

POLICY STATEMENT

HARRISON COUNTY VETERANS' SERVICE COMMISSION

CADIZ, OHIO

The basic charter of the Relief Commission is Title 5901 of the Ohio Revised Code.

The Veterans' Service Commission is charged with the following responsibilities:

1. Aid to needy veterans and/or dependents.
2. Service office assistance to veterans and their dependents and to dependents of deceased veterans in filing claims for benefits to which they are entitled by law
3. The administration and disbursement of Memorial Day Appropriation.

AID TO NEEDY VETERANS

When the Soldiers' Relief Commission was established, it was the only financial assistance agency available to veterans. In 1988, the legislature changed the name to Veterans' Service Commission. The initial law, although amended in several particulars through the years, has never changed in its essential characteristics. The basic intent of the law was to insure that no veteran who left his family and neighborhood to dedicate part of his life to the perpetuation of the society he loved, would ever be deprived, through no fault of his/her own, of a reasonable level of living for him/herself and his/her family. The Veterans' Service Commission has responsibility for administering the financial assistance. They are representatives of veterans' organizations familiar with veterans' problems, and are given wide latitude under the law in determining which veterans are to receive aid, the nature and level of this aid, and the period during which it is given.

Financial assistance is available not only for those who have honorable discharges and have been in federal military service, but also for their needy parents, wives, widows, and minor children. All eligibility for assistance under this law rests originally on military service by anyone in the armed forces of the United States. Service must have been performed in the armed forces of the United States and the veteran must have been honorably discharged and meet requirements of the Ohio Revised Code 5901. Financial assistance is also available to those discharged in general under honorable conditions. Beneficiaries must also be residents of the state of Ohio for one year and of Harrison County for three months.¹ The time qualifications apply alike to a veteran or a veteran's dependents.

ANY CHANGES MUST BE REPORTED IMMEDIATELY!!!

¹ Change adopted 4/25/94

The following factors or policies are regularly involved in determining the dates for and the amount of aid given.

1. Veterans who quit their jobs or who were discharged from their jobs for cause within their control will only be aided at the discretion of the Veterans Service Commission.
2. Veterans with less than 180 days active duty will not be eligible for aid unless discharged for a service-connected disability or hardship as shown on his/her DD-214.
3. National Guardsmen and Army Reserve personnel who are "Active Duty for Training" are not considered as serving in the "active" forces of the United States. Consequently, they are not eligible for financial assistance. The exception is detailed in Title 38, U.S. Code, Section 101 (24) which provides for payment in case of disablement, death, or injury during the active duty for training period. Members of the National Guard or Reserve Forces who are called to active duty during a period of national emergency are serving without restriction and are veterans in every sense of the word.
4. Financial assistance will not be granted where investigation shows that clients are imprudent with financial assistance given; such as excessive drinking, using narcotics, or using money for purposes other than actual living expenses. If found in violation of our rules, a veteran is ineligible for aid for twelve full months from the date of the violation. The only exception to this is when lack of aid would cause suffering to dependents. The Commission then reserves the right to pay money directly to those persons who will provide the goods and services necessary to sustain the dependents in need.
5. All applicants for financial assistance who are physically capable of work must be actively trying to secure employment.
6. The guidelines for assistance shall be \$600.00 a month household income, increasing by \$100.00 per month for each dependent, with paid medical bills offsetting income dollar for dollar. Those who are eligible for assistance can only receive \$400.00 in a calendar year for assistance (unless extreme cases warrant more assistance determined by the Veterans Service Commission). The Veterans Service Commission will help on electric disconnect notices, water disconnect, and gas disconnect. Also, they may help households low on fuel, coal, propane, or wood. Fees for obtaining medical records needed to process compensation and pension claims can also be paid by the office on a case by case basis. Food vouchers can be given in the amount of \$75.00, increasing by \$25.00 for each dependent up to \$150.00. Additional vouchers can be authorized after 30 days if needed. Veterans and dependents moving out of the county may be assisted the same as county residents until they meet the three-month residency requirement of that county.

Any person who is denied assistance under the guidelines will have the right to appear before the Board and plead their case. A form requesting a review before the Board will be signed in the Veterans Service Office.²

² Policy adopted 4-25-94

As there are other agencies today that provide assistance to needy persons, many veterans and/or dependents who formerly could look only to the Veterans Service Commission are eligible for aid under one or more of these agencies. It is required that the veteran and/or dependents utilize these other programs for assistance when appropriate.

Transportation may be provided to veterans who are being treated at the Veterans Administration Medical Centers: Wade Park and Brecksville Division, Cleveland, OH, Pittsburgh, PA, Canton, OH, and Columbus, OH.

The law under which the Veterans Service Commission operates is designed to help those who have served their country honestly and well and now need assistance.

The foregoing qualifications, hinged on honorable military service and on residence do not make an applicant for assistance eligible unless he is "needy", a word which the law does not define. The law does require, however, that the applicant, under penalty of law, disclose any income and assets he may possess. The applicant must sign the application form. Verification of this financial background through investigation provides data on which the caseworker can contemplate the assistance required.

Veterans and others eligible for assistance may be referred to the Veterans Service Commission through a number of different ways. Veterans organizations and social service agencies who hear or know of needy families are several such ways. The usual procedure is for the veteran or other person eligible for aid to report in person to the Veterans Service Office, 100 West Market Street, Cadiz, OH 43907.

The Service Officer records the applicant's name and determines whether or not he/she has been in the office previously. **THE VETERAN'S SERVICE SEPARATION RECORD (DD-214) MUST BE A MATTER OF RECORD BEFORE AN APPLICATION CAN BE INITIATED.** The applicant is given an application to complete which requires basic family and financial data. Copies are made of any documents pertaining to his application. This data is maintained on each case. It is essential that this information be disclosed and maintained up-to-date. Failure to provide this information in compliance with Section 5901.09 (Applications for Assistance) of the Ohio Revised Code will disqualify applicants for assistance through the Veterans Service Commission. Anyone who falsifies such information may be prosecuted under the law or be ineligible for further assistance. There is usually a waiting period to secure data before financial aid can be given. Household income is a prime factor in determining eligibility. The completed application is then submitted to the Veterans Service Commission. The Service Officer can grant emergency assistance, but should contact at least three board members.³

VERIFICATION OF THE FOLLOWING DATA WILL BE REQUIRED FOR CASE RECORDS

1. Proof of residence. Applicant must be a bona fide resident of this county. To be a bona-fide resident, the person has to have a verifiable address, proving they were living in Harrison County at least 90 days. The address should be a number or street address.⁴
2. Marriage and children's birth certificates.

³ Policy adopted 5-23-94

⁴ Policy adopted 7-25-94

3. Medical statements from doctors if the veteran or dependent claim to be ill or disabled, and medical expenses for past 30 days. Copies are made for file.
4. Amount of rent or house payment and utility bills due or paid by claimant.
5. Verification of all household income for past 30 days may be required.
6. Statement of employment and/or earnings from former and/or present employers of husband, wife, and other employable members in the household group.
7. Record of support payments received or paid for children.
8. Rental income statements.
9. Savings, bank accounts, stocks, bonds, and other assets.
10. Signature for release of information from Ohio Bureau of Employment Services, Social Security, Department of Human Services, Housing Urban Development, etc...

GAS VOUCHERS

This office will provide gas vouchers to veterans who are going to V.A. facilities other than the Pittsburgh area VAMC. The vouchers are \$15.00 for travel to the St. Clairsville and New Philadelphia clinics and \$25.00 for travel to Cleveland or Canton. IF a veteran has an appointment in Pittsburgh and chooses not to ride the van, he/she is ineligible for a gas voucher. The DAV provides a van which is scheduled to go to Pittsburgh five days a week for transporting veterans and medically needed aides. *see attached van policy

LIMITS ON REPRESENTATION OF THE HARRISON COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSION AND THE VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER.

The Harrison County Veterans Service Office does not provide representation before the Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA), or the Court of Veterans Appeals (COVA).

It is the recommendation of this office that the veteran or dependents select a service representative with VA Form 21-22 to indicate their power of attorney (POA) preference with one of the four major service representatives or any other representatives of their choice in all claims.

The basic mission of this office is assisting veterans and their eligible dependents in the filing of claims before the Department of Veterans Affairs in the regional office, and the securing of documentation in support of entitlements filed for. All veterans and dependents can expect full claims service for any notice of disagreement or first appeal (VA Form 9) before the Veterans Affairs Regional Office (VARO).

This policy is designed to inform veterans and their dependents of the limits they can expect and the rationale due limited staffing.

COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER

Much of the time, Service Officer functions are performed for veterans and their dependents who are not in need of financial assistance. Many of the veterans and/or their dependents have serious personal problems and may be confused and disturbed. Not all express