




I Mina'trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan
BILL STATUS

BILL NO.	SPONSOR	TITLE	DATE INTRODUCED	DATE REFERRED	CMTE REFERRED	FISCAL NOTES	PUBLIC HEARING DATE	DATE COMMITTEE REPORT FILED	NOTES
248-38 (COR)	V. Anthony Ada Christopher M. Dueñas Vincent A. V. Borja	AN ACT TO <i>AMEND</i> CHAPTER 67 OF TITLE 10, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO MODERNIZING AND EXPANDING THE GUAM OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (GOVA) WITH THE INTENT OF STRENGTHENING SERVICES, IMPROVING ACCOUNTABILITY, ESTABLISHING RESPONSIBILITIES IN STATUTE, ENHANCING SUPPORT FOR GUAM'S VETERANS, THEIR FAMILIES, AND TRANSITIONING SERVICE MEMBERS, AND TRANSFORMING THE OFFICE INTO A COMPREHENSIVE VETERANS AGENCY.	12/22/25 2:19 p.m.						

I MINA'TRENTAI OCHO NA LIHESLATURAN GUÅHAN
2025 (FIRST) Regular Session

Bill No. 248-38 (COR)

Introduced by:

V. Anthony Ada 
Christopher M. Dueñas 
Vincent A.V. Borja 

AN ACT TO AMEND CHAPTER 67 OF TITLE 10, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO MODERNIZING AND EXPANDING THE *GUAM OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS* (GOVA) WITH THE INTENT OF STRENGTHENING SERVICES, IMPROVING ACCOUNTABILITY, ESTABLISHING RESPONSIBILTIES IN STATUTE, ENHANCING SUPPORT FOR GUAM'S VETERANS, THEIR FAMILIES, AND TRANSITIONING SERVICE MEMBERS, AND TRANSFORMING THE OFFICE INTO A COMPREHENSIVE VETERANS AGENCY.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF GUAM:

Section 1. Legislative Findings and Intent. *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* finds

that Guam's veterans have long served our nation with honor, courage, and sacrifice, yet remain underserved in critical areas of healthcare access, mental health support, housing navigation, employment assistance, and the claims process required to secure federal benefits they have earned. Since the original enactment of Chapter 67, Title 10, Guam Code Annotated, the needs of veterans have evolved significantly, as have federal systems, technology requirements, and the complexity of navigating U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) programs. The current statutory framework guiding the Guam Office of Veterans Affairs (GOVA) has not kept pace with these developments, resulting in service gaps that place additional burdens on veterans, their families, and those transitioning from military service.

1 *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* acknowledges the recent *GOVA Modernization and*
2 *Interagency Plan* submitted by the Office, which outlines administrative goals to
3 improve coordination, technology, and service delivery. While this plan provides a
4 useful roadmap for internal reforms, it carries no legal force, may be altered by future
5 administrations, and lacks the enforceability, continuity, and accountability that only
6 statute can provide. Therefore, this Act complements the Office’s administrative
7 objectives by codifying key modernization measures into law, ensuring that
8 improvements are mandatory, durable, and aligned with the long-term needs of
9 Guam’s veteran community.

10 It is the intent of *I Liheslatura* to modernize and strengthen Guam’s statutory
11 foundation for veterans’ services by updating definitions, expanding the scope of the
12 Office’s mission, improving accountability mechanisms, and clarifying GOVA’s
13 role as the central coordinating entity for veteran-related services across the
14 government of Guam. This modernization enhances GOVA’s statutory
15 responsibilities in areas such as mental health outreach, suicide-prevention
16 initiatives, veteran employment readiness, transitional support for service members
17 returning home, housing navigation, and proactive enrollment assistance for VA
18 healthcare and benefits. These reforms address longstanding barriers faced by
19 veterans, including limited access to federal systems, fragmented service pathways,
20 and insufficient outreach. This Act would align Guam’s laws with best practices
21 used by state and territorial veterans’ agencies across the country.

22 This Act further strengthens the operational structure of GOVA by
23 establishing clearer authority for strategic planning, data modernization, interagency
24 cooperation, and publication of measurable outcomes. These improvements ensure
25 greater transparency, improved service delivery, and a stronger foundation for
26 securing federal and local funding. The modernization of the Veterans Affairs Fund,
27 the Veterans Registry, and other administrative provisions reinforce the commitment

1 to expanding services efficiently, without duplicating federal adjudicatory functions.
2 Instead, GOVA is empowered to act as Guam’s central advocate, navigator, and
3 frontline support system for veterans and their families.

4 *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* also recognizes that certain provisions of Chapter 67,
5 particularly those concerning the Guam Veterans Commission, have recently been
6 amended through the passage of Bill No. 192-38 and remain the subject of continued
7 community dialogue. Accordingly, this Act focuses on operational modernization
8 and service enhancement without revisiting §§ 67107 or 67107.1, ensuring that
9 improvements to veterans’ services move forward without interfering with
10 governance reforms recently enacted or still under review.

11 Through this modernization, Guam reaffirms its commitment to honoring
12 veterans not merely with expressions of gratitude, but with a capable, responsive,
13 and well-resourced Office of Veterans Affairs. If enacted, this Act will transform
14 GOVA from a narrowly focused claims-assistance office into a comprehensive,
15 service-oriented veterans’ agency capable of meeting today’s challenges and
16 strengthening support for generations to come.

17 **Section 2.** Chapter 67 of Title 10, Guam Code Annotated is hereby *amended*
18 to read as follows:

19 **ARTICLE 1**

20 **OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

21
22 § 67100. Creation of Office.

23 § 67101. Definitions.

24 § 67102. Purpose of Office.

25 § 67103. Powers and Duties of Officer.

26 § 67103.1. Guam Veterans Cemetery, Eligibility for.

- 1 § 67104. ~~Transfer of Records, Equipment and Employees~~ Information, and Inter-
2 Agency Coordination.
- 3 § 67105. Burial in Veterans Cemetery.
- 4 § 67105.1. Veterans Cemetery Trust Fund.
- 5 § 67106. ~~Effective Date.~~ Solicitation, Acceptance, Utilization and Administration of
6 Gifts, Bequests and Donations.
- 7 § 67107. Guam Veterans Commission.
- 8 § 67108. Vacancy.
- 9 § 67109. Veterans Affairs Fund.
- 10 § 67110. Guam Veterans Registry.
- 11 § 67111. Veterans Healthcare Assistance.
- 12 § 67112. Administrative Rules and Regulations.
- 13 § 67113. Funding.
- 14 § 67114. Veteran Emergency Assistance Program.

15 **§ 67100. Creation of Office.**

16 There is within the Office of I Maga'hågan/Maga'låhen Guåhan an Office of
17 Veterans Affairs. The Veterans Affairs Officer is the administrative head of the
18 Office of Veterans Affairs and is a member of the unclassified service, appointed by
19 *I Maga'hågan/Maga'låhen Guåhan* and with advice of the Guam Veterans
20 Commission.

21 **§ 67101. Definitions.**

22 As used in this Chapter:

23 (a) “Officer” means Veterans Affairs Officer appointed pursuant to §
24 67100 of this Chapter.

25 (b) “Office” means the Guam Office of Veterans Affairs (GOVA), the
26 territorial agency established to administer veteran’s services, programs, and
27 benefits pursuant to Guam law.

1 (c) ~~A veteran~~ “Veteran” means a person who served in the active
2 military, naval, air service ~~to include~~ and was discharged or released there
3 from under conditions other than dishonorable. Veteran includes veterans of
4 the Guam Combat Patrol, the United States Insular Force, Philippine Scouts
5 of World War II, and the United States Armed Forces, as well as any
6 individual who served on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty
7 training and has a service-connected or post-service condition recognized by
8 the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

9 (d) “Spouse” means a person who is legally married to the Veteran at
10 the time that Veteran was on active duty, or active duty for training, or inactive
11 duty for training ~~and prior to the date when the service connected injuries~~
12 ~~occurred, and subsequently rated by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs~~
13 ~~as being one hundred percent (100%) Disabled due to service connected~~
14 ~~reasons or is rated as being Individually Unemployable by the U.S.~~
15 ~~Department of Veterans Affairs, and who qualifies as a dependent or~~
16 beneficiary under applicable federal veterans regulations.

17 (e) “Surviving Spouse” means a person who:

18 (1) was married to the service member who died from service-
19 connected injuries while on active duty, active duty for training, or
20 inactive duty training, and is not currently remarried; or

21 (2) was married to the Veteran, ~~for at least one (1) year~~
22 ~~immediately prior to death of a Veteran who is rated by the U.S.~~
23 ~~Veterans Administration as being one hundred percent (100%)~~
24 ~~Disabled or Individually Unemployable and~~ qualifies as a surviving
25 beneficiary under applicable federal veteran’s regulations and is not
26 currently remarried.

27 (f) [No text]

1 ~~(1) Legal Guardian for Minor Children of a Single Parent is a~~
2 ~~person lawfully vested with the power, and charged with the obligation~~
3 ~~of taking care of and managing the property and rights of a person who~~
4 ~~because of age, understanding, or self-control, is considered incapable~~
5 ~~of administering his or her own affairs, while the service member, who~~
6 ~~is a single parent, is deployed to an area where dependents are not~~
7 ~~allowed to accompany the service member.~~

8 ~~(2) Said designation as Legal Guardian shall have been affected~~
9 ~~prior to the deployment of the service member.~~

10 ~~(g) Legal Guardian for Disabled Service Member is a person lawfully~~
11 ~~vested with the power, and charged with the obligation, of taking care of and~~
12 ~~managing the property and rights of a person who because of service-~~
13 ~~connected disabling injuries is in need of care, and provided that the service~~
14 ~~member is divorced, never married, widowed, or has no children.~~

15 ~~(h) Individually Unemployable. As defined by the U.S. Department of~~
16 ~~Veterans Affairs, a Veteran must be unable to maintain substantially gainful~~
17 ~~employment as a result of his/her service-connected disabilities. Additionally,~~
18 ~~a Veteran must have:~~

19 ~~(1) one (1) service-connected disability ratable at sixty percent~~
20 ~~(60%) or more; or~~

21 ~~(2) two (2) or more service-connected disabilities, at least one (1)~~
22 ~~disability ratable at forty percent (40%) or more, with a combined rating~~
23 ~~of seventy percent (70%) or more.~~

24 ~~(f) “Dependent” means *a spouse, surviving spouse, minor child, adult*~~
25 ~~*child with disabilities, or any person recognized as a dependent under federal*~~
26 ~~*veteran’s regulations or this Chapter.*~~

1 (g) “Veteran Family Member” means a person related to a Veteran by
2 blood, marriage, legal guardianship, or domestic partnership who may be
3 eligible for services, counseling, or support under programs administered by
4 the Office.

5 (h) “Post-Service Injury or Illness” means any physical, psychological,
6 or mental health condition arising after military service that may be related
7 to or aggravated by service, including PTSD, traumatic brain injury, military
8 sexual trauma, or chronic health conditions recognized by the U.S. DVA.

9 (i) “Mental Health Condition” means any behavioral health, substance
10 abuse, or psychological condition affecting a Veteran that may warrant
11 treatment, outreach, counseling, or referral services.

12 (j) “Service-Connected Condition” means a disability, injury, or illness
13 determined by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to be incurred or
14 aggravated in the line of duty.

15 (k) “Individually Unemployable” As defined by the Department of
16 Veterans Affairs and includes Veterans unable to maintain substantially
17 gainful employment due to service-connected disabilities.

18 (l) “Legal Guardian for Minor Children of a Single Parent” means a
19 person lawfully vested with guardianship authority over the minor child of a
20 service member who is a single parent, when the service member is deployed
21 to an area where dependents are prohibited from accompanying the service
22 member.

23 (m) “Legal Guardian for Disabled Service Member” means a person
24 lawfully appointed to care for a service member who, due to service-
25 connected injuries or disabilities, is unable to manage personal, medical, or
26 financial affairs.

1 (n) “Transitioning Service Member” means a service member within
2 twenty-four (24) months of separation or retirement from military service,
3 eligible for pre-discharge or transitional programs facilitated by the Office.

4 (o) “Registry” means the official database maintained by the Office
5 pursuant to § 67110, which may include digital and data-sharing components
6 for improved service delivery.

7 **§ 67102. Purpose of Office.**

8 (a) The Office *shall* be responsible for the administration of all local
9 laws respecting veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States and shall
10 serve as the central territorial entity responsible for delivering, coordinating,
11 and improving veteran services within Guam.

12 (b) It *shall* also be that agency of the government of Guam charged with
13 the responsibility of cooperating with the Veterans Administration of the
14 United States in all matters relating to local veterans and with other federal,
15 territorial, and community organizations involved in veterans’ health,
16 housing, employment, education, behavioral health, and transition services.

17 (c) The Office *shall* assist every veteran of Guam and the dependent or
18 survivor of every veteran of Guam in presenting and pursuing ~~such claim as~~
19 ~~the veteran, dependent, or survivor may have~~ claims and applications under
20 current Federal law governing VA benefits arising out of qualifying military
21 service and in establishing the veteran’s, dependent’s or survivor’s right to
22 any privilege, preference, care or compensation provided for by the laws of
23 the United States or of Guam.

24 (1) The processing of claims for veterans and their dependents
25 and survivors *shall* be limited to the initial claims.

1 (2) The claims *may* include ~~the following types of benefits and~~
2 ~~service~~ any benefit for which the veteran, dependent, or survivor *may*
3 be eligible, including but not limited to:

4 (A) Disability compensation benefits.

5 (B) Disability pension benefits.

6 (C) Dependents' indemnity compensation.

7 (D) Widow's death pension.

8 (E) Burial benefits.

9 (F) ~~Confirmed and continued claims~~ Preparation, status
10 tracking, and support for ongoing claims, supplemental claims,
11 and appeals, consistent with accreditation requirements.

12 (G) Vocational rehabilitation and education.

13 (H) Waivers of indebtedness.

14 (I) Other benefits that result in monetary awards to the
15 claimant.

16 (J) Outreach, counseling, and assistance for veteran health
17 care enrollment, housing assistance, educational benefits,
18 behavioral health services, and transitional support.

19 (d) It *shall* furnish staff services for Guam veterans and *shall* cooperate
20 with all local veterans organizations and *shall* coordinate with other
21 government of Guam agencies to ensure integrated delivery of services
22 involving health, behavioral health, employment, housing, housing,
23 workforce development, family support, and reintegration for veterans.

24 (e) Strategic Planning and Reporting

25 In addition to the duties above, the Office *shall*:

1 (1) Develop and publish a Veterans Services Strategic Plan every
2 three (3) years identifying needs, service gaps, priorities, and
3 measurable performance goals across all veteran service areas;

4 (2) Prepare an annual Veterans Outcomes and Services Report
5 measuring claim outcomes, service utilization, unmet needs, and the
6 effectiveness of programs administered or coordinated by the Office;

7 (3) Serve as the central coordinating agency for veteran-related
8 services across government departments;

9 (4) Maintain federally accredited Veteran Service Officers
10 (VSOs) to support the preparation, submission, and follow-up of initial
11 claims, supplemental claims, and appeals, consistent with federal
12 accreditation standards;

13 (5) Conduct periodic outreach and education campaigns to
14 inform veterans, their families, and transitioning service members of
15 available benefits, programs, and services; and

16 (6) Coordinate periodic enrollment initiatives for the U.S.
17 Veterans Health Administration (VHA), including community-based
18 enrollment drives and outreach efforts to increase Guam's veteran
19 enrollment rate and improve access to federal medical benefits; and

20 (7) Coordinate with the U.S. Department of Defense, the U.S.
21 Department of Veterans Affairs, and military installations to support
22 transitioning service members, hand-off of benefits, and continuity of
23 care.

24 (f) Nothing in this section shall authorize the Office to duplicate federal
25 VA adjudicatory functions; the Office shall instead serve as a coordinating,
26 assisting, information-sharing, and advocacy entity to ensure veterans receive
27 timely access to federal and territorial programs.

1 **§ 67103. Powers and Duties of Officer.**

2 The Officer:

3 (a) *shall* administer the Office and implement the provisions set forth
4 in Section 67102 above;

5 (b) *shall* exercise and discharge the duties of the Office through such
6 organizational units as ~~he~~ The Officer may establish;

7 (c) *shall* enforce the provisions of this Chapter and of any other laws
8 granting ~~him~~ The Officer jurisdiction pertaining to veterans of the Armed
9 Forces of the United States;

10 (d) *may* administer and certify oaths and affirmations, take and certify
11 affidavits and acknowledgments, and exercise any other power of a notary
12 public, but only as part of ~~his~~ The Officer's duties under this Chapter and
13 neither ~~he~~ nor his office shall charge any fee for such certification or notarial
14 service;

15 (e) *may* formulate and adopt rules necessary or proper for the internal
16 administration of the Office; and for the implementation of expanded
17 responsibilities under this Chapter;

18 (f) *may* study and plan for the establishment of a Guam Veterans
19 Cemetery, ~~seeking such assistance, advice and support from the Armed Forces~~
20 ~~of the United States, the Federal Veterans Administration, other local and~~
21 ~~Federal agencies, and veterans and veterans organizations~~ and shall
22 coordinate with appropriate federal, territorial, and veterans' organizations for
23 the maintenance, improvement, or expansion of veteran memorial and burial
24 services; and

25 (g) ~~S~~shall receive and execute the policy recommendations of the Guam
26 Veterans Commission to the extent said recommendations are not in
27 contravention to existing law or directives;

1 (h) shall develop and implement policies, programs, and partnerships
2 to support veteran access to health care, behavioral health services, housing
3 assistance, employment and training programs, and transitional services in
4 coordination with federal, territorial, and community agencies;

5 (i) shall maintain federally accredited Veteran Service Officers to assist
6 with initial claims, supplemental claims, higher-level reviews, and appeals
7 consistent with accreditation standards;

8 (j) shall supervise and ensure the accuracy, security, and modernization
9 of the Veterans Registry established under §67110, including development of
10 data-sharing protocols with federal and territorial partners;

11 (k) shall prepare and submit the Veterans Services Strategic Plan and
12 the annual Veterans Outcomes and Services Report required under §67102;

13 (l) shall conduct periodic outreach, education, and enrollment
14 initiatives, including coordinated efforts to assist veterans and eligible family
15 members with enrollment in Veterans Health Administration (VHA)
16 programs, to increase access to federal benefits and strengthen Guam’s
17 veteran health utilization metrics;

18 (m) shall represent the interests of Guam veterans before relevant
19 territorial and federal agencies, advocate for expanded access to federal
20 programs, and facilitate information-sharing necessary to ensure timely
21 veteran access to benefits;

22 (n) shall coordinate with the U.S. Department of Defense, the U.S.
23 Department of Veterans Affairs, and military installations to support
24 transitioning service members, including access to pre-discharge programs
25 and benefit preparation;

1 (o) may enter into memoranda of understanding, partnership
2 agreements, or cooperative arrangements with public or private entities to
3 advance the purposes of this Chapter; and

4 (p) shall perform all other duties necessary to carry out the intent of this
5 Chapter.

6 **§ 67103.1. Guam Veterans Cemetery, Eligibility for.**

7 The Guam Veterans Cemetery *shall* be used for the burial of persons who
8 served honorably in the armed forces of the United States, the Insular Guard, the
9 Guam Militia, the Guam Scouts, the Guam Combat Patrol or who were employed in
10 a civil capacity on Wake Island on December 7, 1941, United States Merchant
11 Marine vessels and other duties in direct support of the United States government at
12 war and their spouses and dependents.

13 **§ 67104. Transfer of Records, ~~Equipment and Employees~~ Information, and**
14 **Inter-Agency Coordination.**

15 ~~Upon effective date of this Chapter, all contracts, books, records, papers,~~
16 ~~documents, property and pending business heretofore made, used and acquired or~~
17 ~~conducted by the Veterans Affairs Coordinator shall be transferred to the Office of~~
18 ~~Veterans Affairs, and all employees of the Veterans Coordinator engaged in~~
19 ~~performing functions herein transferred shall be transferred to the Office of Veterans~~
20 ~~Affairs.~~

21 (a) All government of Guam agencies shall, upon request of the Office,
22 provide veteran-related records, documents, or data necessary for the Office
23 to perform its duties under this Chapter, subject to all applicable
24 confidentiality protections.

25 (b) Agencies receiving veteran status documentation, including but not
26 limited to DD-214 forms or equivalent proofs of service, shall provide copies

1 to the Office within thirty (30) days of receipt, provided the veteran or
2 authorized representative consents to such transmission.

3 (c) The Office is authorized to enter into memoranda of understanding,
4 data-sharing agreements, or cooperative arrangements with other agencies to
5 facilitate coordination of services, eligibility verification, and the maintenance
6 of the Guam Veterans Registry.

7 (d) Nothing in this Section shall supersede federal privacy laws, VA
8 regulations, or confidentiality provisions under Guam law; however, all
9 agencies shall cooperate to the maximum extent permitted by law to support
10 the effective delivery of services to veterans and their families.

11 **§ 67105. Burial in Veteran’s Cemetery.**

12 Any veteran of the United States Armed Forces *shall* be buried without charge
13 to the family of the deceased veteran in the Veteran's Cemetery of Guam.

14 **§ 67105.1. Veterans Cemetery Trust Fund.**

15 (a) The Veterans Cemetery Trust Fund is transferred from the Guam
16 Parks Commission to the Guam Veterans Commission.

17 (b) Any money paid by the federal government to Guam in connection
18 with the use of the Cemetery *shall* be deposited in the Veterans Cemetery
19 Trust Fund and used for the maintenance of the Cemetery.

20 (c) Expenditures from the Fund *shall* be by direction of the Veterans
21 Affairs Officer.

22 (d) The Veterans Affairs Officer *shall*, at the end of every quarter,
23 provide an accounting to the Guam Veterans Commission, *I*
24 *Maga’hågan/Maga’låhen Guåhan* and *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* for the use of
25 the Fund, and have it posted on the Office’s website.

26 **§ 67106. Solicitation, Acceptance, Utilization and Administration of Gifts,**
27 **Bequests and Donations.**

1 The Veterans Affairs Officer ~~may~~ shall have the authority to solicit, accept,
2 utilize and administer on behalf of the Guam Office of Veterans Affairs (GOVA),
3 gifts, bequests and donations.

4 (a) The funds received shall be deposited in the Veterans Affairs Fund.

5 (b) Such gifts, bequests and donations shall be used for

6 (1) the maintenance and improvement of the Veterans Cemetery
7 of Guam including grounds, facilities, and related services,

8 (2) the maintenance, operational support, modernization, and
9 expansion of the Guam Office of Veterans Affairs Office,

10 (3) the support of veteran recognition events, community
11 ceremonies, outreach activities, and public engagement initiatives,
12 included but not limited to the sponsorship of Memorial Day and
13 Veterans' Day events, and

14 (4) ~~purposes intended by the donor which are consistent with the~~
15 ~~goals and objectives of the Office of Veterans Affairs as stated in this~~
16 ~~Section.~~ programs, services, outreach efforts, and veteran support
17 initiatives consistent with the mission, goals, and statutory
18 responsibilities of the Office, including but not limited to:

19 (A) veteran housing, employment, mental health and
20 wellness initiatives;

21 (B) veteran outreach, education, and enrollment assistance
22 for VA health care and benefits;

23 (C) data modernization, registry maintenance, and
24 technology improvements; and

25 (D) other purposes intended by the donor that align
26 pursuant to this Chapter.

1 (c) A quarterly report *shall* be submitted by the Veterans Affairs Officer
2 to *I Maga'hågan/Maga'låhen Guåhan*, the Speaker of *I Liheslaturan Guåhan*,
3 and the Public Auditor, describing the solicitation, acceptance, utilization and
4 administration of gifts, bequests and donations, and ~~posted on the Office's~~
5 website such reports shall also be posted on the Office's website no later than
6 fifteen (15) days after submission.

7 **§ 67107. Guam Veterans Commission.**

8 (a) Commission Membership. There is hereby established a Guam
9 Veterans Commission which shall, at a minimum, be composed of a total of
10 six approved Veteran organizations whose representatives to the Commission
11 are Veterans who have been nominated by their respective organizations and
12 approved by *I Maga'hågan/Maga'låhen Guåhan*. The members shall include,
13 but are not limited to the following representation:

14 (1) A member, each of whom shall be representative of veterans
15 or retirees association for each branch of the U.S. Armed Forces to
16 consist of:

- 17 (A) U.S. Army;
- 18 (B) U.S. Marine Corps;
- 19 (C) U.S. Navy;
- 20 (D) U.S. Air Force;
- 21 (E) U.S. Space Force;
- 22 (F) U.S. Coast Guard.

23 (2) A member from the officially chartered Guam chapters of
24 multi-service Veteran Service Organization include but are not limited
25 to: the American Legion (AL), Military Order of the Purple Heart
26 (MOPH), Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), and the Vietnam Veterans
27 of America (VVA).

1 (3) Approved Veteran Organizations. Organizations to be
2 represented on the Guam Veterans Commission, pertaining to
3 Subsections (1) and (2), are required to be duly registered as a nonprofit
4 organization with the Guam Department of Revenue and Taxation, in
5 accordance with Title 18 of Guam Code Annotated. The organizations
6 shall furnish the Guam Veterans Affairs Office (GOVA) a copy of
7 official documentation reflecting their non-profit status, a current
8 certificate of Good Standing, and a copy of the organization's By-Laws.
9 GOVA shall maintain a file of each organization represented on the
10 Commission; and

11 (4) Ex-Officio Members. With the recommendation of the Guam
12 Veterans Commission, I Maga'hågan/Maga'låhen Guåhan may appoint
13 as an ex-officio, non-voting member a veteran of a foreign country who
14 has fought alongside U.S. armed forces members as allies in combat,
15 who is a representative of an established allied veterans organization on
16 Guam which is compliant with §67107(a)(3), and is a resident of Guam.
17 Said veteran shall serve for a term of three years from the date of
18 appointment.

19 (b) Commission Membership Terms and Conduct of Business.

20 (1) Veteran Organization Nominations. The Commander, or
21 designee, of a Veteran Service Organization shall present in writing to
22 the Chairman of the Commission the names of two individuals, to be
23 transmitted to I Maga'hågan/Maga'låhen Guåhan for approval to the
24 Commission to represent their respective veteran organization, which
25 shall be subject to the aforementioned provisions. The nominating
26 Organization shall designate each nominee as the Primary and
27 Alternate representative, respectively.

1 (2) Terms of Commission Representatives. Every representative
2 to the Commission shall serve for a term of three years, to commence
3 on the date of approval by the Governor.

4 (A) Should the approved primary Commission
5 representative terminate his/her term prior to the conclusion of
6 the three years, the approved Alternate shall assume the Primary
7 representative position. In the event both approved
8 representatives terminate, the nominating Veteran Service
9 Organization shall nominate a successor to serve for the balance
10 of the three (3) year term, which shall commence upon the date
11 of approval by the Governor.

12 (B) Said nomination shall be in writing and presented to
13 the Chairman of the Guam Veterans Commission for transmittal
14 to I Maga'hågan/Maga'låhen Guåhan, with a copy to be
15 furnished to the Veterans Affairs Officer of the Office of
16 Veterans Affairs.

17 (3) Quorum Requirements. The presence of fifty percent (50%)
18 plus one of the appointed primary or alternate members shall be
19 required to establish quorum. For the official conduct of business, a
20 majority of the members present, following the constituting of a
21 quorum, shall be required to conduct official business.

22 (4) Meetings. The Commission shall meet at least once every
23 quarter. However, nothing herein prevents the convening of additional
24 meetings to deliberate on emergent issues.

25 (5) Conduct of meetings. The Commission shall conduct its
26 meetings in accordance with the Open Government Law, 5 GCA
27 Chapter 8.

1 (6) Use of Video Teleconferencing. Commission members may
2 participate in regular meetings via video teleconferencing and in
3 accordance with 5 GCA § 43121. Participation of a member via
4 teleconferencing may be counted towards quorum requirements. The
5 Commission shall broadcast regular meetings in accordance with 5
6 GCA § 43122.

7 (7) Removal from Commission for Unexcused Absences. The
8 unexcused absences of a member from three (3) consecutive regular
9 meetings of the Commission shall constitute a cause for removal of the
10 member from the Commission, *I Maga'hågan/Maga'låhen Guåhan*
11 may thereupon remove the member from the Commission. The
12 determination of whether a member's absence is excused or unexcused
13 shall be made by the Commission.

14 (8) Veteran Community Participation. The Commission shall
15 provide veterans and their families the opportunity to press grievances
16 and concerns for the purpose of effecting corrective action or change to
17 existing policies that affect the delivery of benefits and services to
18 Guam's Veteran population.

19 (9) Administrative Support. The Guam Veterans Office (VAO)
20 through the direction of the Veterans Affairs Officer, shall provide
21 administrative support to the Guam Veterans Commission in the
22 conduct of its meetings.

23 (10) Ethics Training. Commission representatives shall
24 complete an ethics training within six months from the date of approval.

25 (11) Commission Duties and Responsibilities. The Commission
26 shall have the authority to:

27 (a) Develop appropriate policies to address the concerns of all veterans;

1 (b) Recommend any legislation including budgetary requirements
2 which may be necessary for the implementation, operation and maintenance
3 of the Guam Office of Veterans Affairs;

4 (c) Develop and adopt internal rules and procedures to govern the
5 conduct of the Commission and to facilitate coordination with the Guam
6 Office of Veterans Affairs;

7 (d) Perform all functions necessary to carry out the provisions of this
8 Chapter; and

9 (e) Submit a written report no later than May 1st of each year to *I*
10 *Maga'hågan/Maga'låhen Guåhan* and the Speaker of *I Liheslaturan Guåhan*
11 summarizing the Commission's activities, accomplishments, challenges, and
12 plans to support the Guam Office of the Veterans Affairs. The report shall also
13 include information regarding costs and agreements related to veterans'
14 claims data. All veterans' claims data shall be consistent with federal-data
15 sharing and privacy regulations.

16 (f) The Guam Office of Veterans Affairs is authorized to provide
17 resource and/or administrative support to fulfill the Commission's expanded
18 reporting and oversight responsibilities.

19 **§ 67108. Vacancy.**

20 When the position of Veterans Affairs Officer, Office of Veterans Affairs is
21 vacant or vacated, the Guam Veterans Commission *may* recommend a nominee to *I*
22 *Maga'hågan/Maga'låhen Guåhan* from a list of eligible applicant(s) provided by
23 the Department of Administration. Nothing in this Section shall restrict the authority
24 of *I Maga'hågan/Maga'låhen Guåhan* to appoint a Veterans Affairs Officer
25 pursuant to §67100 of this Chapter. The Department of Administration *may* assist in
26 posting the vacancy, collecting applications, and conducting eligibility verification,

1 but shall not limit or restrict the appointing authority of I Maga'hågan/Maga'låhen
2 Guåhan.

3 **§ 67109. Veterans Affairs Fund.**

4 There is hereby created, separate and apart from other funds of the
5 government of Guam, a special fund known as the Veterans Affairs Fund (Fund).

6 (a) The Fund *shall* not be commingled with the General Fund or any
7 other funds of the government of Guam.

8 ~~(b) The Veterans Affairs Officer and a member of the Guam Veterans~~
9 ~~Commission shall approve all expenditures paid from the Fund. All~~
10 ~~expenditures from the Fund shall be approved by the Veterans Affairs Officer~~
11 ~~in accordance with procedures established by rule of law, with quarterly~~
12 ~~expenditure reports submitted to I Maga'hågan/Maga'låhen Guåhan, the~~
13 ~~Speaker of I Liheslaturan Guåhan, and the Public Auditor.~~

14 (c) The Veterans Affairs Officer *shall* be the administrator of the Fund,
15 and ~~may issue warrants of expenditure pursuant to § 67106 of this Chapter~~
16 ~~and shall~~ maintain a record of all donations and expenditures. Expenditures
17 from the Fund may include support for veteran housing, employment, mental
18 health and wellness initiatives; veteran outreach, education, and enrollment
19 assistance for VA health care and benefits; data modernization and registry
20 maintenance; technology improvements; Memorial Day and Veterans Day
21 observances; and other purposes consistent with this Chapter.

22 (d) The Fund may receive appropriations, grants, gifts, bequests,
23 donations, or other contributions from any public or private source, provided
24 that such funds are used solely for purposes authorized pursuant to this
25 Chapter.

26 (e) The Office shall publish an annual public report detailing all Fund
27 revenues, expenditures, balances, and program impacts.

1 § 67110. Guam Veterans Registry.

2 (a) The Office of Veterans Affairs *shall* be responsible for the
3 establishment and maintenance of a Guam Veterans Registry (Registry),
4 which *shall* be updated ~~no less than semiannually~~ at least quarterly, or more
5 frequently as technology and data-sharing capabilities allow.

6 (1) The update of the Registry *shall* entail the addition of newly
7 registered veterans residing on Guam, and the scrubbing of the list to
8 ensure that the names of veterans who no longer reside on the island or
9 who have passed away are deleted from the Registry. The Office *may*
10 also integrate verified data received from other government agencies or
11 federal partners to improve accuracy.

12 (2) The Registry *shall* be utilized by the Office for the purpose
13 of ~~providing Guam veterans and their families with current information~~
14 ~~on veterans' benefits and activities, through the use of its webpage or~~
15 ~~other means deemed necessary that would ensure the maximum~~
16 ~~dissemination of veteran related information~~ supporting outreach,
17 benefit enrollment, health care enrollment campaigns, and
18 dissemination of information on veteran services, programs, and
19 activities through digital platforms, secure communication tools, or
20 other appropriate methods; and for the validation of Guam's veteran
21 population to further strengthen the Office's ability to pursue financial
22 resources and support in the provision of services or programs for the
23 benefit of Guam's veterans and their families.

24 (3) The Office *may* ~~use~~ receive, request, and utilize data collected
25 at other government agencies, ~~which may be collecting the required~~
26 ~~data, in whole or in part~~ including data relevant to veteran status,

1 service history, or eligibility, subject to documented consent and
2 applicable confidentiality requirements.

3 (4) Nothing herein *shall* relieve the duty of any other entity to
4 collect veterans' data for the benefit of veterans on Guam. All entities
5 shall coordinate with the Office to ensure data consistency, accuracy,
6 and secure transmission protocols.

7 (b) All government of Guam entities, whenever applicable, *shall* render
8 assistance to the Office of Veterans Affairs in carrying out the provisions
9 contained herein.

10 (1) All government entities to whom a DD214 form or other
11 proof of veteran status is presented by an applicant as a qualifying
12 document for benefits or services shall forward a copy of the applicant's
13 DD214 form or other proof of veteran status to the Office of Veterans
14 Affairs no later than thirty (30) days after the date of acceptance by that
15 government entity; provided, that said service member or his or her
16 legal guardian provides documented consent to the transmittal of said
17 information to the Office of Veterans Affairs pursuant to this Section.
18 Electronic verification or secure digital upload may be used when
19 available.

20 (2) Transmission of forms *may* be made by electronic means over
21 ~~a secured network~~ through secure, encrypted systems, electronic
22 transfer tools, or other digital platforms as prescribed by the Office of
23 Veterans Affairs.

24 (3) The Office of Veterans Affairs *shall* have the authority to
25 adopt regulations to implement and administer the provisions of this
26 Section and ensure the confidentiality of veteran information. Such

1 regulations shall include digital security standards, interagency data-
2 sharing agreements, and procedures for periodic data audits.

3 (c) The ~~Administrator~~ Veterans Affairs Officer of the Office of
4 Veterans Affairs *shall* submit a ~~quarterly~~ semiannual progress report of the
5 Guam Veterans Registry to the Speaker of *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* and *shall*
6 publish a public summary on the Office's website to improve transparency
7 and community awareness.

8 § 67111. Veterans Healthcare Assistance.

9 (a) The Guam Office of Veterans Affairs *shall* provide information on
10 various programs available to veterans in the area of healthcare. The Office
11 *shall*:

12 (1) provide assistance to disabled and elderly veterans in the
13 scheduling of patient appointments, ~~tracking, reviewing, and~~
14 ~~responding to electronic orders and consultations~~ including
15 coordination of referrals, follow up reminders, and navigation of the
16 federal VA and local health systems;

17 (2) provide assistance to eligible veterans in the filling of
18 prescriptions, coordination of ~~their appointments~~ medical
19 transportation, assistance with VA Community Care referrals, creation
20 and maintenance of medical documentation files, and other services
21 ~~that would enhance the patient healthcare provider relationship~~
22 necessary to support continuity of care and access to benefits; and

23 (3) provide non-emergency or scheduled transportation for
24 eligible veterans to and from medical appointments and pharmacies.

25 (4) conduct periodic Veterans Health Enrollment Clinics, in
26 coordination with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, to increase

1 local enrollment in the Veterans Health Administration and improve
2 access to healthcare services for Guam’s veterans;

3 (5) provide outreach, counseling, and assistance to veterans and
4 their families regarding behavioral health, substance abuse, suicide-
5 prevention resources, and available federal and territorial treatment
6 programs;

7 (6) coordinate with Guam Behavioral Health and Wellness
8 Center, Guam Memorial Hospital Authority, Department of Public
9 Health and Social Services, and other territorial agencies to facilitate
10 integrated health services for veterans.

11 (b) Employment positions *may* be created, if necessary, and filled in
12 accordance with established administrative rules and regulations; however,
13 nothing herein is to be construed or interpreted as to limit the office from
14 implementing the services and provisions of this Section prior to the
15 establishment of positions and the ~~creation and adjudication~~ promulgation and
16 adoption of administrative rules and regulations.

17 § 67112. Administrative Rules and Regulations.

18 The ~~Director~~ Veterans Affairs Officer shall develop rules and regulations,
19 consistent with the provisions of Chapter 9, 5 GCA, for the implementation and
20 operation of ~~veterans’ medical support services.~~ all programs, responsibilities, and
21 services administered by the Office under this Chapter, including but not limited to:

22 (a) claims assistance and accredited claims representation;

23 (b) veteran outreach, education, and VHA enrollment initiatives;

24 (c) coordination of health, behavioral health, housing, employment, and
25 transition services;

26 (d) administration of the Guam Veterans Registry and data-sharing
27 protocols;

1 (e) management of the Veterans Affairs Fund and donation-based
2 programs pursuant to § 67106 and § 67109; and

3 (f) implementation of the Veterans Services Strategic Plan and annual
4 Veterans Outcomes and Services Report.

5 § 67113. Funding.

6 Initial funding for the implementation of § 67111, supra, in the amount of
7 Three Hundred Forty Thousand Dollars (\$340,000) is appropriated from the General
8 Fund from excess Fiscal Year 2024 revenues. Thereafter, the Director *shall* include
9 needed funding in the Office’s annual budget request. This appropriation *shall* be
10 available until fully expended. The appropriations from this Act shall be transferred
11 to the Guam Office of Veterans Affairs no later than the enactment of this Act. The
12 funds allocated and authorized in this Section are not subject to *I*
13 *Maga’hågan/Maga’låhen Guåhan’s* transfer authority.

14 § 67114. Veteran Emergency Assistance Program.

15 (a) There is hereby established within the Guam Office of Veterans
16 Affairs (Office) a Veteran Emergency Assistance Program (VEAP) to provide
17 short-term, immediate support to eligible Veterans and their families
18 experiencing temporary hardship that threatens health, housing stability, or
19 access to essential services.

20 (b) Eligible assistance under this Section may include, but is not limited
21 to:

22 (1) temporary housing or shelter assistance for Veterans facing
23 imminent loss of housing or unsafe living conditions;

24 (2) emergency food, transportation, or utility assistance
25 necessary to preserve health, safety, or access to essential services;

1 (3) urgent travel or coordination support for medical care,
2 including transportation to VA-authorized healthcare appointments
3 when federal resources are unavailable;

4 (4) temporary support for behavioral health crises, including
5 connection to Guam Behavioral Health and Wellness Center or the VA;
6 and

7 (5) other forms of short-term assistance consistent with the
8 purpose of this Section and determined by the Office to be necessary to
9 stabilize the immediate welfare of a Veteran or surviving family
10 member.

11 (c) To qualify for assistance under this Section, an applicant must:

12 (1) be a Veteran as defined in § 67101 of this Chapter, or a
13 Surviving Spouse or Dependent pursuant to §§ 67101(d)–(f) of this
14 Chapter;

15 (2) demonstrate a temporary emergency need that threatens
16 health, safety, housing stability, or access to medical or behavioral
17 health care; and

18 (3) provide documentation as required by the Office to verify
19 eligibility and need.

20 (d) Assistance provided under this Section:

21 (1) is intended for short-term stabilization and shall not exceed
22 thirty (30) days unless extended based on documented necessity.

23 (2) shall not duplicate benefits offered directly through the U.S.
24 Department of Veterans Affairs or other federal programs.

25 (3) Funds shall be expended subject to availability and may be
26 supplemented by donations deposited into the Veterans Affairs Fund,
27 pursuant to § 67109 of this Chapter.

1 (e) The Office shall coordinate, to the maximum extent practicable,
2 with:

3 (1) the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs;

4 (2) Guam Behavioral Health and Wellness Center;

5 (3) the Guam Housing and Urban Renewal Authority;

6 (4) community health centers, nonprofit organizations, and
7 veterans' service organizations; and

8 (5) other government or community partners assisting Veterans.

9 (f) The Office shall develop rules and regulations pursuant to 5 GCA
10 Chapter 9 to implement this Section, including application requirements,
11 documentation standards, allowable expenditures, reporting obligations, and
12 oversight mechanisms to ensure program integrity.

13 (g) The Veterans Affairs Officer shall include in the annual Veterans
14 Outcomes and Services Report required pursuant to § 67102(e)(2) of this
15 Chapter the number of Veterans served under this Section, the types of
16 assistance provided, and program performance indicators.