



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

AUDITOR OF THE COMMONWEALTH

STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133

SUZANNE M. BUMP, ESQ.
AUDITOR

TEL (617) 727-2075
FAX (617) 727-2383

May 13, 2014

Coleman Nee, Secretary
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Department of Veterans' Services
600 Washington Street, 7th Floor
Boston, MA 02111

Dear Secretary Nee:

On October 24, 2013, the Office of the State Auditor initiated an audit of the Department of Veterans' Services (DVS). The scope of this audit, which was to cover the period July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2013, was to include a review and assessment of the outreach activities and efforts of DVS and local Veterans' Service Officers (VSOs) in assisting returning Massachusetts veterans in applying for and receiving benefits to ensure that Massachusetts veterans are fully aware of the state and federal benefits and resources available to veterans and their dependents. In addition, we intended to perform an assessment of DVS's performance measures and desired results concerning outreach activity.

During the initial part of our audit, we conducted a survey of various programs and activities of DVS, including the Statewide Advocacy for Veterans' Empowerment program, the Statewide Housing Advocacy Reintegration and Prevention program, the Women Veterans' Network, various annuity and bonus programs, and the benefit program providing public assistance for indigent veterans (Chapter 115 of the Massachusetts General Laws) that is administered by local VSOs. Based on our survey work, we determined that DVS has not formally defined the parameters of its outreach efforts in each of the programs reviewed. Without a defined outreach strategy, developed performance measures, and methods to perform ongoing monitoring and evaluations, there are no

Coleman Nee, Secretary
Department of Veterans' Services
May 13, 2014
Page 2

criteria or reliable performance data on which to base our assessment and determine whether DVS outreach efforts achieved desired outcomes. As a result, we have terminated our audit at this time.

However, based on our survey work, we made certain observations, which we believe warrant DVS's attention. The audit team will be contacting your staff in the near future to arrange a meeting to discuss our observations about DVS's outreach activities.

I wish to express my appreciation to you and your staff for the cooperation and assistance provided to us during the audit survey process. My office will contact you during the next fiscal year to reschedule our audit after you have had a chance to consider our observations and address those that you deem appropriate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'SMB', is written over the typed name.

Suzanne M. Bump
Auditor of the Commonwealth