



Jim Doyle, Governor
John A. Scocos, Secretary

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State Budget Brings Host of New, Changed Benefits for Wisconsin Veterans

(MADISON) – The budget bill signed into law by Governor Jim Doyle as 2005 Wisconsin Act 25 provides significant new benefits to state veterans programs and services.

“The budget measures included by the Legislature and signed into law by the Governor include advances for veterans, surviving spouses and dependents of those who die in the line of duty, and the spouses and children of veterans left disabled by their military service that are among the most significant in the 60-year history of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs,” said Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary John A. Scocos.

Among the budget measures for state veterans:

- Effective for the Fall semester, the “Wisconsin G.I. Bill” will provide 50% tuition waivers for veterans who were Wisconsin residents when they entered active military duty, and free tuition for spouses and dependents of veterans who die or are disabled as a result of their military service.
- Effective with next year’s tax forms, Wisconsin will provide a new property tax credit to elderly, totally disabled eligible veterans and their eligible unremarried surviving spouses equal to 100% of the property tax paid on their home.
- The Veterans Educational Grant and Assistance to Needy Veterans programs were created by consolidating and modifying existing grant programs.
- State taxpayers will see a new way to support Wisconsin’s veterans and military families with a designated donation line on next year’s individual and corporate state income tax forms.
- A Gold Star license plate will be available for immediate family members of service members who die in combat while serving in the U.S. Armed Forces. Another new plate to show support for Wisconsin’s veterans will also be created. Fees from the new plate and the current veterans’ plates will be donated to the Veterans Trust Fund.
- Staffing for the new 120-bed skilled nursing facility at the Wisconsin Veterans Home at Union Grove.
- New funding for the “Mission: Welcome Home” outreach initiative, a housing voucher demonstration project for chronically homeless veterans, and matching funds for a homeless veterans transitional program in Chippewa Falls.

“We greatly appreciate the Governor and the Legislature for passing and enacting these measures,” said Scocos.

Additional information about the budget items for veterans can be found on the WDVA website, at www.dva.state.wi.us.