



For General Release
July 1, 2013

Happy New Year to our Ohio Veterans Community!

COLUMBUS - Fiscal New Year, that is, because July 1 marks the start of state government's fiscal year 2014 and the first day of a new biennial state budget that will take the Ohio Department of Veterans Services through June 2015. It's a time for all of us here – working with you, our fellow veterans, friends and stakeholders – to make a fresh start, with new energy and enthusiasm for the goals we've set for the years ahead.

Governor Kasich recently signed the new state budget into law, and it builds on the job-creating policies in the budget he signed just two years ago when Ohio and the nation were just beginning to climb out of the toughest economic downturn since the Great Depression. For example, this budget features:

- A \$2.7 billion net tax cut to make Ohio more competitive with other states – and the world – for jobs and economic growth, including a 10-percent personal income tax reduction over three years and a 50 percent small-business tax deduction on the first \$250,000 of business income.
- A new Achievement Everywhere Plan for Ohio's local schools that delivers \$1.5 billion in additional funds to help create a world-class education system and encourages schools to pursue innovative new education strategies to improve student success.
- A new funding plan for Ohio's public colleges and universities that rewards improved graduation rates in order to make Ohio a more desirable place for job creators to expand or relocate and to strengthen our economy.
- An additional \$3 billion in federal, state and local funds to meet Ohio's pressing transportation infrastructure needs – a crucial factor for a growing economy.

As for the Ohio Department of Veterans Services, we also have a number of highlights to talk about in the new state budget:

- Veterans service organizations can now make up to \$36,000 a year from rental income before being subject to property taxes. The previous cap was \$10,000 a year, and included rental income as well as income from other sources.
- Veterans service organizations are now required to prepare an annual report on their veteran- and community-support activities to the Director of the Ohio Department of Veterans Services, who must certify the report in order for the organizations to receive state funding. This process increases transparency of taxpayer dollars while providing the veterans service organizations the opportunity to showcase the good work they are doing in their communities.
- The Ohio Veterans Homes in Sandusky and Georgetown can continue to provide quality care for our most vulnerable veterans without reducing services, and at no additional cost in taxpayer dollars.
- The retired pay of employees of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Public Health Service Commissioned Corps is now exempted from Ohio taxes. This is in concert with prior federal legislation that provides these agencies the same legal standing as the five Armed Forces.

As we celebrate the start of the state's new fiscal year, we look forward to working with you and all Ohioans we serve. We're optimistic about the future of our department and our outstanding programs as we work together to actively identify, connect with and advocate for veterans and their families.

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