</u>
<u>Veterans of the Vietnam War, Inc.</u>	<u>May 5, 1980</u>
<u>Gold Star Wives</u>	<u>Dec. 4, 1980</u>
<u>Italian American War Veterans</u>	<u>Nov. 20, 1981</u>
<u>U.S. Submarine Veterans, Inc.</u>	<u>Nov. 20, 1981</u>
<u>National Veterans Legal Services Program, Inc.</u>	<u>1981</u>
<u>American Ex-Prisoners of War</u>	<u>Aug. 10, 1982</u>
<u>Women's Army Corps Veterans Association</u>	<u>Oct. 30, 1984</u>
<u>American Gold Star Mothers, Inc.</u>	<u>June 12, 1984</u>
<u>Polish Legion of America</u>	<u>June 23, 1984</u>
<u>Catholic War Veterans</u>	<u>Aug. 17, 1984</u>
<u>Jewish War Veterans</u>	<u>Aug. 21, 1984</u>
<u>Pearl Harbor Survivors</u>	<u>Oct. 7, 1985</u>
<u>Vietnam Veterans of America</u>	<u>May 23, 1986</u>
<u>Army and Navy Union</u>	<u>Nov. 6, 1986</u>
<u>Non-Commissioned Officers Association of America</u>	<u>April 6, 1988</u>
<u>National Association of County Veterans Service Officers, Inc.</u>	<u>June 1990</u>
<u>Military Order of the World Wars</u>	<u>Oct. 23, 1992</u>
<u>The Retired Enlisted Association</u>	<u>Oct. 23, 1992</u>
<u>Fleet Reserve Association</u>	<u>Oct. 23, 1996</u>
<u>National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA)</u>	<u>N.A.</u>
<u>Women Airforce Service Pilots of World War II</u>	<u>N.A.</u>



In Service to America

February 26, 2008

Chairman Roses and Members of the Committee  
House Special Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs

According to the latest statistics, Alaska now has almost 80,000 veterans which, as you know, is the highest per capita in the United States. But under Federal and State privacy laws we are not longer able to find them and inform them of the rights and services they've earned.

Since the introduction last year of HB44 by Rep Guttenberg, Dahlstrom, Kerttula, & Lynn requiring the Permanent Fund Board include the question: "Are you an American Veteran?" on the PFD Dividend Application form we have done some homework.

We have met with the Governor's Advisory Council, staff of the AK Dept of Mil and Vet Affairs, and a number of Members of the House and Senate to examine the few concerns that have been raised. We believe that with a committee substitute, such as we have suggested, we have resolved these issues; mainly of list confidentiality. We respectfully request your consideration of the substitute language suggested and move this bill forward.

This is not just an act that will benefit our veterans and their families. This act is in the economic best interest of Alaska. Veterans annually generate over \$1 Billion in funds and services to our state's economy - that with the VA serving less than 20% of our veterans. This small act enables our Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to locate and communicate with our veterans and their families. Every year Congress scolds the VA for its failure in "outreach" but this is honestly unfair, given all the restrictions now. In Alaska we have a unique means to accomplish this, by putting this simple question on the annual PFD Dividend Application. Then we can inform our veterans and their families of their rights to access services they earned.

#### VETERAN ECONOMIC VALUE TO ALASKA

- VA home loans represent over half a billion to our economy every year. (FY05 \$584M 3,500 homes)
- Military retirement payments account for over \$165 Million in direct cash to Alaskan families each year.
- Compensation for disabled veterans adds \$97.2 Million every year to our economy (FY05 12,000 AK veterans w/ in-service connected disabilities, FY06 it will be well over \$100 Million, 300 AK veterans received non-service connected pensions \$2.2 Million)
- VA medical services, provided in Alaska represent over \$103 Million in FY05.
- VA Education benefits 1,300 Alaska veterans totaling \$11 Million.
- VA Survivor dependent benefits \$6.2 Million in FY05

As you can see an increase of just 20% in the levels of service provided Alaska's veterans would have a significant positive economic impact on our state and these deserving families.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation

Ric Davidge  
State Council President



In Service to America

## Chapter 904 - Anchorage, Alaska "An Agenda of Service"

February 26, 2008

Chairman Lynn  
House State Affairs Committee  
Juneau, AK

Mr. Chairman:

This is to inform you of our strong support for the passage of HB44.

In these trying times our veterans, old and new, need all of the support that our state and country can possibly give them. Let us not forget all of the sacrifices our veterans have made for us. Lots of veterans get out of the service not knowing and not caring about benefits that are rightfully theirs. They just want to be left alone. Each and every day, in our work with veterans of all wars, we are finding more and more down and out and needy veterans that don't have a clue that they have any kind of help coming from the VA. A lot of these veterans have suffered through forty years without any sort of VA help to which they are entitled.

**THIS HAS TO BE CORRECTED NOW**, and Alaska has a unique opportunity to do this through the PFD application question: "Are you an American Veteran?"

HB44 will go a long way in helping find Alaska's vets and informing them of their benefits.

Hats off to every legislator supporting this bill. You have our vote.

Best wishes,

Al Balfone  
Vice President, VVA Chapter 904 (Anchorage)

ALASKA SERVICE-DISABLED VETERAN-OWNED BUSINESS  
ALLIANCE



Rep. David Guttenberg  
State Capitol Bldg. Room 418  
Juneau, AK. 99801

Rep. Guttenberg,

As the Secretary of the Alaska Service Disabled Veteran Owned Business Alliance and a member of the Veterans of Modern Warfare I am in contact with Veterans throughout our State of Alaska. You would not believe how many Veterans out there that don't know what benefits or information that they need to know. With HB44 this would bring the Veteran population into one database to get required information to all Veterans whether it is updates or new legislation from the Veterans Affairs or links to websites for all us Veterans. I ask you and the rest of your colleagues to pass this bill because this is a necessity to keep all veterans informed.

Thank you,

Tim Wheeler, Secretary  
Alaska Service Disabled Veteran Owned Business Alliance  
And  
Veterans of Modern Warfare



Military Order of the *Purple Heart*

Department of Alaska  
"Combat Wounded Veterans"

Date: February 28, 2008



Our combat wounded veteran's organization lends its full support to HB44. The question of "Are you an American Veteran" on the PFD application is critical to enable all Alaska veteran organizations to be able to reach out to the many Alaska veterans who are in remote locations. Those Alaska veterans who do not have ready access to the assistance centers in major cities still need and have justly earned the benefits they have long been denied. By passing HB44 we in the major population centers will have a vehicle that will enable us to provide the support that those military members in remote areas have earned.

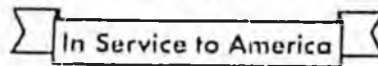
The MOPH (Military Order of the Purple Heart) is proud to be in full support of HB44. We ask that you assist in the cause of providing us a means to reach out to those veterans who are denied the easy access to the benefits they have justly earned as result of their honored military service.

*Ron Siebels*

Ron Siebels

MOPH, Sr-Vice, Dept of Alaska

MOPH, Commander, Chapter 593, Anchorage



## Chapter 891 - Wasilla, Alaska

Never again will one generation of Veterans abandon another

March 1, 2008

Greeting: Chairman Lynn and Members of the Committee  
House State Affairs Committee

As a Veteran of over 40 years active Military Service, I have seen many missed opportunities of Veterans who came to Alaska to hide from people when they were young. Now these Veterans who served this Country so well are getting older. These Veterans need to get into the Veterans Administrations health care system and receive the care they have earned. Please take this small action to pass on HB 44.

In the Mat-Su Valley we are supporting the Veterans Aviation Outreach program where they go into the bush and find Veterans. Most of these Veterans are in need of health care.

I am writing in support of HB 44. The bill will help the department of Veterans Affairs to locate Veterans and get information to them about their earned Veterans Benefits.

Thank you for supporting this Bill to Aid Veterans

William (Bill) Farling  
President Vietnam Veterans Chapter 891

Representative Bob Lynn, Chair  
House State Affairs Committee  
State Capitol  
Juneau, AK 99801

February 28, 2008

Dear Chairman Lynn,

Our combat wounded veterans' organization lends its full support to HB44. The question of "Are you an American Veteran?" on the PFD application is critical to enable all Alaska veteran organizations to be able to reach out to the many Alaska veterans who are in remote locations. Those Alaska veterans who do not have ready access to the assistance centers in major cities still need and have justly earned the benefits they have long been denied. By passing HB44 we in the major population centers will have a vehicle that will enable us to provide the support that those military members in remote areas have earned.

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Ron Siebels

MOPH, Sr-Vice, Dept of Alaska  
MOPH, Commander, Chapter 593, Anchorage

Janey Wineinger

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From: ricdavidge.ak@gci.net on behalf of Ric Davidge [ricdavidge.ak@gci.net]  
Sent: Monday, April 07, 2008 2:01 PM  
To: Sen. Lyda Green  
Subject: Why is Charlie and Stedman holding these up?

Sen Green,

I'm writing you directly because I've had a number of calls today from Juneau telling me that Huggins and Stedman are just not going to move HB44 and HB45 out of Sen Fin.

There is NO substantive reason for this obstruction, and given your support from the beginning for HB44, it appears you will have to call them and ask that these bills be put on the floor.

It appears its really up to you now.

Standing by. You have ALWAYS been a woman of your word and I know you will look into this.

*Ric Davidge*

Alaska State Council President, Vietnam Veterans of America  
Chairman, Alaska Veterans Foundation  
(907) 229-5328 cell

DON YOUNG  
CONGRESSMAN FOR ALL ALASKA  
WASHINGTON OFFICE  
2111 RAYBURN BUILDING  
TELEPHONE 202/225-5765  
WWW.HOUSE.GOV/DONYOUNG/



Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

April 7, 2008

cc Miles  
Darwin

COMMITTEE ON  
TRANSPORTATION  
COMMITTEE ON  
RESOURCES  
COMMITTEE ON  
HOMELAND SECURITY

RECEIVED

APR - 7 2008

Co-Chairman Lyman Hoffman  
State Capitol, Room 518  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

COPY

Co-Chairman Bert Stedman  
State Capitol, Room 30  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Chairman Hoffman and Chairman Stedman,

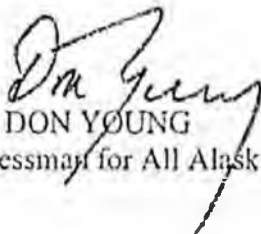
I am writing to express my support for Alaska House Bill 44, "Finding Our Veterans" and to urge the Senate to pass this bill and allow Alaska to find its veterans.

Alaska has the highest number of veterans per capita of any state, with an estimated 73,000 veterans that call our state home. Those veterans, along with the active duty military that serve in our state and the members of the Alaska National Guard have earned benefits as veterans and they deserve to know about them. There are too many veterans in our state that do not receive the benefits they have earned because they don't know about them and our state cannot identify them.

HB 44 would solve this problem by allowing veterans to identify themselves to the state via the Permanent Fund Dividend application, something all Alaskans fill out. This will allow the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to contact them and help them receive the benefits they deserve. This information will also help Alaska's Congressional delegation in their efforts to ensure that Alaska's veterans are taken care of at the national level.

Please refer HB 44 to the Senate Floor and pass this vital legislation to find our veterans and give them the benefits they need. If you have any questions, please contact Thomas Ryan on my staff, at (202) 225-5765 or by email at [thomas.ryan@mail.house.gov](mailto:thomas.ryan@mail.house.gov).

Sincerely,

  
DON YOUNG  
Congressman for All Alaska

cc: Senate President Lyda Green  
Senate Majority Leader Johnny Ellis

2008-04-07-16-04-26

510 L Street  
Suite 580  
ANCHORAGE, AK 99501  
907-271-5978

101 12TH AVENUE  
BOX 10  
FAIRBANKS, ALASKA 99701  
907-456-0210

871 FEDERAL BUILDING  
P.O. Box 21247  
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99802  
907-588-7400

130 TRADING BAY ROAD  
Suite 105  
KENAI, ALASKA 99811  
907-283-5808

540 WATER STREET  
SUITE 101  
KETCHIKAN, ALASKA 99901  
907-225-6880

851 EAST WESTPORT DRIVE  
Suite 307  
WASILLA, ALASKA 99654  
907-378-7065

**HB**

**45**

**HFIN**

**FILE**



# FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA  
2007 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 1  
Bill Version: C5HB 45(MLV)  
(H) Publish Date: 2/26/07

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): \_\_\_\_\_ Dept. Affected: Administration  
Title: An act establishing the Alaska veterans' cemetery fund in the general fund. RDU: Centralized Admin Services  
Component: Finance  
Sponsor: Representatives Gultenberg, Doll & Lynn  
Requester: \_\_\_\_\_ Component No. 59

**Expenditures/Revenues** (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013
Personal Services	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Travel	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Contractual	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Supplies	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Equipment	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Land & Structures	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Grants & Claims	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Miscellaneous	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

<b>CAPITAL EXPENDITURES</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
-----------------------------	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

<b>CHANGE IN REVENUES ( )</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
-------------------------------	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

**FUND SOURCE** (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
1003 GF Match	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
1004 GF	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
1005 GF/Program Receipts	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
1037 GF/Mental Health	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other (Specify Type--Do not abbreviate)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

Estimate of any current year (FY2007) cost: 0.0

Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2008 budget proposal:

**POSITIONS**

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

**ANALYSIS:** (Attach a separate page if necessary)

Establishing funds created by legislation such as this is in the normal course of business for the Division of Finance. This bill should have no fiscal impact on the agency.

Prepared by: Kim Garnero & Lisa Pusich  
Division: Finance  
Approved by: Kevin Brooks, Deputy Commissioner  
Agency: Department of Administration

Phone: 465-2200  
Date/Time: 2/9/07 12:30 PM  
Date: 2/9/2007

# FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA  
2007 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 2  
Bill Version: C5HB 45(MLV)  
(H) Publish Date: 2/26/07

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): \_\_\_\_\_ Dept. Affected: Administration  
Title: "An Act authorizing the DMVA to establish and RDU: Division of Motor Vehicles  
maintain Alaska veterans' cemeteries; Component: Motor Vehicles  
Sponsor: Rep. Guttenberg  
Requester: (H) MLV Component No.: 2348

**Expenditures/Revenues** (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013
Personal Services	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Travel	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Contractual	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Supplies	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Equipment	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Land & Structures	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Grants & Claims	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Miscellaneous	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

<b>CAPITAL EXPENDITURES</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
-----------------------------	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

<b>CHANGE IN REVENUES ( )</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
-------------------------------	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

**FUND SOURCE** (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
1003 GF Match	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
1004 GF	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
1005 GF/Program Receipts	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
1037 GF/Mental Health	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other (Specify Type--Do not abbreviate)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

Estimate of any current year (FY2007) cost: 0.0

Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2008 budget proposal:

**POSITIONS**

Full-time	0	0	0	0	0	0
Part-time	0	0	0	0	0	0
Temporary	0	0	0	0	0	0

**ANALYSIS:** (Attach a separate page if necessary)

This bill does not impact the Division of Motor Vehicles, however revenue derived from the sale of the "Commemorative Veteran's License Plate" may be used for funding of the Alaska veterans cemetery.

Prepared by: Duane Bannock, director  
Division: Motor Vehicles  
Approved by: Kevin Brooks, Deputy Commissioner  
Agency: Department of Administration

Phone: 465-2200  
Date/Time: 2/10/2007 11:00am  
Date: 2/12/2007

# FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA  
2007 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 3  
Bill Version: CSHB 45(MLV)  
(H) Publish Date: 2/26/07

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): \_\_\_\_\_ Dept. Affected: Military & Veterans Affairs  
Title: State Veterans Cemetery and Fund RDU: Military and Veterans Affairs  
Component: Veterans Services  
Sponsor: Representatives Guttenberg, Doll, and Lynn  
Requester: Military & Veterans Affairs Component No.: 421

**Expenditures/Revenues** (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013
Personal Services	*	*	*	*	*	*
Travel	*	*	*	*	*	*
Contractual	*	*	*	*	*	*
Supplies	*	*	*	*	*	*
Equipment	*	*	*	*	*	*
Land & Structures	*	*	*	*	*	*
Grants & Claims	*	*	*	*	*	*
Miscellaneous	*	*	*	*	*	*
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	*	*	*	*	*	*

<b>CAPITAL EXPENDITURES</b>						
-----------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

<b>CHANGE IN REVENUES ( )</b>						
-------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

**FUND SOURCE** (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF	*	*	*	*	*	*
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type-Do not abbreviate)						
<b>TOTAL</b>	*	*	*	*	*	*

Estimate of any current year (FY2007) cost: 00

Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2008 budget proposal:

**POSITIONS**

Full-time	*	*	*	*	*	*
Part-time						
Temporary						

**ANALYSIS:** (Attach a separate page if necessary)

At this time, the Department is unable to determine the fiscal impact for construction, operation, and maintenance of Veterans' Cemeteries.

Prepared by: Mr. John Cramer, Acting Deputy Commissioner  
Division: Commissioner's Office  
Approved by: General Craig Campbell, Commissioner  
Agency: Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

Phone: (907) 465-4602  
Date/Time: 2/9/07 10:05 AM  
Date: 2/9/2007

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



Sponsor

Statement

SESSION:  
Alaska State Capitol, Room 418  
Juneau, AK 99801  
(907) 465-4457 Office  
(907) 465-3519 Fax  
(800) 928-4457 Toll Free

INTERIM:  
1292 Sadler Way, Suite 304  
Fairbanks, AK 99701  
Office (907) 456-8172  
Fax (907) 456-2490

## Representative David Guttenberg

### House Bill 45 - State Veterans' Cemetery

All Alaska veterans deserve access to a military cemetery that honors their service and recognizes their sacrifices while serving our country, usually under challenging conditions, and frequently in harm's way.

On a per capita basis, Alaska has more residents in active military service or who are veterans than all but one other state. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), a total of 9,469 veterans reside in the Fairbanks North Star Borough.

The VA's long-term goal is to provide an operational veterans' cemetery within 75 miles of 90 percent of the veterans in the country. The nearest veterans' cemetery to Fairbanks is Fort Richardson National Cemetery, located 350 miles away in Anchorage. By the VA's own estimation, a facility in Fairbanks would greatly increase the number of veterans served by a veterans' cemetery.

Interior Alaska's veterans deserve a cemetery located in the Interior of the state. A state veterans' cemetery in the Interior would better serve the needs of veterans and their families, and provide a final resting place that is centrally located, honorable, and well maintained. An Interior veterans' cemetery will help families avoid the pain of burying a loved one far from home.

HB 45 seeks to establish a state cemetery similar to the Fort Richardson and Sitka National Cemeteries. It will provide a place in the Interior for soldiers to be laid to rest with full military funeral honors, including uniformed pallbearers, rifle team, and ceremonial folding and presentation of the United States flag.

HB 45 authorizes the Alaska Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs to establish and maintain a state veterans' cemetery with funds from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, State Cemetery Grants Program. Through this program, the Alaska Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs may be awarded up to 100% of allowable costs for design, construction, and operating equipment for an approved project. To date, the VA has awarded 152 grants totaling more than \$264 million to establish, expand, or improve 65 veterans' cemeteries in 35 states, Guam and Northern Mariana Islands. There are now 65 operational cemeteries and four more under construction.

I urge you to support this legislation.

Representative.David.Guttenberg@legis.state.ak.us  
<http://guttenberg.akdemocrats.org>



## Veterans cemetery approved

[Print Page](#)

By *SHERRY DEVLIN of the Missoulian*

Six years after Missoula veterans began the quest, the federal government has approved construction of a \$3.25 million state veterans cemetery here.

Bids will be advertised within the next two months and construction should begin by fall, Joe Foster, administrator of the Montana Veterans Affairs Division, said Saturday.

"Our service veterans have given so much to this country, they must not be overlooked," said U.S. Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont. "It is important that we provide them with this final resting place."

Tester came to the site of the Western Montana State Veterans Cemetery early Saturday afternoon to announce that a bureaucratic logjam has been broken, and construction can begin. He was joined by Foster and the dozen or so Missoula veterans who have worked - since 2001 - to find a location and funding for the cemetery.

It took years to find and secure the ground, 23 acres just north of Big Sky High School, with a sweeping view of the Missoula Valley and its circle of mountains.

The state took care of the land, arranging a transfer of property from the Montana Department of Natural Resources to the Veterans Affairs Office.

Then came the request for funding to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the required approval of the cemetery's design. The money arrived more than a year ago, but the design and construction plan appeared lost in the federal bureaucracy.

And without an approval letter from the federal Department of Veterans Affairs, ground could not be broken.

Both Foster and the Missoula-based committee of veterans appealed to Tester not long after he took the oath of office earlier this year - and was assigned to the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee. A month ago, Tester met for lunch with Jim Nicholson, secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

"It was time to get this thing moving forward," Tester said Saturday. "I was able to take that message to the secretary eyeball to eyeball, and he responded appropriately."

"I really appreciate it when you sit down with people and they respond appropriately. That means the government is working for us."

The formal letter of approval arrived at Foster's Helena office on Friday.

Tester said the real credit, though, goes to the veterans who volunteered their time and talents over the

past six years.

"I want to thank these folks for laying the groundwork to make it happen," he said. "With everybody working together, we can get good projects done."

Committee chairman Charlie Crookshanks said Montana veterans have long needed a third cemetery where they can be buried alongside their comrades. The existing cemeteries - at Fort Harrison in Helena and in Miles City - are a long drive for family and friends.

More than 36,000 Montana veterans live west of Lewis and Clark County. In all, Montana is home to 109,000 veterans, the second-highest number per-capita in the nation.

"Having a state veterans cemetery here in Missoula means a lot to veterans and their spouses," Foster said. Eleven percent of Montanans are veterans.

The new cemetery, now due for completion by the fall of 2008, will be open to any veteran who was honorably discharged from the Armed Forces, and to his or her spouse.

Many families are holding onto their loved one's ashes until they can be buried at the Missoula cemetery, said committee member Gary Sorensen, retired from the U.S. Army.

"I plan to be buried here," Sorensen said. "My wife died in 2003, and I am saving her ashes to be buried here as well."

In a grove of pines on its west end, the Missoula cemetery will have an operations and equipment building, and the local veterans services office. Another nearby building will provide information for visitors and restrooms.

The remainder of the acreage, now an open field, will provide gravesites.

"Now western Montana has a place where our veterans can come for their final resting place," Tester said, "where families can come to remember their loved ones, where we can come to honor their service and sacrifices.

"This will be hallowed ground."

Missoulian editor Sherry Devlin can be reached at 523-5250 or at [sdevlin@missoulian.com](mailto:sdevlin@missoulian.com)

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# LEGAL SERVICES

DIVISION OF LEGAL AND RESEARCH SERVICES  
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY  
STATE OF ALASKA

(907) 465-3867 or 465-2450  
FAX (907) 465-2029  
Mail Stop 3101

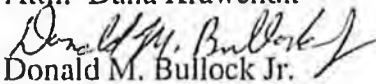
State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182  
Deliveries to: 129 6th St., Rm. 329

## MEMORANDUM

April 11, 2007

**SUBJECT:** Sectional summary of CSHB 45(MLV)  
(Work Order No. 25-LS0230\C)

**TO:** Representative David Guttenberg  
Attn: Dana Krawchuk

**FROM:**   
Donald M. Bullock Jr.  
Legislative Counsel

You have requested a sectional summary of the above-described bill.

As a preliminary matter, note that a sectional summary of a bill should not be considered an authoritative interpretation of the bill and the bill itself is the best statement of its contents. If you would like an interpretation of the bill as it may apply to a particular set of circumstances, please advise.

**Section 1.** Allows the legislature to appropriate a portion of the money received for special request plates commemorating Alaska veterans to the Alaska veterans cemetery fund created in sec. 3 of the bill.

**Section 2.** Adds gifts, donations, and grants received by the Department of Military and Veteran's Affairs for veterans' cemeteries to the list of program receipts in AS 37.05.146(c) that are accounted for separately; appropriations from these program receipts are not made from the unrestricted general fund.

**Section 3.** Creates the Alaska veterans' cemetery fund in the general fund; the fund is not exempt from the requirements of AS 37.07 (Executive Budget Act) and money in the fund is not dedicated for a specific purpose. Provides that the legislature may appropriate amounts from the fund to the Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs for the construction, operation, and maintenance of veterans' cemeteries established under sec. 4 of the bill. Appropriations to the veterans' cemetery fund do not lapse under AS 37.25.010, and the unexpended and unobligated balance of an appropriation from the fund lapses back into the fund.

**Section 4.** Authorizes the Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs to establish and maintain Alaska veterans' cemeteries in the state. Allows the department to accept gifts, donations, and grants for the purpose of establishing and maintaining the cemeteries; land received by the department is owned by the state. Requires the department to consult

Representative David Guttenberg

April 11, 2007

Page 2

with the Alaska Veterans' Advisory Council when adopting regulations for determining eligibility for burial in a state veterans' cemetery, receive the plot or interment allowance on behalf of the state, comply with all requirements for a state veterans' cemetery grant established by the United States Department of Veterans' Affairs, and apply for state veterans' cemetery grants from the United States Department of Veterans' Affairs. Authorizes the Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs to adopt regulations, enter into agreements for the operation of veterans' cemeteries, and solicit gifts, donations, and grants in addition to grants from the United States Department of Veterans' Affairs.

DMB:ljw

07-207.ljw

# LEGAL SERVICES

DIVISION OF LEGAL AND RESEARCH SERVICES  
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY  
STATE OF ALASKA

(907) 465-3867 or 465-2450  
FAX (907) 465-2029  
Mail Stop 3101

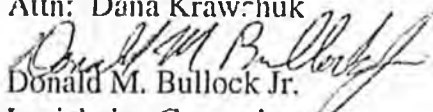
State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182  
Deliveries to: 129 6th St., Rm. 329

## MEMORANDUM

January 31, 2007

**SUBJECT:** Sectional summary of HB 45 (Work Order No. 25-LS0230\A)

**TO:** Representative David Guttenberg  
Attn: Dana Krawchuk

**FROM:**   
Donald M. Bullock Jr.  
Legislative Counsel

You have requested a sectional summary of the above-described bill.

As a preliminary matter, note that a sectional summary of a bill should not be considered an authoritative interpretation of the bill and the bill itself is the best statement of its contents. If you would like an interpretation of the bill as it may apply to a particular set of circumstances, please advise.

**Section 1.** Allows the legislature to appropriate a portion of the money received for special request plates commemorating Alaska veterans to the Alaska veterans' cemetery fund created in sec. 2 of the bill.

**Section 2.** Creates the Alaska veterans' cemetery fund in the general fund; the fund is not exempt from the requirements of AS 37.07 (Executive Budget Act) and money in the fund is not dedicated for a specific purpose. Provides that the legislature may appropriate amounts from the fund to the Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs for the construction, operation, and maintenance of veterans' cemeteries established under sec. 3 of the bill. Appropriations to the veterans' cemetery fund do not lapse under AS 37.25.010, and the unexpended and unobligated balance of an appropriation from the fund lapses back into the fund.

**Section 3.** Authorizes the Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs to establish and maintain Alaska veterans' cemeteries in the state. Allows the department to accept gifts, donations, and grants for the purpose of establishing and maintaining the cemeteries; land received by the department is owned by the state. Requires the department to consult with the Alaska Veterans' Advisory Council for adopting regulations for determining eligibility for burial in a state veterans' cemetery, receive the plot or interment allowance on behalf of the state, comply with all requirements for a state veterans' cemetery grant established by the United States Department of Veterans' Affairs, and apply for state veterans' cemetery grants from the United States Department of Veterans' Affairs. Authorizes the Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs to adopt regulations, enter

Representative David Guttenberg

January 31, 2007

Page 2

into agreements for the operation of veterans' cemeteries, and solicit gifts, donations, and grants in addition to grants from the United States Department of Veterans' Affairs.

DMB:med  
07-058.med

# STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

DIVISION OF MOTOR VEHICLES

SARAH PALIN, GOVERNOR

Annette Kreitzer, Commissioner

1300 W BENSON BLVD  
ANCHORAGE, AK 9950  
PHONE: (907) 269-5559  
[www.state.ak.us/dmv/](http://www.state.ak.us/dmv/)

February 5, 2007

The Honorable David Guttenberg  
House of Representatives  
State Capitol, Room 418  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

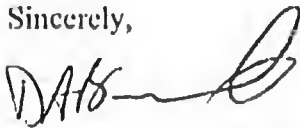
Dear Representative Guttenberg:

I received your request for information concerning the revenues associated with the Veteran License Plate programs. The following schedule shows revenues collected for FY03 through FY06, and for the first half of FY07.

	Standard Veteran License Plates	Commemorative Veteran License Plates - Original	Commemorative Veteran License Plates - Renewal
FY03	\$ 18,330	\$ 0	\$ 0
FY04	18,390	200	0
FY05	22,510	1,800	70
FY06	21,160	1,700	0
FY07 (Jul-Dec)	10,755	970	0

I hope you find this information useful. If I may be of further assistance on this, or any other DMV matter, please don't hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,



Duane Bannock  
Director

CC: Annette Kreitzer, Commissioner, Department of Administration

## FAIRBANKS VETERANS CEMETERY WORKSHEET OPERATIONAL AND MAINTENANCE COSTS<sup>1</sup>

Demographic Factors	Data	Notes
Veterans in four areas	11,164	Fairbanks/North Star and 3 adjoining areas
Avg. annual death rate	149	2005-2026 VA figures
Usage factor	0.50	50% will choose cemetery
Dependents factor	1.50	1 dependent per 2 veterans
Annual burial rate	112	[Death rate x usage] x dependents factor
Graves per acre (gross)	600	Rule of thumb
Min. gravesites needed (20 yr.)	1,676	[Annual burials x 0.75] x 20
Min. burial acreage needed	2.79	One of four is a "second interment"
Gross acreage recommended	20.00 <sup>2</sup>	Min. gravesites/600 see note below
<b>Personnel Factors</b>		
	<b>Data</b>	
Admn. Workers (230 inter. Per FTE)	0.49	Based on NCA estimates
Field workers		Cumulative
Interments (250 per FTE)	0.45	Includes PT, temp., etc.
Gravesites (7,844.4 per FTE)	0.21	Rises over time
Acres Maint. (10.7 per FTE)	0.26	Burial acres used/developed acres may vary
Field Workers Subtotal	0.92	
Employees	1.41	Admn. & field workers
Cem. Director (GS 9--\$36.7 x 1.3 for fringes)	\$47,652.80	NCA Costs 1.0 Full Time Equivalent Employee (FTEE)
Equip. Operator (WG-8--\$28 x 1.3)	\$36,142.60	1.0 FTEE
<b>Total Salary</b>	<b>\$83,795.40</b>	
<b>Operations Factors</b>		
	<b>Data</b>	
Utilities & communications	\$1,117.50	Phone, water, electricity, gas (\$400 x acres)
Supplies & materials	\$2,095.31	Fuel, fertilizer, etc. (\$750 x acres)
Contractual services	\$1,187.34	Janitorial, security, irrigation (\$425 x acres)
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$4,400.16</b>	
<b>Total Annual Operations    \$88,195.56</b>		
<i>Maintenance and Repairs</i>		<i>extra</i>
<i>Equipment Replacement</i>		<i>extra</i>

<sup>1</sup> The standard usage factor is 25% but we have increased the factor to 50% in this case because of the difficulty in projecting usage in this area. While 50% usage may be high, it would be better to estimate a higher number at this point rather than a lower number.

<sup>2</sup> The model assumes a suitable site with easily developed cemetery land. In this case, it would be better to acquire as large a parcel as possible in order to assure suitable land and the ability to buffer surrounding land uses. At least 20 acres should be considered.

# **Benefits for Veterans and Dependents**

*Department of Veterans Affairs*

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[Previous Section](#)

[Next Section](#)

Links to chapters:

[Introduction](#) / [Health Care Benefits](#) / [Benefit Programs](#) / [Burial Benefits](#)  
[Survivor Benefits](#) / [Women Veterans](#) / [Homeless Veterans](#) / [Overseas Benefits](#)  
[Small and Disadvantaged Businesses](#) / [Appeals](#) / [Workplace Benefits](#)  
[Miscellaneous Programs](#) / [Tables](#) / [Phone Numbers and Internet Links](#) / [VA Facilities](#)

## **Burial Benefits**

Links to topics on this page:

[Eligibility](#) / [Burial in VA National Cemeteries](#) / [Headstones and Markers](#)  
[Presidential Memorial Certificates](#) / [Burial Flags](#) / [Reimbursement of Burial Expenses](#)  
[Military Funeral Honors](#) / [Veterans Cemeteries Administered by Other Agencies](#)  
[Arlington National Cemetery](#) / [Department of the Interior](#) / [State Veterans Cemeteries](#)

### **Eligibility**

Veterans discharged under conditions other than dishonorable and servicemembers who die while on active duty may be eligible for the following burial benefits: (1) burial in a national cemetery; (2) government-furnished headstone or marker; (3) Presidential Memorial Certificate; (4) burial flag; and in some cases, (5) reimbursement of a portion of burial expenses. With certain exceptions, service beginning after Sept. 7, 1980, as an enlisted person, and after Oct. 16, 1981, as an officer, must be for a minimum of 24 consecutive months or the full period for which the person was called to active duty. Reservists and National Guard members are eligible if they were entitled to retired pay at the time of death, or would have been entitled had they not been under the age of 60.

Certain Filipino veterans of World War II, to include those who served in the Philippine Commonwealth Army (USAFFE) or recognized guerilla forces and New Philippine Scouts, may be eligible if the veteran, at the time of death, was a citizen of the United States or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the United States.

Persons convicted of a federal or state capital crime, and sentenced to death or life imprisonment without parole, are barred from receiving burial benefits. For additional information on burial benefits, call the nearest national cemetery or 1-800-827-1000, or visit: <http://www.cem.va.gov/>.



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### **Burial in VA National Cemeteries**

VA provides veterans and dependents several gravesite options for burial, though choices are limited to those available at a specific cemetery. These may include a full casket burial, or columbarium or in-ground niche for cremated remains. A limited number of national cemeteries also provide a scatter garden for cremated remains.

The funeral director or the next of kin makes interment arrangements for an eligible veteran or dependent at the time of need by contacting the national cemetery in which burial is desired. VA normally does not conduct burials on weekends. However, weekend callers will be directed to a national cemetery that can schedule burials for the following week. Gravesites in national cemeteries cannot be reserved, however VA will honor reservations made under previous programs. See the VA Facilities section of this book to locate a national cemetery.

Spouses and dependent children of eligible veterans and servicemembers also may be buried in a national cemetery. If the surviving spouse of an eligible veteran remarries, and that marriage is terminated by death or dissolved by annulment or divorce, the surviving spouse is eligible for burial in a national cemetery. The surviving spouse need not be unmarried at the time of death to retain eligibility, if the date of death is on or after Jan. 1, 2000. Burial of dependent children is limited to unmarried children under 21 years of age, or under 23 years of age if pursuing a full-time course of instruction at an approved educational institution. Unmarried adult children who became physically or mentally disabled and incapable of self-support before reaching the age of 21, or 23 if a full-time student, also are eligible for burial.



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### **Headstones and Markers**

Flat bronze, granite or marble markers and upright granite or marble headstones are available. In national cemeteries, the style chosen must be consistent with existing monuments at the place of burial. Niche markers are available to mark columbaria used for inurnment of cremated remains. Government-furnished headstones and markers must be inscribed with the name of the deceased, branch of service, and the year of birth and death. They also may be inscribed with other markings, including an authorized emblem of belief and, space permitting, additional text including military grade, rate or rank; war service such as "World War II;" complete dates of birth and death; military awards; military organizations; civilian or veteran affiliations; and words of endearment. When burial or memorialization is in a national, state or military veterans cemetery, the

headstone or marker must be ordered through cemetery officials. To apply or obtain specific information on available styles, contact the cemetery where the headstone or marker is to be placed.

When burial occurs in a private cemetery, an application for a government-furnished headstone or marker must be made to VA. The government will ship the headstone or marker free of charge, but will not pay for its placement. Headstones and markers previously provided by the government may be replaced at government expense if badly deteriorated, illegible, vandalized or stolen. Eligible veterans and servicemembers buried in private cemeteries, whose deaths occurred on or after Sept. 11, 2001, may receive a government-furnished headstone or marker regardless of whether the grave is already marked with a non-government memorial.

To apply, mail a completed VA Form 40-1330, Application for Standard Government Headstone or Marker for Installation in a Private or State Veterans Cemetery, along with a copy of the veteran's military service discharge document to Memorial Programs Service (402E), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC, 20420-0001. Or fax documents to 1-800-455-7143. Do not send original discharge documents because they will not be returned. For information and application instructions, visit: <http://www.cem.va.gov/>.

VA also provides memorial headstones and markers, bearing the inscription "In Memory of" as their first line, to memorialize eligible veterans and servicemembers whose remains were not recovered or identified, were buried at sea, donated to science or cremated and scattered. Eligible dependents may be memorialized only in national or state veterans cemeteries. To be memorialized, dependents do not need to outlive the veteran from whom their eligibility is based. Memorial headstones or markers must be placed in national, state veterans, local or private cemeteries. VA supplies and ships memorial headstones and markers free of charge, but does not pay for their plots or placement. To check the status of an application for headstone or marker, call 1-800-697-6947.

#### **Presidential Memorial Certificates**

Certificates signed by the president are issued upon request to recognize the military service of honorably discharged deceased veterans. Next of kin, other relatives and friends may request them in person at any VA regional office or by mail: Presidential Memorial Certificates, Department of Veterans Affairs, 5109 Russell Rd., Quantico, VA 22143-3909. There is no pre-printed form to complete or time limit for requesting a certificate(s), but requests should include a copy, not the original, of the deceased veteran's discharge document and clearly indicate to what address the certificate(s) should be sent. Additional information and a sample certificate can be found on the Internet: <http://www.cem.va.gov/pmc.htm>.



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### **Burial Flags**

VA will furnish a United States burial flag for memorialization of:

- (1) Veterans who served during wartime, or served after Jan. 31, 1955.
- (2) Veterans who were entitled to retired pay for service in the reserves, or would have been entitled to such pay but not for being under 60 years of age.
- (3) Members or former members of the Selected Reserve who served at least one enlistment or, in the case of an officer, the period of initial obligation, or were discharged for disability incurred or aggravated in line of duty, or died while a member of the Selected Reserve.

### **Reimbursement of Burial Expenses**

VA will pay a burial allowance up to \$2,000 if the veteran's death is service-connected. In some instances, VA also will pay the cost of transporting the remains of a service-disabled veteran to the national cemetery nearest the home of the deceased that has available gravesites. In such cases, the person who bore the veteran's burial expenses may claim reimbursement from VA. There is no time limit for filing reimbursement claims in service-connected death cases. VA will pay a \$300 burial and funeral expense allowance for veterans who, at time of death, were entitled to receive pension or compensation or would have been entitled to compensation but for receipt of military retirement pay. Eligibility also may be established when death occurs in a VA facility, a nursing home under VA contract or a state veterans nursing home. Additional costs of transportation of the remains may be paid. In nonservice-connected death cases, claims must be filed within two years after permanent burial or cremation. VA will pay a \$300 plot allowance when a veteran is not buried in a cemetery that is under U.S. government jurisdiction under the following circumstances: the veteran was discharged from active duty because of disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty; the veteran was in receipt of compensation or pension or would have been except for receiving military retired pay; or the veteran died in a VA facility. The \$300 plot allowance may be paid to the state if a veteran is buried without charge for the cost of a plot or interment in a state-owned cemetery reserved solely for veteran burials. Burial expenses paid by the deceased's employer or a state agency will not be reimbursed.



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### **Military Funeral Honors**

Upon request, the Department of Defense will provide military funeral honors for the burial of military members and eligible veterans. A basic military funeral honors ceremony consists of the folding and presentation of the United States

flag and the playing of Taps by a bugler, if available, or by electronic recording. A funeral honors detail to perform this ceremony consists of two or more uniformed members of the armed forces, with at least one member from the service in which the deceased veteran served.

The Department of Defense maintains a toll-free telephone line (1-877-MIL-HONR) for use by funeral directors only to request honors. Family members should inform their funeral directors if they desire military funeral honors for a veteran. VA national cemetery staff can help arrange for honors during burials at VA national cemeteries. Veterans service organizations or volunteer groups may help provide honors. For more information, visit the military funeral honors Web page: <http://www.militaryfuneralhonors.osd.mil/>.

**Veterans' Cemeteries Administered by Other Agencies**

**Arlington National Cemetery:** The Department of the Army administers Arlington National Cemetery. Eligibility for burial is more restrictive than at VA national cemeteries. Information may be found on the Internet <http://www.arlingtoncemetery.org/> or by writing to Superintendent, Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, VA 22211, or calling 703-607-8585.

**Department of the Interior:** The Department of the Interior administers two active national cemeteries: Andersonville National Cemetery in Georgia and Andrew Johnson National Cemetery in Tennessee. Eligibility for burial is similar to VA cemetery eligibility.

**State Veterans Cemeteries:** Individual states operate cemeteries for veterans. Eligibility requirements may differ from those for national cemeteries. Contact the state cemetery or state veterans affairs office for additional information. To locate a state veterans cemetery, visit the Internet: <http://www.cem.va.gov/lsvc.htm>.



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## 64.203 State Cemetery Grants

### FEDERAL AGENCY:

NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION, DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

### AUTHORIZATION:

Veterans Housing Benefits Act of 1978, Section 202, Public Laws 95-476, 98-223, 100-687, 103-446, and 105-368; 38 U.S.C. 2408.

### OBJECTIVES:

To assist States in the establishment, expansion, and improvement of veterans' cemeteries.

### TYPES OF ASSISTANCE:

Project Grants.

### USES AND USE RESTRICTIONS:

Monetary assistance is provided under this program to construct, expand, and improve State veterans' cemeteries. Cemeteries must be State-owned and operated solely for the interment of eligible veterans and their dependents and/or spouses. Construction cost means the amount found necessary to convert a tract of land to an operational cemetery.

### ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

#### Applicant Eligibility:

Any State may apply.

#### Beneficiary Eligibility:

The cemetery must be used solely for the interment of veterans, their wives, husbands, surviving spouses, minor children, and unmarried adult children who were physically or mentally disabled and incapable of self support: section 1.620 of 38 CFR.

#### Credentials/Documentation:

Costs will be determined in accordance with revised OMB Circular No. A-87 for State Governments, dated May 4, 1995, and further amended August 29, 1997.

### APPLICATION AND AWARD PROCESS:

#### Preapplication Coordination:

Consultation or assistance is available from VA Central Office personnel (State Cemetery Grants Service) to aid in the preparation of an application. The standard application forms as furnished by VA and required by OMB Circular No. A-102 must be used for this program (Standard Form 424, "Application for Federal Assistance," with attachments). An environmental assessment is required. This program is eligible for coverage under E.O. 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." An applicant should consult the office or official designated as the single point of contact in his or her State for more information on the process the State requires to be followed in applying for assistance, if

the State has selected the program for review.

**Application Procedure:**

Submit Standard Form 424, "Application for Federal Assistance for Construction Programs," with attachments, to the Director, State Cemetery Grants Service (401C), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420. This program is excluded from coverage under OMB Circular No. A-110.

**Award Procedure:**

Formal notification of the award to the State is made by the Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs, National Cemetery Administration.

**Deadlines:**

A deadline of July 1 is established for the filing of applications in the year prior to the fiscal year in which funding is requested.

**Range of Approval/Disapproval Time:**

From 30 to 60 days.

**Appeals:**

No application shall be disapproved until the applicant has been afforded an opportunity for a hearing.

**Renewals:**

Not applicable.

**ASSISTANCE CONSIDERATIONS:**

**Formula and Matching Requirements:**

The amount of the Federal contribution to a State is up to 100 percent of the cost of establishing, improving or expanding State Veterans Cemeteries. In the case of establishment grants, the cost of operating equipment may also be included. Land value is not included as an allowable cost for reimbursement under the grant.

**Length and Time Phasing of Assistance:**

Funds are provided by electronic transfer of funds and must be used within 3 years.

**POST ASSISTANCE REQUIREMENTS:**

**Reports:**

Outlay Report and Request for Reimbursement for Construction Programs, and Performance Reports are accomplished in accord with 38 CFR Part 43.

**Audits:**

In accordance with the provisions of OMB Circular No. A-133 (Revised, June 24, 1997), "Audits of States, Local Governments, and Nonprofit Organizations," nonfederal entities that expend financial assistance of \$300,000 or more in Federal awards will have a single or a program-specific audit conducted for that year. Nonfederal entities that expend less than \$300,000 a year in Federal awards are exempt from Federal audit requirements for that year, except as noted in Circular No. A-133.

**Records:**

Financial records, supporting documents, statistical records and all other records pertinent to a grant shall be retained for a period of 3 years. If any claim or audit is started before the expiration of the 3 year period, the records shall be retained until all litigation, claims or audit findings involving the records

have been resolved.

**FINANCIAL INFORMATION:**

**Account Identification:**  
36-0183-0-1-705.

**Obligations:**  
(Grants) FY 04 \$33,621,693; FY 05 est \$36,109,000; and FY 06 est \$32,000,000.

**Range and Average of Financial Assistance:**  
\$4,305 to \$10,965,607. Average: \$1,533,992.

**PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

For fiscal year 2005 the State Cemetery Grants Service has received requests totaling \$126,070,995. The State Cemetery Grants Service estimates approximately 5 to 10 applications to establish, expand, or improve State veterans cemeteries in fiscal years 2005 and 2006.

**REGULATIONS, GUIDELINES, AND LITERATURE:**

VA Regulations 38 CFR Parts 39 and 43, State Cemetery Grant Program; State Cemetery Grants Program Guide (PG 40-1); and, "Federal Assistance for Establishment, Expansion and Improvement of State Veterans' Cemeteries (State Cemetery Grants Program)" (VA Pamphlet 40-96).

**INFORMATION CONTACTS:**

**Regional or Local Office:**  
None.

**Headquarters Office:**  
Director, State Cemetery Grants Service, (41E), National Cemetery Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20420. Contact: Mr. William Jayne. Telephone: (202) 565-6152 or 565-6801. Fax: (202) 565-6141.

**Web Site Address:**  
<http://www.va.gov>.

**RELATED PROGRAMS:**

64.101, Burial Expenses Allowance for Veterans; 64.201, National Cemeteries; 64.202, Procurement of Headstones and Markers and/or Presidential Memorial Certificates.

**EXAMPLES OF FUNDED PROJECTS:**

1) Construction necessary to convert a tract of land to an operational cemetery; 2) construction of a committal facility, administration/maintenance building, and improve storm drainage system; and 3) the expansion of cemetery acreage or building a committal shelter.

**CRITERIA FOR SELECTING PROPOSALS:**

Applications are prioritized and ranked with other projects in the order received. The priority system consists of six groups or categories. Examples: The extent to which States have adequate funds to match the Federal grant; and the extent to which a project involves additional gravesites necessary to keep the cemetery open. The availability of the Federal and nonfederal share of the project is a primary consideration.

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**Department of Veterans Affairs**  
**National Cemetery Administration**

Communications & Outreach Support Division (41C2)  
Washington DC 20420  
(202) 273-5221  
FAX (202) 273-6698

[www.cem.va.gov](http://www.cem.va.gov)  
[public.inquiry@va.gov](mailto:public.inquiry@va.gov)

## State Cemetery Grants Program

- The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) State Cemetery Grants Program was established in 1978 to complement VA's national cemeteries.
- The program assists states in providing gravesites for veterans in those areas where NCA cannot fully satisfy their burial needs.
- Grants may be used only to establish, expand or improve veterans cemeteries that are owned and operated by a state. Aid is granted only to states, not to private organizations, counties, cities, or other government agencies.
- VA can provide up to 100 percent of the development cost for an approved project. For establishment of new cemeteries, VA can provide for operating equipment as well. VA cannot pay for acquisition of land.
- Cemeteries established under the grant program must conform to the standards and guidelines pertaining to site selection, planning, and construction prescribed by VA.
- Cemeteries must be operated solely for the interment of service members who die on active duty, veterans (as defined by federal law), and their eligible spouses and dependent children. States may impose residency requirements and other limitations to eligibility in addition to those imposed by federal law. State eligibility requirements, however, may not be less stringent than Federal requirements.
- The administration, operation, and maintenance of a VA-supported state cemetery is solely the responsibility of the state.
- VA is authorized to pay a "plot allowance" of \$300 to a state for expenses incurred in the burial of certain eligible veterans.
- VA has awarded 152 grants totaling more than \$274 million to establish, expand or improve 71 veterans cemeteries in 35 states and Guam.
- In fiscal year 2006 NCA-supported state cemeteries provided more than 22,000 interments.



## BURIAL & MEMORIALS

### State Cemetery Grants Program - General Information

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) State Cemetery Grants Program was established in 1978 to complement VA's National Cemetery Administration.

The program assists states

in providing gravesites for veterans in those areas where VA's national cemeteries cannot fully satisfy their burial needs.

Grants may be used only for the purpose of establishing, expanding or improving veterans cemeteries that are owned and operated by a state or U.S. territory. Aid can be granted only to states or U.S. territories. VA cannot provide grants to private organizations, counties, cities or other government agencies.

VA can now provide up to 100 percent of the development cost for an approved project. For establishment of new cemeteries, VA can provide for operating equipment. VA does not provide for acquisition of land. The value of the land cannot be considered as an "allowable cost" under the grant. States are solely responsible for acquisition of the necessary land. Any state ceasing to own or operate a cemetery established, expanded or improved through the use of grant funds, or using the funds for any other purpose than for which the grant was made will be liable for the total refund of all grants made for that cemetery. Federal funds can also be suspended or withdrawn for noncompliance with the terms and conditions of the grant.



*Massachusetts State Veterans Cemetery Agawam*

Cemeteries established under the grant program must conform to the standards and guidelines pertaining to site selection, planning and construction prescribed by VA. Cemeteries must be operated solely for the burial of service members who die on active duty, veterans, and their eligible spouses and dependent children. Any cemetery assisted by a VA grant must be maintained and operated according to the operational standards and measures of the National Cemetery Administration.

The administration, operation and maintenance of a VA-supported state cemetery is solely the responsibility of the state. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs is authorized to pay a plot or interment allowance (not to exceed \$300) to a state for expenses incurred by the state in the burial of eligible veterans in a cemetery owned and operated by the state if the burial is performed at no cost to the veteran's next-of-kin. This benefit is administered by the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) and the state must apply to VBA to receive it.

VA has awarded 152 grants totaling more than \$264 million to establish, expand or improve 65 veterans cemeteries in 35 states, Guam and Northern Mariana Islands.

There are 65 operational cemeteries and four more under construction.

A list of state veterans cemeteries is available.

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Reviewed/Updated Date: January 21, 2007



## BURIAL & MEMORIALS

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### Establishing a State Veterans Cemetery

#### Determine Need

Analyze existing service provided by national cemeteries and other state cemeteries. Consider service life of existing cemeteries. Provide data on veteran population, including age.

#### Investigate Availability of Suitable Land

Suitable land should be easily accessed by road, free of limitations such as rock, steep slopes and wetlands, uncompromised by incompatible land uses near by, and appropriate for cemetery use. Land already owned by the state, county or municipality is usually the best choice. The state must have title to the land.

#### Assess Impacts

Analyze possible negative environmental and historic preservation impacts the cemetery location may have. Can such limitations be overcome?

#### Encourage Support

Veterans service organizations should be informed of the project and be in support of an effort to establish a state veterans cemetery. Local governments should also be supportive. Ultimately, the state legislature must pass necessary legislation authorizing the state cemetery and appropriating funds for establishment and operation.

#### Complete Application

Apply to the Department of Veterans Affairs for federal assistance with a grant for establishing a state veterans cemetery. For forms and other guidance, see OMB Grants Management and the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance.

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## BURIAL & MEMORIALS

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### State Grants Planning Model Overview

[Veterans Shrine Commitment](#)

[General Program Requirements](#)

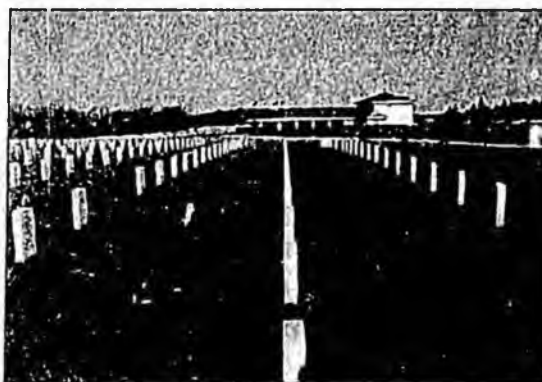
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#### **Veterans Shrine Commitment**

The appearance of state veterans cemeteries demonstrates to America's veterans that the nation appreciates their selfless service and the sacrifices they have made. Elevating the appearance of the cemeteries to shrine status signals the commitment to maintain our veterans' cemeteries at the highest standards forever. State veterans cemeteries help foster patriotism and preserve the nation's history.

Each visitor should depart feeling that the grounds, the gravesites and the environs of the state cemetery are a beautiful and awe-inspiring tribute to those who gave much to preserve the nation's freedom and way of life.

Each state cemetery exists as a veterans shrine and serves as an expression of the appreciation and respect of a grateful state and nation for the service and sacrifice of its veterans. Each cemetery provides an enduring memorial to their sacrifice as well as a dignified and respectful setting for their final rest.

To satisfy this requirement, pre-applications should include a written assurance that the state will maintain the cemetery according to VA National Cemetery Administration standards as established in 38 CFR Section 39.6(4).

#### **General Program Requirements**

In general, state cemetery projects should be built to create a sense of visual continuity with the site and reflect the tradition and heritage of the area. Cemetery buildings should not be isolated, preeminent elements of the cemetery. Buildings should blend with the site design and may be contemporary, single-story architectural structures found in the project region, or transitional, with a style reminiscent of historic state architecture. All buildings should be designed to reflect permanence and durability with minimum maintenance required. The overall design should consider human scale and privacy for visitors. A consistent architectural expression shall be maintained throughout the cemetery.

Cemetery master plans should be laid out in a looped circulation configuration. Loop configurations include roads that separate vehicular, pedestrian and maintenance traffic. Loop configurations also help define memorial areas but roads should not be used as boundaries to circumscribe the burial areas. The design should establish a strong sense of entry into the cemetery and create an interesting and dramatic sequence of spaces.

The development plan should be divided into phases, each consisting of an area approximating the burial need over a 10-year period. Construction of burial areas in latter phases should be programmed to be completed two years before actual need. This lead-time allows for the continuity of interment service.

Prior to construction, the site chosen should be evaluated for environmental impact and issues. Projects are required to support a FONSI (Finding of No Significant Impact) indicating the project will not have an undue negative impact on the environment.

In general, cemetery plans should avoid lakes, greenhouses and bridges. Chapel buildings, whether freestanding or part of another structure, are not allowed under 38 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations) Part 39. The cost to build and maintain cemetery features of this nature is not supported by the State Cemetery Grants Program. Additionally, per the CFR, the grants program does not fund cemetery land costs or offsite utilities. Some current state cemeteries received land donations for their project.

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### Project Design Requirements

The following is a list of the reference documents required for the design of the project.

- 38 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations), Part 39
- [Your State Contract Requirements \(A/E, Construction\)](#)
- State Cemetery Grants Program - Grant Information Kit July 2001
- A/E Submission Requirements; PG-18-15 Volume D June 1999

All cemetery designs must conform to all state and local codes and requirements.

### Site Considerations

#### Site Selection Standards for a State Cemetery:

- **Proximity** - Locate the site as close as possible to the most densely populated location in the area under consideration. Not only actual distance, but travel time to the site must be considered.
- **Size** - Site acreage is sufficient to provide at least 20-40 years of gravesites based on state projected burial rate. More acreage is encouraged. The acreage required will depend on the burial method, gravesite yield, projected burial rates based on the state's estimated needs for at least 20 years, and the project site's proximity to other national and state cemeteries.
- **Shape** - Uniform boundaries, undivided by roads or easements, with generally square or rectangular shapes are desired. Irregularly shaped sites are more difficult to access and less efficient to design and develop.
- **Accessibility** - Site accessible by highway. Public transportation service is desirable but not required. Road quality of access streets should also be considered.

- **Utilities & Water** - Availability of public utilities (electricity, water, sewer, gas) is important. However, on-site septic systems and on-site potable water wells or ponds are acceptable. An adequate water supply for irrigation is of primary importance. Consider the availability of on-site or off-site recyclable water. The grant program does not fund off-site improvements such as water line extensions.
- **Surrounding Land Use** - Surrounding land should be free from noise or adverse environmental impact(s) (nuisance, landfills or hazardous waste sites). Consider the attractiveness and compatibility of adjacent land. Sites adjacent to visually objectionable, loud noise, high traffic, or other nuisance elements should be avoided. Both current and future projected land use are considered.
- **Soils** - Soils should be of a quality which will provide adequate topsoil for growing turf. The soil should have adequate stability for constructing roads and buildings and should be free from shallow-depth groundwater. The water table must be lower than the maximum proposed depth of burial. There should be no sub-surface obstructions or hazardous waste present. Site soil information is available through the Natural Resources Conservation Service, United States Department of Agriculture ([www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov)).
- **Topography** - Land should be relatively level to rolling terrain for areas to be developed. The grade of the site should be in the two to ten percent range. There should be sufficient slope to enable proper drainage of the site. Ravines, wetlands, lakes, streams, floodplains and sinkholes cannot be developed. If hilly land is used, access must not be cost prohibitive.
- **Aesthetics** - Existing site amenities such as pleasant views and quality vegetative cover are favorable.
- **Restrictions to Development** - The presence of elements such as cultural/historic/archaeological elements, utility easements, rights-of-way or mineral rights can hamper or legally prevent development. Presence of endangered species limits land development. Potential flood hazards must be avoided.
- **Site Suitability and Acceptability** - Consider the following tests and items to determine site suitability and acceptability: 1) Soil Borings and Test Pits, Perk Test (Septic Field Requirements), Soil Sample Analysis; 2) Well, Aquifer Level, Underground Water Quality Testing; 3) Historic and Archaeological Land Use Review; 4) Cultural Resources; 5) Flood Plains, Wetlands, and Endangered Species; 6) Land Use and Public Access; 7) Utilities; 8) Hazardous Waste; 9) Corrective Action Agreement.

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#### Site Description and Site Analysis

Per 38 CFR 39.8, the plan for a state cemetery requires a description of the site and its various elements. The description should explain specific development of the site, design concepts and include space and area requirements (space outline) for support facilities. The description should also include: proposed and existing burial acreage; available gravesites; total acreage and gravesites upon completion of the project; and the projected annual interment rates. (If the cemetery is to be developed in phases, each phase will be handled as a separate project.)

As part of the site selection process, NCA may provide states with demographic data from the [Future Burial Needs](#) report. This information will assist states in locating state veterans cemeteries in the most advantageous sites. Through its technical assistance program, NCA will assist State Directors of Veterans Affairs in answering related questions from other state officials.

Cemeteries established under the grant program must conform to VA-prescribed standards and guidelines for site selection, planning and construction. Cemeteries must be operated solely for the interment of service members who die on active duty, eligible veterans and their spouses and minor children. The administration, operation and maintenance of a VA-supported state cemetery are solely the responsibility of the state. VA is authorized to pay a "plot allowance" of \$300 to a state for expenses incurred in the burial of an eligible veteran.

#### Planning Process for Establishing State Cemeteries

Using the Site Selection Standards listed above, states should identify several potential sites. Sites should be assessed for overall site potential, proximity to veterans in the state, topographical features, available acreage and the surrounding land use. Once the number of sites has been narrowed to the most favorable locations, consider the suitability of the land for development as a cemetery. The preferred site is then described in the pre-application for a grant. States have always been partners with the Federal government in providing for the needs of military veterans. The VA State Cemetery Grants Program (SCGP) assists the states in providing gravesites with grants used to establish, expand or improve veterans cemeteries owned and operated by the state.

#### Phasing

Cemeteries are constructed in phases based on the needs of the veteran population. The initial phase of construction should be based on a projected ten-year interment rate. Initial development of larger increments would unnecessarily increase state maintenance costs. This first phase includes the development and construction of the cemetery infrastructure as follows:

- Entry Features (Including Avenue of Flags)
- Roads and Parking
- Avenue of Flags
- Assembly Area (Flag Location)
- Burial Areas and Burial Sections
- Committal Service Shelter
- Columnarium and In-Ground Cremain Burials
- Memorial Walk
- Administration Building
- Public Information Center (PIC)
- Public Restrooms
- Maintenance Building
- Service Yard
- Irrigation System
- Utility Distribution System
- Capillon Tower

In subsequent phases cemeteries should look at burial needs for 10 years. Subsequent phases will include the build out of additional burial sections and continuation of the columnarium, as required. The additional phases will require the extension of roadways to access the planned burial sections. Initially, cemeteries are specifically designed with loop roads to easily accommodate additional phases. Planning for the second phase should start approximately six years after the cemetery opens.

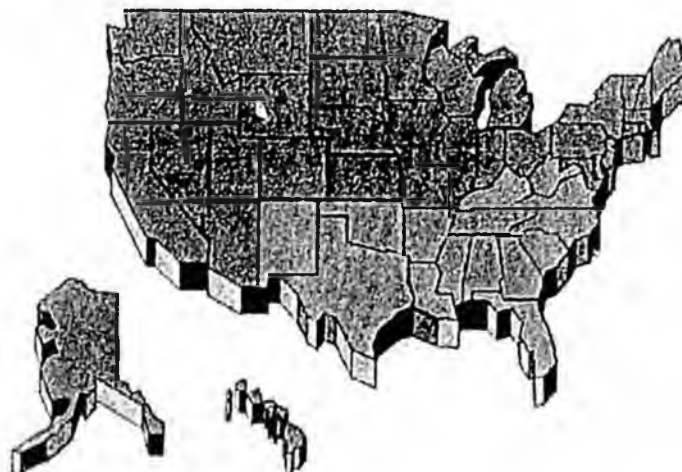
[back to top](#)



## BURIAL & MEMORIALS

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### State Cemetery Grants Program/Grant Information Kit



[Applicant Eligibility](#) [Program History and Background](#) [Scope of the Program](#) [Availability of Funds](#) [Application Guidelines](#) [Application Content](#) [Selection Criteria](#) [Review Process](#)

#### Applicant Eligibility

1. State governments are eligible to receive grants to **establish, expand or improve** state veterans cemeteries. The term "state" means each of the several states, territories and possessions of the United States, including Guam, American Samoa, the Virgin Islands and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The District of Columbia and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico are also eligible to receive grants.
2. Counties, cities and other state subdivisions, including multi-agency organizations are not eligible for grants. Native American tribal governments and entities are not eligible to receive grants. Private organizations are not eligible to receive grants.
3. **Applicants must own the land** on which the cemetery is to be established. The state is responsible for the provision of land. Land may be purchased, transferred from another agency or donated.
4. Eligible applicants must provide assurance that they possess legislative authority and adequate appropriations to construct the project to be built with grant assistance.
5. Cemeteries must be operated solely for the interment of service members who die on active duty, veterans (as defined in Title 38, U.S. Code §101.(2)), and their spouses and minor children. States may impose residency requirements for eligibility but are encouraged not to.
6. Grants may only be awarded to establish, expand or improve state-owned veterans cemeteries. Grants may not be awarded for maintenance or repairs.

7. New cemeteries must be capable of providing at least 20 years of service.

#### Program History and Background

1. The federal government's system of national cemeteries was first established during the Civil War. The Army operated most of the cemeteries until 1973 when they were transferred to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Arlington National Cemetery is still operated by the Department of the Army. The National Park Service operates several historical national cemeteries such as Gettysburg and Vicksburg. An independent agency, the American Battle Monuments Commission, maintains cemeteries overseas for the dead of World War I and World War II. States have operated veterans cemeteries since the War with Mexico.
2. The VA State Cemetery Grants Program was established in 1978 to complement VA's network of national cemeteries. Funds were first appropriated for the program in 1980. As originally authorized, VA provided 50 percent of the cost and states provided 50 percent. The value of the state land dedicated to the cemetery comprised up to half of the state's share.
3. The program assists states in providing gravesites in those areas where the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) cannot fully satisfy veterans' burial needs.
4. 4. Public Law 105-368, which went into effect in 1999, authorized VA to provide up to 100 percent of the development cost for an approved project. VA can now provide for operating equipment for establishment of new cemeteries. VA does not provide for acquisition of land.
5. The administration, operation and maintenance of a VA-supported state cemetery are solely the responsibility of the state.
6. VA is authorized to pay a "plot allowance" of \$300 to a state for expenses incurred in the burial of an eligible veteran without charge.
7. Federal statutes authorizing the program are codified at 38 U.S.C. § 2408. Regulations are at 38 C.F.R. Part 39.
8. The State Cemetery Grants Program is described in the *Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance* under "State Cemetery Grants" at 64.203.

#### Scope of the Program

1. The State Cemetery Grants Program is intended to complement the service provided by the VA's system of veterans cemeteries operated by the National Cemetery Administration.
2. VA seeks to provide the service of a veterans cemetery within 75 miles of 90 percent of the veterans across the country. Data shows that a 75-mile radius defines the effective "service area" of a veterans cemetery.
3. Since 1973, VA has opened many new cemeteries, primarily in large metropolitan areas where veterans previously had no effective service. VA also works to expand existing national cemeteries to maintain current service. VA has more than doubled the acreage available in federal veterans cemeteries since 1973 and the burial rate at these cemeteries has also increased by more than 100 percent.
4. Smaller cities and rural areas located beyond the 75-mile service areas of these existing national cemeteries are ideal locations for state veterans cemeteries.

#### Availability of Funds

1. Federal funds are appropriated each year for the State Cemetery Grants Program. VA requested \$32 million in funding for FY 2004 (October 1, 2003 through September 30, 2004).
2. Appropriated funds are available until expended.
3. If a state that has received a grant under this program ceases to operate the cemetery as a veterans cemetery, the federal government is entitled to recover the total of all grants made under this program to that state.
4. Funds must be expended in accordance with applicable guidelines, including Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-87, "Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Tribal Governments."
5. All grant costs must be "necessary, reasonable" and allocable to the project for which funds have been requested.
6. When all requirements for Federal funding have been met, VA will award grants providing sufficient funds are available.
7. If sufficient funds are not available, VA will award funds according to the priority established (see "Selection Criteria").

#### Application Guidelines

1. A state seeking grant funding for a veterans cemetery project must apply to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in accordance with 38 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations) Part 39. The applicant must also conform with the Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments, 38 CFR Part 43, known as the "Common Grants Management Rule."
2. The applicant must have clear legislative authority from the state to apply for the grant.
3. The applicant must have the funds necessary to begin design and planning work. Federal funds are awarded on the basis of the bids received for construction. **State funds are needed to prepare plans and specifications prior to bidding.** Once the successful bidder has been determined and VA has awarded the grant, the state may be reimbursed for allowable costs already incurred.
4. The applicant must provide written assurance that any cemetery established, expanded, or improved through a grant will be maintained and operated in accordance with the operational standards and measures of the National Cemetery Administration.
5. VA provides **no monetary assistance to operate state veterans cemeteries.** States must be aware of the commitment to operate the cemetery.
6. VA must receive applications by July 1 for projects to be funded in the next Federal fiscal year (October 1 through September 30).
7. Applications must be reviewed by the State "Single Point of Contact" under the Executive Order 12372 process.
8. Applications must be signed and dated by the authorized state representative, normally the director of

the state veterans affairs agency.

9. Cemeteries established under the grant program must conform to VA-prescribed standards and guidelines for site selection, planning and construction.

#### Application Content

1. Standard forms approved by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) must be used to apply for grants. All these forms are provided in the "State Cemetery Grants Program Guide, PG 40-1." They are also available on the OMB Grants Management website.
  - o The basic application form is SF (Standard Form) 424, titled "Application for Federal Assistance," and known as the "face sheet."
  - o The application must also include SF 424C, "Budget Information—Construction Programs."
  - o The applicant must also submit SF 424D, "Assurances—Construction Programs."
  - o The "Certificate of Compliance" with Federal drug-free workplace and debarment and suspension requirements is required.
  - o In addition, the applicant must submit the "Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loan and Cooperative Agreements," which certifies that the applicant will not use grant funds for lobbying. If grant funds are to be used for lobbying, they must be disclosed on the "Disclosure" form.

The applicant must submit written assurance that it possesses authority to establish and operate a state veterans cemetery and that it will maintain the cemetery in accordance with VA standards.

2. For all projects expected to cost \$100,000 or more, the applicant must submit a pre-application. The pre-application is intended to:
  - o Establish communication between the grantor agency (VA) and the applicant;
  - o Determine the applicant's eligibility;
  - o Determine how well the proposed project can compete with applications from others;
  - o Discourage proposals that have little or no chance of being funded.
3. Pre-applications must include the following:
  - o The location of the cemetery. A specific site may be designated during the review phase of the application, but the pre-application must designate the area to be served and the preferred location of the cemetery;
  - o A design concept that describes the primary features to be included in the project and the number of gravesites to be provided. Standard features include items such as the entrance gate, administration building, committal service facility, flag plaza and assembly area;
  - o A needs assessment that explains the need for the project to establish, expand or improve the veterans cemetery. This should be concise and quantitative to the degree possible.

### Selection Criteria

1. Preapplications received by July 1, will be prioritized for funding in the following fiscal year.
2. Only preapplications which have met the requirements noted in the "Application Guidelines" and the "Application Content" sections will be prioritized. That is, applications must be properly completed on the appropriate forms. They must include the proper attachments and the applicant must have clear authority and adequate funding to begin the design process.
3. Preapplications meeting these basic requirements will be prioritized according to published criteria in the Program Guide, PG 40-1.
4. VA will rank the preapplications and announce priorities by August 15. VA will rank applications according to priority and the date on which the application was received.
5. Prioritization follows these rules:
  - o PRIORITY I - Projects needed to avoid disruption in burial service that would otherwise occur at existing veterans' cemeteries within 4 years of the date of the preapplication. Such projects would include phased expansion projects as well as improvement projects that are needed to continue interment operations.
  - o PRIORITY II - Projects for the establishment of new veterans' cemeteries.
  - o PRIORITY III - Planned phased developments prior to need.
  - o PRIORITY IV - Other improvement projects.

Within priority groups 1, 2 and 3, highest priority will be given to projects in geographical locations that would provide **service to the largest number** of unserved veterans as determined by VA. Within priority group 4, projects will be ranked in order based upon VA's determination of the relative importance and necessity to operate.

### Review Process

1. In addition to the required forms, assurances, certifications and attachments, all projects must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Historic Preservation Act. In many cases, especially with new cemeteries, the applicant will be required to perform an Environmental Assessment (EA) to determine whether a more in-depth Environmental Impact Study (EIS) is required. The EA should progress toward a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The FONSI should be made available for public review and comment.
2. The National Historic Preservation Act requires VA to determine whether proposed projects will have any impact on historic or cultural resources. When a new cemetery is being established, it is normally necessary to perform an investigation of the site to determine whether any historic or cultural resources would be affected and, if so, what mitigation or protection may be afforded. The applicant then confers with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), which renders an opinion of the project's impact. Depending on the opinion of the SHPO, VA may be able to approve the project.
3. Most states hire architect/engineer (A/E) firms to design major projects. In the case of major projects, including all establishment grants, VA requires a "pre-design conference" in which VA, state and A/E representatives meet to familiarize themselves with the site and VA design requirements.
4. VA requires a "master plan" for establishment of new cemeteries. The master plan should analyze the

major factors affecting design of the cemetery—including climate, soil, hydrology, site constraints, views, and activity level. The plan should analyze alternative designs and address the ultimate "build-out" of the site and planned phases of development.

5. The design process then proceeds to "design development" or partial plans, sometimes called 40 percent or 50 percent drawings. Again VA must review these submissions and approve them.
6. The final design submission comprises the construction drawings and specifications. VA is required to approve these documents before the state advertises for bids. Cemetery plans must be complete, comprehensive and professional.
7. Based on construction bids, the state submits a new form 424 and 424C that reflects the actual construction amount rather than the estimated amount provided in the preapplication. Along with the forms, the state must submit a tabulation of bids and designate the contractor to whom the contract will be awarded. VA reviews these materials and then awards the grant. Once the state receives the Notification of Grant Award, they may request reimbursement for costs they have already incurred such as design costs.

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[Freedom of Information Act](#) | [Small Business Contacts](#) | [Site Map](#)  
[USA.gov](#) | [White House](#) | [USA Freedom Corps](#)

Reviewed/Updated Date: September 13, 2006

Disabled American Veterans  
Department of Alaska  
Resolution #2007-01

SUPPORT FOR A POLICY FOR A STATE VETERANS CEMETARY

WHEREAS, Alaskan veterans deserve a cemetery that is located in the Interior that honors their service; and

WHEREAS, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration, Alaska has more residents in the military on a per-capita basis than any other state. The Fairbanks North Star Borough has approximately 11,164 veterans; Forty percent of families in the Fairbanks area have at least one veteran in their household and sixteen percent have at least one woman in the household who is a veteran; and

WHEREAS, A State Veterans' Cemetery in the Interior would better serve needs of the veterans and their families and provide a place that is centrally located, honorable and well maintained; and

WHEREAS, The nearest officially designated military cemetery is located 350 miles North of Anchorage at Ft. Richardson; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administrations' goal is to provide eligible veterans reasonable access to Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) burial options; and

WHEREAS, The VA provides a burial and funeral expense allowance of \$300 and a plot-interment allowance of \$300; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration follows a six-step process to build a new state veteran cemetery; site selection; environmental statement; land acquisition; master planning and design development; construction document preparation; and construction award and completion; and

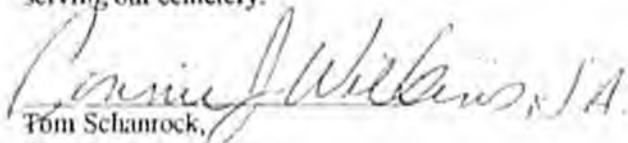
WHEREAS, The Alaska Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs can be awarded up to 100% of the development costs from the Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration for an approved project; and

WHEREAS, To date, the Veterans Administration has awarded 137 grants totaling more than \$200 million to establish, expand or improve sixty-two veterans cemeteries in thirty-two states, plus Guam, Fifty-six cemeteries in twenty-one states and Guam are now operational; and

WHEREAS, According to the Division of Motor Vehicles from FY03 to FY05, \$45,040, has been generated from both the Federal and Commemorative Veterans license plate programs. The monies collected from the state license plate program currently goes into the general fund; and

WHEREAS, The construction of a state veterans cemetery in the Interior would be a great benefit to the friends and families of veterans in our community and would provide a place in the Interior for soldiers to be laid with full military funeral honors, pallbearers, rifle team, flag folding and flag presentation; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the Disabled American Veterans, Department of Alaska, That support be given in the creation of a veterans state cemetery, as proposed in HB45, open to all veterans in the state and recognizes the veterans sacrifices while serving our cemetery.

  
Tom Schanrock,  
for Department Commander



## AMERICAN LEGION

C. RUSSELL HUBER POST #57

*"The Friendly Post" -- Home of Happy Bears*  
1634 Cushman Street • Fairbanks, Alaska 99701  
Phone: (907) 452-5757 • Fax: (907) 452-8954

January 30, 2007

Representative David Guttenberg  
State Capital  
Room 418  
Juneau, AK. 99801

Reference: Veterans Cemetery in Fairbanks

Dear Representative Guttenberg:

As the 2007 Legislative session begins, Veterans organizations are again requesting Legislative support for the establishment of a Veterans Cemetery in Fairbanks. You will recall that the American Legion, Department of Alaska, at their 2005 State Convention in Kodiak voted unanimously in support of that cemetery. Most noteworthy is that the resolution calling for a new veteran's cemetery came from our Anchorage American Legion comrades who recognized the only existing veteran's cemetery in Alaska is located at Fort Richardson.

We have met with Federal Veterans Affairs officials, State Veterans Affairs personnel, American Legion Posts, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Alaska Native Veterans, members of the Order of The Purple Heart and other veterans organizations who all strongly support your bill to establish a second veterans cemetery to serve the desperate need for a final resting ground for those many who have served our country in times of war and peace.

The need for a new veteran's cemetery is urgent as the few veterans' sites available will soon be filled with no provision existing for veteran's grave anywhere in the interior.

Please share this letter with other members of the Legislature.

For God and Country,

Darrell Peterson, Commander

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By: Luke Hopkins  
Hank Bartos  
Introduced: 03/24/05  
Adopted: 03/24/05

FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH  
RESOLUTION NO. 2005 - 15

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE CREATION OF A STATE VETERANS' CEMETERY IN THE INTERIOR THROUGH LEGISLATION THAT ESTABLISHES AN ALASKAN VETERANS CEMETERY WITH FUNDS FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA) STATE CEMETERY GRANTS PROGRAM.

WHEREAS, Alaskan veterans deserve a cemetery that is located in the Interior that honors their service; and

WHEREAS, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration, Alaska has more residents in the military on a per-capita basis than any other state. There are approximately 11,164 veterans living in the Fairbanks North Star Borough; and

WHEREAS, the nearest officially designated military cemetery is located in Anchorage at Fort Richardson Army base; and

WHEREAS, the VA National Cemetery Administration follows a 6-step process to build a new state veterans cemetery: site selection; environmental assessment; land acquisition; master planning and design development; construction documents preparation; and construction award and completion; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs can be awarded up to 100 percent of the development costs from the VA State Cemetery Grants Program for an approved project and the VA has awarded 137 grants to establish and improve veterans cemeteries around the country; and

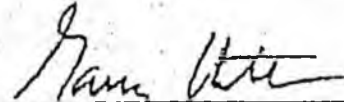
WHEREAS, a State Veterans' Cemetery in the Interior would better serve needs of the veterans and their families, and provide a place that is centrally located, honorable, and would provide a place in the Interior for soldiers to be laid with full military funeral honors, pallbearers, rifle tear, flag folding, and flag presentation; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fairbanks North Star Borough Assembly supports the creation of a State Veterans' Cemetery in the Interior and recognizes veterans' sacrifices while serving our country.

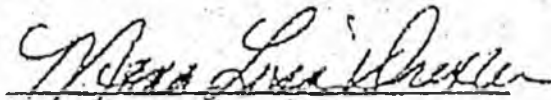
46 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution shall be  
47 forwarded to The Honorable Governor Frank Murkowski, the Alaska Interior Delegation,  
48 members of the House Military and Veterans Affairs Committee, Major General Craig E.  
49 Campbell Adjutant General/Commissioner, Military and Veterans Affairs, The Honorable  
50 Senator Ted Stevens, the Honorable Senator Lisa Murkowski, the Honorable  
51 Congressman Don Young.

52  
53  
54

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 24<sup>th</sup> DAY OF MARCH 2005.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Garry Hutchison  
Presiding Officer

ATTEST: :

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mona Lisa Drexler, GMC  
Municipal Borough Clerk

55  
56 Ayes: Romans, Bartos, Sattley, Rex, Williams, Hopkins, Aldridge, Frank, Hutchison  
57 Noes: None



April 2, 2007

The Honorable Bob Lynn, Chair  
House State Affairs Committee  
Alaska Capitol, Room 104  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

RE: HB 45 (Guttenberg & Doll)—Support

Dear Chair Lynn:

On behalf of the members of AARP in Alaska, we urge you and your colleagues on the House State Affairs Committee to support HB 45, authored by Representatives David Guttenberg and your Committee colleague Andrea Doll and co-sponsored by you and Representatives Crawford and Kerttula.

HB 45 would establish a fund for the maintenance of and development of future veterans' cemeteries in Alaska. As you know, the only veterans' cemeteries are in Anchorage and Sitka yet the Fairbanks area alone has over 11,000 veterans, many of whom are AARP members. Certainly veterans and their families would like to have a cemetery closer to where they live.

Burial in a veterans' cemetery is one of the last honors we can offer our fellow citizens who have served in the Armed Forces. We think it is a well-deserved tribute to these men and women who served our country. It is a proper thank-you to the veterans and their families.

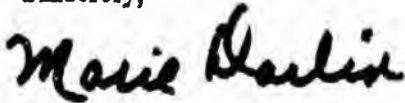
Undoubtedly there may be some costs associated with a new cemetery. Our veterans didn't weigh the costs when they joined the armed services. Surely we can bear the costs of this final thank-you to them.

AARP recommends an "AYE" vote on HB 45.

Should you have any questions about our position, please feel free to contact me (586-3637) or Patrick Luby, AARP Advocacy Director (907-762-3314).

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Marie Darlin, Coordinator  
AARP Capital City Task Force  
415 Willoughby Avenue, Apt. 506  
Juneau, AK 99801  
586-3637 (voice)  
463-3580 (fax)

CC: Vice-Chair Bob Roses  
Representative John Coghill  
Representative Kyle Johansen  
Representative Craig Johnson  
Representative Andrea Doll  
Representative Max Gruenberg  
Representative David Guttenberg



## Fairbanks North Star Borough

*Office of the Mayor*

---

809 Pioneer Road • PO Box 71267 • Fairbanks, Alaska 99707-1267 •

Phone 907/459-1300 Fax 907/459-1102 Email [mayor@co.fairbanks.ak.us](mailto:mayor@co.fairbanks.ak.us)

12 February, 2007

Dear Committee Members,

This is a letter of support for HB 45: State Veterans Cemetery and a thank you to Representative David Guttenberg for his sponsorship of this valuable piece of legislation.

This legislation serves to better meet the need of our Alaskan Veterans and their families through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, State Cemetery Grants Program.

As the home of the Stryker Brigade Combat Team (formerly the 172<sup>nd</sup> SBCT / now the 1-25 SBCT), and having recently emerged successfully from our efforts to challenge the BRAC recommendations to scale back the military presence in Alaska, we have no choice but to continue to provide adequate reason for the military to stay here. This bill does that.

I fully support this legislation which honors Alaskans who have served their country with dignity as well as their family members in our community.

Sincerely,

Jim Whitaker, Mayor - Fairbanks North Star Borough

**HB**

**45**

**SFIN**

**FILE**

25-LS0230\E  
Bullock  
2/29/08

ADMITTED  
9/3/08

SENATE CS FOR CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 45( )  
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA  
TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY

Offered:  
Referred:

Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES GUTTENBERG AND DOLL, Lynn, Crawford, Kerttula, Roses, Johnson, Gruenberg, Olson, Thomas, Gardner

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 "An Act authorizing the Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs to establish and  
2 maintain Alaska veterans' cemeteries."

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

4 \* Section 1. AS 37.05.146(c) is amended by adding a new paragraph to read:

5 (83) gifts, donations, and grants received by the Department of  
6 Military and Veterans' Affairs for the purpose of establishing and maintaining Alaska  
7 veterans' cemeteries under AS 26.10.030 and AS 44.35.035(b).

8 \* Sec. 2. AS 44.35 is amended by adding a new section to read:

9 Sec. 44.35.035. Alaska veterans' cemeteries. (a) The department may  
10 establish and maintain Alaska veterans' cemeteries in the state to serve state veterans  
11 and spouses and eligible dependents of state veterans.

12 (b) The department may accept gifts, donations, and grants, including land,  
13 under AS 26.10.030 for the purpose of establishing and maintaining Alaska veterans'  
14 cemeteries. Land received by the department for an Alaska veterans' cemetery shall be

1 owned by the state.

2 (c) The department shall, in consultation with the Alaska Veterans' Advisory  
3 Council,

4 (1) adopt regulations for determining individuals eligible for burial in  
5 an Alaska veterans' cemetery;

6 (2) receive the plot or interment allowance on behalf of the state under  
7 38 U.S.C. 2303;

8 (3) comply with all requirements for a state veterans' cemetery grant  
9 established by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs under 38 U.S.C.  
10 2408; and

11 (4) apply to the United States Department of Veterans Affairs for state  
12 veterans' cemetery grants under 38 U.S.C. 2408.

13 (d) The department may

14 (1) adopt regulations necessary to administer Alaska veterans'  
15 cemeteries;

16 (2) enter into agreements for the maintenance and operation of Alaska  
17 veterans' cemeteries with political subdivisions of the state and other persons; and

18 (3) solicit gifts, donations, and grants in addition to a state veterans'  
19 cemetery grant in (c) of this section that may be designated for the establishment and  
20 maintenance of an Alaska veterans' cemetery and received by the department under  
21 AS 26.10.030.

22 (e) In this section, "department" means the Department of Military and  
23 Veterans' Affairs.

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



SESSION:  
Alaska State Capitol, Room 418  
Juneau, AK 99801  
(907) 465-4457 Office  
(907) 465-3519 Fax  
(800) 928-4457 Toll Free

INTERIM:  
1292 Sadler Way, Suite 304  
Fairbanks, AK 99701  
Office (907) 456-8172  
Fax (907) 456-2490

## Representative David Guttenberg

### Explanation of Changes to HB 45 CS for HB 45(MLV)

Amendment offered and adopted in House Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee

Page 2, following line 2:

Insert a new bill section to read:

\*\*\*Sec. 2. AS 37.05.146(c) is amended by adding a new paragraph to read:

(82) gifts, donations, and grants received by the Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs for the purpose of establishing and maintaining Alaska veterans' cemeteries under AS 26.10.030 and AS 44.35.035(b)."

Page 2, line 8:

Delete "2007"

Insert "2008"

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Sponsor



Statement

SESSION:  
Alaska State Capitol, Room 418  
Juneau, AK 99801  
(907) 465-4457 Office  
(907) 465-3519 Fax  
(800) 928-4457 Toll Free

INTERIM:  
1292 Sadler Way, Suite 304  
Fairbanks, AK 99701  
Office (907) 456-8172  
Fax (907) 456-2490

## Representative David Guttenberg

### House Bill 45 - State Veterans' Cemetery

All Alaska veterans deserve access to a military cemetery that honors their service and recognizes their sacrifices while serving our country, usually under challenging conditions, and frequently in harm's way.

On a per capita basis, Alaska has more residents in active military service or who are veterans than all but one other state. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), a total of 9,469 veterans reside in the Fairbanks North Star Borough.

The VA's long-term goal is to provide an operational veterans' cemetery within 75 miles of 90 percent of the veterans in the country. The nearest veterans' cemetery to Fairbanks is Fort Richardson National Cemetery, located 350 miles away in Anchorage. By the VA's own estimation, a facility in Fairbanks would greatly increase the number of veterans served by a veterans' cemetery.

Interior Alaska's veterans deserve a cemetery located in the Interior of the state. A state veterans' cemetery in the Interior would better serve the needs of veterans and their families, and provide a final resting place that is centrally located, honorable, and well maintained. An Interior veterans' cemetery will help families avoid the pain of burying a loved one far from home.

HB 45 seeks to establish a state cemetery similar to the Fort Richardson and Sitka National Cemeteries. It will provide a place in the Interior for soldiers to be laid to rest with full military funeral honors, including uniformed pallbearers, rifle team, and ceremonial folding and presentation of the United States flag.

HB 45 authorizes the Alaska Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs to establish and maintain a state veterans' cemetery with funds from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, State Cemetery Grants Program. Through this program, the Alaska Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs may be awarded up to 100% of allowable costs for design, construction, and operating equipment for an approved project. To date, the VA has awarded 152 grants totaling more than \$264 million to establish, expand, or improve 65 veterans' cemeteries in 35 states, Guam and Northern Mariana Islands. There are now 65 operational cemeteries and four more under construction.

I urge you to support this legislation.

Representative.David.Guttenberg@legis.state.ak.us  
<http://guttenberg.akdemocrats.org>

# LEGAL SERVICES

DIVISION OF LEGAL AND RESEARCH SERVICES  
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY  
STATE OF ALASKA

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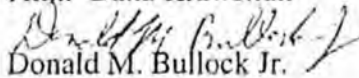
State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182  
Deliveries to: 129 6th St., Rm. 329

## MEMORANDUM

April 11, 2007

**SUBJECT:** Sectional summary of CSHB 45(MLV)  
(Work Order No. 25-LS0230(C))

**TO:** Representative David Guttenberg  
Attn: Dana Krawchuk

**FROM:**   
Donald M. Bullock Jr.  
Legislative Counsel

You have requested a sectional summary of the above-described bill.

As a preliminary matter, note that a sectional summary of a bill should not be considered an authoritative interpretation of the bill and the bill itself is the best statement of its contents. If you would like an interpretation of the bill as it may apply to a particular set of circumstances, please advise.

**Section 1.** Allows the legislature to appropriate a portion of the money received for special request plates commemorating Alaska veterans to the Alaska veterans' cemetery fund created in sec. 3 of the bill.

**Section 2.** Adds gifts, donations, and grants received by the Department of Military and Veteran's Affairs for veterans' cemeteries to the list of program receipts in AS 37.05.146(c) that are accounted for separately; appropriations from these program receipts are not made from the unrestricted general fund.

**Section 3.** Creates the Alaska veterans' cemetery fund in the general fund; the fund is not exempt from the requirements of AS 37.07 (Executive Budget Act) and money in the fund is not dedicated for a specific purpose. Provides that the legislature may appropriate amounts from the fund to the Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs for the construction, operation, and maintenance of veterans' cemeteries established under sec. 4 of the bill. Appropriations to the veterans' cemetery fund do not lapse under AS 37.25.010, and the unexpended and unobligated balance of an appropriation from the fund lapses back into the fund.

**Section 4.** Authorizes the Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs to establish and maintain Alaska veterans' cemeteries in the state. Allows the department to accept gifts, donations, and grants for the purpose of establishing and maintaining the cemeteries; land received by the department is owned by the state. Requires the department to consult

Representative David Guttenberg

April 11, 2007

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with the Alaska Veterans' Advisory Council when adopting regulations for determining eligibility for burial in a state veterans' cemetery, receive the plot or interment allowance on behalf of the state, comply with all requirements for a state veterans' cemetery grant established by the United States Department of Veterans' Affairs, and apply for state veterans' cemetery grants from the United States Department of Veterans' Affairs. Authorizes the Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs to adopt regulations, enter into agreements for the operation of veterans' cemeteries, and solicit gifts, donations, and grants in addition to grants from the United States Department of Veterans' Affairs.

DMB:ljw  
07-207.ljw

## FAIRBANKS VETERANS CEMETERY WORKSHEET OPERATIONAL AND MAINTENANCE COSTS<sup>1</sup>

Demographic Factors	Data	Notes
Veterans in four areas	11,164	Fairbanks/North Star and 3 adjoining areas
Avg. annual death rate	149	2005-2026 VA figures
Usage factor	0.50	50% will choose cemetery
Dependents factor	1.50	1 dependent per 2 veterans
Annual burial rate	112	[Death rate x usage] x dependents factor
Graves per acre (gross)	600	Rule of thumb
Min. gravesites needed (20 yr.)	1,676	[Annual burials x 0.75] x 20
Min. burial acreage needed	2.79	One of four is a "second interment"
Gross acreage recommended	20.00 <sup>2</sup>	Min. gravesites/600 see note below
<b>Personnel Factors</b>	<b>Data</b>	
Admn. Workers (230 inter. Per FTE)	0.49	Based on NCA estimates
Field workers		Cumulative
Interments (250 per FTE)	0.45	Includes PT, temp., etc.
Gravesites (7,844.4 per FTE)	0.21	Rises over time
Acres Maint. (10.7 per FTE)	0.26	Burial acres used/developed acres may vary
Field Workers Subtotal	0.92	
Employees	1.41	Admn. & field workers
Cem. Director (GS 9--\$36.7 x 1.3 for fringes)	\$47,652.80	NCA Costs 1.0 Full Time Equivalent Employee (FTEE)
Equip. Operator (WG-8--\$28 x 1.3)	\$36,142.60	1.0 FTEE
<b>Total Salary</b>	<b>\$83,795.40</b>	
<b>Operations Factors</b>	<b>Data</b>	
Utilities & communications	\$1,117.50	Phone, water, electricity, gas (\$400 x acres)
Supplies & materials	\$2,095.31	Fuel, fertilizer, etc. (\$750 x acres)
Contractual services	\$1,187.34	Janitorial, security, irrigation (\$425 x acres)
Subtotal	\$4,400.16	
<b>Total Annual Operations    \$88,195.56</b>		
<i>Maintenance and Repairs</i>	<i>extra</i>	
<i>Equipment Replacement</i>	<i>extra</i>	

<sup>1</sup> The standard usage factor is 25% but we have increased the factor to 50% in this case because of the difficulty in projecting usage in this area. While 50% usage may be high, it would be better to estimate a higher number at this point rather than a lower number.

<sup>2</sup> The model assumes a suitable site with easily developed cemetery land. In this case, it would be better to acquire as large a parcel as possible in order to assure suitable land and the ability to buffer surrounding land uses. At least 20 acres should be considered.

**What Is A VA Burial Allowance ?**

A VA burial allowance is a partial reimbursement of an eligible veteran's burial and funeral costs. When the cause of death is not service-related, the reimbursement is generally described as two payments: (1) a burial and funeral expense allowance, and (2) a plot interment allowance.

**Who Is Eligible ?**

**You may be eligible for a VA burial allowance if:**

- ❖ you paid for a veteran's burial or funeral **AND**
- ❖ you have not been reimbursed by another government agency or some other source, such as the deceased veteran's employer **AND**
- ❖ the veteran was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable.

**In addition, at least one of the following conditions must be met:**

- ❖ the veteran died because of a service-related disability **OR**
- ❖ the veteran was receiving VA pension or compensation at the time of death **OR**
- ❖ the veteran was entitled to receive VA pension or compensation but decided not to reduce his/her military retirement or disability pay **OR**
- ❖ the veteran died in a VA hospital or while in a nursing home under VA contract, or while in an approved state nursing home.

**How Much Does VA Pay ?**

**Service-Related Death.** VA will pay up to \$1,500 toward burial expenses for deaths prior to September 10, 2001. For deaths on or after September 11, 2001, VA will pay \$2,000. If the veteran is buried in a VA national cemetery, some or all of the cost of moving the deceased may be reimbursed.

**Non-service-Related Death.** VA will pay up to \$300 toward burial and funeral expenses, and a \$150 plot interment allowance for deaths prior to December 1, 2001. The plot-interment allowance is \$300 for deaths on or after December 1, 2001. If the death happened while the veteran was in a VA hospital or under contracted nursing home care, some or all of the costs for transporting the deceased's remains may be reimbursed.

**How Can You Apply ?**

You can apply by filling out VA Form 21-530, Application for Burial Allowance. You should attach proof of the veteran's military service (DD 214), a death certificate, and copies of funeral and burial bills you have paid.

**Related Benefits**

Burial in VA National Cemeteries  
Presidential Memorial Certificates

Headstones and Markers  
Burial Flags

For More Information Call Toll-Free 1-800-827-1000  
Or Visit Our Web Site At <http://www.cem.va.gov>

# STATE OF ALASKA

## DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

### DIVISION OF MOTOR VEHICLES

SARAH PALIN, GOVERNOR

Annette Kreitzer, Commissioner

1300 W BENSON BLVD  
ANCHORAGE, AK 9950  
PHONE: (907) 269-5559  
[www.state.ak.us/dmv/](http://www.state.ak.us/dmv/)

February 5, 2007

The Honorable David Guttenberg  
House of Representatives  
State Capitol, Room 418  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

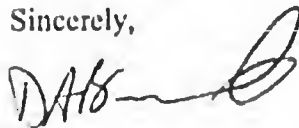
Dear Representative Guttenberg:

I received your request for information concerning the revenues associated with the Veteran License Plate programs. The following schedule shows revenues collected for FY03 through FY06, and for the first half of FY07.

	Standard Veteran License Plates	Commemorative Veteran License Plates - Original	Commemorative Veteran License Plates - Renewal
FY03	\$ 18,330	\$ 0	\$ 0
FY04	18,390	200	0
FY05	22,510	1,800	70
FY06	21,160	1,700	0
FY07 (Jul-Dec)	10,755	970	0

I hope you find this information useful. If I may be of further assistance on this, or any other DMV matter, please don't hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,



Duane Bannock  
Director

CC: Annette Kreitzer, Commissioner, Department of Administration



## Fairbanks North Star Borough

*Office of the Mayor*

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809 Pioneer Road • PO Box 71267 • Fairbanks, Alaska 99707-1267 •

Phone 907/459-1300 Fax 907/459-1102 Email [mayor@co.fairbanks.ak.us](mailto:mayor@co.fairbanks.ak.us)

12 February, 2007

Dear Committee Members,

This is a letter of support for HB 45: State Veterans Cemetery and a thank you to Representative David Guttenberg for his sponsorship of this valuable piece of legislation.

This legislation serves to better meet the need of our Alaskan Veterans and their families through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, State Cemetery Grants Program.

As the home of the Stryker Brigade Combat Team (formerly the 172<sup>nd</sup> SBCT / now the 1-25 SBCT), and having recently emerged successfully from our efforts to challenge the BRAC recommendations to scale back the military presence in Alaska, we have no choice but to continue to provide adequate reason for the military to stay here. This bill does that.

I fully support this legislation which honors Alaskans who have served their country with dignity as well as their family members in our community.

Sincerely,



Jim Whitaker, Mayor - Fairbanks North Star Borough

Disabled American Veterans  
Department of Alaska  
Resolution #2007-01

**SUPPORT FOR A POLICY FOR A STATE VETERANS CEMETARY**

WHEREAS, Alaskan veterans deserve a cemetery that is located in the Interior that honors their service; and

WHEREAS, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration, Alaska has more residents in the military on a per-capita basis than any other state. The Fairbanks North Star Borough has approximately 11,164 veterans; Forty percent of families in the Fairbanks area have at least one veteran in their household and sixteen percent have at least one woman in the household who is a veteran; and

WHEREAS, A State Veterans' Cemetery in the Interior would better serve needs of the veterans and their families and provide a place that is centrally located, honorable and well maintained; and

WHEREAS, The nearest officially designated military cemetery is located 350 miles North of Anchorage at Ft. Richardson; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administrations' goal is to provide eligible veterans reasonable access to Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) burial options; and

WHEREAS, The VA provides a burial and funeral expense allowance of \$300 and a plot-interment allowance of \$300; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration follows a six-step process to build a new state veteran cemetery; site selection; environmental statement; land acquisition; master planning and design development; construction document preparation; and construction award and completion; and


WHEREAS, The Alaska Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs can be awarded up to 100% of the development costs from the Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration for an approved project; and

WHEREAS, To date, the Veterans Administration has awarded 137 grants totaling more than \$200 million to establish, expand or improve sixty-two veterans cemeteries in thirty-two states, plus Guam, Fifty-six cemeteries in twenty-one states and Guam are now operational; and

WHEREAS, According to the Division of Motor Vehicles from FY03 to FY05, \$45,040, has been generated from both the Federal and Commemorative Veterans license plate programs. The monies collected from the state license plate program currently goes into the general fund; and

WHEREAS, The construction of a state veterans cemetery in the Interior would be a great benefit to the friends and families of veterans in our community and would provide a place in the Interior for soldiers to be laid with full military funeral honors, pallbearers, rifle team, flag folding and flag presentation; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the Disabled American Veterans, Department of Alaska, That support be given in the creation of a veterans state cemetery, as proposed in HB45, open to all veterans in the state and recognizes the veterans sacrifices while serving our cemetery.

  
Tom Schanrock,  
Department Commander



## AMERICAN LEGION

C. RUSSELL HUBER POST #57

*"The Friendly Post" -- Home of Happy Bears*  
1634 Cushman Street • Fairbanks, Alaska 99701  
Phone: (907) 452-5757 • Fax: (907) 452-8954

January 30, 2007

Representative David Guttenberg  
State Capital  
Room 418  
Juneau, AK. 99801

Reference: Veterans Cemetery in Fairbanks

Dear Representative Guttenberg:

As the 2007 Legislative session begins, Veterans organizations are again requesting Legislative support for the establishment of a Veterans Cemetery in Fairbanks. You will recall that the American Legion, Department of Alaska, at their 2005 State Convention in Kodiak voted unanimously in support of that cemetery. Most noteworthy is that the resolution calling for a new veteran's cemetery came from our Anchorage American Legion comrades who recognized the only existing veteran's cemetery in Alaska is located at Fort Richardson.

We have met with Federal Veterans Affairs officials, State Veterans Affairs personnel, American Legion Posts, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Alaska Native Veterans, members of the Order of The Purple Heart and other veterans organizations who all strongly support your bill to establish a second veterans cemetery to serve the desperate need for a final resting ground for those many who have served our country in times of war and peace.

The need for a new veteran's cemetery is urgent as the few veterans' sites available will soon be filled with no provision existing for veteran's grave anywhere in the interior.

Please share this letter with other members of the Legislature.

For God and Country,

Darrell Peterson, Commander



## BURIAL & MEMORIALS

### State Cemetery Grants Program - General Information

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) State Cemetery Grants Program was established in 1978 to complement VA's National Cemetery Administration.

The program assists states in providing gravesites for veterans in those areas where VA's national cemeteries cannot fully satisfy their burial needs.

Grants may be used only for the purpose of establishing, expanding or improving veterans cemeteries that are owned and operated by a state or U.S. territory. Aid can be granted only to states or U.S. territories. VA cannot provide grants to private organizations, counties, cities or other government agencies.

VA can now provide up to 100 percent of the development cost for an approved project. For establishment of new cemeteries, VA can provide for operating equipment. VA does not provide for acquisition of land. The value of the land cannot be considered as an "allowable cost" under the grant. States are solely responsible for acquisition of the necessary land. Any state ceasing to own or operate a cemetery established, expanded or improved through the use of grant funds, or using the funds for any other purpose than for which the grant was made will be liable for the total refund of all grants made for that cemetery. Federal funds can also be suspended or withdrawn for noncompliance with the terms and conditions of the grant.

Cemeteries established under the grant program must conform to the standards and guidelines pertaining to site selection, planning and construction prescribed by VA. Cemeteries must be operated solely for the burial of service members who die on active duty, veterans, and their eligible spouses and dependent children. Any cemetery assisted by a VA grant must be maintained and operated according to the operational standards and measures of the National Cemetery Administration.

The administration, operation and maintenance of a VA-supported state cemetery is solely the responsibility of the state. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs is authorized to pay a plot or interment allowance (not to exceed \$300) to a state for expenses incurred by the state in the burial of eligible veterans in a cemetery owned and operated by the state if the burial is performed at no cost to the veteran's next-of-kin. This benefit is administered by the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) and the state must apply to VBA to receive it.

VA has awarded 152 grants totaling more than \$264 million to establish, expand or improve 65 veterans cemeteries in 35 states, Guam and Northern Mariana Islands.

There are 65 operational cemeteries and four more under construction.

A list of state veterans cemeteries is available.



Massachusetts State Veterans Cemetery Agawam



## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

### BURIAL & MEMORIALS

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#### Establishing a State Veterans Cemetery

##### Determine Need

Analyze existing service provided by national cemeteries and other state cemeteries. Consider service life of existing cemeteries. Provide data on veteran population, including age.

##### Investigate Availability of Suitable Land

Suitable land should be easily accessed by road, free of limitations such as rock, steep slopes and wetlands, uncompromised by incompatible land uses near by, and appropriate for cemetery use. Land already owned by the state, county or municipality is usually the best choice. The state must have title to the land.

##### Assess Impacts

Analyze possible negative environmental and historic preservation impacts the cemetery location may have. Can such limitations be overcome?

##### Encourage Support

Veterans service organizations should be informed of the project and be in support of an effort to establish a state veterans cemetery. Local governments should also be supportive. Ultimately, the state legislature must pass necessary legislation authorizing the state cemetery and appropriating funds for establishment and operation.

##### Complete Application

Apply to the Department of Veterans Affairs for federal assistance with a grant for establishing a state veterans cemetery. For forms and other guidance, see OMB Grants Management and the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance.

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Revised/Updated April 25/September 11, 2006



## BURIAL & MEMORIALS

### State Grants Planning Model Overview

[Veterans Shrine Commitment](#)

[General Program Requirements](#)

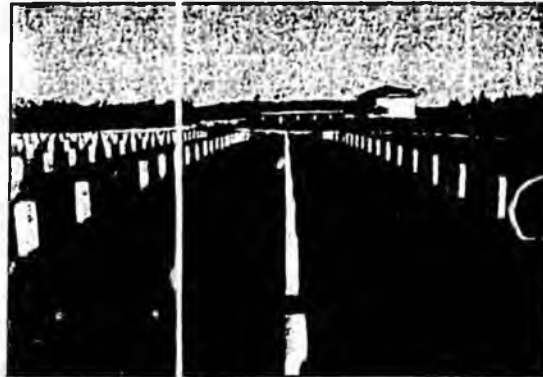
[Project Design Requirements](#)

[Site Considerations - Site Selection  
Standards for a State Cemetery](#)

[Site Description and Site Analysis](#)

[Planning Process for Establishing State  
Cemeteries](#)

[Phasing](#)



#### Veterans Shrine Commitment

The appearance of state veterans cemeteries demonstrates to America's veterans that the nation appreciates their selfless service and the sacrifices they have made. Elevating the appearance of the cemeteries to shrine status signals the commitment to maintain our veterans' cemeteries at the highest standards forever. State veterans cemeteries help foster patriotism and preserve the nation's history.

Each visitor should depart feeling that the grounds, the grave sites and the environs of the state cemetery are a beautiful and awe-inspiring tribute to those who gave much to preserve the nation's freedom and way of life.

Each state cemetery exists as a veterans shrine and serves as an expression of the appreciation and respect of a grateful state and nation for the service and sacrifice of its veterans. Each cemetery provides an enduring memorial to their sacrifice as well as a dignified and respectful setting for their final rest.

To satisfy this requirement, pre-applications should include a written assurance that the state will maintain the cemetery according to VA National Cemetery Administration standards as established in 38 CFR Section 39.6(4).

#### General Program Requirements

In general, state cemetery projects should be built to create a sense of visual continuity with the site and reflect the tradition and heritage of the area. Cemetery buildings should not be isolated, preeminent elements of the cemetery. Buildings should blend with the site design and may be contemporary, single-story architectural structures found in the project region, or transitional, with a style reminiscent of historic state architecture. All buildings should be designed to reflect permanence and durability with minimum maintenance required. The overall design should consider human scale and privacy for visitors. A consistent architectural expression shall be maintained throughout the cemetery.

Cemetery master plans should be laid out in a looped circulation configuration. Loop configurations include roads that separate vehicular, pedestrian and maintenance traffic. Loop configurations also help define memorial areas but roads should not be used as boundaries to circumscribe the burial areas. The design should establish a strong sense of entry into the cemetery and create an interesting and dramatic sequence of spaces.

The development plan should be divided into phases, each consisting of an area approximating the burial need over a 10-year period. Construction of burial areas in latter phases should be programmed to be completed two years before actual need. This lead-time allows for the continuity of interment service.

Prior to construction, the site chosen should be evaluated for environmental impact and issues. Projects are required to support a FONSI (Finding of No Significant Impact) indicating the project will not have an undue negative impact on the environment.

In general, cemetery plans should avoid lakes, greenhouses and bridges. Chapel buildings, whether freestanding or part of another structure, are not allowed under 38 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations) Part 39. The cost to build and maintain cemetery features of this nature is not supported by the State Cemetery Grants Program. Additionally, per the CFR, the grants program does not fund cemetery land costs or offsite utilities. Some current state cemeteries received land donations for their project.

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### Project Design Requirements

The following is a list of the reference documents required for the design of the project.

- 38 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations), Part 39
- Your State Contract Requirements (A/E, Construction)
- State Cemetery Grants Program - Grant Information Kit July 2001
- A/E Submission Requirements; PG-18-15 Volume D June 1999

All cemetery designs must conform to all state and local codes and requirements.

### Site Considerations

#### Site Selection Standards for a State Cemetery:

- **Proximity** - Locate the site as close as possible to the most densely populated location in the area under consideration. Not only actual distance, but travel time to the site must be considered.
- **Size** - Site acreage is sufficient to provide at least 20-40 years of grave space based on state projected burial rate. More acreage is encouraged. The acreage needed will depend on the burial method, gravesite yield, projected burial rates based on state estimated needs for at least 20 years, and the project site's proximity to other state cemeteries.
- **Shape** - Uniform boundaries, undivided by roads or easements, with generally square or rectangular shapes are desired. Irregularly shaped sites are more difficult to access and less efficient to design and develop.
- **Accessibility** - Site accessible by highway. Public transportation service is desirable but not required. Road quality of access streets should also be considered.

- **Utilities & Water** - Availability of public utilities (electricity, water, sewer, gas) is important. However, on-site septic systems and on-site potable water wells or ponds are acceptable. An adequate water supply for irrigation is of primary importance. Consider the availability of on-site or off-site recyclable water. The grant program does not fund off-site improvements such as water line extensions.
- **Surrounding Land Use** - Surrounding land should be free from noise or adverse environmental impact(s) (nuisance, landfills or hazardous waste sites). Consider the attractiveness and compatibility of adjacent land. Sites adjacent to visually objectionable, loud noise, high traffic, or other nuisance elements should be avoided. Both current and future projected land use are considered.
- **Soils** - Soils should be of a quality which will provide adequate topsoil for growing turf. The soil should have adequate stability for constructing roads and buildings and should be free from shallow-depth groundwater. The water table must be lower than the maximum proposed depth of burial. There should be no sub-surface obstructions or hazardous waste present. Site soil information is available through the Natural Resources Conservation Service, United States Department of Agriculture ([www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov)).
- **Topography** - Land should be relatively level to rolling terrain for areas to be developed. The grade of the site should be in the two to ten percent range. There should be sufficient slope to enable proper drainage of the site. Ravines, wetlands, lakes, streams, floodplains and sinkholes cannot be developed. If hilly land is used, access must not be cost prohibitive.
- **Aesthetics** - Existing site amenities such as pleasant views and quality vegetative cover are favorable.
- **Restrictions to Development** - The presence of elements such as cultural/historic/archaeological elements, utility easements, rights-of-way or mineral rights can hamper or legally prevent development. Presence of endangered species limits land development. Potential flood hazards must be avoided.
- **Site Suitability and Acceptability** - Consider the following tests and items to determine site suitability and acceptability: 1) Soil Borings and Test Pits, Perk Test (Septic Field Requirements), Soil Sample Analysis; 2) Well, Aquifer Level, Underground Water Quality Testing; 3) Historic and Archaeological Land Use Review; 4) Cultural Resources; 5) Flood Plains, Wetlands, and Endangered Species; 6) Land Use and Public Access; 7) Utilities; 8) Hazardous Waste; 9) Corrective Action Agreement.

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#### Site Description and Site Analysis

Per 38 CFR 39.8, the plan for a state cemetery requires a description of the site and its various elements. The description should explain specific development of the site, design concepts and include space and area requirements (space outline) for support facilities. The description should also include: proposed and existing burial acreage; available gravesites; total acreage and gravesites upon completion of the project; and the projected annual interment rates. (If the cemetery is to be developed in phases, each phase will be handled as a separate project.)

As part of the site selection process, NCA may provide states with demographic data from the Future Burial Needs report. This information will assist states in locating state veterans cemeteries in the most advantageous sites. Through its technical assistance program, NCA will assist State Directors of Veterans Affairs in answering related questions from other state officials.

Cemeteries established under the grant program must conform to VA-prescribed standards and guidelines for site selection, planning and construction. Cemeteries must be operated solely for the interment of service members who die on active duty, eligible veterans and their spouses and minor children. The administration, operation and maintenance of a VA-supported state cemetery are solely the responsibility of the state. VA is authorized to pay a "plot allowance" of \$300 to a state for expenses incurred in the burial of an eligible veteran.

### Planning Process for Establishing State Cemeteries

Using the Site Selection Standards listed above, states should identify several potential sites. Sites should be assessed for overall site potential, proximity to veterans in the state, topographical features, available acreage and the surrounding land use. Once the number of sites has been narrowed to the most favorable locations, consider the suitability of the land for development as a cemetery. The preferred site is then described in the pre-application for a grant. States have always been partners with the Federal government in providing for the needs of military veterans. The VA State Cemetery Grants Program (SCGP) assists the states in providing gravesites with grants used to establish, expand or improve veterans cemeteries owned and operated by the state.

### Phasing

Cemeteries are constructed in phases based on the needs of the veteran population. The initial phase of construction should be based on a projected ten-year interment rate. Initial development of larger increments would unnecessarily increase state maintenance costs. This first phase includes the development and construction of the cemetery infrastructure as follows:

- Entry Features (including Avenue of Flags)
- Roads and Parking
- Avenue of Flags
- Assembly Area (Flag Location)
- Burial Areas and Burial Sections
- Committal Service Shelter
- Columbarium and In-Ground Cremain Burials
- Memorial Walk
- Administration Building
- Public Information Center (PIC)
- Public Restrooms
- Maintenance Building
- Service Yard
- Irrigation System
- Utility Distribution System
- Carillon Tower

In subsequent phases cemeteries should look at burial needs for 10 years. Subsequent phases will include the build out of additional burial sections and continuation of the columbarium, as required. The additional phases will require the extension of roadways to access the planned burial sections. Initially, cemeteries are specifically designed with loop roads to easily accommodate additional phases. Planning for the second phase should start approximately six years after the cemetery opens.

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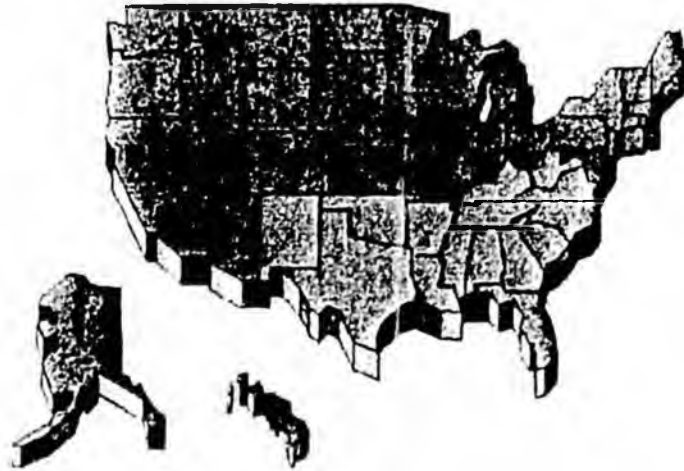


## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

### BURIAL & MEMORIALS

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#### State Cemetery Grants Program/Grant Information Kit



[Applicant Eligibility](#) [Program History and Background](#) [Scope of the Program](#) [Availability of Funds](#) [Application Guidelines](#) [Application Content](#) [Selection Criteria](#) [Review Process](#)

#### Applicant Eligibility

1. State governments are eligible to receive grants to **establish, expand or improve** state veterans cemeteries. The term "state" means each of the several states, territories and possessions of the United States, including Guam, American Samoa, the Virgin Islands and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The District of Columbia and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico are also eligible to receive grants.
2. Counties, cities and other state subdivisions, including multi-agency organizations are not eligible for grants. Native American tribal governments and entities are not eligible to receive grants. Private organizations are not eligible to receive grants.
3. **Applicants must own the land** on which the cemetery is to be established. The state is responsible for the provision of land. Land may be purchased, transferred from another agency or donated.
4. Eligible applicants must provide assurance that they possess legislative authority and adequate appropriations to construct the project to be built with grant assistance.
5. Cemeteries must be operated solely for the interment of service members who die on active duty, veterans (as defined in Title 38, U.S. Code §101. (2)), and their spouses and minor children. States may impose residency requirements for eligibility but are encouraged not to.
6. Grants may only be awarded to establish, expand or improve state-owned veterans cemeteries. Grants may not be awarded for maintenance or repairs.

- 7. New cemeteries must be capable of providing at least 20 years of service.

**Program History and Background**

- 1. The federal government's system of national cemeteries was first established during the Civil War. The Army operated most of the cemeteries until 1973 when they were transferred to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Arlington National Cemetery is still operated by the Department of the Army. The National Park Service operates several historical national cemeteries such as Gettysburg and Vicksburg. An independent agency, the American Battle Monuments Commission, maintains cemeteries overseas for the dead of World War I and World War II. States have operated veterans cemeteries since the War with Mexico.
- 2. The VA State Cemetery Grants Program was established in 1978 to complement VA's network of national cemeteries. Funds were first appropriated for the program in 1980. As originally authorized, VA provided 50 percent of the cost and states provided 50 percent. The value of the state land dedicated to the cemetery comprised up to half of the state's share.
- 3. The program assists states in providing gravesites in those areas where the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) cannot fully satisfy veterans' burial needs.
- 4. 4. Public Law 105-368, which went into effect in 1999, authorized VA to provide up to 100 percent of the development cost for an approved project. VA can now provide for operating equipment for establishment of new cemeteries. VA does not provide for acquisition of land.
- 5. The administration, operation and maintenance of a VA-supported state cemetery are solely the responsibility of the state.
- 6. VA is authorized to pay a "plot allowance" of \$300 to a state for expenses incurred in the burial of an eligible veteran without charge.
- 7. Federal statutes authorizing the program are codified at 38 U.S.C. § 2408. Regulations are at 38 C.F.R. Part 39.
- 8. The State Cemetery Grants Program is described in the *Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance* under "State Cemetery Grants" at 64.203.

**Scope of the Program**

- 1. The State Cemetery Grants Program is intended to complement the service provided by the VA's system of veterans cemeteries operated by the National Cemetery Administration.
- 2. VA seeks to provide the service of a veterans cemetery within 75 miles of 90 percent of the veterans across the country. Data shows that a 75-mile radius defines the effective "service area" of a veterans cemetery.
- 3. Since 1973, VA has opened many new cemeteries, primarily in large metropolitan areas where veterans previously had no effective service. VA also works to expand existing national cemeteries to maintain current service. VA has more than doubled the acreage available in federal veterans cemeteries since 1973 and the burial rate at these cemeteries has also increased by more than 100 percent.
- 4. Smaller cities and rural areas located beyond the 75-mile service areas of these existing national cemeteries are ideal locations for state veterans cemeteries.

### Availability of Funds

1. Federal funds are appropriated each year for the State Cemetery Grants Program. VA requested \$32 million in funding for FY 2004 (October 1, 2003 through September 30, 2004).
2. Appropriated funds are available until expended.
3. If a state that has received a grant under this program ceases to operate the cemetery as a veterans cemetery, the federal government is entitled to recover the total of all grants made under this program to that state..
4. Funds must be expended in accordance with applicable guidelines, including Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-87, "Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Tribal Governments."
5. All grant costs must be "necessary, reasonable" and allocable to the project for which funds have been requested.
6. When all requirements for Federal funding have been met, VA will award grants providing sufficient funds are available.
7. If sufficient funds are not available, VA will award funds according to the priority established (see "Selection Criteria").

### Application Guidelines

1. A state seeking grant funding for a veterans cemetery project must apply to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in accordance with 38 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations) Part 39. The applicant must also conform with the Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments, 38 CFR Part 43, known as the "Common Grants Management Rule."
2. The applicant must have clear legislative authority from the state to apply for the grant.
3. The applicant must have the funds necessary to begin design and planning work. Federal funds are awarded on the basis of the bids received for construction. **State funds are needed to prepare plans and specifications prior to bidding.** Once the successful bidder has been determined and VA has awarded the grant, the state may be reimbursed for allowable costs already incurred.
4. The applicant must provide written assurance that any cemetery established, expanded, or improved through a grant will be maintained and operated in accordance with the operational standards and measures of the National Cemetery Administration.
5. VA provides **no monetary assistance to operate state veterans cemeteries.** States must be aware of the commitment to operate the cemetery.
6. VA must receive applications by July 1 for projects to be funded in the next Federal fiscal year (October 1 through September 30).
7. Applications must be reviewed by the State "Single Point of Contact" under the Executive Order 12372 process.
8. Applications must be signed and dated by the authorized state representative, normally the director of

the state veterans affairs agency.

9. Cemeteries established under the grant program must conform to VA-prescribed standards and guidelines for site selection, planning and construction.

#### Application Content

1. Standard forms approved by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) must be used to apply for grants. All these forms are provided in the "State Cemetery Grants Program Guide, PG 40-1." They are also available on the [OMB Grants Management](#) website.
  - o The basic application form is SF (Standard Form) 424, titled "Application for Federal Assistance," and known as the "face sheet."
  - o The application must also include SF 424C, "Budget Information—Construction Programs."
  - o The applicant must also submit SF 424D, "Assurances—Construction Programs."
  - o The "Certificate of Compliance" with Federal drug-free workplace and debarment and suspension requirements is required.
  - o In addition, the applicant must submit the "Certificate for Contracts, Grants, Loan and Cooperative Agreements," which certifies that the applicant will not use grant funds for lobbying. If grant funds are to be used for lobbying, they must be disclosed on the "Disclosure" form.

The applicant must submit written assurance that it possesses authority to establish and operate a state veterans cemetery and that it will maintain the cemetery in accordance with VA standards.
2. For all projects expected to cost \$100,000 or more, the applicant must submit a pre-application. The pre-application is intended to:
  - o Establish communication between the grantor agency (VA) and the applicant;
  - o Determine the applicant's eligibility;
  - o Determine how well the proposed project can compete with applications from others;
  - o Discourage proposals that have little or no chance of being funded.
3. Pre-applications must include the following:
  - o The location of the cemetery. A specific site may be designated during the review phase of the application, but the pre-application must designate the area to be served and the preferred location of the cemetery;
  - o A design concept that describes the primary features to be included in the project and the number of gravesites to be provided. Standard features include items such as the entrance gate, administration building, committal service facility, flag plaza and assembly area;
  - o A needs assessment that explains the need for the project to establish, expand or improve the veterans cemetery. This should be concise and quantitative to the degree possible.