

**Senate File 2282 - Introduced**

SENATE FILE 2282

BY COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS

(SUCCESSOR TO SSB 3079)

**A BILL FOR**

- 1 An Act relating to veterans services and making appropriations.
- 2 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

unofficial

1 Section 1. NEW SECTION. **35.4 Power of attorney.**

2 The provisions of this chapter and chapters 35A, 35B, 35C, and  
3 35D do not limit the ability of a veterans' service organization  
4 recognized pursuant to 38 C.F.R. §14.628(c) to represent a  
5 veteran in the United States department of veterans affairs  
6 benefit claims process or to be granted the power of attorney for  
7 a veteran with the United States department of veterans affairs.  
8 A veteran may grant a veterans' service organization that is  
9 recognized pursuant to 38 C.F.R. §14.628(c) power of attorney for  
10 the purposes of filing claims with the United States department  
11 of veterans affairs.

12 Sec. 2. Section 35A.5, subsection 6, paragraph b,  
13 subparagraph (2), Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

14 (2) All ~~funds~~ moneys received by the department for the  
15 purposes established in subparagraph (1) shall be deposited  
16 in the county ~~commission of veteran affairs training veterans~~  
17 services excellence training program and administration account  
18 established in section 35A.16, subsection 4.

19 Sec. 3. Section 35A.5, subsection 9, Code 2026, is amended to  
20 read as follows:

21 9. Verify each executive director and administrator of a  
22 county commission of veteran affairs ~~is fully qualified to work~~  
23 ~~in the person's position. Qualifications include but are not~~  
24 ~~limited to~~ has all of the following credentials:

25 a. The person has obtained certification that is federally  
26 required for the executive director's or administrator's position  
27 within twelve months of beginning the person's employment.

28 b. The person has obtained a personal identification  
29 verification card necessary to access the veterans benefits  
30 management system within twelve months of beginning the person's  
31 employment.

32 c. The person maintains certification that is federally  
33 required for the executive director's or administrator's  
34 position.

35 d. The person maintains an active personal identification

1 verification card and has access to the veterans benefits  
2 management system.

3 e. ~~The person is proficient in the use of electronic~~  
4 ~~mail, general computer use, and use of the internet to~~  
5 ~~access information regarding facilities, benefits, and services~~  
6 ~~available to veterans and their families in compliance with~~  
7 education and training standards established by the commandant.

8 Sec. 4. Section 35A.5, Code 2026, is amended by adding the  
9 following new subsections:

10 NEW SUBSECTION. 16A. Establish and maintain a statewide  
11 standardized electronic claim system to be used by county  
12 veterans service offices for submission of all United States  
13 department of veterans affairs claims.

14 NEW SUBSECTION. 16B. Communicate county veterans service  
15 office performance metrics to county commissions of veteran  
16 affairs and boards of supervisors through quarterly reports.

17 Sec. 5. Section 35A.13, subsection 5, paragraph e, Code 2026,  
18 is amended to read as follows:

19 e. Notwithstanding paragraphs "a", "b", and "c", moneys  
20 transferred under subsection 6 to the county ~~commission of~~  
21 ~~veteran affairs training veterans services excellence training~~  
22 program and administration account shall be expended as provided  
23 in section 35A.16.

24 Sec. 6. Section 35A.13, subsection 6, Code 2026, is amended  
25 to read as follows:

26 6. For the fiscal year beginning July 1, ~~2024~~ 2026, and  
27 for each subsequent fiscal year, there is transferred to  
28 the county ~~commission of veteran affairs training veterans~~  
29 services excellence training program and administration account  
30 of the county ~~commissions of veteran affairs veterans services~~  
31 excellence fund created in section 35A.16, from the moneys  
32 transferred pursuant to section 99G.39 from the lottery fund to  
33 the veterans trust fund, three hundred thousand dollars.

34 Sec. 7. Section 35A.16, Code 2026, is amended to read as  
35 follows:

1     **35A.16 County ~~commissions of veteran affairs~~ veterans**  
2 **services excellence fund — appropriation.**

3     1. a. A county ~~commissions of veteran affairs~~ veterans  
4 services excellence fund is created within the state treasury  
5 under the control of the department. The fund shall consist of  
6 appropriations made to the fund and any other moneys available  
7 to and obtained or accepted by the department from the federal  
8 government or private sources for deposit in the fund. Moneys  
9 in the fund are appropriated to the department to be used to  
10 incentivize counties to effectively increase veteran outreach  
11 and efficiency in the application for individual federal veteran  
12 compensation.

13     b. There is appropriated from the general fund of the state  
14 to the department, for the fiscal year beginning July 1, ~~2009~~  
15 2026, and for each subsequent fiscal year, the sum of nine  
16 hundred ninety thousand dollars to be credited to the county  
17 ~~commissions of veteran affairs~~ veterans services excellence fund.

18     2. Notwithstanding section 12C.7, interest or earnings on  
19 moneys in the ~~county commissions of veteran affairs~~ fund shall  
20 be credited to the ~~county commissions of veteran affairs~~ fund.  
21 Notwithstanding section 8.33, moneys remaining in the ~~county~~  
22 ~~commissions of veteran affairs~~ fund at the end of a fiscal year  
23 shall not revert to the ~~general fund of the state~~.

24     3. a. If sufficient moneys are available, the department  
25 shall annually ~~allocate ten thousand dollars~~ make allocations  
26 from the fund to each county commission of veteran affairs, or  
27 to each county sharing the services of an executive director  
28 or administrator pursuant to chapter 28E, ~~to~~. For the fiscal  
29 year beginning July 1, 2026, the department shall allocate moneys  
30 equally to each qualifying county. For the fiscal year beginning  
31 July 1, 2027, and each subsequent fiscal year, the department  
32 shall allocate moneys based on performance criteria determined by  
33 the department. The moneys shall be used to provide services to  
34 veterans pursuant to section 35B.6 and provide for and maintain  
35 accreditation in accordance with the policies and procedures

1 of the department and the United States department of veterans  
2 affairs. Each county receiving an allocation shall annually  
3 report on expenditure of the allocation in on a form agreed to  
4 provided by the department and ~~county representatives.~~

5 b. If a county fails to be in compliance with the  
6 requirements of section 35B.6 on June 30 of each fiscal year, all  
7 moneys received by the county pursuant to this subsection during  
8 that fiscal year shall be reimbursed to the ~~county commissions of~~  
9 ~~veteran affairs~~ fund.

10 c. Moneys distributed to a county under this subsection shall  
11 be used to supplement and not supplant any existing funding  
12 provided by the county or received by the county from any other  
13 source. The department shall adopt a maintenance of effort  
14 requirement for moneys distributed under this subsection.

15 4. A county ~~commission of veteran affairs~~ veterans services  
16 excellence training program and administration account ~~shall be~~  
17 is established within the ~~county commissions of veteran affairs~~  
18 fund. Any moneys remaining in the fund after the allocations  
19 under subsection 3 shall be credited to the account and are  
20 appropriated to the department to fund the ~~county commission of~~  
21 ~~veteran affairs training program under section 35A.5, subsection~~  
22 ~~6, and training for department personnel.~~ In addition, from  
23 the moneys transferred to the account from the veterans trust  
24 fund created in section 35A.13, the department shall annually  
25 allocate three thousand dollars to each county commission of  
26 veteran affairs, or to each county sharing the services of an  
27 executive director or administrator pursuant to chapter 28E, to  
28 be used for national training and related expenses of county  
29 ~~veteran service officers and appropriate staff.~~ Moneys in the  
30 account are appropriated to the department to provide training  
31 and support for county commissions of veteran affairs, including  
32 but not limited to a statewide standardized electronic claim  
33 system for county submissions of claims to the United States  
34 department of veterans affairs and education and training for  
35 county veterans service officers.

1 Sec. 8. Section 35B.6, subsection 1, paragraph d, Code 2026,  
2 is amended by adding the following new subparagraph:

3 NEW SUBPARAGRAPH. (4) Utilize the statewide standardized  
4 electronic claim system authorized and provided by the department  
5 of veterans affairs to file all claims for United States  
6 department of veterans affairs benefits.

7 Sec. 9. Section 35B.7, Code 2026, is amended to read as  
8 follows:

9 **35B.7 Meetings — report — budget.**

10 The commission shall meet monthly and at other times as  
11 necessary. At the monthly meeting, the commission shall  
12 determine who are is entitled to county benefits and the probable  
13 amount required to be expended. The commission shall also  
14 review quarterly performance reports generated by the department  
15 of veterans affairs to assess the effectiveness of delivery of  
16 federal benefits. The commission shall meet annually to prepare  
17 an estimated budget for all expenditures to be made in the next  
18 fiscal year and certify the budget to the board of supervisors.  
19 The board may approve or reduce the budget for valid reasons  
20 shown and entered of record and the board's decision is final.

21 Sec. 10. Section 99G.39, subsection 3, Code 2026, is amended  
22 to read as follows:

23 3. Two million five hundred thousand dollars in lottery  
24 revenues shall be transferred each fiscal year to the veterans  
25 trust fund established pursuant to section 35A.13 prior to  
26 deposit of the lottery revenues in the general fund of the state  
27 pursuant to section 99G.40. However, if the balance of the  
28 veterans trust fund is fifty million dollars or more, the moneys  
29 ~~shall be~~ are appropriated to the department of veterans affairs  
30 for distribution, with the first three hundred thousand dollars  
31 transferred to the county veterans services excellence training  
32 program and administration account created in section 35A.16, and  
33 the remainder allocated to county directors of veteran affairs,  
34 with fifty percent of the moneys to be distributed equally to  
35 each county and fifty percent of the moneys to be distributed to

1 each county based upon the population of veterans in the county,  
2 so long as the moneys distributed to a county do not supplant  
3 moneys appropriated by that county for the county director of  
4 veteran affairs.

5 EXPLANATION

6 The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with  
7 the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

8 This bill provides that the provisions of Code chapters 35,  
9 35A, 35B, 35C, and 35D do not limit the ability of a veterans'  
10 service organization to represent a veteran in the United States  
11 department of veterans affairs benefit claims process or to be  
12 granted power of attorney by a veteran for those purposes.

13 The bill replaces the county commissions of veteran affairs  
14 fund and training program account with the county veterans  
15 services excellence fund and training program and administration  
16 account. Moneys in the fund are appropriated to the department  
17 of veterans affairs (IDVA) to be used to incentivize counties  
18 to effectively increase veteran outreach and efficiency in the  
19 application for individual federal veteran compensation.

20 Under current law, IDVA annually allocates \$10,000 from the  
21 fund to each county commission of veteran affairs (CCVA) or to  
22 each county sharing the services of an executive director or  
23 administrator, and each county must report on the expenditure  
24 of its allocation in a form agreed to by IDVA and the county  
25 representatives. The bill strikes the specified allocation  
26 amount. The bill provides that for FY 2026-2027, each county  
27 shall receive an equal amount of moneys from the fund.  
28 For subsequent fiscal years, allocations shall be based on  
29 performance criteria established by IDVA.

30 The bill requires the veterans services excellence training  
31 program and administration account to fund training and support  
32 for CCVAs and strikes provisions that credit remaining moneys in  
33 the fund to the account and that allocate \$3,000 to each CCVA  
34 or each county sharing the services of an executive director or  
35 administrator for training expenses.

1 The bill requires IDVA to verify that each executive director  
2 and administrator of a CCVA be in compliance with education and  
3 training standards established by the commandant and removes the  
4 requirement to verify they are proficient in general computer  
5 use.

6 The bill requires IDVA to create a statewide standardized  
7 electronic claim system through which county veterans service  
8 offices must submit all United States department of veterans  
9 affairs claims and requires IDVA to communicate county veterans  
10 service office performance metrics to CCVAs and boards of  
11 supervisors. A CCVA must review the quarterly performance report  
12 generated by IDVA.

13 Under current law, when the balance of the veterans trust fund  
14 is \$50 million or more, lottery revenues that would otherwise  
15 be deposited in the veterans trust fund is distributed to county  
16 directors of veteran affairs. The bill provides that the first  
17 \$300,000 of these moneys is transferred to the county veterans  
18 services excellence training program and administration account.