



SOUTH CAROLINA REVENUE AND FISCAL AFFAIRS OFFICE
STATEMENT OF ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT
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Bill Number: H. 4954 Introduced on January 16, 2020
Author: S. Williams
Subject: Veterans' Affairs Offices
Requestor: House Medical, Military, Public, and Municipal Affairs
RFA Analyst(s): Gallagher
Impact Date: January 29, 2020 Updated for Additional Agency Response

Fiscal Impact Summary

This bill requires county veterans' affairs offices to provide free transportation services to veterans who require assistance to and from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care facilities for medical and health care appointments. Based on responses from six counties, this bill is expected to increase nonrecurring expenses by \$75,000 to \$542,110 per county in FY 2020-21 for initial program costs. This bill is further expected to increase recurring expenses by \$70,000 to \$298,910 per county in FY 2021-22 for the maintenance of vehicles, staff wages, and miscellaneous expenses. These costs may vary significantly by county as multiple counties indicated they already have transportation programs in place utilizing volunteer drivers and federal grants. Revenue and Fiscal Affairs (RFA) anticipates these counties would face costs associated with hiring paid employees in lieu of volunteer drivers in these instances.

This fiscal impact has been updated to include a response from Spartanburg County.

Explanation of Fiscal Impact

Updated for Additional Agency Response on January 29, 2020

State Expenditure

N/A

State Revenue

N/A

Local Expenditure

This bill requires county veterans' affairs offices to provide free transportation services to veterans who require assistance to and from VA health care facilities for medical and health care appointments. The transportation services program must be:

- approved and supervised by the county legislative delegation,
- funded and budgeted for by the county veterans' affairs office, and
- performed by paid employees of the county veterans' affairs office.

The cost to each county to enact this bill is expected to vary depending on the total veteran population, the number of veterans receiving care, and the location of VA health care facilities. The total population of veterans and number of those receiving treatment at a VA health care facility are as follows:

Veteran Population by County FY 2017-18		
County	Veteran Population	Unique Patients Receiving Treatment at a VA Health Care Facility
Abbeville	1,723	667
Aiken	13,711	5,122
Allendale	518	171
Anderson	14,995	4,590
Bamberg	1,238	395
Barnwell	1,314	544
Beaufort	24,009	5,031
Berkeley	23,667	8,152
Calhoun	1,042	473
Charleston	31,196	11,243
Cherokee	3,613	1,250
Chester	2,256	877
Chesterfield	2,702	1,058
Clarendon	2,688	1,218
Colleton	3,816	1,505
Darlington	4,990	1,583
Dillon	1,965	641
Dorchester	17,596	5,789
Edgefield	1,777	747
Fairfield	1,647	680
Florence	9,954	3,371
Georgetown	6,008	1,902
Greenville	31,099	8,529
Greenwood	4,602	1,582
Hampton	1,330	544
Horry	29,574	11,930
Jasper	2,124	755
Kershaw	6,177	2,324
Lancaster	5,395	2,109
Laurens	4,825	1,481
Lee	1,057	479
Lexington	23,298	7,193
Marion	2,241	942
Marlboro	1,956	611
McCormick	993	404
Newberry	2,468	783
Oconee	6,175	1,634
Orangeburg	6,276	2,608
Pickens	7,194	2,283
Richland	36,967	17,278
Saluda	1,247	442

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Spartanburg	19,872	5,800
Sumter	13,021	4,807
Union	1,923	600
Williamsburg	1,986	912
York	16,515	5,886
Grand Total	400,742	138,925

Veteran population estimates are produced by the VA Predictive Analytics and Actuary Service. Data regarding unique patients who received treatment at a VA health care facility is provided by the Allocation Resource Center.

RFA surveyed all 46 counties and received responses from 8: Charleston County, Georgetown County, Greenville County, Lancaster County, Lee County, Kershaw County, Oconee County, and Spartanburg County. Charleston, Georgetown, Lee, Oconee, and Spartanburg County provided the following expenditure estimates:

Anticipated Expenditures by County from Enacting H. 4954		
County	Initial Costs: FY 2020-21	Recurring Costs: Beginning FY 2021-22
Charleston	\$100,000	Slightly less than \$100,000
Georgetown	\$120,000	\$70,000
Greenville	\$160,000	\$95,100
Lee	\$100,000	\$75,000
Oconee	\$75,000-\$100,000	\$75,000-\$100,000
Spartanburg	\$542,110	\$298,910

When not specified in the county's response, we anticipate that initial costs include the upfront price of purchasing and registering a transportation vehicle, costs associated with new employee wages, and general administrative expenses. Spartanburg County anticipates initial costs will include the purchase of four wheelchair accessible vans and general operating costs to include computers, office equipment, cell phones, fuel and vehicle insurance. Spartanburg County further anticipates they will need to hire 4 FTEs: 3 drivers and 1 administrative assistant. Additionally, the county anticipates the need for 2 part time drivers on an as-needed basis. The county currently transports 40 veterans per week to Asheville, Columbia, Greenville, and Spartanburg. Recurring costs are expected to include continued vehicle registration and maintenance, employee wages, and general administrative expenses for all counties.

Lancaster, Kershaw, and Oconee County currently provide veterans with free transportation services to and from VA medical appointments as needed, utilizing volunteer drivers and federal grants for vehicle maintenance and registration. Kershaw and Lancaster Counties work with the nonprofit Disabled American Veterans to obtain vehicles, and Oconee County noted their vehicle was donated by the Wm. Jennings Bryan Dorn VA Medical Center. RFA anticipates these counties would face costs associated with hiring paid employees in lieu of volunteer drivers in these instances.

Based upon these responses, we anticipate that nonrecurring expenses will increase by \$75,000 to \$542,110 per county in FY 2020-21 depending on the number of veterans and distance

travelled. This bill is further expected to increase recurring expenses by \$70,000 to \$298,910 per county in FY 2021-22 for the maintenance of vehicles, staff wages, and miscellaneous expenses. These costs may vary significantly by county as multiple counties indicated they already have transportation programs in place utilizing volunteer drivers and federal grants.

This expenditure impact has been updated to include a response from Spartanburg County.

Local Revenue

N/A

Introduced on January 16, 2020

State Expenditure

N/A

State Revenue

N/A

Local Expenditure

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Local Revenue

N/A

Frank A. Rainwater, Executive Director