

1 HOUSE BILL NO. 178

2 INTRODUCED BY D. BEDEY

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4 A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT REVISING LAWS RELATED TO COUNTY AND MULTICOUNTY
5 VETERANS' SERVICE OFFICES; CLARIFYING GRANT DISPERSAL; AMENDING SECTION 10-2-116, MCA;
6 REPEALING SECTION 6, CHAPTER 462, LAWS OF 2019; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE."

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8 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

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10 **Section 1.** Section 10-2-116, MCA, is amended to read:11 **"10-2-116. ~~(Temporary)~~ Funding county veterans' service offices -- grant -- conditions and**

12 **reporting.** (1) (a) The board shall administer a grant program and award block grants to county and
13 multicounty veterans' service offices from funding appropriated by the legislature for the purposes of this
14 section.

15 (b) The amount paid to each county or multicounty veterans' service office is calculated by multiplying
16 the total annual appropriation for the grant program by the ratio of the number of veterans residing in a county
17 or counties serviced by a county or multicounty veterans' service office to the total number of veterans residing
18 in all counties participating in the grant program and rounding to the nearest whole dollar amount. The number
19 of veterans residing in a county is determined using the most recent data reported by the U.S. department of
20 veterans affairs.

21 (c) After the board determines that a county or multicounty veterans' service office has met the
22 eligibility requirements provided for in subsection (2), the board shall distribute the amount paid as calculated in
23 subsection (1)(b) to the county or multicounty veterans' service office as a block grant by August 31 of each
24 fiscal year.

25 ~~(e)~~(d) The board shall ensure that all funds are distributed to eligible county or multicounty veterans'
26 service offices.

27 (2) To receive a grant, a county or multicounty veterans' service office shall:

28 (a) submit a grant application provided by the board that provides evidence that the requirements in

1 this subsection (2) have been met;

2 ~~(a)~~(b) have established county funding as provided for in 15-10-425 or through other means provided
3 by law;

4 ~~(b)~~(c) have established a physical office at an accessible location where veterans and their family
5 members may visit in person;

6 ~~(c)~~(d) provide for at least one veterans' service officer;

7 ~~(d)~~(e) ensure that each county veterans' service officer meets the qualifications and requirements of
8 10-2-115; and

9 ~~(e)~~(f) ensure that all of the grant money received pursuant to this section is spent in support of
10 veterans and their family members and may not be used for any other purpose.

11 (3) If the requirements of subsection (2) are met, a grant must be awarded:

12 (a) to a county veterans' service office established before July 1, 2019;

13 (b) to a new county veterans' service office during the biennium immediately following the date it was
14 established; and

15 (c) each subsequent fiscal year a county veterans' service office continues to meet the requirements
16 in subsection (2).

17 (4) The amount of grant money a county veterans' service office receives is in proportion to the
18 number of veterans residing in the county or counties served by that office as specified in subsection (1)(b).

19 (5) A county veterans' service office that receives a grant shall report data and information to the
20 department at the end of the fiscal year in which a grant was dispersed. Reported data and information ~~shall~~
21 must encompass the following:

22 (a) disability benefit claims data and information, including but not limited to:

23 (i) the number of claim forms submitted by the county veterans' service office to the U.S. department
24 of veterans affairs; and

25 (ii) the number of notices of disagreement or appeals submitted through the county veterans' service
26 office to the U.S. department of veterans affairs;

27 (b) the number of medical enrollments submitted by the county veterans' service office to the U.S.
28 department of veterans affairs;

1 (c) the number of veterans' education enrollments submitted by the county veterans' service office to
2 the U.S. department of veterans affairs;

3 (d) the number of county and state burial benefits processed by the county veterans' service office;
4 and

5 (e) a description of any other ancillary services provided to county veterans, such as transportation
6 services, mental health services, homeless services, crisis intervention, and military records requests.

7 (~~Terminates June 30, 2023--sec. 6, Ch. 462, L. 2019.~~)"

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9 NEW SECTION. Section 2. Repealer. Section 6, Chapter 462, Laws of 2019, is repealed.

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11 NEW SECTION. Section 3. Effective date. [This act] is effective July 1, 2021.

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