

1 AN ACT concerning State government.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**  
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 5. The Department of Veterans Affairs Act is  
5 amended by changing Sections 2 and 8 as follows:

6 (20 ILCS 2805/2) (from Ch. 126 1/2, par. 67)

7 Sec. 2. Powers and duties. The Department shall have the  
8 following powers and duties:

9 To perform such acts at the request of any veteran, or his  
10 or her spouse, surviving spouse or dependents as shall be  
11 reasonably necessary or reasonably incident to obtaining or  
12 endeavoring to obtain for the requester any advantage, benefit  
13 or emolument accruing or due to such person under any law of  
14 the United States, the State of Illinois or any other state or  
15 governmental agency by reason of the service of such veteran,  
16 and in pursuance thereof shall:

17 (1) Contact veterans, their survivors and dependents  
18 and advise them of the benefits of state and federal laws  
19 and assist them in obtaining such benefits;

20 (2) Establish field offices and direct the activities  
21 of the personnel assigned to such offices;

22 (3) Create a volunteer field force of accredited  
23 representatives, representing educational institutions,

1 labor organizations, veterans organizations, employers,  
2 churches, and farm organizations;

3 (4) Conduct informational and training services;

4 (5) Conduct educational programs through newspapers,  
5 periodicals and radio for the specific purpose of  
6 disseminating information affecting veterans and their  
7 dependents;

8 (6) Coordinate the services and activities of all state  
9 departments having services and resources affecting  
10 veterans and their dependents;

11 (7) Encourage and assist in the coordination of  
12 agencies within counties giving service to veterans and  
13 their dependents;

14 (8) Cooperate with veterans organizations and other  
15 governmental agencies;

16 (9) Make, alter, amend and promulgate reasonable rules  
17 and procedures for the administration of this Act;

18 (10) Make and publish annual reports to the Governor  
19 regarding the administration and general operation of the  
20 Department;

21 (11) (Blank); and

22 (12) (Blank). ~~Conduct an annual review of the benefits~~  
23 ~~received by Illinois veterans that compares benefits~~  
24 ~~received by Illinois veterans with the benefits received by~~  
25 ~~veterans in all other states and U.S. territories. The~~  
26 ~~required annual review shall include, but not be limited~~

1 ~~to, (1) the average benefit paid to individual veterans~~  
2 ~~from Illinois, in direct comparison to the average benefit~~  
3 ~~paid to individual veterans of each of the other states and~~  
4 ~~U.S. territories; (2) the number of veterans receiving~~  
5 ~~benefits in Illinois for the first time during the year~~  
6 ~~compared to the number of claims filed by Illinois veterans~~  
7 ~~during the year; (3) the aggregate number of Illinois~~  
8 ~~veterans receiving benefits compared to the number of~~  
9 ~~veterans from each of the other states and U.S. territories~~  
10 ~~receiving benefits; and (4) a categorical analysis of the~~  
11 ~~types of injuries and disabilities for which benefits are~~  
12 ~~being paid in Illinois and each of the other states and~~  
13 ~~U.S. territories. The benefits review shall be reported to~~  
14 ~~the Governor, the General Assembly, and the Illinois~~  
15 ~~Congressional delegation upon the completion of the report~~  
16 ~~each year.~~

17 The Department may accept and hold on behalf of the State,  
18 if for the public interest, a grant, gift, devise or bequest of  
19 money or property to the Department made for the general  
20 benefit of Illinois veterans, including the conduct of  
21 informational and training services by the Department and other  
22 authorized purposes of the Department. The Department shall  
23 cause each grant, gift, devise or bequest to be kept as a  
24 distinct fund and shall invest such funds in the manner  
25 provided by the Public Funds Investment Act, as now or  
26 hereafter amended, and shall make such reports as may be

1 required by the Comptroller concerning what funds are so held  
2 and the manner in which such funds are invested. The Department  
3 may make grants from these funds for the general benefit of  
4 Illinois veterans. Grants from these funds, except for the  
5 funds established under Sections 2.01a and 2.03, shall be  
6 subject to appropriation.

7 The Department has the power to make grants, from funds  
8 appropriated from the Korean War Veterans National Museum and  
9 Library Fund, to private organizations for the benefit of the  
10 Korean War Veterans National Museum and Library.

11 The Department has the power to make grants, from funds  
12 appropriated from the Illinois Military Family Relief Fund, for  
13 benefits authorized under the Survivors Compensation Act.

14 (Source: P.A. 97-297, eff. 1-1-12.)

15 (20 ILCS 2805/8)

16 Sec. 8. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Outpatient  
17 Counseling Program. Subject to appropriations for that  
18 purpose, the Department, in consultation with the Department of  
19 Human Services, shall contract with professional counseling  
20 specialists to provide a range of confidential counseling and  
21 direct treatment services to war-affected Southwest Asia  
22 combat veterans and their family members, and to provide  
23 additional treatment services to Viet Nam War veterans for  
24 post-traumatic stress disorder, particularly those Viet Nam  
25 veterans whose post-traumatic stress disorder has intensified

1 or initially emerged due to the war in the Middle East. Any  
2 such contracts entered into by the Department must be with  
3 individuals and entities pre-approved by the U.S. Department of  
4 Veterans Affairs and must be for the provision of services  
5 pre-approved by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. In  
6 consultation with the Department of Human Services, the  
7 Department shall, to the extent funds are available:

8 (1) develop an educational program designed to inform  
9 and train primary health care professionals, including  
10 mental health professionals, about the effects of  
11 war-related stress and trauma;

12 (2) provide informational and counseling services for  
13 the purpose of establishing and fostering peer-support  
14 networks throughout the State for families of deployed  
15 members of the reserves and the Illinois National Guard;  
16 and

17 (3) provide for veterans' families a referral network  
18 of mental health providers who are skilled in treating  
19 deployment stress, combat stress, and post-traumatic  
20 stress.

21 As used in this Section, "Southwest Asia combat veteran"  
22 means an Illinois resident who is, or who was honorably  
23 discharged as, a member of the Armed Forces of the United  
24 States, a member of the Illinois National Guard, or a member of  
25 any reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States  
26 and who served on active duty in connection with Operation

1 Desert Storm, Operation Enduring Freedom, or Operation Iraqi  
2 Freedom.

3 (Source: P.A. 95-576, eff. 8-31-07.)

4 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon  
5 becoming law.