

PACIFIC COUNTY VETERANS' ASSISTANCE PROGRAM POLICIES & PROCEDURES

SECTION 1. STATEMENT OF POLICY

The purpose of the Pacific County Veterans' Assistance Program is to provide for the relief of indigent Veterans and their families. The intent of the Veterans' Assistance Program is to provide model programs that benefit Veterans and family members facing financial hardship.

SECTION 2. FUNDS GENERATED

The Veterans' Assistance Program funding is generated from a tax levied by the Pacific County Board of County Commissioners in accordance with RCW 73.08.080.

SECTION 3. PROGRAM ASSISTANCE

Only eligible Veterans and family members of Veterans may receive assistance from the Veterans' Assistance Program. The eligible Veteran or family member must have a financial need and must provide documentation proving their need for assistance from the Program.

SECTION 4. AUDITING AND PAYMENT

All applications received for assistance will be audited to ensure all requirements of the Program are met. Once completed, the application will be submitted for approval to the Chairman of the Board of Pacific County Commissioners. Full board approval is required for requests exceeding allowances specified in Section 10: Types of Financial Assistance, by 20% or more. Upon approval, the application will be forwarded to the Pacific County Auditor's Office for payment(s). Lost or stolen payments may not be reissued. Payment shall be made to an account or vendor in the Veteran or eligible family member's name only.

SECTION 5. MEETING PLACE RENTAL

As authorized by RCW 73.04.080, meeting place rental is allowable for a maximum of \$500 per calendar year to those Veteran organizations that file a proper claim voucher with the Pacific County Auditor's Office.

SECTION 6. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

A. ELIGIBILITY

In order to receive the types of financial assistance as provided in Section 10, up to the maximum per type per calendar year from the Veterans' Assistance Program, the Veteran or family member must meet the eligibility criteria outlined in this section. Veterans or eligible family members must provide documentation verifying eligibility for assistance.

B. VETERAN AND FAMILY MEMBER STATUS

To receive assistance from the Veterans' Assistance Program, an applicant must either be a Veteran as defined in RCW 73.08.005(5)(a)[, RCW 41.04.005, or RCW 41.04.007,] or a family member as defined in RCW 73.08.005(2):

RCW 73.08.005

(5)(a) "Veteran" means:

(i) A person who served in the active military, naval, or air service; a member of the women's air forces service pilots during World War II; a United States documented merchant mariner with service aboard an oceangoing vessel operated by the war shipping administration; the office of defense transportation, or their agents, from December 7, 1941, through December 31, 1946; or a civil service crewmember with service aboard a United States army transport service or United States naval transportation service vessel in oceangoing service from December 7, 1941, through December 31, 1946, who meets one of the following criteria:

(A) Served on active duty for at least one hundred eighty days and who was released with an honorable discharge;

(B) Received an honorable or general under honorable characterization of service with a medical reason for separation for a condition listed as non-existed prior to service, regardless of number of days served; or

(C) Received an honorable discharge and has received a rating for a service-connected disability from the United States department of veterans' affairs regardless of number of days served;

(ii) A current member honorably serving in the armed forces reserve or national guard who has been activated by presidential call up for purposes other than training;

(iii) A former member of the armed forces reserve or national guard who has fulfilled his or her initial military service obligation and was released with an honorable discharge;

(iv) A former member of the armed forces reserve or national guard who does not have over one hundred seventy-nine days of active duty service, but meets the federal definition of a veteran having completed twenty years of service.

RCW 73.08.005

(5)(b) At the discretion of the county legislative authority and in consultation with the veterans' advisory board, counties may expand eligibility for the Veterans assistance fund as the county determines necessary, which may include serving veterans with additional discharge characterizations.

RCW 73.08.005

(2) "Family" the spouse or domestic partner, surviving spouse, surviving domestic partner, and dependent children of a living or deceased veteran, or a servicemember who was killed in the line of duty regardless of the number of days served.

C. RESIDENCY

Applicants must have been residents of Pacific County for at least **four months** immediately prior to seeking assistance from the Veterans' Assistance Program. Post office boxes cannot be used to establish residency.

D. INDIGENCE

Applicants must be indigent. One or more of the following definitions shall be used to determine if an applicant is indigent as defined by RCW 73.08.005:

1. Receiving one of the following types of public assistance: Temporary assistance for needy families, aged, blind, or disabled assistance benefits, pregnant women assistance benefits, poverty-related Veterans' benefits, food stamps or food stamp benefits transferred electronically, refugee resettlement benefits, Medicaid, medical care services, or supplemental security income
2. Receiving an annual income, after taxes, of up to two hundred percent or less of the current federally established poverty level, or receiving an annual income not exceeding a higher qualifying income established by the county legislative authority
3. Unable to pay reasonable costs for shelter, food, utilities, and transportation because his or her available funds are insufficient

Income includes all funds received by the applicant and their spouse or domestic partner, and all other individuals who will benefit from the assistance.

Examples of included income, which must be reported on the Veterans' Assistance Program application for the purpose of determining income eligibility, are as follows:

- money, wages and salaries after any deductions;
- net receipts from self-employment;
- savings;
- worker's compensation;
- CDs, annuities, other financial instruments;
- unemployment compensation;
- child support;
- social security other than supplemental security income;
- foster child payments;
- tax refunds, gifts, loans, lump-sum inheritance, one-time insurance payments or compensation for injury or death;
- dependency and indemnity compensation for service-connected death;
- educational assistance benefits (including Veterans' educational assistance benefits not paid directly to the school for tuition and books), vocational rehabilitation subsistence allowance, and work-study benefits (including Veterans' work-study benefits);
- alimony;
- Veterans' compensation and disability
- Military family allotments or other regular support from an absent family member or someone not living in the household;
- Retirement;
- pension (including Veterans' pension) and annuities;
- insurance payments;
- dividends, interest, and periodic receipts from estates or trusts;

Proof of **ALL** income must be attached to the Veterans Relief Application

Applicants who report no income for the previous 31 days must provide additional documentation showing their means of support and verification showing they have applied for assistance from other government agencies and social service programs deemed appropriate by the Veterans Assistance Program staff.

SECTION 7. ASSISTANCE PROVIDED

A. APPLICANT REQUIREMENTS

1. Complete the Application for Veteran's Relief.
2. Have received an honorable discharge
3. Attach a copy of your Official Letter of Discharge or DD-214.
4. Attach the original unpaid invoices and/or bills. Payment will not be issued to the Veteran.
5. Provide documentation of all income.
6. Provide all supporting documentation proving eligibility for assistance.

B. VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER (VS0) REQUIREMENTS

1. Review Veteran's Relief Application for eligibility and completeness.
2. Ensure Applicant Requirements in Section A. above are complete.
3. Submit the completed Veterans Relief Fund Packet (provided by Pacific County) to the Board of County Commissioners for auditing and payment. Please note: Incomplete applications will delay funding.

Authorized Veterans Service Officer signatures of any post, camp, chapter of any national organization of Veterans, or accredited through Department of Veteran Affairs, are required to be placed on file with the Clerk of the Board

SECTION 8. CERTIFICATION

Applicants applying for assistance are required to sign a statement certifying that the information provided is complete and accurate and that if discovered to be otherwise the applicant shall be denied assistance from the Program.

SECTION 9. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Financial assistance may be provided to eligible Veterans and eligible family members to assist with needs such as rent, food, transportation, utilities, burial/cremation, natural disaster and miscellaneous assistance as outlined in Section 10: Types of Financial Assistance. It is the intent of this program to provide a maximum entitlement if eligible. Funds will be disbursed based on the allowances specific to the type of assistance requested.

SECTION 10. TYPES OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Applicants are eligible for up to \$2,000.00 assistance for Sections A-F and up to \$2,000.00 for Section G. Additional financial assistance for emergent situations may be available as outlined in Section 4: Auditing and Payment along with supporting documentation and statement of need submitted by the Veteran Service Officer.

A. RENT OR MORTGAGE ASSISTANCE

Eligible Veterans or family members may receive assistance with rent, first and last month's rent, mortgage payments, or nonrefundable deposits on the applicant's residence.

The applicant must provide a written rental agreement or documents proving ownership of the property. The Veteran or eligible family member must be able to sustain rent or mortgage payments in the months to come.

Payments for rental assistance will be paid directly to the property owner, property management company or the owner's legal representative. Payments will not be made to family members.

Rent payments will only be paid for the applicant's primary residence. Veterans or eligible family members who share a residence with the property owner may receive half of the applicant's share of rent in a twelve-month period of time.

Mortgage payments will be made directly to the mortgage lender and will only be paid for the applicant's primary residence.

B. UTILITIES

Eligible Veterans or family members may receive assistance with utilities.

Eligible Veterans or family members may receive assistance with utilities, including power, water, garbage and propane. Other utility services such as cable or internet services will not be paid.

The applicant must provide a utility bill, a shut-off notice or letter of impending disconnection from the power, water or garbage company showing the current amount owed. Payment shall be made directly to the utility company and may include shut-off and reconnection fees.

Payment shall be made to an account in the Veteran or eligible family member's name only. Utilities shall only be paid for the residence where the Veteran or eligible family member currently resides.

C. TRANSPORTATION

Eligible Veterans or family members may receive assistance with transportation.

Daily or monthly bus passes may be provided for transportation within Pacific County. Bus passes may be provided for transportation outside the county for visits to qualified local United States Department of Veterans Affairs' medical facilities.

Assistance may be provided for vehicle payments and will be made directly to the lender. The applicant must provide billing invoice or statement proving ownership of the vehicle. The Veteran or eligible family member must be able to sustain vehicle payments in the months to come.

D. FOOD

Eligible Veterans or family members may receive assistance with food to participating grocery outlets located in Pacific County. Payments will not be made directly to the Veteran.

E. NATURAL DISASTER ASSISTANCE

Eligible Veterans may receive assistance for those who have suffered damage or loss as a result of a natural or catastrophic disaster or other event declared an emergency by state or local officials.

A natural or catastrophic disaster is defined as an act of god, including but not limited to hurricanes, tornadoes, wind storms, ice storms, earthquakes, volcanoes, floods, fire, mud slides, and disease outbreaks. Vehicular accidents as a result of icy, or snow-covered roads, are not included, or covered under this type of assistance.

Payments of natural disaster assistance are granted only when necessary for the health or wellbeing of the Veteran or their family. In all cases, this fund will be the "last" payer. In no case may entitlements be used to pay for services, materials, or goods that are reimbursable under an applicant's insurance policies or a state or federal disaster relief fund.

F. MISCELLANEOUS ASSISTANCE

Eligible Veterans may receive assistance for those who have experienced unforeseen or emergent situations and when not covered by any other Veterans Assistance Relief options and only when necessary for the health or wellbeing of the Veteran or their family.

Miscellaneous assistance may be provided if reasonably necessary and bears favorable recommendation with a letter of necessity from the authorized submitting Veteran Service Officer. The letter of necessity should include the reason for the assistance and how the assistance will be of benefit to the Veteran or their family, along with an unpaid invoice or bill for requested miscellaneous assistance.

G. BURIAL/CREMATION ASSISTANCE

As a last resource, eligible Veterans or family members may receive assistance up to **\$2,000** provided for the burial or cremation of any deceased indigent Veteran, widow of indigent Veteran or dependent children of an indigent Veteran, who dies without leaving means sufficient to defray funeral expenses. Documentation including a death certificate, Official Letter of Discharge or DD 214, invoice from the mortuary/funeral home showing the burial or cremation expenses, benefits received from other sources for burial/cremation and any out-of-pocket expenses paid must be provided in order to receive assistance from the Veterans' Assistance Program. The family member requesting assistance that all other sources have been exhausted must sign a declaration.

SECTION 11. DENIAL OF SERVICES

Pacific County has the right to deny applications that do not meet the requirements included in this policy.

SECTION 12. FRAUD, CRIMINAL ACTIVITY OR MISUSE OF FUNDS

If it is determined that the applicant provided false information or that fraud, criminal activity or misuse of funds has occurred, the Veteran or family member may be ineligible to receive assistance from the Veterans' Assistance Program for up to 10 years. Pacific County will seek to prosecute individuals where there is evidence of fraudulent claims for assistance.

SECTION 13. SEVERABILITY

If any provision of these policies and procedures or their application to any particular person or circumstance is held to be invalid, illegal or unenforceable, the remaining provisions and their application to other persons or circumstances shall not be affected.

SECTION 14. PACIFIC COUNTY VETERAN'S ASSISTANCE PROGRAM INDIGENT GUIDELINES

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services supplies indigent guidelines used to determine financial eligibility for this program in the Federal Register. The guidelines are updated annually and may be found by visiting <https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines>. To ensure your indigence, we highly recommend that you refer to these guidelines when applying for the Veterans Assistance Program.

PACIFIC COUNTY VETERAN'S ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
INDIGENT GUIDELINES

2024

Persons in Family/Household	200% of Poverty Annual/Monthly	Poverty Guidelines
1	\$30,120/\$2,510	\$15,060
2	\$40,880/\$3,407	\$20,440
3	\$51,640/\$4,303	\$25,820
4	\$62,400/\$5,200	\$31,200
5	\$73,160/\$6,097	\$36,580
6	\$83,920/\$6,993	\$41,960
7	\$94,680/\$7,890	\$47,340
8	\$105,440/\$8,787	\$52,720

For families/households with more than 8 persons, add \$5,380 for each additional person.