

# Maryland Veterans Service Animal Program

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## *2019 Report to the General Assembly*

### Background

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Chapter 417 of 2017 established the Maryland Veterans Service Animal Program. The program refers eligible veterans to selected nonprofit training organizations to apply for service dogs. The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs must select at least one training entity to carry out elements of the program.

Chapter 416 also established the Maryland Veterans Service Animal Program Fund, consisting of revenue collected by MDVA in the form of donations to the program, money appropriated in the State Budget, and money from any other source accepted for the benefit of the fund.

Chapter 152 of 2018 requires the Secretary of Veterans Affairs or the Secretary's designee to administer the fund. This designee is the Director of the Outreach and Advocacy Program. Revenue from the fund may be used only to pay a nonprofit training entity and for administrative costs of the program. Expenditures from the fund made in accordance with the State Budget.

Chapter 465 of 2019 altered the definition of nonprofit training entity to include programs that use trained therapy horses for interactions with veterans. The change went in to effect June 1, 2019. After conducting research on equine therapy and meeting with therapeutic riding organizations, updated regulations drafted.

As of December 31, 2019, the updated regulations were still in draft form and under public review.

### Number of Program Participants

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October 5, 2019; Hero Dogs; Veteran G.D.; \$10,000

September 28, 2019; Warrior Canine Connection; Veteran J.H.; \$10,000

September 28, 2019; Warrior Canine Connection; Veteran D.F.; \$10,000

September 28, 2019; Warrior Canine Connection; Veteran S.M.; \$10,000

October 5, 2018; Hero Dogs; Veteran J.S.; \$10,000

# MARYLAND VETERANS SERVICE ANIMAL PROGRAM

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## Nonprofit Training Entity Participants

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Warrior Canine Connection

Hero Dogs

Fidos For Freedom



*Hero Dogs staff presented with the first Maryland Veterans Service Animal Program Fund reimbursement. (March 2019)*

Present left to right: Hero Dogs staff, MDVA Outreach Director Dana Burl, Maryland Senator Brian Simonaire, MDVA Secretary George Owings III, and Robert Finn, MDVA Deputy Secretary

## Fund Balance

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At the conclusion of 2019, the Maryland Veterans Service Animal Program Fund had a balance of \$26,595. Of this total, \$11,801 was the donation balance and \$14,794 was the general fund unexpended balance. A total of \$50,000 distributed to programs placing service dogs with veterans.

## Contact

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