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Adopted
August 10, 2011

Amended
January 9, 2012

2012 POSITION PAPER Education Section Staffing

1. **OBJECTIVE:** Ensure that the State Approving Agency (SAA) for Veterans Education and Training of the Department of Veterans Services (DVS) has the necessary position authorization to meet its new mission under the Post 9/11 GI Bill Improvement Act.
2. **BACKGROUND:**
 - The Virginia SAA is responsible for approving courses of instruction at post-secondary educational institutions, so that eligible veterans, war orphans and widows may enroll in and receive financial assistance from the USDVA while pursuing an approved course or program.
 - At present, 994 institutions are approved; 426 are active (i.e. have a Veteran enrolled for FFY12: October 2011 – September 2012).
 - Over 51,000 Veterans and eligible dependents were enrolled in Virginia institutions in FFY11.
 - The Virginia SAA operates under a contract with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA), is authorized seven (7) positions, and is funded by federal (non-general) funds.
 - Beginning October 1, 2011, the Virginia SAA is also required, under the federal contract, to perform compliance surveys under the Post 9/11 GI Bill Improvement Act.
 - This involves conducting audits of Veterans educational and financial aid records at all active institutions in Virginia (i.e. the 426 schools with a Veteran enrolled for FFY12).
 - Compliance Surveys are conducted at schools and establishments to verify enrollment data, award actions and previous payments for accuracy and to ensure that payments made to eligible Veterans are in keeping with USDVA regulations.
 - The new mission will also help SAA monitor the graduation and employment rates of Veterans.
3. **DISCUSSION:**
 - SAA estimates that it will take two to three hours to audit a Veterans record. Even if only 10% of the records are audited, the time required exceeds the current capacity by a wide mark.
 - SAA cannot complete its new mission without additional manpower.
 - Two additional positions are required to ensure the Virginia SAA has the human resources necessary to meet its mission of ensuring access to higher education opportunities for Virginia Veterans and eligible dependents.
 - The estimated cost is \$70,000 per position. This includes salary, benefits, travel, etc.
 - SAA is federally funded, so there will be no fiscal impact to the Commonwealth. The SAA will either receive increased funding from the USDVA to pay for the new positions, or will reprogram funding currently used for education outreach.
4. **RECOMMENDATIONS:** That the General Assembly support the proposal, made in Governor McDonnell's introduced budget, to provide two additional positions for the Virginia Department of Veterans Services, State Approving Agency for Veterans Education and Training.