

2021—Subsecs. (a)(1), (b)(3). Pub. L. 116-283 “air, or space service” for “or air service”.

2008—Subsec. (a)(1). Pub. L. 110-181, §1710(a), inserted “, or from a reserve component,” after “active military, naval, or air service”.

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 110-181, §1710(b), added par. (1) and redesignated former pars. (1) and (2) as (2) and (3), respectively.

§ 6302. Biennial plan

(a) BIENNIAL PLAN REQUIRED.—The Secretary shall, during the first nine months of every odd-numbered year, prepare a biennial plan for the outreach activities of the Department for the two-fiscal-year period beginning on October 1 of that year.

(b) ELEMENTS.—Each biennial plan under subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) Plans for efforts to identify eligible veterans and eligible dependents who are not enrolled or registered with the Department for benefits or services under the programs administered by the Secretary.

(2) Plans for informing eligible veterans and eligible dependents of modifications of the benefits and services under the programs administered by the Secretary, including eligibility for medical and nursing care and services.

(c) COORDINATION IN DEVELOPMENT.—In developing the biennial plan under subsection (a), the Secretary shall consult with the following:

(1) Directors or other appropriate officials of organizations approved by the Secretary under section 5902 of this title.

(2) Directors or other appropriate officials of State and local education and training programs.

(3) Representatives of nongovernmental organizations that carry out veterans outreach programs.

(4) Representatives of State and local veterans employment organizations.

(5) Other individuals and organizations that the Secretary considers appropriate.

(Added Pub. L. 109-233, title IV, §402(a), June 15, 2006, 120 Stat. 408.)

§ 6303. Outreach services

(a) REQUIREMENT TO PROVIDE SERVICES.—In carrying out the purposes of this subchapter, the Secretary shall provide the outreach services specified in subsections (b) through (d). In areas where a significant number of eligible veterans and eligible dependents speak a language other than English as their principal language, such services shall, to the maximum feasible extent, be provided in the principal language of such persons.

(b) INDIVIDUAL NOTICE TO NEW VETERANS.—The Secretary shall by letter advise each veteran at the time of the veteran's discharge or release from active military, naval, air, or space service (or as soon as possible after such discharge or release) of all benefits and services under laws administered by the Department for which the veteran may be eligible. In carrying out this subsection, the Secretary shall ensure, through the use of veteran-student services under section 3485 of this title, that contact, in person or

by telephone, is made with those veterans who, on the basis of their military service records, do not have a high school education or equivalent at the time of discharge or release.

(c) DISTRIBUTION OF INFORMATION.—(1) The Secretary—

(A) shall distribute full information to eligible veterans and eligible dependents regarding all benefits and services to which they may be entitled under laws administered by the Secretary; and

(B) may, to the extent feasible, distribute information on other governmental programs (including manpower and training programs) which the Secretary determines would be beneficial to veterans.

(2) Whenever a veteran or dependent first applies for any benefit under laws administered by the Secretary (including a request for burial or related benefits or an application for life insurance proceeds), the Secretary shall provide to the veteran or dependent information concerning benefits and health care services under programs administered by the Secretary. Such information shall be provided not later than three months after the date of such application.

(d) PROVISION OF AID AND ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary shall provide, to the maximum extent possible, aid and assistance (including personal interviews) to members of the Armed Forces, veterans, and eligible dependents with respect to subsections (b) and (c) and in the preparation and presentation of claims under laws administered by the Department.

(e) ASSIGNMENT OF EMPLOYEES.—In carrying out this section, the Secretary shall assign such employees as the Secretary considers appropriate to conduct outreach programs and provide outreach services for homeless veterans. Such outreach services may include site visits through which homeless veterans can be identified and provided assistance in obtaining benefits and services that may be available to them.

(Added Pub. L. 109-233, title IV, §402(a), June 15, 2006, 120 Stat. 408; amended Pub. L. 116-283, div. A, title IX, §926(a)(59), Jan. 1, 2021, 134 Stat. 3830; Pub. L. 117-205, §2(b)(2), Oct. 17, 2022, 136 Stat. 2233.)

Editorial Notes

PRIOR PROVISIONS

Provisions similar to those in this section were contained in section 7722 of this title prior to repeal by Pub. L. 109-233.

AMENDMENTS

2022—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 117-205 substituted “this subchapter” for “this chapter”.

2021—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 116-283 “air, or space service” for “or air service”.

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

IMPROVEMENTS TO VETERANS JUSTICE OUTREACH PROGRAM

Pub. L. 117-328, div. V, title III, §302, Dec. 29, 2022, 136 Stat. 5506, provided that:

“(a) OUTREACH REQUIREMENT.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct outreach regarding the Veterans Justice Outreach Program to justice-involved veterans, military and veterans service organizations,

and relevant stakeholders in the criminal justice community, including officials from local law enforcement, court, and jail systems and others as determined appropriate by the Secretary. Such outreach—

“(1) shall be designed—

“(A) to spread awareness and understanding of the Program;

“(B) to spread awareness and understanding of veteran eligibility for the Program, including the eligibility of veterans who were discharged from service in the Armed Forces under conditions other than honorable; and

“(C) to improve the identification of justice-involved veterans; and

“(2) may be conducted in person, virtually, or through other means, including by the dissemination of informational materials and contact information.

“(b) STRATEGIC PLAN.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall develop a strategic plan for the Veterans Justice Outreach Program. In developing such plan, the Secretary shall conduct—

“(1) an assessment of barriers to working with justice-involved veterans in rural, remote, and underserved areas, including potential steps to address such barriers; and

“(2) a workforce gap analysis for the Program.

“(c) INCREASE IN NUMBER OF VJO SPECIALISTS.—

“(1) INCREASE.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall increase the number of Veterans Justice Outreach specialists responsible for supporting justice-involved veterans in rural, remote, or underserved areas, including areas located far from Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers, as determined by the Secretary, through—

“(A) the hiring of additional Veterans Justice Outreach specialists;

“(B) the reallocation of existing Veterans Justice Outreach specialists; or

“(C) such other means as may be determined appropriate by the Secretary.

“(2) DETERMINATION.—The Secretary shall determine the number of Veterans Justice Outreach specialists required, and the locations of such specialists, under paragraph (1) by taking into account—

“(A) such number and locations needed to achieve the mission and strategic goals of the Veterans Justice Outreach Program;

“(B) any gaps in the workforce of the Program, including such gaps identified pursuant to subsection (b)(2); and

“(C) strategies to address such gaps.

“(3) USE OF TECHNOLOGY.—In carrying out paragraph (1), the Secretary shall consider the use of virtual technology.

“(d) PERFORMANCE GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION PLANS.—

“(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish performance goals and implementation plans for—

“(A) the Veterans Justice Outreach Program;

“(B) Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists; and

“(C) providing support for research regarding justice-involved veterans.

“(2) CONSISTENCY WITH STRATEGIC PLAN.—The Secretary shall ensure that the performance goals and implementation plans under paragraph (1) are consistent with the strategic plan under subsection (b) and include—

“(A) qualitative and quantitative milestones, measures, and metrics, and associated timelines for completion of the plans under paragraph (1) and barriers to such completion;

“(B) an identification of relevant staff; and

“(C) an estimate of resource needs and sources.

“(3) PERFORMANCE DATA.—The Secretary shall establish a process to regularly collect and analyze performance data to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of implementing the plans under paragraph (1).

“(e) TRAINING REQUIREMENT.—The Secretary shall ensure that all Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists receive training not less frequently than annually on—

“(1) best practices for identifying and conducting outreach to justice-involved veterans and relevant stakeholders in the criminal justice community; and

“(2) veteran eligibility for the Veterans Justice Outreach Program, including with respect to consistently communicating changes regarding eligibility (including through the use of a script or other reference materials).

“(f) REPORTS ON IMPLEMENTATION.—

“(1) FIRST REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act [Dec. 29, 2022], the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the following:

“(A) An assessment of implementing subsection (c), including—

“(i) strategies to increase Veterans Justice Outreach specialists responsible for supporting justice-involved veterans in rural, remote, or underserved areas; and

“(ii) the progress of the Secretary in addressing gaps in the workforce of the Veterans Justice Outreach Program identified pursuant to paragraph (2) of such subsection.

“(B) The performance goals and implementation plans established under subsection (d)(1).

“(2) SUBSEQUENT REPORT.—Not later than three years after the date on which the first report is submitted under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the progress of the Secretary in meeting the performance goals and carrying out activities under the implementation plans established under subsection (d)(1).

“(g) REPORT ON VETERANS TREATMENT COURTS.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary, in consultation with the Attorney General, shall submit to Congress a report on the engagement of the Department of Veterans Affairs with veterans treatment courts, including—

“(1) the availability and efficacy of veterans treatment courts in meeting the needs of justice-involved veterans;

“(2) best practices for Department of Veterans Affairs staff and justice-involved veterans in working with veterans treatment courts; and

“(3) the ability of justice-involved veterans to access veterans treatment courts, including any barriers that exist to increasing such access.

“(h) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) The term ‘justice-involved veteran’ means a veteran with active, ongoing, or recent contact with some component of a local criminal justice system.

“(2) The term ‘Veterans Justice Outreach Program’ means the program through which the Department of Veterans Affairs identifies justice-involved veterans and provides such veterans with access to Department services.

“(3) The term ‘Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist’ means an employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs who serves as a liaison between the Department and the local criminal justice system on behalf of a justice-involved veteran.

“(4) The term ‘veterans treatment court’ means a State or local court that is participating in the veterans treatment court program (as defined in section 2991(i)(1) of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3797aa(i)(1)) [now 34 U.S.C. 10651(i)(1)]).”

FACT SHEETS

Pub. L. 117–62, §2, Nov. 22, 2021, 135 Stat. 1482, provided that:

“(a) LANGUAGES.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall make available versions of all fact sheets of the Department of Veterans Affairs in—

“(1) English;

“(2) Spanish;

“(3) Tagalog; and

“(4) each of the 10 most commonly spoken languages, other than English, in the United States that are not otherwise covered by paragraphs (2) and (3).

“(b) WEBSITE.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish and maintain a publicly available website of the Department of Veterans Affairs that contains links to all fact sheets of the Veterans Benefits Administration, Veterans Health Administration, and of the National Cemetery Administration. The website shall be accessible by a clearly labeled hyperlink on the homepage of the Department.

“(c) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act [Nov. 22, 2021], the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit a report to Congress regarding fact sheets described in subsection (a) and details of the Language Access Plan of the Department of Veteran[s] Affairs. The report shall include the following:

“(1) What the Secretary determines constitutes a fact sheet of the Department for purposes of this Act [enacting this note and provisions set out as a note under section 101 of this title].

“(2) How such fact sheets are utilized and distributed other than on and through the website of the Department.

“(3) How such Language Access Plan is communicated to veterans, family members of veterans, and caregivers.

“(4) The roles and responsibilities of patient advocates in the coordination of care for veterans with limited English proficiency, family members of such veterans, and caregivers.

“(5) Other demographic information that the Secretary determines appropriate regarding veterans with limited English proficiency.”

CONTINUATION OF WOMEN'S HEALTH TRANSITION TRAINING PROGRAM OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Pub. L. 116-315, title III, §3005(a), Jan. 5, 2021, 134 Stat. 4993, provided that: “The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out the Women's Health Transition Training program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (in this section [remainder of section 3005 of Pub. L. 116-315 not classified to the Code] referred to as the ‘Program’) until at least one year after the date of the enactment of this Act [Jan. 5, 2021].”

PILOT PROGRAM ON ASSISTING VETERANS WHO EXPERIENCE INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE OR SEXUAL ASSAULT

Pub. L. 116-315, title V, §5304, Jan. 5, 2021, 134 Stat. 5041, provided that:

“(a) PILOT PROGRAM REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out a pilot program to assess the feasibility and advisability of assisting former members of the Armed Forces who have experienced or are experiencing intimate partner violence or sexual assault in accessing benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs, including coordinating access to medical treatment centers, housing assistance, and other benefits from the Department.

“(b) DURATION.—The Secretary shall carry out the pilot program under subsection (a) during the two-year period beginning on the date of the commencement of the pilot program.

“(c) COLLABORATION.—The Secretary shall carry out the pilot program under subsection (a) in collaboration with—

“(1) intimate partner violence shelters and programs;

“(2) rape crisis centers;

“(3) State intimate partner violence and sexual assault coalitions; and

“(4) such other health care or other service providers that serve intimate partner violence or sexual assault victims as determined by the Secretary, particularly those providing emergency services or housing assistance.

“(d) AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.—In carrying out the pilot program under subsection (a), the Secretary may conduct the following activities:

“(1) Training for community-based intimate partner violence or sexual assault service providers on—

“(A) identifying former members of the Armed Forces who have been victims of, or are currently experiencing, intimate partner violence or sexual assault;

“(B) coordinating with local service providers of the Department; and

“(C) connecting former members of the Armed Forces with appropriate housing, mental health, medical, and other financial assistance or benefits from the Department.

“(2) Assistance to service providers to ensure access of veterans to intimate partner violence and sexual assault emergency services, particularly in underserved areas, including services for Native American veterans (as defined in section 3765 of title 38, United States Code).

“(3) Such other outreach and assistance as the Secretary determines necessary for the provision of assistance under subsection (a).

“(e) INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT OUTREACH COORDINATORS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—In order to effectively assist veterans who have experienced intimate partner violence or sexual assault, the Secretary may establish local coordinators to provide outreach under the pilot program required by subsection (a).

“(2) LOCAL COORDINATOR KNOWLEDGE.—The Secretary shall ensure that each coordinator established under paragraph (1) is knowledgeable about—

“(A) the dynamics of intimate partner violence and sexual assault, including safety concerns, legal protections, and the need for the provision of confidential services;

“(B) the eligibility of veterans for services and benefits from the Department that are relevant to recovery from intimate partner violence and sexual assault, particularly emergency housing assistance, mental health care, other health care, and disability benefits; and

“(C) local community resources addressing intimate partner violence and sexual assault.

“(3) LOCAL COORDINATOR ASSISTANCE.—Each coordinator established under paragraph (1) shall assist intimate partner violence shelters and rape crisis centers in providing services to veterans.

“(f) REPORT.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the completion of the pilot program under subsection (a), the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the pilot program.

“(2) CONTENTS.—The report required by paragraph (1) shall include the following:

“(A) The findings and conclusions of the Secretary with respect to the pilot program.

“(B) Such recommendations for continuing or expanding the pilot program as the Secretary considers appropriate.

“(g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) INTIMATE PARTNER.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ‘intimate partner’ means a person with whom one has a close personal relationship that may be characterized by the partners’ emotional connectedness, regular contact, ongoing physical contact and sexual behavior, identity as a couple, and familiarity and knowledge about each other’s lives.

“(B) CLOSE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS.—In this paragraph, the term ‘close personal relationships’ includes the following:

“(i) A relationship between married spouses.

“(ii) A relationship between common-law spouses.

“(iii) A relationship between civil union spouses.

“(iv) A relationship between domestic partners.

“(v) A relationship between dating partners.

“(vi) A relationship between ongoing sexual partners.

“(2) INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE.—The term ‘intimate partner violence’ includes physical violence,

sexual violence, stalking, and psychological aggression, including coercive tactics by a current or former intimate partner.”

PILOT PROGRAM ON INFORMATION SHARING BETWEEN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND DESIGNATED RELATIVES AND FRIENDS OF VETERANS REGARDING ASSISTANCE AND BENEFITS AVAILABLE TO THE VETERANS

Pub. L. 116-214, title I, §101, Dec. 5, 2020, 134 Stat. 1027, provided that:

“(a) **PILOT PROGRAM REQUIRED.**—

“(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act [Dec. 5, 2020], the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall commence carrying out a pilot program—

“(A) to encourage members of the Armed Forces who are transitioning from service in the Armed Forces to civilian life, before separating from such service, to designate up to 10 persons to whom information regarding the assistance and benefits available to the veterans under laws administered by the Secretary shall be disseminated using the contact information obtained under paragraph (7); and

“(B) provides such persons, within 30 days after the date on which such persons are designated under subparagraph (A), the option to elect to receive such information.

“(2) **DURATION.**—The Secretary shall carry out the pilot program during a period beginning on the date of the commencement of the pilot program that is not less than two years.

“(3) **DISSEMINATION.**—The Secretary shall disseminate information described in paragraph (1)(A) under the pilot program no less than quarterly.

“(4) **TYPES OF INFORMATION.**—The types of information to be disseminated under the pilot program to persons who elect to receive such information shall include information regarding the following:

“(A) Services and benefits offered to veterans and their family members by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

“(B) Challenges and stresses that might accompany transitioning from service in the Armed Forces to civilian life.

“(C) Services available to veterans and their family members to cope with the experiences and challenges of service in the Armed Forces and transition from such service to civilian life.

“(D) Services available through community partner organizations to support veterans and their family members.

“(E) Services available through Federal, State, and local government agencies to support veterans and their family members.

“(F) The environmental health registry program, health and wellness programs, and resources for preventing and managing diseases and illnesses.

“(G) A toll-free telephone number through which such persons who elect to receive information under the pilot program may request information regarding the program.

“(H) Such other matters as the Secretary, in consultation with members of the Armed Forces and such persons who elect to receive information under the pilot program, determines to be appropriate.

“(5) **PRIVACY OF INFORMATION.**—In carrying out the pilot program, the Secretary may not disseminate information under paragraph (4) in violation of laws and regulations pertaining to the privacy of members of the Armed Forces, including requirements pursuant to—

“(A) section 552a of title 5, United States Code; and

“(B) the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-191) [see Tables for classification].

“(6) **NOTICE AND MODIFICATIONS.**—In carrying out the pilot program, the Secretary shall, with respect to a veteran—

“(A) ensure that such veteran is notified of the ability to modify designations made by such veteran under paragraph (1)(A); and

“(B) upon the request of a veteran, authorize such veteran to modify such designations at any time.

“(7) **CONTACT INFORMATION.**—In making a designation under the pilot program, a veteran shall provide necessary contact information, specifically including an email address, to facilitate the dissemination of information regarding the assistance and benefits available to the veteran under laws administered by the Secretary.

“(8) **OPT-IN AND OPT-OUT OF PILOT PROGRAM.**—

“(A) **OPT-IN BY MEMBERS.**—A veteran may participate in the pilot program only if the veteran voluntarily elects to participate in the program. A veteran seeking to make such an election shall make such election in a manner, and by including such information, as the Secretary shall specify for purposes of the pilot program.

“(B) **OPT-IN BY DESIGNATED RECIPIENTS.**—A person designated pursuant to paragraph (1)(A) may receive information under the pilot program only if the person makes the election described in paragraph (1)(B).

“(C) **OPT-OUT.**—In carrying out the pilot program, the Secretary shall, with respect to a person who has elected to receive information under such pilot program, cease disseminating such information to that person upon request of such person.

“(b) **SURVEY AND REPORT ON PILOT PROGRAM.**—

“(1) **SURVEY.**—

“(A) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than one year after the date of the commencement of the pilot program and not less frequently than once each year thereafter for the duration of the pilot program, the Secretary shall administer a survey to persons who ever elected to receive information under the pilot program for the purpose of receiving feedback regarding the quality of information disseminated under this section.

“(B) **ELEMENTS.**—Each survey conducted under subparagraph (A) shall include solicitation of the following:

“(i) Feedback on the following:

“(I) The nature of information disseminated under the pilot program.

“(II) Satisfaction with the pilot program.

“(III) The utility of the pilot program.

“(IV) Overall pilot program successes and challenges.

“(ii) Recommendations for improving the pilot program.

“(iii) Reasons for opting in or out of the pilot program.

“(iv) Such other feedback or matters as the Secretary considers appropriate.

“(2) **REPORT.**—

“(A) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than three years after the date on which the pilot program commences, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a final report on the pilot program.

“(B) **CONTENTS.**—The report submitted under subparagraph (A) shall include the following:

“(i) The results of the survey administered under paragraph (1).

“(ii) The number of participants enrolled in the pilot program who are veterans.

“(iii) The number of persons designated under subsection (a)(1)(A).

“(iv) The number of such persons who opted in or out of the pilot program under subsection (a)(8).

“(v) The average period such persons remained in the pilot program.

“(vi) An assessment of the feasibility and advisability of making the pilot program permanent.

“(vii) Identification of legislative or administrative action that may be necessary if the pilot program is made permanent.

“(viii) A plan to expand the pilot program if the pilot program is made permanent.

“(ix) If the Secretary finds under clause (vi) that making the pilot program permanent is not feasible or advisable, a justification for such finding.”

EXPANSION OF CAPABILITIES OF WOMEN VETERANS
CALL CENTER

Pub. L. 116-315, title V, §5109, Jan. 5, 2021, 134 Stat. 5033, provided that: “The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall enhance the capabilities of the women veterans call center of the Department of Veterans Affairs to respond to requests by women veterans for assistance with accessing health care and benefits furnished under the laws administered by the Secretary.”

Pub. L. 116-171, title VI, §601, Oct. 17, 2020, 134 Stat. 824, provided that: “The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall expand the capabilities of the Women Veterans Call Center of the Department of Veterans Affairs to include a text messaging capability.”

REQUIREMENT FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
INTERNET WEBSITE TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON
SERVICES AVAILABLE TO WOMEN VETERANS

Pub. L. 116-171, title VI, §602, Oct. 17, 2020, 134 Stat. 824, provided that:

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall survey the internet websites and information resources of the Department of Veterans Affairs in effect on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act [Oct. 17, 2020] and publish an internet website that serves as a centralized source for the provision to women veterans of information about the benefits and services available to them under laws administered by the Secretary.

“(b) ELEMENTS.—The internet website published under subsection (a) shall provide to women veterans information regarding all services available in the district in which the veteran is seeking such services, including, with respect to each medical center and community-based outpatient clinic in the applicable Veterans Integrated Service Network—

“(1) the name and contact information of each women’s health coordinator;

“(2) a list of appropriate staff for other benefits available from the Veterans Benefits Administration, the National Cemetery Administration, and such other entities as the Secretary considers appropriate; and

“(3) such other information as the Secretary considers appropriate.

“(c) UPDATED INFORMATION.—The Secretary shall ensure that the information described in subsection (b) that is published on the internet website required by subsection (a) is updated not less frequently than once every 90 days.

“(d) OUTREACH.—In carrying out this section, the Secretary shall ensure that the outreach conducted under section 1720F(i) of title 38, United States Code, includes information regarding the internet website required by subsection (a).

“(e) DERIVATION OF FUNDS.—Amounts used by the Secretary to carry out this section shall be derived from amounts made available to the Secretary to publish internet websites of the Department.”

VETERANS TREATMENT COURT IMPROVEMENT

Pub. L. 115-240, Sept. 17, 2018, 132 Stat. 2888, provided that:

“SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

“This Act may be cited as the ‘Veterans Treatment Court Improvement Act of 2018’.

“SEC. 2. HIRING BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OF ADDITIONAL VETERANS JUSTICE OUTREACH SPECIALISTS.

“(a) HIRING OF ADDITIONAL VETERANS JUSTICE OUTREACH SPECIALISTS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act [Sept. 17, 2018], the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall hire not fewer than 50 Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists and place each such Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist at an eligible Department of Veterans Affairs medical center in accordance with this section.

“(2) REQUIREMENTS.—The Secretary shall ensure that each Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist employed under paragraph (1)—

“(A) serves, either exclusively or in addition to other duties, as part of a justice team in a veterans treatment court or other veteran-focused court; and

“(B) otherwise meets Department hiring guidelines for Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists.

“(b) ELIGIBLE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTERS.—For purposes of this section, an eligible Department of Veterans Affairs medical center is any Department of Veterans Affairs medical center that—

“(1) complies with all Department guidelines and regulations for placement of a Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist;

“(2) works within a local criminal justice system with justice-involved veterans;

“(3) maintains an affiliation with one or more veterans treatment courts or other veteran-focused courts; and

“(4) either—

“(A) routinely provides Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists to serve as part of a justice team in a veterans treatment court or other veteran-focused court; or

“(B) establishes a plan that is approved by the Secretary to provide Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists employed under subsection (a)(1) to serve as part of a justice team in a veterans treatment court or other veteran-focused court.

“(c) PLACEMENT PRIORITY.—The Secretary shall prioritize the placement of Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists employed under subsection (a)(1) at eligible Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers that have or intend to establish an affiliation, for the purpose of carrying out the Veterans Justice Outreach Program, with a veterans treatment court, or other veteran-focused court, that—

“(1) was established on or after the date of the enactment of this Act; or

“(2)(A) was established before the date of the enactment of this Act; and

“(B) is not fully staffed with Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists.

“(d) REPORTS.—

“(1) REPORT BY SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act [Sept. 17, 2018], the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress a report on the implementation of this section and its effect on the Veterans Justice Outreach Program.

“(B) CONTENTS.—The report submitted under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

“(i) The status of the efforts of the Secretary to hire Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists pursuant to subsection (a)(1), including the total number of Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists hired by the Secretary pursuant to such subsection and the number that the Secretary expects to hire pursuant to such subsection.

“(ii) The total number of Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists assigned to each Department of Veterans Affairs medical center that participates in the Veterans Justice Outreach Program, including the number of Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists hired under subsection (a)(1) disaggregated by Department of Veterans Affairs medical center.

“(iii) The total number of eligible Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers that sought

placement of a Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist under subsection (a)(1), how many Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists each such center sought, and how many of such medical centers received no placement of a Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist under subsection (a)(1).

“(iv) For each eligible Department of Veterans Affairs medical center—

“(I) the number of justice-involved veterans who were served or are expected to be served by a Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist hired under subsection (a)(1); and

“(II) the number of justice-involved veterans who do not have access to a Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist.

“(2) REPORT BY COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report on the implementation of this section and the effectiveness of the Veterans Justice Outreach Program.

“(B) CONTENTS.—The report required by subparagraph (A) shall include the following:

“(i) An assessment of whether the Secretary has fulfilled the Secretary's obligations under this section.

“(ii) The number of veterans who are served by Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists hired under subsection (a)(1), disaggregated by demographics (including discharge status).

“(iii) An identification of any subgroups of veterans who underutilize services provided under laws administered by the Secretary, including an assessment of whether these veterans have access to Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists under the Veterans Justice Outreach Program.

“(iv) Such recommendations as the Comptroller General may have for the Secretary to improve the effectiveness of the Veterans Justice Outreach Program.

“(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) JUSTICE TEAM.—The term ‘justice team’ means the group of individuals, which may include a judge, court coordinator, prosecutor, public defender, treatment provider, probation or other law enforcement officer, program mentor, and Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist, who assist justice-involved veterans in a veterans treatment court or other veteran-focused court.

“(2) JUSTICE-INVOLVED VETERAN.—The term ‘justice-involved veteran’ means a veteran with active, ongoing, or recent contact with some component of a local criminal justice system.

“(3) LOCAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM.—The term ‘local criminal justice system’ means law enforcement, jails, prisons, and Federal, State, and local courts.

“(4) VETERANS JUSTICE OUTREACH PROGRAM.—The term ‘Veterans Justice Outreach Program’ means the program through which the Department of Veterans Affairs identifies justice-involved veterans and provides such veterans with access to Department services.

“(5) VETERANS JUSTICE OUTREACH SPECIALIST.—The term ‘Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist’ means an employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs who serves as a liaison between the Department and the local criminal justice system on behalf of a justice-involved veteran.

“(6) VETERANS TREATMENT COURT.—The term ‘veterans treatment court’ means a State or local court that is participating in the veterans treatment court program (as defined in section 2991(i)(1) of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3797aa(i)(1)) [now 34 U.S.C. 10651(i)(1)]).”

OUTREACH PROGRAM TO VETERANS IN RURAL AREAS

Pub. L. 109-461, title II, §213, Dec. 22, 2006, 120 Stat. 3422, provided that:

“(a) PROGRAM.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct an extensive outreach program to identify and provide information to veterans who served in the theater of operations for Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom and who reside in rural communities in order to enroll those veterans in the health-care system of the Department of Veterans Affairs during the period when they are eligible for such enrollment.

“(b) FEATURES OF PROGRAM.—In carrying out the program under subsection (a), the Secretary shall seek to work at the local level with employers, State agencies, community health centers located in rural areas, rural health clinics, and critical access hospitals located in rural areas, and units of the National Guard and other reserve components based in rural areas, in order to increase the awareness of veterans and their families of the availability of health care provided by the Secretary and the means by which those veterans can achieve access to the health-care services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs.”

INFORMATION TO ASSIST VETERANS RECEIVING EDUCATION BENEFITS

Pub. L. 101-237, title IV, §421, Dec. 18, 1989, 103 Stat. 2088, provided that:

“(a) IN GENERAL.—For the purpose of assisting individuals receiving education benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall prepare, and update periodically, a document containing a detailed description of the benefits, limitations, procedures, requirements, and other important aspects of the education programs administered by the Department.

“(b) DISTRIBUTION.—The Secretary shall, beginning in fiscal year 1990 but not before July 1, 1990, distribute copies of such document—

“(1) to each individual applying for benefits under an education program administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs and to each such individual at least annually in the years thereafter in which the individual receives such benefits;

“(2) to education and training institution officials on at least an annual basis; and

“(3) upon request, to other individuals significantly affected by education programs administered by the Secretary, including military education personnel.

“(c) FUNDING.—The Secretary shall use funds appropriated to the readjustment benefits account of the Department to carry out this section.”

OUTREACH SERVICES

Pub. L. 100-687, div. B, title XII, §1204, Nov. 18, 1988, 102 Stat. 4125, as amended by Pub. L. 102-4, §4, Feb. 6, 1991, 105 Stat. 15; Pub. L. 102-83, §6(k)(2), Aug. 6, 1991, 105 Stat. 409, provided that:

“(a) ONGOING OUTREACH PROGRAM.—(1) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct an active, continuous outreach program for furnishing to veterans of active military, naval, or air service who served in the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam era information relating to—

“(A) the health risks (if any) resulting from exposure during that service to dioxin or any other toxic agent in herbicides used in support of United States and allied military operations in the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam era; and

“(B) services and benefits available to such veterans with respect to such health risks.

“(2) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall annually furnish updated information on health risks described in paragraph (1)(A) to veterans referred to in paragraph (1).

“(b) INFORMATION IN AGENT ORANGE REGISTRY.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall take reasonable actions to organize and update the information contained in the Department of Veterans Affairs Agent Orange Registry in a manner that enables the Secretary promptly to notify a veteran of any increased health

risk for such veteran resulting from exposure of such veteran to dioxin or any other toxic agent referred to in subsection (a) during Vietnam-era service in the Republic of Vietnam whenever the Secretary determines, on the basis of physical examination or other pertinent information, that such veteran is subject to such an increased health risk."

§ 6304. Veterans assistance offices

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish and maintain veterans assistance offices at such places throughout the United States and its territories and possessions, and in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, as the Secretary determines to be necessary to carry out the purposes of this subchapter. The Secretary may maintain such offices on such military installations located elsewhere as the Secretary, after consultation with the Secretary of Defense and taking into account recommendations, if any, of the Secretary of Labor, determines to be necessary to carry out such purposes.

(b) LOCATION OF OFFICES.—In establishing and maintaining such offices, the Secretary shall give due regard to—

- (1) the geographical distribution of veterans recently discharged or released from active military, naval, air, or space service;
- (2) the special needs of educationally disadvantaged veterans (including their need for accessibility of outreach services); and
- (3) the necessity of providing appropriate outreach services in less populated areas.

(Added Pub. L. 109-233, title IV, § 402(a), June 15, 2006, 120 Stat. 409; amended Pub. L. 116-283, div. A, title IX, § 926(a)(60), Jan. 1, 2021, 134 Stat. 3830; Pub. L. 117-205, § 2(b)(2), Oct. 17, 2022, 136 Stat. 2233.)

Editorial Notes

PRIOR PROVISIONS

Provisions similar to those in this section were contained in section 7723 of this title prior to repeal by Pub. L. 109-233.

AMENDMENTS

2022—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 117-205 substituted “this subchapter” for “this chapter”.

2021—Subsec. (b)(1). Pub. L. 116-283 substituted “air, or space service” for “or air service”.

§ 6305. Outstationing of counseling and outreach personnel

The Secretary may station employees of the Department at locations other than Department offices, including educational institutions, to provide—

- (1) counseling and other assistance regarding benefits under this title to veterans and other persons eligible for benefits under this title; and
- (2) outreach services under this subchapter.

(Added Pub. L. 109-233, title IV, § 402(a), June 15, 2006, 120 Stat. 409; amended Pub. L. 117-205, § 2(b)(2), Oct. 17, 2022, 136 Stat. 2233.)

Editorial Notes

PRIOR PROVISIONS

Provisions similar to those in this section were contained in section 7724 of this title prior to repeal by Pub. L. 109-233.

AMENDMENTS

2022—Par. (2). Pub. L. 117-205 substituted “this subchapter” for “this chapter”.

§ 6306. Use of other agencies

(a) In carrying out this subchapter, the Secretary shall arrange with the Secretary of Labor for the State employment service to match the particular qualifications of an eligible veteran or eligible dependent with an appropriate job or job training opportunity, including, where possible, arrangements for outstationing the State employment personnel who provide such assistance at appropriate facilities of the Department.

(b) In carrying out this subchapter, the Secretary shall, in consultation with the Secretary of Labor, actively seek to promote the development and establishment of employment opportunities, training opportunities, and other opportunities for veterans, with particular emphasis on the needs of veterans with service-connected disabilities and other eligible veterans, taking into account applicable rates of unemployment and the employment emphases set forth in chapter 42 of this title.

(c) In carrying out this subchapter, the Secretary shall cooperate with and use the services of any Federal department or agency or any State or local governmental agency or recognized national or other organization.

(d) In carrying out this subchapter, the Secretary shall, where appropriate, make referrals to any Federal department or agency or State or local governmental unit or recognized national or other organization.

(e) In carrying out this subchapter, the Secretary may furnish available space and office facilities for the use of authorized representatives of such governmental unit or other organization providing services.

(f) In carrying out this subchapter, the Secretary shall conduct and provide for studies, in consultation with appropriate Federal departments and agencies, to determine the most effective program design to carry out the purposes of this subchapter.

(Added Pub. L. 109-233, title IV, § 402(a), June 15, 2006, 120 Stat. 409; amended Pub. L. 117-205, § 2(b)(2), Oct. 17, 2022, 136 Stat. 2233.)

Editorial Notes

PRIOR PROVISIONS

Provisions similar to those in this section were contained in section 7725 of this title prior to repeal by Pub. L. 109-233.

AMENDMENTS

2022—Pub. L. 117-205 substituted “this subchapter” for “this chapter” wherever appearing.

§ 6307. Grants to States and Indian Tribes to improve outreach to veterans

(a) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this section to provide for assistance by the Secretary to States and Indian Tribes to carry out programs that improve covered outreach and assistance to veterans and the spouses, children, and parents of veterans, to ensure that such individuals are fully informed about, and assisted in applying