

# Spread the Word about the Veterans Service Bonus

*Richard Cordray*

As leaders in your community, I hope you can help me spread the word about a great benefit that is now open to veterans of recent wars.

Last November, an overwhelming majority of Ohio voters — more than 70 percent — voted to provide a modest payment to the men and women who served our country during the Iraq, Afghanistan and Persian Gulf wars. This Veterans Service Bonus is an honored tradition in our state: Voters approved similar financial recognition for veterans after World War I, World War II, Korea and Vietnam.

After announcing application guidelines for the bonus, my office received many calls and e-mails with questions from service members and their families. Sadly, many were from Vietnam veterans who had never learned about their service bonus, which had long since lapsed.

We should not let this unfortunate oversight happen again. Please share the following information with your family, friends, neighbors and co-workers as well as with community members you see at church, football games or other gathering places.

Odds are good that you know an eligible veteran.

An estimated 200,000 Ohio veterans qualify for the bonus. As of late October, the Ohio Department of Veterans Services had received only about 27,000 applications. That's less than 15 percent of those we believe can apply.

Please help us get the word out to the men and women who have made great sacrifices to protect us and to their families. Here are the details:

- This bonus pays \$100 per month to any member of the military who served in the Persian Gulf, Iraq and Afghanistan wars, up to a maximum of \$1,000.

- Service members who served in other parts of the world during these wars are eligible for \$50 per month of service, up to \$500 total.

- The families of service members who gave their lives in these wars can receive \$5,000.

For more information, visit [www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/VeteransBonus](http://www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/VeteransBonus).

There you will find:

- Information about how to apply
- Locations that offer free notary service (applications must be notarized)
- A flier you can post that will help spread the word about the bonus

After the application period began, my office secured letters from the Internal Revenue Service and Ohio Department of Taxation confirming that the bonuses are non-reportable gifts and therefore are not subject to federal and state income taxes. The Regional Income Tax Authority, which collects taxes for 183 Ohio municipalities, also provided a letter confirming that the bonus should not be subjected to municipal income tax. I encourage non-RITA municipalities to honor this exemption as well.

RITA's letter is available at:  
[www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/VetsBonusLocalLetter](http://www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/VetsBonusLocalLetter)

So, please, spread the word. Our veterans have earned this benefit through their service to our country; now let us make sure they all know to receive it.

*Richard Cordray is Ohio Attorney General.*