

Pass HF 1000 : Veteran Service Organization (VSO) Matching Grant Program

Talking Points for Legislator Meetings

- Introduce yourself and which veteran organization you are representing, then move into the below talking points.
- Iowa's veterans are asking for your help to support the veteran service organizations (VSOs) in our state.
- HF 1000 would establish a Veterans Service Organization (VSO) Matching Grant Program to expand the number of employees directly working claims for veterans to receive their VA benefits. The appropriation we are requesting is \$250,000 per year.
 - (For example, if salary and benefits to add an employee costs \$80,000, the organization would be responsible for \$40,000 and the grant would provide \$40,000. The grant would not be for existing employees, but only for adding additional employees.)
- VSOs are facing many challenges and need help to be able to support our state's veterans with the VA claims process. VSO revenue is declining due to reduced membership and increased competition for donations. Yet, the number of VA claims, and the complexity of those claims, processed by VSOs is increasing exponentially as our military members are thankfully surviving injuries that were not survivable in earlier war eras.
- Describe your own experience and challenges navigating the VA claims process and how VSOs are integral to supporting veterans receiving the benefits they have earned.
- VSOs are the entities trusted by Iowa's veterans to support them in the VA claims and appeals process. They have the infrastructure and relationships with our veterans but need financial support to meet demand and get veterans the benefits they have earned.
- VSOs currently receive no federal or state funding to provide these claims services to all veterans, not just their members.
- Pass HF 1000 to provide the VSOs with the resources needed to support Iowa's veterans. This could be the most impactful program the state of Iowa has ever enacted to support veterans receiving their earned benefits.
- Ask the legislator to commit to supporting HF 1000 during the 2026 Legislative Session and report commitments back to your VSO leadership.