

1 **COORDINATION OF SERVICES FOR VETERANS**

2 2013 GENERAL SESSION

3 STATE OF UTAH

4 **Chief Sponsor: Peter C. Knudson**

5 House Sponsor: Paul Ray

7 **LONG TITLE**

8 **General Description:**

9 This bill creates a veterans' services coordinator position and requires certain
10 government entities to provide data to the Utah Department of Veterans' Affairs.

11 **Highlighted Provisions:**

12 This bill:

- 13 ▶ creates a veterans' coordinator position and qualifications;
- 14 ▶ requires government entities to designate a veterans' services specialist within each
15 entity;
- 16 ▶ requires contractors receiving government entity funds to participate;
- 17 ▶ provides for training of agency veterans' services specialists; and
- 18 ▶ requires an annual report to the Government Operations Interim Committee.

19 **Money Appropriated in this Bill:**

20 None

21 **Other Special Clauses:**

22 None

23 **Utah Code Sections Affected:**

24 AMENDS:

25 **71-8-1**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2007, Chapters 173 and 329

26 **71-8-3**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2007, Chapter 173

27 ENACTS:

28 **71-8-5**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

29 **71-8-6**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

30 71-8-7, Utah Code Annotated 1953

31 71-8-8, Utah Code Annotated 1953



33 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*

34 Section 1. Section 71-8-1 is amended to read:

35 **71-8-1. Definitions.**

36 As used in this chapter:

37 (1) "Contractor" means a person who is or may be awarded a government entity
38 contract.

39 [~~1~~] (2) "Council" means the Veterans' Advisory Council.

40 [~~2~~] (3) "Department" means the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

41 [~~3~~] (4) "Executive director" means the executive director of the Department of
42 Veterans' Affairs.

43 [~~4~~] (5) "Government entity" means the state and any county, municipality, local
44 district, special service district, and any other political subdivision or administrative unit of the
45 state, including state institutions of education.

46 (6) "Specialist" means a full-time employee of a government entity who is tasked with
47 responding to, and assisting, veterans who are employed by the entity or come to the entity for
48 assistance.

49 [~~5~~] (7) "Veteran" means:

50 (a) an individual who has served on active duty in the armed forces for at least 180
51 consecutive days or was a member of a reserve component, and who has been separated or
52 retired under honorable conditions; or

53 (b) any individual incurring an actual service-related injury or disability in the line of
54 duty whether or not that person completed 180 days of active duty.

55 Section 2. Section 71-8-3 is amended to read:

56 **71-8-3. Duties of executive director -- Services to veterans.**

57 The executive director shall:

58 (1) be responsible for the administration and the operation or support of the following
59 veteran-related operations:

- 60 (a) Utah State Veterans' Nursing Homes and Programs;
- 61 (b) Utah State Veterans' Cemetery and Memorial Park;
- 62 (c) Title 71, Chapter 10, Veteran's Preference;
- 63 (d) any locally or federally funded programs for homeless veterans within the state; and
- 64 (e) any federally funded education services for veterans within the state;

65 (2) maintain liaison with local, state, and federal veterans' agencies and with Utah
66 veterans' organizations;

67 (3) provide current information so that veterans, their surviving spouses and family
68 members, and Utah veterans' organizations will be aware of benefits to which they are, or may
69 become, entitled;

70 (4) reach out and assist veterans and their families in applying for benefits and
71 services;

72 (5) develop and maintain a system for determining how many veterans are employed
73 by the various government entities within the state and keeping track of them; ~~and~~

74 (6) cooperate with other state entities in the receipt of information to create and
75 maintain a record of veterans in Utah[-]; and

76 (7) prepare an annual report for presentation not later than November 30 of each year
77 to the Government Operations Interim Committee on:

- 78 (a) all services provided to veterans; and
- 79 (b) the coordination of veterans' services by government entities with the department.

80 Section 3. Section **71-8-5** is enacted to read:

81 **71-8-5. Veterans' services coordinator qualifications -- Duties.**

82 (1) The veterans' services coordinator shall:

- 83 (a) be a veteran;
- 84 (b) have the education and experience in the use of computer technology, including
85 databases, to collect, manage, and store information; and

- 86 (c) have some education and experience in public relations.
- 87 (2) The veterans' services coordinator shall be responsible to:
- 88 (a) identify all government entities that provide services for veterans;
- 89 (b) develop a process for coordination of veterans' services across all government
- 90 entities; and
- 91 (c) develop and provide training for veterans' affairs specialists on the coordination of
- 92 veterans' services with the department.

93 Section 4. Section **71-8-6** is enacted to read:

94 **71-8-6. Government entity participation.**

- 95 (1) This section applies to:
- 96 (a) the Department of Human Services;
- 97 (b) the institutions of higher education listed in 53B-1-102;
- 98 (c) the Division of Professional and Occupational Licensing;
- 99 (d) the Department of Public Safety;
- 100 (e) the Department of Workforce Services; and
- 101 (f) the Department of Health.
- 102 (2) Each entity in Subsection (1) shall:
- 103 (a) assign a full-time employee, who preferably shall be a veteran, as a veterans'
- 104 services specialist as part of their duties to coordinate the provision of veterans' services with
- 105 the department; and
- 106 (b) provide the department with nonprotected or nonprivate information about services
- 107 provided to veterans.
- 108 (3) Each entity shall post on the entity's website:
- 109 (a) all services available for veterans from the entity and the contact information for the
- 110 veterans' services specialist; and
- 111 (b) a link to the department with the contact information for the veterans' services
- 112 coordinator.

113 Section 5. Section **71-8-7** is enacted to read:

114 **71-8-7. Government entity veterans' affairs specialist -- Duties -- Training.**

115 (1) Each government entity listed in Section 71-8-6 shall appoint or designate a
116 full-time employee as a veterans' affairs specialist.

117 (2) The veterans' affairs specialist shall:

118 (a) coordinate the provision of veterans' services by the government entity with the
119 department; and

120 (b) attend annual training by the department on coordination processes including
121 providing nonprotected or nonprivate information to the department.

122 Section 6. Section **71-8-8** is enacted to read:

123 **71-8-8. Entity that provides no services -- Referral to department.**

124 A government entity that does not provide services to veterans shall, upon a request for
125 services by a veteran, direct the veteran to contact the department, and provide the veteran with
126 the department contact information.