

For immediate release

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Furloughed Federal Employees Who Are Veterans May Be Eligible for State's Chapter 115 Benefit Program

Federal employees who are qualified veterans on furlough may be entitled to benefits through the State's Chapter 115 Benefit Program. Under Chapter 115 of Massachusetts General Laws (M.G.L. ch. 115), the Commonwealth provides a needs based and means tested program of financial and medical assistance for indigent veterans and their dependents.

Qualifying Veterans and their dependents receive necessary financial assistance for food, shelter, clothing, fuel, and medical care in accordance with a formula which takes into account the number of dependents and income from all sources. The current process for applying for Chapter 115 benefits for furloughed government employees is outlined below:

1) An application must be taken by Peter Harvell, Lincoln's Veterans Services Officer, and the standard intake process will be followed with the exception of:

- a. Child support process is waived for furloughed workers.
- b. Retirement asset test is waived for furloughed workers. This covers retirement funds such as 401(k), IRA's, annuities, etc.
- c. All cash assets such as savings/checking accounts are counted and must meet the current guidelines before receiving benefits. Base line assets are \$5K for single person and \$9K for married couple.

2) The applicant should have a letter from their employer stating they are on furlough.

3) A Standard budget will be calculated with the furloughed worker's income from federal government set to \$0. The VSO will count all other income that normally comes into the household (spouse income, rental income, etc.)

4) An Agreement to Reimburse will be filed and explained in detail to the applicant for any retroactive payments that may be provided at a future date.

5) Furloughed employees will not be required to conduct job searches under 108 CMR 7.01 but Peter Harvell will assist applicants in applying for any Unemployment Insurance benefits through the Department of Employment and Training (DET).

For more information, please contact Lincoln Veteran Service Officer, Peter Harvell, at the Lincoln Council of Aging 781-259-8811

