



MEMORANDUM

TO: Satpal Sidhu, County Executive
FROM: Erika Lautenbach, Director
RE: San Juan County – Veteran Service Officer Support Interlocal Agreement
DATE: October 1, 2021

Attached is an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and San Juan County for your review and signature.

▪ **Background and Purpose**

When veterans are discharged from the military there can be a need to connected with Veterans Affairs (VA) related services that benefit them and/or their family members. The process to access benefits and services can be challenging and Veterans Service Officers (VSO) help to navigate this system. VSOs can assist veterans and their families in many ways, including answering questions, advising, and educating individuals and groups on what benefits are available from federal, state, county, and local resources, and assisting persons in completing and filing benefit claims representing individuals in VA hearings.

VSO's are trained and accredited by the VA or other recognized organizations to provide assistance to veterans, their dependents, and survivors. This includes not only applying for federal and state benefits but also providing information on resources related to the following: Compensation and Pension, Health Care, Education & Training, Employment, Burial & Survivor, Housing, Transportation, Military Records.

Veterans living in San Juan County do not have an accredited VSO that they can reach out to and would like to access the services of Whatcom County's VSO. Whatcom's Federally accredited VSO will provide service to San Juan County resident veterans.

▪ **Funding Amount and Source**

San Juan County will reimburse Whatcom County at a rate of \$200/initial claim and \$100/subsequent claim submitted to the Federal VA by Whatcom County's VSO. Funding for this Agreement will not exceed \$10,000. These funds will be included in the 2021 budget. Council approval is required per RCW 39.34.030(2) for agreements between public agencies.

Please contact Ann Beck, Human Services Supervisor at 360-778-6055 (ABeck@co.whatcom.wa.us) or Kathleen Roy, Assistant Director at 360-778-6007 (KRoy@co.whatcom.wa.us), if you have any questions or concerns regarding this request.

