



Gaston County

Gaston County
Board of Commissioners
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Financial and Management Services - Grants

Board Action

File # 26-038

Commissioner Shehan - Financial and Management Services - Grants (Veterans Services) - To Accept and Appropriate Grant Funds from the North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs for the Grant Program for County Veterans Offices - Round 2 for FY2026 (\$20,000)

STAFF CONTACT

Tammy Smith - Financial & Management Services - Grants - 704-862-6604.

BUDGET IMPACT

General Fund.

Increase state grant revenues by \$20,000

Increase expenses by \$20,000

No match or County funds.

BACKGROUND

The Gaston County Veterans Services Office (VSO) has been awarded a second round of the North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs grant in the amount of \$20,000 to enhance staff capacity, increase public awareness of available veterans' benefits and services, and improve privacy and accessibility for veterans seeking assistance. The project supports the County's ongoing mission to connect veterans and their families with earned benefits, resources, and support through a professional, confidential, and service-driven environment.

POLICY IMPACT

N/A

ATTACHMENTS

Budget Change Request (BCR), Grant Contract

DO NOT TYPE BELOW THIS LINE

I, Donna S. Buff, Clerk to the County Commission, do hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of action taken by the Board of Commissioners as follows.

NO.	DATE	M1	M2	JBailey	CBrown	CCloninger	AFraley	BHovis	TKeidher	SShehan	Vote
2026-069	02/26/2026	JB	CC	A	A	A	AB	A	A	AB	U

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North Carolina
DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY
AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

APPLICATION-CONTRACT GRANT PROGRAM FOR COUNTY VETERANS OFFICES

BACKGROUND.

Session Law 2023-134, Section 33 13(a) directed the North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (NCDMVA) to establish a grant program for existing county veterans offices (CVOs) to provide services to veterans. A grant may be awarded up to \$20,000. To be eligible for the grant program, the CVO must be located in a county where there are eight (8) or less certified veteran service officers (VSOs). The VSO may be an employee of or volunteer with the federal government, State of North Carolina, county, or an entity in the county, including a nonprofit organization. NCDMVA will verify the presence of eight (8) or less certified VSOs in the county through the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) prior to awarding a grant.

Instructions.

The County Veterans Office (the "RECIPIENT") will complete the **PART I – RECIPIENT SECTION** of this document, including Attachments. The RECIPIENT will have an authorized official complete the **PART IV – EXECUTION SECTION** of this document.

The RECIPIENT shall complete and submit the following documents:

- Attachment A - Scope of Work and Budget
- Attachment B - W-9 Form
- Attachment C - Electronic Payment/Vendor Verification Form
- Attachment D - Conflict of Interest Policy (sample)
- Attachment E - Sworn (notarized) Certification of No Overdue Tax Debts
- Attachment F - State Grant Compliance Reporting
- Attachment G - Grant Certification
- Attachment H - Closeout Reporting Document

Upon receipt and approval of this completed document and attachments, NCDMVA will complete the **PART II – DMVA SECTION** of this document and have an authorized individual complete the **PART IV – EXECUTION SECTION** of this document.

Upon the execution page being signed in the **PART IV – EXECUTION SECTION** by both the RECIPIENT and NCDMVA (referred to collectively as the "PARTIES"), this document and all required attachments are incorporated herein and together constitute the contract agreement (Agreement) between the PARTIES.

PART I – RECIPIENT SECTION:

Section 1. RECIPIENT Organization Information

County Name. Gaston County
County Address 128 W. Main Avenue, Gastonia, NC 28052
Recipient Contact: Pat Laws
Contact Phone (704) 866-3771
Contact Email Pat.Laws@gastongov.com

Grant Amount Request: \$20,000 (Up to \$20,000 Final amount subject to allocation and appropriation of funds to NCDMVA)

Section 2. Award Amount

The award amount will not exceed \$20,000 per Session Law 2023-134, Section 33 13(a) The actual amount of the award is dependent on the number of eligible recipients as described in Part I, Section 4 of this document, and subject to the allocation and appropriation of funds to NCDMVA. The RECIPIENT's award amount can be found in Part II – Section 2 of this document, which will be finalized after the RECIPIENT completes all requirements within Part I – RECIPIENT SECTION (including Attachments A - E) and signs the execution page. (Attachments F-H will be completed post award as described below)

Section 3 Use of funds

As required by Session Law 2023-134, Section 33 13(a), CVO grant awards are for the purpose of providing services to veterans. A CVO may receive a grant award up to \$20,000 for this purpose. The RECIPIENT will use Attachment A. Scope of Work and Budget, to provide a scope of work regarding how grant funds will be utilized to serve veterans and a budget with a detailed description of proposed grant expenditures.

The RECIPIENT agrees to expend funds in accordance with the scope of work and budget cost items set forth in the RECIPIENT's approved budget. Upon written notification to NCDMVA, the RECIPIENT may reallocate or redistribute funds among budgeted line items in an amount not to exceed ten percent (10%) of the total approved budget without requiring NCDMVA's prior written approval.

Any reallocation or redistribution of funds exceeding ten percent (10%) of the total approved budget shall require the prior written approval of NCDMVA, documented as a written amendment to the contract agreement (Agreement) as described in Part III, Section 3 of this document.

Section 4 Eligibility Requirements

The RECIPIENT confirms it meets the requirement as defined in Session Law 2023-134, Section 33 13(a) which dictates:

The CVO must be located in a county in which there are eight or less certified veteran service officers (VSOs) The VSO may be an employee of or volunteer with the federal government, State of North Carolina, county, or an entity in the county, including a nonprofit organization. DMVA shall verify the presence of eight or less certified VSOs in the county through the United States Department of Veterans Affairs prior to awarding a grant.

Section 5 Reporting Requirements

The RECIPIENT agrees and shall submit compliance reports and certify that all grant funds received or held are being used for the purposes for which the grant was awarded, and providing an accounting of all funds received. Such reporting shall be required at a minimum of once every six (6) months following the date on which funds are received and shall continue until all funds have been expended and accounted for to the satisfaction of NCDMVA. See Attachment F - Compliance Reporting and Attachment G- Grant Certification for fashion of reporting.

Upon project completion (i.e., once RECIPIENT has expended all grant funds) or No later than **August 3, 2026**, whichever is sooner, the RECIPIENT shall submit, as prescribed by NCDMVA, the following information to SVC_DMVA_FSD.grants@milvets.nc.gov

- (1) The unduplicated number of veterans served by the CVO
- (2) The number of times each individual veteran was served by the CVO
- (3) The services that were provided to veterans using the grant funds awarded to the CVO

See Attachment H. Closeout Reporting Document for form and fashion of reporting the information above.

PART II – NCDMVA SECTION:

Section 1. Eligibility Determination

It is the responsibility of NCDMVA to verify through the United States Department of Veterans Affairs that the RECIPIENT has eight (8) or less certified veteran service officers (VSOs) The VSO may be an employee of or volunteer with the federal government, State of North Carolina, county, or an entity in the county, including a nonprofit organization

Section 2. Award Amount

The RECIPIENT will hereby be awarded the amount of \$20,000 00 NCDMVA will disburse the full amount of the grant award to the RECIPIENT within 30 days of NCDMVA's receipt and approval of the RECIPIENT's required documentation, including attachments, in form and substance satisfactory to NCDMVA.

Section 3. Contract Information

Once executed, this document will serve as the Agreement between the PARTIES. The Agreement number is 2026-0024

Section 4. Period of Performance

The period of performance shall begin on the date this Agreement is fully executed by all parties (Contract Execution Date) and shall continue through **June 30, 2026**.

PART III – OTHER CONTRACTUAL REQUIREMENTS:

Section 1. Compliance with Laws

All state grants are subject to corresponding statutes and rules, most notably the cost principles enunciated in the Code of Federal Regulations, 2 CFR, Part 200, N C. Gen. Stat. 143C-6-23, and 09 N C. Admin Code 03M. The RECIPIENT shall be responsible for compliance with all laws, ordinances, codes, rules, regulations, licensing requirements and other regulatory matters that are applicable to the conduct of its business and work performance under this Agreement, including those of Federal, State, and local agencies having appropriate jurisdiction Disbursement of funds is contingent upon RECIPIENT's compliance with the terms of this Agreement and any applicable federal or state requirements.

Section 2: Monitoring and Auditing

The RECIPIENT acknowledges and agrees that, from and after the date of execution of this Agreement and for five (5) years following its termination, the books, records, documents and facilities of the RECIPIENT are subject to being audited, inspected and monitored at any time by NCDMVA upon its request (whether in writing or otherwise) The RECIPIENT further agrees to provide NCDMVA staff and staff of the Office of State Auditor with access to financial and accounting records to support internal audit, financial reporting and related requirements.

GASTON COUNTY

Section 3: Amendments

This Agreement may be amended in writing which documents approval of changes by both the NCDMVA and the RECIPIENT. NCDMVA, in its sole discretion, may approve amendment requests to this Agreement.

A RECIPIENT may submit one (1) written amendment request to NCDMVA for an extension of the period of performance established under this Agreement. Any such extension requests must be made prior to the expiration of the current performance period and shall include justification or explanation for the requested extension. If approved, no extension shall extend the period of performance beyond July 31, 2026.

Section 4: Sub-Recipients

If the RECIPIENT grants to any sub-recipient, any of the grant funds awarded to the RECIPIENT under this Agreement, the RECIPIENT or sub-recipient is not relieved of any duties and responsibilities of this Agreement. Additionally, the sub-recipient agrees to abide by the standards contained in this contract and to provide information in its possession to all the RECIPIENT to comply with these standards.

Section 5: SITUS

This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of North Carolina and any claim for breach or enforcement of this Agreement shall be filed in State court in Wake County, North Carolina.

Section 6: Termination of Agreement

This agreement may be terminated by mutual consent upon sixty (60) days written notice to the other party, or as otherwise provided by law. As soon as possible following termination of this agreement, any residual, unexpended grant funds remaining at the end of the termination or the period of performance shall be returned to NCDMVA.

PART IV – EXECUTION:

The undersigned represent and warrant that they are authorized to bind their principals to the terms and conditions of this Agreement. In Witness Whereof, the RECIPIENT and NCDMVA have executed this Agreement electronically, with each party retaining an electronic version. This Agreement shall be effective as of the date of the last party's signature.

RECIPIENT NAME Gaston County Veterans Services

V. Wong
AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE

Vincent Wong/Deputy County Manager
PRINTED NAME AND TITLE

10/20/2025
DATE

NC Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

J. Sider
AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE

Jessica Sider Wheeler
PRINTED NAME AND TITLE

1/28/20
DATE

Attachment A

County Veterans Office State Grant - Scope of Work and Budget

Scope of Work and Budget with Detailed Description

Pursuant to Part I, Section 3 of the Agreement, please provide a scope of work and budget with detailed description for the use of the maximum amount of \$20,000 even though the award amount may be less.

Gaston County Veterans Services Office (VSO)

****FY 2025–2026 Scope of Work and Budget Summary****

Project Purpose

The Gaston County Veterans Services Office (VSO) will use these funds to enhance staff capacity, increase public awareness of available veterans' benefits and services, and improve privacy and accessibility for veterans seeking assistance. The project supports the County's ongoing mission to connect veterans and their families with earned benefits, resources, and support through a professional, confidential, and service-driven environment.

Objectives and Activities

1. Professional Development and Certification

Objective Strengthen staff expertise and ensure compliance with North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) and National Association of County Veterans Service Officers (NACVSO) certification standards.

Activities:

- Fund registration, lodging, meals, and travel for four staff members to attend the annual Spring Conference (\$4,000)
- Support participation for two staff members (VSO and assistant) at the National Conference (\$5,000)

Outcome Enhanced staff qualifications, improved service delivery, and full compliance with state and national certification requirements.

2. Public Awareness and Outreach

Objective. Increase visibility of veterans' benefits and services throughout Gaston County

Activities:

- Design and print billboard(s) to promote awareness of VSO programs and events.
- Implement a targeted social media advertising campaign to reach veterans and families across multiple platforms.

Budget Allocation. \$8,250.

Outcome Broader community engagement, higher utilization of veterans' services, and increased connections with hard-to-reach veteran populations.

3. Veterans Streaming Room Development

Objective. Improve service accessibility and privacy through the creation of a dedicated Veterans Streaming Room for virtual consultations and secure benefit assistance.

Activities

- Purchase a new desktop computer (\$1,100), 27" monitor (\$180), printer (\$500), and webcam (\$180) for streaming and document processing.
- Furnish the room with a desk/table (\$220) and install soundproofing materials (\$750) to ensure confidentiality

Outcome Private, acoustically treated workspace for sensitive client discussions, virtual appointments with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and online training sessions.

Performance Measures

In alignment with grant guidance, the Gaston County Veterans Services Office will track and report on the following measures

1. Unduplicated Number of Veterans Served
Total number of individual veterans who receive assistance from the VSO during the grant year
2. Number of Times Each Veteran Was Served
Total instances of service delivery, including repeated assistance or follow-up appointments for the same veteran.
3. Services Provided Using Grant Funds:
Specific services delivered as a result of the grant-funded activities, including:
 - o Assistance with VA claims and benefit applications during virtual or in-person sessions.
 - o Outreach and information sessions prompted by billboard and social media campaigns
 - o Consultations, interviews, or benefits assistance conducted in the Veterans Streaming Room

These metrics will demonstrate the impact of grant funds in expanding service reach, improving veteran engagement, and strengthening service delivery quality

Budget Summary

- Conferences/Training – \$9,000
- Advertising – \$8,250
- Office Furnishings – \$970
- Computer Equipment – \$1,780
- TOTAL – \$20,000

2025-2026 Budget suggestion

Conferences/Training:

Spring Conference (4 attendees)	\$ 4,000.00
National Conference (2 attendees)	\$ 5,000.00
Total Conferences/Training	\$ 9,000.00

Registration, lodging, meals, and travel for required DMVA or NACVSO certification courses for the VSO and assistant. Enhances staff qualifications and compliance with NC standards.

Advertising:

Billboard & social media ads	\$ 8,250.00
Total Advertising	\$ 8,250.00

Design and print billboard(s) and targeted social media ads to raise awareness of veterans benefits and services across the county

Office Furnishings:

desk/table	\$ 220.00
Soundproofing materials	\$ 750.00
Total Office Furnishings	\$ 970.00

for Veterans Streaming Room
Soundproof or acoustically treated for privacy during sensitive conversations

Computer Equip:

Desktop	\$ 1,100.00
Monitor Sceptre 27'	\$ 180.00
Printer	\$ 500.00
Webcam	
Total Computer Equip	\$ 1,780.00

for Veterans Streaming Room

TOTAL \$20,000.00