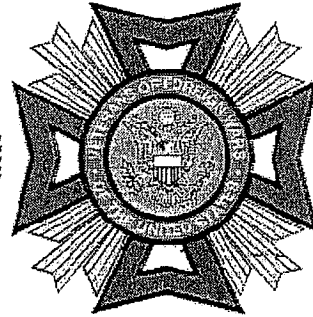


Kansas Commission on Veterans' Affairs

Veterans' Claims Assistance Program



Annual Report

By: Wayne Bollig
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Report to the Legislature on Veterans' Claims Assistance Program (VCAP) and the Service Grant Program

Executive Summary

This is the annual report to the Legislature detailing activities of the Veterans Claims Assistance Program (VCAP) for completed State fiscal year 2012. This report outlines the results of oversight and coordination of VCAP and as a component of this program the Service Grant Program. Authority was granted under K.S.A. 73-1236 which stipulated an annual report to the Legislative Budget Committee detailing the achievements activities and expenditures under the VCAP and the Service Grant Program.

With this report the VCAP has completed its sixth successful full year of operation. During this reporting period, the VCAP continues to make progress in creating smooth and productive working relationships and agreements between the KCVA, and Chartered Veterans Service Organizations participating in the grant program. This success reflects the guidance of the KCVA leadership, the commitment of the Director of Veterans Services and the sincere efforts of all involved.

VCAP is a multifaceted program, with the service grants, operated through one-stop centers. It was initiated by the legislature to improve upon a successful 65 year partnership between public and private organizations. It is the collaborative effort between the American Legion, the VFW and the Veteran Services Program to provide services to veterans', dependents and survivors. The evolving challenges of veterans' advocacy require continuing reassessments of strategies and capabilities; application of new resources; and successful distribution of current resources.

In State Fiscal Year 2012 the Legislature revised its original appropriation for Veterans Service Grant Program increasing funding, to \$500K, to match the initial funding level back in 2006 when the program was initiated. Funds to support this increase were taken for the Kansas Soldiers Home and the Kansas Veterans Home SGF budgets. The Commission awarded funds to the two eligible Veterans Service Organizations that completed a request to participate and expressed a willingness to comply with the requirements of K.S.A. 73-1234, as recommended by the VCAP Advisory Board. These Veterans Service Organizations were the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW). As outlined in K.S.A. 73-1234 funds were used only for salaries, wages, related employer contributions and personnel costs, and operating and capital outlay expenditures for training and equipment for veterans claims assistance representatives and necessary support and managerial staff."

VCAP and its service grant partners are committed working with the Director of Veterans Service in their combined ongoing efforts by continuing to building upon Veteran Services' past achievements.

I. Introduction

This report to the Legislature details activities of VCAP. For the past fiscal year as it relates to veterans benefits and expenditures.

II. Background

The Kansas Legislature, in a positive step towards providing assistance for new veterans and the estimated 221,000 veterans currently living in Kansas, enacted dramatic changes to the Veteran Services Program with the Veterans' Claims Assistance Program.

K.S.A. 73-1234 charged the Commission with establishment and administration of VCAP. To include, appointment of the director of the Veterans' Claims Assistance Program; oversight of grants to Veterans Service Organizations, the development of eligibility criteria, annual applications and agreements which were to be incorporated into rules and regulations. With the establishment of these new programs, the KCVA Veteran Services Program has expanded from a program that operated field offices and offices in the VA medical centers to a program that operates as the outreach arm of the KCVA and Quality Assurance Program for veterans' claims.

K.S.A. 73-1235 established the Veterans Claims Assistance Advisory board; its composition; outlined how appointments are made; Board organization; recovery of expenses.

And finally K.S.A. 73-1236 which requires an annual study by the Legislative Budget Committee; to include reports by Veterans Service Organizations.

III. Progress SFY 2012

During this reporting period, the Kansas Commission on Veterans' Affairs awarded Grants to two-chartered Veterans Service Organization in Kansas, the American Legion, and the VFW. The Veterans Service Organizations contributed a match of in-kind resources and cash contributions in the amount of \$ 171,729. By combining the service organization match with state general funds, Veterans Services, thru VCAP is able to maximize the effective and efficient use of taxpayer dollars. Partnering with the Service organizations the State is able to utilize the VCAP match stretching their support. In addition, the American Legion and VFW allow Veteran Services to utilize the service organizations posts in communities across the state to disseminate information, and to meet veterans as part of their itinerant schedules. This in conjunction with outreach performed by Veteran Services field offices, information provided in service organization newsletters and participation by KCVA staff in state and district meetings and conventions expands the reach of the KCVA and increases the reach of state dollars allowing the KCVA to provide services to a larger number veterans, their spouses, widows and dependents with claims counseling and assistance.

This section will detail three significant areas of progress, to include:

- (1) The Veterans Claims Assistance Advisory Board;
- (2) Participating Veterans Service Organizations;
- (3) Fiscal year reporting period July 1, 2011 thru June 30, 2012;

The Veterans Claims Assistance Advisory Board

Advisory Board membership during the reporting period:

- Senator Ralph Ostmeyer – Vice Chair,
- Representative Melanie Miers – Secretary,
- Wayne Bollig, Director of Veteran Services and the VCAP Board – Chair
- Darrell Bencken - VFW representative and
- Elgin Wallenberg - American Legion representative.

The advisory board meets four times per year either in person or telephonically providing guidance to the service organizations participating in the grant program, the Director of Veteran Services and advising the KCVA Commission in VCAP issues. Major issues reviewed by the advisory board included;

- Review of requests to participate in the grant program and developing a recommendation to the KCVA Commission for distribution of funds;
- Ensuring participating veteran services organizations remain in compliance with K.S.A. 73-1234;
- Reviewing one-stop office production;
- Suggest and develop an outline of needed changes to existing rules and regulations;
- Reviewing proposed contracts that outlined the duties and responsibilities of the KCVA and the grant recipients, and outlining a time frame for transition to the Service Grant Program.

Recommendations of the Veterans Claims Assistance Advisory Board to the KCVA were developed through the cooperative efforts of the participating Veterans Service Organizations members, the appointed legislators and the Chair.

Participating Veterans Service Organizations

Letters were sent to each national veteran's service organization which has an office in the USDVA regional office in Wichita, Kansas, as directed in K.S.A. 73-1234, Section 2. These organizations consisted of:

Service Organization:
American Legion
American Veterans (AMVETS)
Blinded Veterans of America
Catholic War Veterans
Disabled American Veterans
Military Order of Purple Heart
Paralyzed Veterans of America
Veterans of Foreign Wars

Two organizations indicated their commitment to comply with all the requirements outlined in K.S.A. 73-1234 for participation in the SFY 2012 budget year, the American Legion and the VFW.

On July 10, 2013 the Director sent out a second set of letters to eligible Veterans' Service Organizations, requesting their intent to participate in the Service Grant Program in SFY2014. Two Veterans Service Organizations indicated their intent to participate in the Program in SFY2014, the American Legion and the VFW.

- The Advisory Board recommended to the KCVA, Commission distribution of grant funds based on the budget requests submitted by the veteran service organizations and the balance of re-appropriated funds.

July 1, 2011 thru June 30, 2012

Table 1 shows the participating service organizations claims development from July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012.

As you can see from the production figures, service organizations operating under the grant program showed \$247 million dollars in production.

Table 1 below shows the two year comparison of production for SFY2011 and 2012. It is not intended to reflect success or failure of the grant program but simply a baseline of claims production.

Table 1

MONETARY REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2012 YTD (July 2011-June 2012)

KCVA From 23-B

LOCATION	AWD TOTAL	BACK PAY	Confirmed & Continued	Claims	GRAND TOTAL	SFY 2011 Comparison	SFY 2011 New Award Comparison
AL, Lvn	4,595,895	2,975,727	1,649,408	129	9,221,030	7,637,697	6,357,683
AL, Topeka	4,897,081	2,898,092	14,520,756	1,238	22,315,929	20,021,924	6,911,324
AL, Wichita	13,218,143	14,993,917	73,595,748	5,759	101,807,808	98,488,198	26,456,604
SUB TOTAL	22,711,119	20,867,736	89,765,912	7,126	133,344,767	\$ 126,147,819	39,725,611
VFW, Lvn	7,453,835	4,202,000	10,520,987	858	22,176,822	9,255,015	5,708,643
VFW, Topeka	4,068,120	2,687,642	13,633,486	1,070	20,384,248	11,976,171	8,060,511
VFW, Wichita	12,070,878	17,289,669	41,970,936	3,199	71,331,483	59,895,136	28,487,176
SUB TOTAL	23,587,833	24,179,311	66,125,409	5,127	113,892,553	\$ 81,126,323	42,256,331
VCAP Total	46,298,952	45,047,047	155,891,321	12,253	247,237,320	\$ 207,274,142	81,981,942

Expenses

All expenditures of grant participants were in accordance with 73-1234. In addition, the KCVA continues to retain staff in the Wichita RO as in the Quality Assurance program these individuals provide support in taking claims and working appeals as part of the one-stop concept.

Table 2 shows total Grant fund expenditures for SFY2008 of \$500,000 in grant payments to the American Legion and VFW.

Table 2

Veteran Claims Assistance Service Grant Program							
Fund Expenditures Year to Date SFY 2012							
FY 2012 Appropriation:	\$	American Legion	Grant Funds Paid	Matching Funds Reported	Veteran Of Foreign Wars	Grant Funds Paid	Matching Funds Reported
Grants Awarded	\$ 467,268	\$ 233,634	\$ 233,634		\$ 233,634	\$ 233,634	\$ -
Invoice for operations from 7/01/11 - 7/31/11		\$ 27,295	\$ 27,295	\$ 13,195	\$ 19,232	\$ 19,232	\$ 5,198
Invoice for operations from 8/01/11 - 8/31/11		\$ 26,861	\$ 26,861	\$ 12,023	\$ 20,326	\$ 20,326	\$ 4,906
Invoice for operations from 9/01/11 - 9/30/11		\$ 25,051	\$ 25,051	\$ 12,271	\$ 20,751	\$ 20,751	\$ 5,492
Invoice for operations from 10/01/11 - 10/31/11		\$ 28,923	\$ 28,923	\$ 12,221	\$ 19,127	\$ 19,127	\$ 4,843
Invoice for operations from 11/01/11 - 11/30/11		\$ 24,918	\$ 24,918	\$ 12,087	\$ 19,515	\$ 19,515	\$ 5,283
Invoice for operations from 12/01/11 - 12/30/11		\$ 24,959	\$ 24,959	\$ 12,408	\$ 19,320	\$ 19,320	\$ 2,875
Invoice for operations from 1/01/12 - 1/30/12		\$ 24,805	\$ 24,805	\$ 11,662	\$ 19,320	\$ 19,320	\$ 2,579
Invoice for operations from 2/01/12 - 2/29/12		\$ 26,976	\$ 26,976	\$ 11,662	\$ 21,009	\$ 21,009	\$ 5,104
Invoice for operations from 3/01/12 - 3/31/12		\$ 26,633	\$ 26,633	\$ 11,604	\$ 19,938	\$ 19,938	\$ 3,222
Invoice for operations from 4/01/12 - 4/30/12		\$ 13,578	\$ 13,578	\$ 11,810	\$ 21,886	\$ 21,886	\$ 5,119
Invoice for operations from 5/01/12 - 5/31/12		\$ -	\$ -	\$ 24,317	\$ 20,107	\$ 20,107	\$ 5,119
Invoice for operations from 6/01/12 - 6/30/12		\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,672	\$ 29,831	\$ 29,831	\$ 23,797
			\$ 250,000			\$ 250,362	

Accomplishments for the SFY2012

1. Coordinated outreach efforts of the VCA Program, KCVA field offices, and VSO post service officers. Participating veterans service organizations worked with KCVA field office staff to ensure KCVA field office staff, service grant staff and post service offices coordinated outreach activities that were consistent, non-duplicative, efficient and effective.
2. Training requirement was met.
3. Over \$121 million in claims benefits were recovered for Kansas veterans, dependents and survivors.
4. Handled over 50,000 contacts from Kansas veterans, dependents and survivors.
5. Over 12,000 new benefits claims were approved.
6. The Quality Assurance Program reviewed all claims prior to submission to the Federal VA resulting in an 87% claims approval rating. This exceeded the KCVA goal of 80%.
7. The KCVA purchased servers to house the Virtual Veteran database to date over 44,000 veterans have been entered into the system.

V. Summary:

The Veterans Claims Assistance Program has completed its sixth fiscal year and the program can be considered a success. The hard work of KCVA staff, VSO staff, the VCAP Advisory Board and the Commission resulted in more veterans served, and \$247 million dollars being placed in the hands of Kansas veterans, dependents and survivors.

With cross-accreditation, all participating service organizations and KCVA VSRs can access veterans files electronically making each office a one stop for veterans information for veterans electing a participating service organization POA. In addition the KCVA has been working with the service organizations through the VCAP Advisory Board to ensure savings through shared resources when possible. The Veterans Claims Assistance Advisory Board is been working with the USDVA to develop office accommodations that would allow for additional sharing of resources.

The Wichita office is critical, to developing a smooth-running, integrated Veterans Claims Assistance Program and Quality Assurance Program, and the most economical use of all resources. A key requirement of K.S.A. 75-1234 was the veterans data base the system was transitions to a web based program to better serve veterans and share nformation.