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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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19 counties able to better serve local veterans through MVAA grants

Grants allow counties to add staff, upgrade technology

LANSING, Mich. – At county veterans service offices, veterans and their families can file for federal benefits with accredited benefits counselors, learn about state and local resources and much more.

Now, through the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency’s County Incentive Grant program, veterans in 19 counties throughout the state will find it easier to access these services. County Incentive Grants are awarded to counties looking to create local departments of veterans affairs, hire additional accredited benefits counselors or upgrade or invest in new technology – all to better connect those who have served in the Armed Forces with the benefits they’ve earned.

“MVAA works closely with our county partners to ensure veterans can access local, state and federal benefits right where they live and work,” MVAA Director Jeff Barnes said. “Callers to 800-MICH-VET (800-642-4838) are always asked if they are up to date on their federal VA claims. If they are not, we refer veterans and their families to their local county veterans service office, so they don’t have to navigate the claims process alone.

“There are veterans in every one of Michigan’s 83 counties, and the County Incentive Grant program allows us to better serve them.”

In fiscal year 2016, MVAA will disperse \$250,000 through the County Incentive Grant program. So far, more than \$198,000 in one-time grant funding has been distributed to 19 county veterans service offices.

MVAA’s first round of FY 2016 grants include:

- \$600 to Berrien County to upgrade or invest in new technology.
- \$10,000 to Branch County to hire a part-time accredited benefits counselor.
- \$15,000 to Delta County to hire a full-time accredited benefits counselor.
- \$15,000 to Genesee County to hire a full-time accredited benefits counselor.
- \$5,000 to Gladwin County to upgrade or invest in new technology.
- \$10,000 to Kalkaska County to maintain current hours of operation at 28 hours per week.

- \$15,000 to Lapeer County to hire a full-time accredited benefits counselor and upgrade or invest in new technology.
- \$10,000 to Manistee County to offer an additional 10 hours per week of part-time accredited benefits counselor availability and upgrade or invest in new technology.
- \$10,000 to Marquette County to hire a part-time accredited benefits counselor.
- \$15,000 to Montcalm County to hire a full-time accredited benefits counselor.
- \$10,000 to Montmorency County to offer an additional eight hours per week of part-time accredited benefits counselor availability.
- \$15,000 to Muskegon County to hire a full-time accredited benefits counselor.
- \$5,000 to Osceola County to upgrade or invest in new technology.
- \$10,000 to Presque Isle County to maintain current hours of operation at 35 hours per week and upgrade or invest in new technology.
- \$15,000 to Roscommon County to hire a full-time accredited benefits counselor and upgrade or invest in new technology.
- \$10,000 to Schoolcraft County to offer an additional two days per week of part-time accredited benefits counselor availability and upgrade or invest in new technology.
- \$5,000 to St. Clair County to upgrade or invest in new technology.
- \$2,500 to Tuscola County to upgrade or invest in new technology.
- \$20,000 to Wexford County to establish a county department of veterans affairs and upgrade or invest in new technology.

Since FY 2013, MVAA has awarded \$638,100 in one-time grants to 44 counties.

Counties interested in applying for the County Incentive Grant program are encouraged to email their [MVAA Regional Coordinator](#).

Veterans can find their nearest benefits counselor by visiting MichiganVeterans.com or calling 800-MICH-VET (800-642-4838).

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About the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency: MVAA serves as the central coordinating point for Michigan veterans, connecting those who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces, and their families, to services and benefits throughout the state. Learn more at MichiganVeterans.com or call 800-MICH-VET (800-642-4838).