

# County Veterans Service Offices

## Update to 2008 Evaluation Report

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### Problems Identified

- **Vague State Laws.** Although state laws give the Department of Veterans Affairs general supervisory authority over county veterans service offices, they do not define what that entails. In addition, laws give the department few tools to help it exercise its authority.
- **No Statewide Performance Data.** The department has not identified, nor does it routinely collect, performance information from service offices on their activities or outcomes. As a result, little is known about the quality of services to veterans statewide.

### Changes Implemented

- **Working Group Established.** The 2008 Legislature created a working group to review OLA's report and comment on whether and how each recommendation should be implemented. In its January report, the working group rejected 2 of OLA's 11 recommendations and said that it needed more time to study 4 others. The department had already acted on the remaining recommendations.
- **Training Requirements Revised.** The Department of Veterans Affairs revised its training policy to allow county veterans service officers to attend one of two annual conferences for certification, and it clarified the approval process for general training.
- **Require Performance Data for Grants.** The department developed some best practices for enhancement grants and is helping grantees collect more performance information.

### Action Needed

- **Clarify Statutes.** After consulting with interested parties, the Department of Veterans Affairs should recommend to the Legislature statutory language to clarify the department's oversight responsibilities.
- **Require State Certification.** The Legislature should require that service officers be certified by the Department of Veterans Affairs as a condition of employment.
- **Improve Hiring Process.** The Legislature should require that county boards consult with the department when hiring or reappointing their service officers, although counties would retain final appointment authority.
- **Develop Key Performance Measures.** After obtaining input from interested parties, the department should identify key performance measures and then collect these data from service offices. The department should include these data in its annual report to the Legislature and report statewide and county-specific performance data to county boards.