

From: Gragg, Ken <Ken.Gragg@vermont.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 5, 2022 12:13 PM
Subject: RE: Tuition assistance?

The amount to be disbursed to VSAC to support the VTNGTBP is reduced from \$1,119,834 to \$934,290. This reduction in payment to VSAC is based on the ending balance VSAC was carrying as of June 30, 2021. The difference is \$185,544. This is in addition to the \$200K that was identified for reversion during the 2021 legislative session, so the program could maintain the original base budget amount of \$1,319,834 going forward. This was to address the fact, the VT National had approximately 1000 soldiers and airmen deployed during the course of the spring and fall semesters of 2021 and the spring semester of 2022.

Of the \$185,544 available from the VTNGTBP proposed reduction, the administration has allowed the Military Department to fill two critical vacant positions that were not previously funded. First, the Executive Director position which will serve as the Executive Officer to the Adjutant General starting in March/April 2021. The Executive Officer position is currently filled by a full-time military member who is retiring in the March timeframe. The Vermont National Guard will not be able to backfill the position, based on losing 32 full-time positions this year. The second position is a Veterans Service Officer (VSO). The Office of Veterans Affairs is experiencing a growing backlog in managing veterans claims with the Department of Veterans Affairs. We are recruiting the position to start in the April timeframe. The VSO's provide a critical service to veterans in Vermont by acting as the liaison between the veteran and the Department of Veteran Affairs. This service not only benefit the veteran, but also benefits the State of Vermont by providing needed services and benefits paid by the federal government. Which, in-turn relieves Vermont of the financial burden to provide services. In FY2020, each VSO assisted veterans receive approximately \$2.56 million in new benefits. That's approximately \$31 of new benefits for every dollar of salary to pay the VSO's. Not to mention the improved quality of life for the veteran.

Ken

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