



FY21 COUNTY VETERAN SERVICE FUND – GRANT GUIDANCE

COUNTY VETERAN SERVICE FUND

August 2020

SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND

Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency (MVAA) is accepting applications for fiscal year (FY) 2021 County Veteran Service Fund grants (PA 210 of 2018). Public Act 210 of 2018 amends PA 192 of 1953, entitled "An act to create a county department of veterans' affairs in certain counties, and to prescribe its powers and duties; and to transfer the powers and duties of the soldiers' relief commission in such counties," (MCL 35.621 to 35.624) by amending the title and by adding section 3a. This Act creates a county department of veterans' affairs in certain counties, and to prescribe its powers and duties; to create the County Veteran Service Fund (CVSF) and to provide for contributions to and expenditures from that fund; and to transfer the powers and duties of the soldiers' relief commission in those counties.

AWARD INFORMATION

Funding Mechanism: Grant

Total Available Funding: \$4,150,000.00

Anticipated Number of Awards: 83

Purpose: Grant dollars are intended to enhance and improve county veteran service operations in an effort to connect veterans to their federal benefits and provide consistent access to services throughout the state.

Length of Project: Up to 1 fiscal year, depending on fund availability

Cost Sharing/Match Required: No

Continuation Funds: Contingent upon appropriation funding

AVAILABLE FUNDING

The total disbursement for each grant shall be determined by combining the following amounts:

- (a) A base amount of \$50,000
- (b) A per capita amount according to the number of veterans residing in each county. The amount in this subdivision shall be determined by dividing the amount remaining in the fund after accounting for all disbursements under subdivision (a) by the total number of veterans residing in this state and multiplying the resulting dollar amount by the number of veterans residing in the county receiving the grant. Population figures for veterans residing in this state and in each county of this state shall be obtained from the most recent (2018) Geographic Distribution of VA Expenditures (GDX) Report published by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA).

- (c) If the amount remaining in the fund after accounting for all disbursements under subsection (a) is less than the amount obtained by multiplying \$1,000.00 by the number of counties receiving grants, MVAA shall not perform a calculation under subsection (b) and shall not disburse the portion of grant funds described under that subsection.

There is no cost sharing or match required.

TIMELINE

A completed and signed application (including any attachments) must be received by MVAA via e-mail to MVAAGrants@michigan.gov no later than 5 p.m. EST on September 1, 2020. Subject should identify individual county and FY21 CVSF Grant Application. The time of receipt by MVAA is determined by the time stamp provided by the State of Michigan e-mail system. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit their application in advance of the due date to avoid any delays in electronic mail delivery. There will be no extensions of this deadline. Applications received by MVAA beginning at 5:01 p.m. EST on September 1, 2020 and thereafter may not be considered for funding. **It is recommended you do not wait until the last minute to submit your grant application. This is a State of Michigan e-mail address and you run the risk of a server overload.**

August 1, 2020	Letter of Intent request sent to counties
August 10, 2020	Video Meeting – 1:30 p.m. EST general overview of Letter of Intent and Fund goals Join Microsoft Teams Meeting +1 248-509-0316 United States, Pontiac (Toll) Conference ID: 334 194 202# Local numbers Reset PIN Learn more about Teams Meeting options
August 14, 2020	Deadline – Letter of Intent to apply for grant funding MUST be received at MVAAGrants@Michigan.gov no later than 5:00 p.m. EST
August 17, 2020	Grant Application period is open; grant guidance and application will be emailed to counties that submitted Letter of Intent
Thursday, August 20	Webinar – general overview of Grant Application/Budget requirements
Tuesday, August 25	Webinar – Q&A (webinar details will be sent via email as soon as finalized)
September 1st, 2020	Deadline – Grant Application MUST be received at MVAAGrants@Michigan.gov no later than 5:00 p.m. EST
September 15, 2020	Notification of approval/denial/resubmission requests
TBD	Individual conferences with counties to review denials and resubmission requests
September 15, 2020	Award letters and Grant Agreement packet sent for approved applications*
October 1, 2020	Deadline – Resubmissions MUST be received no later than 12:00 p.m. EST
October 5, 2020	Award letters and Grant Agreement packet sent for resubmissions*

*MVAA must receive county signed copy of CVSF Grant Agreement within 60 days of receipt of the Grant Award packet. Grant Agreements received after the 60 days may be forfeited

Grant Agreements will be processed as received. Fully executed Grant Agreements will be returned to the County and payment request will be submitted.

Please note: All documents should be sent to: MVAAGrants@michigan.gov. The time/date of receipt by the MVAA is determined by the time/date stamp provided by the State of Michigan email system.

CONTACT INFORMATION

The same person shall not serve as The Project Director, the Authorized Official, and the Financial Officer.

Project Director* – The person from the applicant’s County Department of Veterans Affairs (CDVA) with overall responsibility for project management and ensuring that all grant guidelines and requirements are met.

* County must ask for permission and be granted an exception by MVAA for someone other than Director of CDVA to be the Project Director.

Financial Officer – The person from the applicant’s organization responsible for the financial accounting of project-related expenditures (must be different than the Authorized Official).

Authorized Official – The person from the applicant’s organization authorized to enter into an agreement with the DMVA/MVAA in order to accept grant funds (must be different than the Financial Officer).

ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility is limited to Michigan counties that meet the eligibility criteria.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be eligible to receive a grant, a county must satisfy the following:

- (a) Maintain a minimum level of county funding for veteran service operations equal to the level of county funding for veteran service operations for the fiscal year preceding September 24, 2018, i.e., Fiscal Year 2017.
- (b) Establish remote access to the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) computing systems and require county veteran service officers to obtain a PIV card.
- (c) Submit quarterly reports to MVAA in accordance with the reporting requirements detailed in this document.
- (d) Provide no less than 20 hours per week toward veteran service operations.
- (e) Submit financial reports, in the requested format, to MVAA on a quarterly basis demonstrating that the county department of veterans’ affairs expended the grant funds received directly and solely on veteran service operations during the period of the report.

EXPECTATIONS

It is the expectation of MVAA that these services will be initiated/implemented as soon as possible after the award. At the latest, grant recipients are expected to provide services no later than the third month post grant being awarded.

Priority will be given to applications that seek to establish a County Department of Veterans Affairs or enhance existing current veteran service operations. Other requests may be considered acceptable

unless they deviate too far from veteran service operations as defined. You will be notified if your application falls in this category and will be afforded the opportunity to reapply.

All submissions must support NEW initiatives or an increase in existing veteran service operations. Project personnel hired with FY19 and/or FY20 grant funds may continue to be funded with FY20 grant funds.

Supplanting is not allowed.

DEFINITIONS

For this funding opportunity, below is a list of commonly used terms as defined by Public Act 210 of 2018:

1. "Accredited veteran service officer": an individual who has met the qualifications for accreditation under 38 USC 5904 and 38 CFR 14.629.
2. "County veteran service fund" or "fund": the county veteran service fund created within the state treasury.
3. "PIV card": a personal identity verification card issued by USDVA.
4. "Veteran service operations": assistance and programming to meet the needs of veterans in this state. Veteran service operations include, but are not limited to, providing advice, advocacy, and assistance to veterans, servicemembers, dependents, or survivors by an accredited veteran service officer to obtain USDVA health, financial, or memorial benefits for which they are eligible.

PROJECT NARRATIVE

Grant applications must be submitted on the supplied forms and in the required format to be accepted. Applications submitted that do not follow the guidelines may be rejected. Each proposed program/initiative and expenditure must be described in detail and include how each ties to one or both of the following goals:

Goal #1: Enhance or increase veteran service provision over past service provisions.

Goal #2: Connect eligible veterans, servicemembers, dependents or survivors to benefits by an accredited service officer to obtain USDVA health, financial, or memorial benefits. This includes applying for emergency grants from the Michigan Veterans Trust Fund to address a short-term unforeseen financial crisis.

In addition, the narrative must include how the county will measure the success of each implemented program/initiative.

EXPENDITURES

Consistent with the best practices of USDVA and MVAA, all proposed expenditures must facilitate, enhance, and improve county veteran service operations to connect veterans to their federal benefits. Failure to obtain prior written approval from DMVA/MVAA may result in an expense not being authorized or reimbursed.

SUGGESTED EXPENDITURES

Please refer to the FAQ handout or contact MVAA for further guidance.

DISALLOWABLE EXPENDITURES

Funds expended without prior MVAA approval will not be reimbursed. Please refer to the FAQ handout or contact MVAA for further guidance.

BUDGET JUSTIFICATION AND NARRATIVE

All applications must have a detailed budget justification and narrative that supports the requested funding. The Budget Justification and Narrative explains how the costs were calculated and must tie directly back to the Project Narrative.

The Budget Justification and Narrative is the justification of 'how' and/or 'why' a line item helps to meet the program deliverables. All costs must be utilized to support the provision of assistance and programing to meet the needs of veterans residing in the county. The proposed costs must be reasonable, allowable, allocable, and necessary for the supported activity.

All budget calculations must follow a prescribed format. Please refer to the FAQ handout or contact MVAA for guidance.

If operational/programmatic changes are needed during the award period, you will need to complete a project amendment form and contact the MVAA Program Manager for PRIOR approval. If the change also requires moving funds from one line item to another, you will need to complete a budget amendment form and contact the MVAA Program Manager for PRIOR approval. All forms will accompany the grant award agreement.

If you are not sure if a cost is allowable, you will need prior approval from the MVAA Program Manager. If a cost is deemed disallowable after it has been expended and there was not a PRIOR authorization, the grant WILL NOT reimburse the county.

Supplanting and administrative (indirect) costs are not permitted.

Charges to the project for items such as salaries must conform to the written policies and established practices of the applicant organization.

POST AWARD

All grantees will need to be registered to do business with the State of Michigan. Registration is available at the following website: www.michigan.gov/SIGMAVSS.

The State of Michigan will not accept Signature Pages without the entire Grant Agreement. A complete signed copy of the Grant Agreement must be returned to MVAA no later than 60 days after the award letter is received.

When communicating with MVAA regarding your grant award, the Grant Award Number must be included in the subject line of the e-mail. E-mails received without the Grant Award Number in the subject line may be returned.

There will be a mandatory one-day training for Project Directors and Financial Officers to learn correct reporting formats. If one or more parties fails to attend, the grant award may be rescinded. Dates and locations will be provided with the grant award letter. Grant funds may be used to support travel to and from the mandatory training. Additional personnel assigned to the project may attend at the expense of the county.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Funding is provided on a reimbursement basis. Grant recipients will submit an updated county department of veterans' affairs budget and invoice for those expenses approved for payment by the grant no later than the 10th day of the month following the end of the quarter.

Submitting budget reports for reimbursement start with an approved budget. Reimbursements will be made on a quarterly basis. All reimbursable expenses must be incurred during the grant award cycle. Requests for reimbursement for activities/services prior to the award or after the close of the award WILL NOT be reimbursed.

Reimbursement for salaries/fringes will need to be supported by submitting certified timesheets signed by both the employee and the employee's supervisor.

Quarterly financial reports demonstrating the expenditures and division of grant funds and county funds must be signed by the Chief Financial Officer.

Quarterly progress reports that identify the major tasks completed during the reporting period, any issues or difficulties during the quarter, project milestones, and performance standards and metrics must be submitted to MVAA by the 30th of the month following the end of the quarter.

Reporting templates will be provided to grant recipients with the Notice of Award.

REPORTING SCHEDULE

Reporting Period	October 1 -December 31, 2020	January 1 – March 31, 2021	April 1 – June 30, 2021	July 1 – September 30, 2021
Report Due	January 10, 2021	April 10, 2021	July 10, 2021	October 5, 2021

MONITORING

All grant recipients will be subject to grant monitoring of performance, including data collection. Standardized templates will be provided with the grant award letter. Budget and progress and activity reports will be required quarterly. Grant and performance monitoring will be conducted by MVAA. If MVAA determines, by audit or otherwise, that a county department of veterans' affairs expended the grant funds received for purposes other than veteran service operations, MVAA shall reduce the grant disbursement provided to the county department of veterans' affairs in the succeeding fiscal year by an amount equal to the total of all amounts improperly expended.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions regarding this funding opportunity, please e-mail MVAAGrants@michigan.gov.

RESOURCES

The following sites may be of assistance in researching and developing your grant application.

The most recent (2019) Geographic Distribution of VA Expenditures (GDX) Report

<https://www.va.gov/vetdata/Expenditures.asp>

Michigan Veterans Trust Fund

<https://www.michiganveterans.com/a/Michigan-Veterans-Trust-Fund>

<https://www.michiganveterans.com/p/Emergency-Assistance>

State of Michigan Travel Rates

https://www.michigan.gov/documents/dtmb/Travel_Rates_FY20_January_2020_675062_7.pdf