

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

for, any veterans and veterans-related benefits and programs (including veterans programs of a State or Indian Tribe) for which they may be eligible and facilitate opportunities for such individuals to receive competent, qualified services in the preparation, presentation and prosecution of veterans benefits claims.

(b) **AUTHORITY.**—The Secretary may award grants to States and Indian Tribes—

(1) to carry out, coordinate, improve, or otherwise enhance—

(A) covered outreach activities; or

(B) activities to assist in the development and submittal of claims for veterans and veterans-related benefits; or

(2) to increase the number of county or Tribal veterans service officers serving in the State by hiring new, additional such officers.

(c) **APPLICATION.**—(1) To be eligible for a grant under this section, a State or Indian Tribe shall submit to the Secretary an application therefor at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require.

(2) Each application submitted under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) A detailed plan for the use of the grant.

(B) A description of the programs through which the State or Indian Tribe will meet the outcome measures developed by the Secretary under subsection (j).

(C) A description of how the State or Indian Tribe will distribute grant amounts equitably among counties or Tribal lands with varying levels of urbanization.

(D) A plan for how the grant will be used to meet the unique needs of American Indian veterans, Alaska Native veterans, or Native Hawaiian veterans, elderly veterans, and veterans from other underserved communities.

(d) **DISTRIBUTION.**—The Secretary shall seek to ensure that grants awarded under this section are equitably distributed among States and Indian Tribes with varying levels of urbanization.

(e) **SET-ASIDE.**—Of the amounts authorized to be appropriated or otherwise made available for grants under this section for any fiscal year, the Secretary shall ensure that not less than five percent is used to make grants to Indian Tribes.

(f) **PRIORITY.**—The Secretary shall prioritize awarding grants under this section that will serve the following areas:

(1) Areas with a critical shortage of county or Tribal veterans service officers.

(2) Areas with high rates of—

(A) suicide among veterans; or

(B) referrals to the Veterans Crisis Line.

(g) **USE OF COUNTY OR TRIBAL VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS.**—A State or Indian Tribe that receives a grant under this section to carry out an activity described in subsection (b)(1) shall carry out the activity through—

(1) a county or Tribal veterans service officer of the State; or

(2) if the State or Indian Tribe does not have a county or Tribal veterans service officer, or if the county or Tribal veterans service officers of the State or Indian Tribe cover only a portion of that State or Indian Tribe, an appropriate entity of a State, local, or Tribal government, as determined by the Secretary.

(h) **REQUIRED ACTIVITIES.**—Any grant awarded under this section shall be used—

(1) to expand existing programs, activities, and services;

(2) to hire new, additional county or Tribal veterans service officers; or

(3) for travel and transportation to facilitate carrying out paragraph (1) or (2).

(i) **AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.**—A grant under this section may be used to provide education and training, including on-the-job training, for State, county, local, and Tribal government employees who provide (or when trained will provide) covered outreach services in order for those employees to obtain accreditation in accordance with procedures approved by the Secretary.

(j) **OUTCOME MEASURES.**—(1) The Secretary shall develop and provide to each State or Indian Tribe that receives a grant under this section written guidance on the following:

(A) Outcome measures.

(B) Policies of the Department.

(2) In developing outcome measures under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall consider the following goals:

(A) Increasing the use of veterans and veterans-related benefits, particularly among vulnerable populations.

(B) Increasing the number of county and Tribal veterans service officers recognized by the Secretary for the representation of veterans under chapter 59 of this title.

(k) **TRACKING REQUIREMENTS.**—(1) With respect to each grant awarded under this section, the Secretary shall track the use of veterans and veterans-related benefits among the population served by the grant, including the average period of time between the date on which a veteran applies for such a benefit and the date on which the veteran receives the benefit, disaggregated by type of benefit.

(2) Not less frequently than annually during the life of the grant program established under this section, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on—

(A) the information tracked under paragraph (1);

(B) how the grants awarded under this section serve the unique needs of American Indian veterans, Alaska Native veterans, or Native Hawaiian veterans, elderly veterans, and veterans from other underserved communities; and

(C) other information provided by States and Indian Tribes pursuant to the grant reporting requirements.

(l) **PERFORMANCE REVIEW.**—The Secretary shall—

(1) review the performance of each State or Indian Tribe that receives a grant under this section; and

(2) make information regarding such performance publicly available.

(m) **REMEDIATION PLAN.**—(1) In the case of a State or Indian Tribe that receives a grant under this section and does not meet the outcome measures developed by the Secretary under subsection (j), the Secretary shall require

the State or Indian Tribe to submit a remediation plan under which the State shall describe how and when it plans to meet such outcome measures.

(2) The Secretary may not award a subsequent grant under this section to a State or Indian Tribe described in paragraph (1) unless the Secretary approves the remediation plan submitted by the State or Indian Tribe.

(n) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term “county or Tribal veterans service officer” includes a local equivalent veterans service officer.

(2) The term “covered outreach” means outreach with respect to—

(A) benefits administered by the Under Secretary for Benefits; or

(B) similar benefits administered by a State or Indian Tribe.

(3) The term “Indian Tribe” has the meaning given such term in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

(4) The term “State” includes the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and any territory or possession of the United States.

(5) The term “Veterans Crisis Line” means the toll-free hotline for veterans established under section 1720F(h) of this title.

(Added Pub. L. 118–210, title III, §302(a)(2), Jan. 2, 2025, 138 Stat. 2789.)

#### Editorial Notes

##### PRIOR PROVISIONS

A prior section 6307 was renumbered section 6308 of this title.

#### § 6308. Outreach for eligible dependents

(a) NEEDS OF DEPENDENTS.—In carrying out this subchapter, the Secretary shall ensure that the needs of eligible dependents are fully addressed.

(b) INFORMATION AS TO AVAILABILITY OF OUTREACH SERVICES FOR DEPENDENTS.—The Secretary shall ensure that the availability of outreach services and assistance for eligible dependents under this subchapter is made known through a variety of means, including the Internet, announcements in veterans publications, and announcements to the media.

(Added Pub. L. 109–233, title IV, §402(a), June 15, 2006, 120 Stat. 410, §6307; amended Pub. L. 117–205, §2(b)(2), Oct. 17, 2022, 136 Stat. 2233; renumbered §6308, Pub. L. 118–210, title III, §302(a)(1), Jan. 2, 2025, 138 Stat. 2789.)

#### Editorial Notes

##### PRIOR PROVISIONS

A prior section 6308 was renumbered section 6309 of this title.

Provisions similar to those in this section were contained in section 7727 of this title prior to repeal by Pub. L. 109–233.

##### AMENDMENTS

2025—Pub. L. 118–210 renumbered section 6307 of this title as this section.

2022—Pub. L. 117–205 substituted “this subchapter” for “this chapter” in subsecs. (a) and (b).

#### § 6309. Biennial report to Congress

(a) REPORT REQUIRED.—The Secretary shall, not later than December 1 of every even-numbered year (beginning in 2008), submit to Congress a report on the outreach activities carried out by the Department.

(b) CONTENT.—Each report under this section shall include the following:

(1) A description of the implementation during the preceding fiscal year of the current biennial plan under section 6302 of this title.

(2) Recommendations for the improvement or more effective administration of the outreach activities of the Department.

(Added Pub. L. 109–233, title IV, §402(a), June 15, 2006, 120 Stat. 410, §6308; renumbered §6309, Pub. L. 118–210, title III, §302(a)(1), Jan. 2, 2025, 138 Stat. 2789.)

#### Editorial Notes

##### PRIOR PROVISIONS

Provisions similar to those in this section were contained in section 7726 of this title prior to repeal by Pub. L. 109–233.

##### AMENDMENTS

2025—Pub. L. 118–210 renumbered section 6308 of this title as this section.

#### SUBCHAPTER II—OTHER OUTREACH PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

#### § 6320. Solid Start program

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall carry out a program, to be known as the “Solid Start program”, under which the Secretary shall—

(1) build the capacity of the Department to efficiently and effectively respond to the queries and needs of veterans who have recently separated from the Armed Forces; and

(2) systemically integrate and coordinate efforts to assist veterans, including efforts—

(A) to proactively reach out to newly separated veterans to inform them of their eligibility for programs of and benefits provided by the Department, including how to enroll in the system of annual patient enrollment established and operated under section 1705 of this title and the ability to seek care and services under sections 1703 and 1710 of this title; and

(B) to connect veterans in crisis to resources that address their immediate needs.

(b) ACTIVITIES OF THE SOLID START PROGRAM.—(1) The Secretary, in coordination with the Secretary of Defense, shall carry out the Solid Start program of the Department by—

(A) collecting up-to-date contact information during transition classes or separation counseling for all members of the Armed Forces who are separating from the Armed Forces, while explaining the existence and purpose of the Solid Start program;

(B) calling each veteran, regardless of separation type or characterization of service, three times within the first year after separation of the veteran from the Armed Forces;