Prepared by the North Dakota Legislative Council
staff for the Public Safety Committee
November 2007

DELIVERY OF VETERANS' SERVICES - OTHER STATES' EFFORTS AND COUNTY VETERANS' SERVICE OFFICER CERTIFICATION

This memorandum provides information regarding the delivery of veterans' services in Minnesota, Montana, and South Dakota and information regarding National Association of County Veterans Service Officers, Inc., (NACVSO) certification.

DELIVERY OF VETERANS' SERVICES - OTHER STATES' EFFORTS

The following is a summary of questions and responses regarding the delivery of veterans' services in North Dakota, Minnesota, Montana, and South Dakota.

	North Dakota	Minnesota	Montana	South Dakota
Does your state have veterans' service officers?	Yes. The county commissioners of each county in the state may appoint, employ, and pay, on a full-time or part-time basis, a **county veterans' service officer**. American Indian tribes may also appoint a tribal veterans' service officer.	Yes. Each county is to appoint a **county veterans' service officer**. Counties may also appoint one or more assistant veterans' service officers.	Yes. The Montana Veterans' Affairs Division employs **state veterans' service officers**.	Yes. The county commissioners of each county in the state are to employ a **county veterans' service officer**, and American Indian tribes may appoint a tribal veterans' service officer to serve under the same terms and conditions as a county veterans' service officer. The South Dakota Division of Veterans Affairs also employs **state veterans' service officers** to assist and train the county and tribal veterans' service officers.
How many veterans' service officers?	North Dakota has **53** veterans' service officers, including 50 county veterans' service officers and 3 tribal veterans' service officers.	Minnesota has **112** veterans' service officers, including 87 county veterans' service officers and **25** assistant county veterans' service officers.	Montana has **19** veterans' service officers.	South Dakota has **79** veterans' service officers, including 5 state veterans' service officers, 67 county veterans' service officers, and 7 tribal veterans' service officers.
Are the veterans' service officers county or state employees?	The county and tribal veterans' service officers are county and tribal employees, respectively.	The veterans' service officers are county employees.	The veterans' service officers are state employees.	The county and tribal veterans' service officers are county and tribal employees, respectively, and the state veterans' service officers are state employees.
Do the veterans' service officers cover regions or a single county?	In general, the county and tribal veterans' service officers serve a single county or tribal area. At the present time, three county veterans' service officers serve two counties--Morton and Oliver; Stark and Dunn; and Steele and Griggs.	The veterans' service officers serve a single county; however, Minnesota Statute 197.602 allows for two or more counties to execute a written agreement whereby the counties may jointly employ a veterans' service officer.	Each veterans' service officer serves from three to eight counties.	The county and tribal veterans' service officers serve a single county or tribal area, and the state veterans' service officers are assigned regions.

	North Dakota	Minnesota	Montana	South Dakota
Who is responsible for training the veterans' service officers?	The North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs provides two training sessions each year for county and tribal veterans' service officers.	The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs provides training to county veterans' service officers and assistant county veterans' service officers.	The veterans' service officers receive training through the American Legion, Fort Harrison Veteran Administration Center, and the National Veterans Legal Services Program.	The state veterans' service officers are responsible for training the county and tribal veterans' service officers.
Are the veterans' service officers certified by the NACVSO?	At the present time, 13 county veterans' service officers are certified by the NACVSO.	At the present time, 11 county veterans' service officers and assistant county veterans' service officers are certified by the NACVSO. Seven additional officers are pending certification by the NACVSO. The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs also has a certification program for county veterans' service officers. Under the program, the lead county veterans' service officer must be certified by the department on an annual basis.	No.	Approximately 12 of the 67 county veterans' service officers are certified by the NACVSO. The five state veterans' service officers are accredited by various other entities, such as the AMVETS and the Disabled American Veterans.
How are the veterans' service officers funded?	The county and tribal veterans' service officers are funded by county and tribal governments, respectively. Pursuant to North Dakota Century Code Sections 57-15-06.4 and 57-15-06.7(18), a county may annually levy a tax to provide for the payment of the salary, traveling, and office expenses of the county veterans' service officers. The county mill levy rate may not exceed two mills.	The county veterans' service officers and assistant county veterans' service officers are funded by county governments.	The veterans' service officers are funded from the state's general fund and special funds generated from license plate sales.	The county and tribal veterans' service officers are funded by county and tribal governments, respectively. The state veterans' service officers are funded from the state's general fund.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS CERTIFICATION

County veterans' service officers may receive United States Department of Veterans Affairs accreditation with NACVSO certification. To complete the accreditation and certification process, a county veterans' service officer must:

1. Attend an accreditation training course. The NACVSO offers accreditation training at the association's annual training conference and at regional training sessions.
2. Receive a score of at least 70 on an accreditation examination.
3. Submit appropriate documents to the NACVSO National Service Director, including a copy of the officer's DD-214, VA Form 21, and a copy of the NACVSO training certificate.

In order for a county veterans' service officer to maintain the United States Department of Veterans Affairs accreditation with NACVSO certification, the officer must continue to be a member of the NACVSO and complete 16 hours of continuing education units each year.