

Veterans and Military Affairs

Summary of Governor Walker's 2011-2013 Biennial Budget

Higher Education

- The Wisconsin GI tuition and fee reimbursement will be expanded to provide full remission of academic fees for 128 credits or eight semesters, whichever is longer, without regard to the number of credits the veteran student received under federal program benefits. This restores a promise to our veterans.

Veterans Trust Fund

- This budget will ensure the solvency of the Veterans Trust Fund through the biennium by providing funding and giving the Department of Veterans Affairs flexibility to reallocate revenues within the agency.

Revenues earned by the Veterans Home at King are routinely higher than expenditures related to the home, resulting in program revenue balances. The home is projected to have a positive program revenue balance at the end of the FY 2011-13 biennium of over \$13 million. This is largely due to compensation savings resulting from Governor Walker's budget repair bill. This balance is sufficient to provide surplus funds to support the Veterans Trust Fund while still ensuring there is a sufficient balance to support the activities of the home.

Nursing Homes

- Provide funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs to build and operate a new veterans home in Chippewa Falls. The department will contract out for the daily operations and staffing of the home.

The budget provides statutory language allowing the department to enter into an agreement with a private entity to operate the home and establishes statutory requirements that ensure proper oversight of the home. A number of other states have chosen to contract for the operations of their veterans homes including Maryland, South Carolina, North Carolina, Utah, Texas, and Georgia.

Department of Military Affairs

- Provide \$1 million additional funding to WEM from the Petroleum Inspection Fund for local assistance after a state disaster.

Other Veteran Issues

- Provide additional expenditure authority to increase staffing and maintenance at the Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemeteries in order to meet the demand for services.
- Provide expenditure authority and staffing to redevelop exhibit space at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum to create a temporary Civil War exhibit, and to move manuscripts, collections and archival materials to a new preservation storage facility.
- Reorganize and consolidate the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide greater administrative efficiency and improved oversight.

**The Governor is committed to introducing a budget that includes only items that have a fiscal impact to state or local governments. Some budget requests from veteran's organizations were non-fiscal policy items and should be passed through the normal legislative process. This will ensure full transparency and accountability.*