



For Immediate Release:
Tuesday, August 24, 2010

Governor, State Leaders Launch Ohio Veterans Bonus Program

Columbus, Ohio – Ohio Governor Ted Strickland, Ohio Attorney General Richard Cordray, Ohio Treasurer Kevin Boyce and Ohio Department of Veterans Services Director Bill Hartnett today launched the Ohio Veterans Bonus program in Columbus.

An estimated 200,000 Ohio residents are eligible for the Ohio Veterans Bonus.

“In November, the voters of Ohio resoundingly supported Issue 1,” Strickland said. “Ohioans wanted to extend a small measure of our thanks and offer a tangible sign of our profound respect for our veterans of recent conflicts and their survivors. Today we are asking all eligible veterans and their survivors to apply for this special payment from the state.”

“Of course no payment is adequate reward for the sacrifices made on our behalf,” Strickland added. “But these checks will help make a mortgage payment, or put food on the table, or start a savings account. And what’s more, these payments will say something clearly and directly to our veterans: thank you.”

All Ohio veterans could be eligible for a bonus if they served on active duty with U.S. armed forces, including the Ohio National Guard, anywhere in the world during specified periods of time. The active duty must be for purposes other than training. Applicants must have been legal residents of Ohio when they went on active duty and also must be Ohio residents when they apply for a bonus.

“The process of providing these bonuses began a few years ago in Iraq, when an Ohioan serving as an Army captain there wrote to my office on behalf of the servicemen and women in his unit,” said Cordray. “Working together, Ohioans responded in a big way, bringing these bonuses to fruition. It truly is a story of democracy at its finest. My office will continue to work to support our Veterans through the application process, to make it as simple as possible.”

The estimated processing time for bonus applications is approximately eight weeks, depending on the volume of applications initially received.

To apply for the bonus, applicants should go to www.veteransbonus.ohio.gov, and complete the online application. Ohio's public libraries are prepared to assist with the online application if applicants do not have Internet access. In addition, staff at Ohio's County Veterans Service Offices is available to assist in the application process.

Ohio Department of Veterans Services Director Bill Hartnett said eligible veterans must satisfy three basic requirements.

"We want to know about residency, geography and time," Hartnett said. "The Veterans must be Ohio residents now and must have been an Ohio resident when they were called to active duty. Next, we have to know where they served and finally we have to know when they served."

Eligible veterans may receive \$100 for each month of active duty service in the following locations during these specified dates:

- ? **Persian Gulf:** Between August 2, 1990 and March 3, 1991, the date when Iraq accepted the conditions for a permanent cease fire. Eligible veterans can apply for a bonus until December 31, 2013.
- ? **Afghanistan:** Since October 7, 2001. Eligible veterans can apply for a bonus for up to three years after the President declares an end to U.S. involvement in Afghanistan.
- ? **Iraq:** Since March 19, 2003. Eligible veterans can apply for a bonus for up to three years after the president declares an end to U.S. involvement in Iraq.
- ? The maximum benefit for service in those three areas is \$1,000.

Eligible veterans serving on active duty (except active duty for training) anywhere else in the world during the specified dates, may receive \$50 a month up to a maximum bonus of \$500. An eligible veteran may combine their service bonuses for a maximum payment of \$1,500.

To be eligible for a bonus:

- ? The veteran must have been separated from the armed forces under honorable conditions.
- ? The veteran remains on active duty service.
- ? After active duty service, the veteran remains in any reserve component of the armed forces, including the Ohio National Guard.

Veterans' applications are not complete until they are printed, signed and mailed to: Ohio Veterans Bonus, P.O. Box 373 Sandusky, Ohio 44871. The final application cannot be submitted on the Internet because the signed application must be notarized or acknowledged.

Public notaries can notarize the applicant's signature or any of Ohio's 88 county common pleas court clerks are prepared to "acknowledge" the signature. In addition, the assistant attorneys general in the Ohio Attorney General's regional offices in Columbus, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Youngstown and Toledo will notarize the applicant's signature free of cost. A list of free notaries can be found at: www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/VeteransBonus.

There also are other bonuses available to eligible veterans or the families of deceased veterans. For these eligibility details and specifications, please visit: https://veteransbonus.ohio.gov/odvs_web/Eligibility_Requirements.aspx

"Ohio has a long history of rewarding military service that stretches back to World War I," said Treasurer Boyce. "Although we can never repay those who risked their lives and left their families, this gesture speaks volumes about the great respect our State has for its veterans. I am proud to stand with Ohioans to honor the sacrifices of so many servicemen and women."

Applicants with specific questions can call 1 -877-OHIO-VET or go online at: www.veteransbonus.ohio.gov.

The Ohio Veterans Bonus is not financed with taxes. Last year, Ohio voters approved a constitutional amendment allowing the state to sell \$200 million worth of bonds to provide a special payment from the Ohio Honors Veterans Fund to servicemen and women.

Media Contacts:

Governor's Office

Amanda Wurst, (614) 644-0957/(614) 832-7512
Amanda.Wurst@governor.ohio.gov

Ohio Department of Veterans Service:

Jim Gravelle, (614) 728-0235
Jim.Gravelle@dvs.ohio.gov

Ohio Attorney General's Office:

Kimberly Kowalski, (614) 728-9692
Kimberly.Kowalski@ohioattorneygeneral.gov

Ohio Treasurer's Office:

Simone Wilkinson, (614) 746-0800
Simone.Wilkinson@tos.ohio.gov

