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Orange County Veterans Advisory Council

1300 S. Grand Avenue, Building B, Rm 247

Santa Ana, CA 92705

714-480-6555

714-567-7577 Fax

Council Members

David Han, Chairman

Erik Duane, Vice Chairman

Vladimir Anderson

Alex Maslin

Robert McDonald

Mario Munoz

Alexis Paschedag Federico

Stephanie Wade

April 14, 2021

Orange County Board of Supervisors

333 W. Santa Ana Blvd.

Santa Ana, California 92701

Re: Orange County Veterans Service Office and Orange County Information Technology Office Online College Tuition Fee Waiver Application Recognition

Dear Board of Supervisors:

About a year ago, the Orange County Veterans Service Office (OCVSO) partnered with Orange County Information Technology (OCIT) to streamline the way in which veterans and their dependents submit applications for College Tuition Fee Waivers. If granted, mandatory system-wide tuition and fees at any State of California Community College, Campus of the University of California, or Campus of the California State University system are waived for veteran dependents.

The OCVSO and OCIT developed a web-based application that simplified, modernized, and expedited the submission and processing of these waivers. As a result, veterans and their dependents can now complete the entire application process online, without ever having to visit the VSO, submit physical paperwork, or even schedule an appointment. The web-based application also enables the OCVSO to process the applications more efficiently, thereby reducing long processing and wait times. It also eliminates the need for postage and document storage, which results in increased cost savings. Most importantly, the web-based application saves OCVSO staff time—time that can now be devoted to veterans seeking other services.

In the last fiscal year the OCVSO accepted 923 applications of which 883 were awarded, saving veterans and their family's \$4,694,334 in tuition and fees as they pursued their educational goals.

Notably, any of the 56 County Veterans Offices in California can benefit from this user-friendly College Tuition Fee Waiver online application and several have expressed interest in doing so. The OCVAC has heard from many local veterans and veteran agencies who have applauded our online application and its benefits, including our neighboring VSOs of Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego counties—who expressed a desire to replicate the application. In fact, Orange County's CalVet Local Interagency Network Coordinator, Ben Gales, has directed veterans from all over California to use OCVSO's web-based application, as it is the only one of its kind. Thus, OCVSO's web-based application has not only helped Orange County veterans and others, but has also shown state-wide that Orange County is a leader with respect to veterans' services.

As your Veterans Advisory Council, we want to make the Board aware of the exceptional work that was done by the following dedicated members of the County Staff:

Ericka Danczak (OC Community Services)
Eric Ensley (VSO)
Jack Luster (OCIT)

Stephen Salcido (OCIT)
Josh Myers (OCIT)
Noel Motus (OCIT)

We hope that the Board of Supervisors can recognize them for their contributions to the concept, planning, development, testing, and roll out of the College Tuition Fee Waiver web-based application and thank them for their initiative, innovation, and dedication to Orange County veterans:

Sincerely,

David Han
Chairman
Orange County Veterans Advisory Council

CC: Supervisor Andrew Do, Vice Chairman, District 1
Supervisor Katrina Foley, Chair, District 2
Supervisor Donald P. Wagner, District 3
Supervisor Doug Chaffee, District 4
Supervisor Lisa Bartlett, District 5
Dylan Wright, OCCR Director
Renee Ramirez, OCCS Director
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