

# SENATE BILL 857

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7lr3324  
CF 7lr3150

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By: **Senators Smith and Waugh**

Introduced and read first time: February 3, 2017

Assigned to: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **State Government – Department of Veterans Affairs – Veterans’ Services**  
3 **Specialists**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring certain units of State government to assign a full-time  
5 employee of the unit as a veterans’ services specialist to coordinate services with the  
6 director of the veterans Outreach and Advocacy Program in the Department of  
7 Veterans Affairs and attend certain training, to provide the Department of Veterans  
8 Affairs with certain information, and to post certain information on the unit’s Web  
9 site; making the Act applicable to certain units of State government; requiring  
10 certain governmental units to direct veterans to contact the Department and provide  
11 the veterans with certain contact information; and generally relating to veterans’  
12 services specialists at units of State government.

13 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,  
14 Article – State Government  
15 Section 9–943  
16 Annotated Code of Maryland  
17 (2014 Replacement Volume and 2016 Supplement)

18 BY adding to  
19 Article – State Government  
20 Section 9–944  
21 Annotated Code of Maryland  
22 (2014 Replacement Volume and 2016 Supplement)

23 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
24 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

25 **Article – State Government**

26 9–943.

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (a) (1) For the purposes of reaching any veteran, veteran's dependent, or  
2 veteran's survivor in need of assistance in obtaining services or benefits granted by the law,  
3 the director shall develop and implement an outreach plan.

4 (2) In order to carry out the director's responsibilities under paragraph (1)  
5 of this subsection, the director may:

6 (i) enter into contracts; and

7 (ii) work with governmental units and community-based  
8 organizations, including the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Department  
9 of Aging, faith-based groups, veterans groups, senior centers, adult day care centers,  
10 institutions of higher education, and other entities the director considers appropriate.

11 (b) (1) The director shall develop mechanisms for outreach to be disseminated  
12 by direct mail and through community-based veterans organizations, the Department of  
13 Veterans Affairs, the Department of Human Resources, the Department of Health and  
14 Mental Hygiene, and any other State agency or unit the director considers appropriate.

15 (2) The mechanisms for outreach shall include:

16 (i) the development of a pamphlet describing the services provided  
17 by the Outreach and Advocacy Program;

18 (ii) a regular newsletter;

19 (iii) brochures describing various benefits or any other issue or  
20 benefit of interest to veterans or their dependents; and

21 (iv) other measures the director considers appropriate.

22 (c) The Department shall develop and maintain a database of veterans in the  
23 State.

24 (d) The Department, in conjunction with the types of community-based  
25 organizations listed in subsection (a)(2) of this section, shall develop a survey to assist in  
26 identifying veterans and dependents who may be eligible for pension programs.

27 (e) The Program shall:

28 (1) in conjunction with other governmental units and community-based  
29 groups, seek out veterans and their dependents who may be eligible for pension program  
30 benefits; and

31 (2) provide wounded or disabled veterans with information on available  
32 services and benefits and support in obtaining these services and benefits.

1 **9-944.**

2 (A) IN THIS SECTION, "SPECIALIST" MEANS A FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE OF A  
3 GOVERNMENTAL UNIT WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR RESPONDING TO AND ASSISTING  
4 VETERANS WHO ARE EMPLOYED BY THE UNIT OR WHO CONTACT THE UNIT FOR  
5 ASSISTANCE.

6 (B) THIS SECTION APPLIES TO:

7 (1) THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES;

8 (2) THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL  
9 SERVICES;

10 (3) THE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD;

11 (4) THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE; AND

12 (5) PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE STATE.

13 (C) EACH UNIT SUBJECT TO THIS SECTION SHALL:

14 (1) ASSIGN A FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE, WHO TO THE EXTENT  
15 PRACTICABLE IS A VETERAN, AS A VETERANS' SERVICES SPECIALIST FOR THE UNIT  
16 AND WHOSE DUTIES INCLUDE THE COORDINATION OF VETERANS' SERVICES WITH  
17 THE DEPARTMENT;

18 (2) PROVIDE THE DEPARTMENT WITH ANY NONPROTECTED OR  
19 NONPRIVATE INFORMATION ABOUT SERVICES THE UNIT PROVIDES TO VETERANS;  
20 AND

21 (3) POST ON THE UNIT'S WEB SITE:

22 (I) ALL SERVICES AVAILABLE FOR VETERANS FROM THE UNIT;

23 (II) THE CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE UNIT'S VETERANS'  
24 SERVICES SPECIALIST; AND

25 (III) A LINK TO THE DEPARTMENT WITH THE CONTACT  
26 INFORMATION FOR THE DIRECTOR OF THE OUTREACH AND ADVOCACY PROGRAM  
27 IN THE DEPARTMENT.

1           **(D) THE VETERANS' SERVICES SPECIALIST SHALL:**

2                   **(1) COORDINATE THE PROVISION OF VETERANS' SERVICES**  
3 **AVAILABLE THROUGH THE UNIT WITH THE DEPARTMENT; AND**

4                   **(2) ATTEND ANNUAL TRAINING THAT THE DEPARTMENT PROVIDES**  
5 **CONCERNING THE COORDINATION OF VETERANS' SERVICES.**

6           **(E) ON REQUEST FOR SERVICES BY A VETERAN, A GOVERNMENTAL UNIT**  
7 **THAT DOES NOT PROVIDE SERVICES TO VETERANS SHALL DIRECT THE VETERAN TO**  
8 **CONTACT THE DEPARTMENT AND PROVIDE THE VETERAN WITH THE DEPARTMENT**  
9 **CONTACT INFORMATION.**

10           SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
11 October 1, 2017.