



For Immediate Release
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Ohio Veterans Bonus Ends This Year for One Group of Veterans

COLUMBUS – As Ohio pauses this Memorial Day weekend to pay tribute to military service members of all wars who made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom, it's natural to also pay tribute to living veterans and those who serve today in our Armed Forces.

Ohio has a unique way of thanking these recent veterans and those who serve. It's the Ohio Veterans Bonus, for service given during the times of the Persian Gulf War and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

But the Ohio Veterans Bonus won't be around forever – the deadline for Persian Gulf War era veterans to apply is December 31, 2013.

Veterans of the Iraq War era have until December 31, 2014 to apply. No deadline has been announced for veterans of the Afghanistan War era.

"I can't say it strongly enough to Gulf War era veterans, get busy and apply for the Bonus before it runs out – the end of December is only seven months away," Ohio Department of Veterans Services Director Tom Moe said. "Overall, we're very pleased with the response of our veterans and active duty military to the Bonus, but we're going to keep on spreading the word."

"In particular, I want to ask all of our Ohio veterans to reach out to the Gulf War and Iraq and Afghanistan vets, and make sure they're applying for this," Moe continued. "Oftentimes, a veteran might hear about something, but they won't take action on it unless the information comes from another veteran."

The Ohio Veterans Bonus is open to veterans of the Persian Gulf War era as well as the eras of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, regardless of where they served. However, the amount available is higher to those who served directly in the war zones. It is also open to the next of kin of those who were killed in action or died of disease as a result of in-theater service. The Bonus is not subject to federal or state taxes, and can be used for any purpose. To date, over \$55.4 million has been paid to nearly 66,000 veterans and families.

Specific criteria for award of the Ohio Veterans Bonus is service in the Armed Forces of more than 90 days active duty, not for training, during the periods of the Persian Gulf

War and the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. For the Persian Gulf, the eligible period is from August 2, 1990 through March 3, 1991; for Afghanistan, from October 7, 2001 through a date to be determined by the President, and for Iraq, from March 19, 2003 through December 31, 2011. Eligible veterans must have been Ohio residents at the time of their entry into the service, and must be Ohio residents currently.

The bonus pays \$100 a month to veterans who served in the Persian Gulf theater, or in the countries of Afghanistan or Iraq, up to a maximum of \$1,000. For veterans who served elsewhere, the payment is \$50 a month up to a \$500 maximum. Veterans medically discharged due to injuries sustained in combat can receive \$1,000, plus up to \$500 for months of service elsewhere. Family members of those killed in action or who died from disease as a result of their in-theater service can receive a bonus of \$5,000 plus whatever the service member was eligible for, up to a total of \$6,500.

Veterans needing more information or who want to apply can call toll-free to 1-877-OHIO VET (1-877-644-6838) option 2, visit www.veteransbonus.ohio.gov, or visit any county veterans service office (see www.dvs.ohio.gov for an interactive map of the county offices). The department also provides information about the Bonus through its social media and at veterans' events, and has advertised the program in print and broadcast media.

Ohio voters approved the Ohio Veterans Bonus by an overwhelming margin in November 2009. The law implementing the Bonus set a deadline for Persian Gulf War veterans to apply of December 31, 2013. The same law set the deadline for Iraq War veterans as the third year following a date determined by the President as the end of the conflict. Tentatively, this date is the termination date of the Iraq Campaign Medal, which was December 31, 2011, making the deadline for Bonus application for service in Iraq December 31, 2014. The clock will not start on a deadline for Afghanistan War era veterans until the President determines a date for the war's end.

The Ohio Veterans Bonus continues a tradition of bonuses to reward Ohio veterans that dates back to the Civil War; however, these other war bonuses are now closed.

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