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## STATE OF WISCONSIN, DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

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### Attention Newsroom – News Release

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## Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs Provides Free Assistance with Veterans Benefit Applications

(MADISON) – A recent letter to a local Wisconsin newspaper talked about the “new” Aid and Attendance benefit for veterans and their spouses. The letter described strict income eligibility requirements and complex paperwork. It also cited a \$650 non-refundable “fee” to apply for the benefit.

Unfortunately, it sounds like the individual writing the letter may have fallen victim to an unscrupulous business looking to collect fees. Some businesses get involved in promoting “new” veterans benefits so they can charge fees to help applicants manipulate the family’s financial assets in order to meet eligibility requirements for veterans benefits. These benefits, like the Aid and Attendance benefit cited in the letter, are not usually new at all.

Veterans and their family members need to know: Filing for veterans benefits is a free process and the experts at the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) Claims Office and County Veterans Service Offices (CVSOs) are ready to help.

Navigating the paperwork and understanding sometimes complex eligibility requirements can take time and require patience. While individuals are free to decide for themselves whether to hire a consultant, people should understand that application fees, or money paid up front, is never required to access a veterans benefit. They should also be aware that the individual representing veterans before the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) must meet federal legal requirements.

The best advice WDVA can offer is:

- Remember filing is a free process. You can apply on your own with free help from WDVA, a CVSO, or other free advocates, such as those provided by veterans service organizations.
- Do your homework and ask questions. If your consultant is more interested in your personal finances or asking for a fee, you should be concerned. Ask how and when the individual was certified for filing claims.
- Be patient and understand that the application process can sometimes be complex and time consuming. Know that the WDVA Claims Office or your CVSO are ready to answer your questions and serve as your guide throughout the process.

Veterans or family members seeking claims assistance are encouraged to call the WDVA Claims Office at (414) 902-5757. To locate contact information for your CVSO, use the blue government pages in your phone book; visit the WDVA website at [www.WisVets.com](http://www.WisVets.com) and click on “Veterans Service Offices” or call WDVA toll-free at 1-800-WIS-VETS (947-8387).

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