

## **FY23 County Veteran Service Fund (CVSF) Grant FAQs**

### **1. How much grant money is available to each county?**

Depending on Legislative approval for the FY23 State Budget, there will be an up-front base payment of \$50,000.00 upon signed agreement. Per capita amounts will be available after all Letters of Intent (LOI) are received by Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency (MVAA). The deadline for those letters is April 8, 2022, at 5:00 p.m. Eastern time. Once received, the \$4.25 million FY23 appropriation, plus the balance carried forward from FY22, will be calculated and the counties intending to apply will be notified of the per capita available.

### **2. In laymen's terms, can you tell me what this grant is for?**

The FY23 CVSF grant is intended to assist counties in establishing a County Department of Veterans Affairs, support NEW initiatives that connect veterans to federal benefits, and/or enhance or expand existing veteran service operations to connect veterans to their benefits.

### **3. What is the grant application process for FY23?**

Please refer to the FY23 CVSF Timeline document. Don't hesitate to call MVAA's Grant Analyst at (517) 243-8619 if you have questions.

### **4. Why is a LOI mandatory?**

Consider the LOI the only method to secure a portion of the grant funds for your county; it allows us to calculate the per capita amounts. The LOI does not bind you to any legal contract or obligate you to apply, though we do ask that if you decide not to apply, you let MVAA know as soon as possible because it will impact the per capita amounts.

### **5. The deadline for the LOI is very quick; what if the county is not sure that they want to apply?**

If there is even a remote possibility that your county will want to apply and take advantage of the funding opportunity, SUBMIT THE LOI.

### **6. What can the grant funds be used for?**

Grant dollars are intended to enhance and improve county veteran service operations. "Veteran service operations" means assistance and programming to meet the needs of veterans in Michigan. Veteran service operations include, but are not limited to, providing advice, advocacy, and assistance to veterans, servicemembers, dependents, or survivors by an accredited VSO to obtain USDVA health, financial, or memorial benefits for which they are eligible.

Here are examples; this is not an exhaustive list. If you are not sure, call MVAA's Grant Analyst at (517) 243-8619 and ask for guidance.

#### **County improvements:**

- Establishing a county department of veterans' affairs office.
- Increase service hours to eligible veterans to connect them with their USDVA benefits.
- Training (to include out of state but must remain in the Continental US).
- Technology (office equipment).
- Administrative Assistant.
- Advertising/Marketing (print, radio, tv, swag).
- Travel reimbursement

- Office improvements
- Office Supplies
- Veteran service improvement if it helps connect veterans to their federal VA benefits
- Bus tokens/gas cards (with qualifiers)/Meijer grocery/personal care vouchers
- Therapy/service animals
- Vehicles and all equipment purchases must remain in the possession of the county and may not be transferred or donated to any other organization. Vehicles, structures, and equipment purchases (other than technology) must be permanently located on county premises.
- Aide to peacetime veterans

**7. What are examples of prohibited expenditures?**

Anything that does not provide or improve assistance and programming to meet the needs of veterans in Michigan is prohibited. *Remember, the purpose of the grant is to enhance and improve veteran service operations to connect veterans to their benefits and provide consistent access to services throughout the state.* If the county cannot justify or tie their requests in the application narrative back to enhancement and improvement as a “veteran service operation,” then it will not be an approved expenditure.

**8. Can the county get guidance regarding their programing ideas before taking the time to apply?**

Call MVAA’s Grant Analyst at (517) 243-8619 to talk it through. Pre-approval cannot be guaranteed without the detailed narrative and budget numbers, and the other information in the application.

**9. The criteria for eligibility seem subjective; what if the county is not sure they qualify?**

Call MVAA’s Grant Analyst at (517) 243-8619 and we will help you figure it out! A few rules are a) the county applying for the grant must be providing at least 20 hours of veteran service operations; it cannot be contracted out to another county; and b) the county must maintain a minimum level of county funding for veteran service operations equal to or more than FY17...if the millage is not renewed, there is no exception, the county still has to at least maintain the funding level equal to or greater than FY17.

**10. How much detail is needed in the “Narrative” and “Budget” sections of the application?**

As much as possible! Really think through the program, project, or initiative and how it will assist your county in establishing a County Department of Veterans Affairs, support NEW initiatives, and enhance or expand existing veteran service operations and connect more veterans to their benefits. Be persuasive; justify every action and itemize every expense in the narrative. Do not assume the Grant Review Committee is familiar with your processes; they want the “who, what, when, where, how, and why.”

**11. How do we estimate costs to create a budget?**

Research costs for items online. Counites need to follow their local procurement policies.

Here are a few specific guidelines:

- Travel—Explain the need for travel and your calculations for travel costs. Break down by airfare, hotel, meals, mileage. Do not use travel sites such as Expedia or Kayak because we cannot reimburse travel packages. Travel expenses charged to the grant may not exceed the

State of Michigan approved travel rates. Travelers must use the most economical method of travel including utilizing county vehicles or carpooling.

- 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.
- The State categorizes all technology purchases (computers, monitors, printers, scanners) as equipment. Supplies include ink, paper, pens, etc.

**12. What should the budget look like in the application?**

You will be given a template with the Notification of Award and Agreement. The budget in the application will be more generic than when reporting and submitting for reimbursement, but the amounts should be as close to actual as possible. The reports/reimbursement requests will have more details, date of expenditure, store/supplier, etc.

**13. Can you give a detailed example of how you want to see the budget for salary?**

Yes! Here is an example of requested formats:

To calculate staff salary, follow the example below:

Personnel:

Name	Position	Hourly Rate	Hours per Week	# of Weeks	Total
Susan Smart	VSO	\$30.00	40	52	\$62,400.00

You will need to adjust the hourly rate to the current salary being paid by your county - multiplied by the number of hours to be worked per week - multiplied by the number of weeks per year to arrive at your actual grant requested amount.

Fringe benefits: Must be calculated for any personnel paid for from the grant. This will need to be completed for each grant-funded employee:

Name	Hourly Rate	Percentage Rate	Hours Worked	Total
Employer FICA	\$30.00			
Retirement	\$30.00			
Hospital Insurance	\$30.00			
Dental Insurance	\$30.00			
Vision Insurance	\$30.00			
Unemployment	\$30.00			
Workers Compensation	\$30.00			
Life Insurance	\$30.00			
Other	\$30.00			

All expenses must be broken down by unit(s)/price/total. The following is an example of an acceptable request:

Item	Quantity	Cost per Unit	Cost
HP Color Printer	2	\$500	\$1,000
Dell Laptop	1	\$1,500	\$1,500
Ink	4	\$100	\$400
		Total	\$1,900

The following is an example of an unacceptable request:

Office	\$2,000
Miscellaneous (this should <b>not</b> be used as a funding category and will be rejected)	All other funds not accounted for in budget

**14. How will the applications be reviewed and approved?**

The MVAA review panel will review applications. Applications received on or before the deadline (May 20, 2022, at 5 pm Eastern) will be reviewed and approved based on completeness and accuracy of the application. Initiatives and requested funding **MUST** conform to the goal and intent of the grant itself (refer to #7 above).

**15. Will a minor error cause the entire application to be rejected?**

No, if there are minor errors or questionable expenditures, counties that have met the application deadline will be given the opportunity to amend their application and resubmit. MVAA will work with each county individually (upon request) to ensure success.

**16. Will the counties get extra time if they are allowed a resubmission?**

Yes, please refer to the timeline provided. If asked to resubmit, the counties will have until noon Eastern on June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022, to resubmit. MVAA wants your application to be approved and is committed to working with you to make application adjustments and resubmit on time.

**17. When will the advanced base payment of \$50,000.00 go out?**

Although we can't give a precise date, processing is dependent upon MVAA receiving the signed copy of the Grant Agreement. If your county requires presentation to and approval from the Board of Commissioners, it would be advised that plans be made to make them aware of the grant requirement. A signed copy of the Grant Agreement from the county **MUST** be received within 60 days of receipt of the award packet.

**18. What paperwork is necessary from the county to get reimbursed for grant expenses after the first \$50,000.00 is spent?**

Reporting a claim above the \$50,000.00 initial payment is the same as reporting and requesting for reimbursement. The same information is needed for verification and approval for payment.

- 19. Do invoices need a supervisor or budget person to sign off on reimbursement requests?**  
MVAA requires the budget reports to be approved by the chief financial officer or person responsible for the county budget. Counties should also follow local accounting policies, procedures, and practices in obtaining other required signatures.
- 20. What if my reports contain errors?**  
Depending on the type and dollar amount of errors, your report will be returned to you for corrections. It is your responsibility to review your report prior to submitting it to MVAA to ensure accuracy.
- 21. If there were grant-related expenses incurred before the grant approval date, will they be eligible for reimbursement?**  
Nothing prior to October 1, 2022, will be approved.
- 22. Can invoices for reimbursement be submitted as they are incurred?**  
No, reimbursements will be made on a quarterly basis once the initial payment has been exhausted. Remember that reports/reimbursement requests turned in late or that do not follow reporting guidelines may delay payment.
- 23. Reporting seems challenging; can you help?**  
Yes, if you have questions when completing the reporting templates, please call MVAA at (517) 243-8619 and ask for the Grant Analyst and we will walk you through it.
- 24. If a county is noncompliant with the CVSF requirements, what will the repercussions be?**  
This would depend on the nature of the noncompliance. In accordance with the current Public Act, the funds would be recouped the following fiscal year.
- 25. What if counties need to change or revise the grant narrative and/or budget amounts after the grant is approved?**  
Project and/or budget revisions may be made; however, they REQUIRE approval from the MVAA Program Manager and the DMVA CFO before changing the project and/or incurring any expense. Counties must submit a project/budget amendment form.
- 26. If counties do not spend all funds received, does it roll over to the next fiscal year?**  
No, in accordance with the Public Act, if the counties have unspent funds, they must be returned to the State of Michigan. If there is money in the state fund at the close of the fiscal year, the money shall remain in the fund and not lapse to the general fund.