

**RCW 43.60A.237 Veterans service officer and peer mentoring programs—Grants.** It is the intent of the legislature to increase state appropriations for veterans service officer and peer mentoring programs with chapter 224, Laws of 2023. As a result, and subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the department shall provide grants to counties of the state in order to develop or expand veterans service officer programs, peer-to-peer support programs, and other services and programs to assist veterans in areas where these programs and services are needed. In distributing these grants, the department must prioritize counties with smaller populations and counties that are below the national average in the percentage of veterans receiving federal disability or pension compensation. [2023 c 224 s 4.]

**Finding—Intent—2023 c 224:** "The legislature finds that it is vital for veterans in their return to our communities to have adequate community supports. Local programs that connect veterans with their federal benefits and with other veterans for peer support are crucial components of that structure. It is the intent of the legislature through this act to enhance state funding of these programs to ensure they are robust and widely available throughout the state." [2023 c 224 s 1.]