STATE OF NEW YORK

7173

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

May 12, 2023

Introduced by M. of A. JEAN-PIERRE -- read once and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

AN ACT to amend the veterans' services law, in relation to requiring all state agencies to appoint veterans' liaisons

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. The veterans' services law is amended by adding a new section 29-b to read as follows:

§ 29-b. Veterans' liaisons. 1. As used in this section the term "state agency" shall mean any department, board, bureau, division, commission, council or committee within the executive branch.

2. Each state agency shall designate at least one employee to act as a liaison with veterans within such agency or served by such agency. Such liaison shall be funded from existing appropriations in each agency. Upon designating a veterans' liaison, which shall be done within ninety days, all state agencies shall inform the department in a form and manner to be prescribed by the department. An employee designated to act as a veterans' liaison must first complete an initial training provided by appropriate staff designated by the department before assuming the duties of a veterans' liaison. Thereafter all veterans' liaisons shall annually receive supplemental trainings provided by the department. A state agency may also, in consultation with the department, prescribe such additional trainings for its veterans' liaisons as it deems necessary and relevant to assisting veterans employed or served by the agency.

3. Each state agency shall conspicuously post the name and contact information of its current veterans' liaisons on its website and a listing of all state agency veterans' liaisons shall be maintained by the department and updated at least annually on its website.

4. The duties of a veterans' liaison may include but not be limited to: (a) providing information and assistance to veterans regarding bene-

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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fits and services available to veterans at the liaison's agency or other state agencies including the department; (b) ensuring active communication, coordination and cooperation are maintained with members of the public as well as other state and local agencies regarding the agency's efforts to assist veterans; (c) advising agency staff as to how to identify and address the unique needs of veterans within or served by the agency; (d) informing veterans within the agency as to applicable employee personnel policies; (e) promoting the recruitment, retention, and professional development of veteran employees within the agency; and (f) making efforts to identify veterans as defined in section one of this article within or served by the agency on an annual basis.

5. Information received pursuant to this section will be provided to the department. Information collected pursuant to this section shall be protected under article six-A of the public officers law against disclosure of confidential material and used only to determine the number of veterans who are employed by or seeking services from the state of New York.

6. The department shall develop guidelines and a best practices document for veterans' liaisons in consultation with state agencies and with input solicited from the veterans' liaisons designated by such agencies. Further, the department shall include engagement with veterans' liaisons as part of its efforts to develop collaborative relationships with state agencies pursuant to subdivision thirty-seven of section four of this article.

7. The annual report required by subdivision seventeen of section four of this article shall contain a description of the department's activities and collaborations with veterans' liaisons and any recommendations of the department with respect to the veterans' liaisons program established under this section.

§ 2. Subdivision 37 of section 4 of the veterans' services law is amended to read as follows:

37. To develop collaborative relationships among state, federal, and local agencies, veterans' liaisons pursuant to section twenty nine-b of this article, and private organizations, including but not limited to the office of mental health, state office for the aging, and office of addiction services and supports, to help facilitate access to services by members of the uniformed services and veterans who are residents of the state and their families.

§ 3. This act shall take effect on the ninetieth day after it shall have become a law.