

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL
FOR ADMINISTRATION OF THE
VETERANS RELIEF FUND
OF
CLARK COUNTY

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References: RCW 73.08 Veterans Relief, Clark County Ordinance Title 2 Administration and Personnel, chapter 2.29 Veterans Relief, Veterans Resource Committee By-laws.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL VETERANS RELIEF FUND

I. INTRODUCTION

- I.1 Overview: This document has been developed to provide guidance for the use of the Clark County Veterans Relief Fund (VRF). The VRF was developed to provide assistance to indigent veterans and their families. The fund was developed in accordance with Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 73.08 and Clark County Ordinance Title 2 Administration and Personnel Chapter 2.29 Veterans Relief.

Assistance from the fund is provided through contracted service officers and community service organizations.

Contracting for the use of the VRF is the responsibility of Clark County through the Community Services Department with the advice of the Veterans Resource Committee. Clark County Board of Commissioners has statutory oversight for the use and expenditures of the fund.

- I.2 Sources of Funds: Washington State law and the Clark County code have established the Veterans Relief Fund as a steady source of tax dollars to be utilized for the needs of indigent veterans and their families. A portion of property tax collected in Clark County is earmarked for the VRF.

- I.3 Clark County Veterans Resource Committee: The Clark County Veterans Resource Committee is an advisory group appointed by the Clark County Board of Commissioners to serve the veterans of Clark County. The committee is made up of members of Veterans organizations within Clark County. The purpose of the Veterans Resource Committee is to serve and act in the best interest of all veterans, in cooperation with Clark County and the State of Washington. The Resource Committee is also the elected relief committee for each of the veteran's organizations.

Members of the committee are registered with the Clark County Auditor through a veteran's service organization in October of each year. The registration for the committee is valid for the year from January through December. Each registered member has one vote on the committee.

- I.4 Contracted Services: The County, with the advice of the VRC, selects contracted organizations through the County's procurement process at least once every three years. The County is responsible for all contracts issued through this process.

- I.5 Service Administration: Eligible veterans may receive assistance through contracted agencies/individuals/organizations. Assistance must be provided to needy individuals without discrimination. Agencies/Individuals/organizations agree to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, rules, and ordinances relating to nondiscrimination. Two types of services are provided:

- Direct emergency relief through a veteran's service officer.
- Ongoing support and assistance through contracted agencies/organizations/individuals that provide community services for indigent people.

2. ELIGIBILITY

- 2.1 Use of Veterans Relief Fund: Eligibility is required for any service provided through the VRF. Eligibility for use of the VRF is determined by the Veterans Service Officer or contracted agency/organization/individuals.
- 2.2 Service Requirements: “Veteran” includes all persons qualified under RCW 41.04.007
- 2.3 Documentation of Veterans Status: Documentation includes DD-214, VA Statement of Service (SOS), or if discharged prior to 1950, a Certificate of Discharge. The Veterans Service Officer or agency staff will assist the veteran in completing a request to receive a certified copy of their DD-214 as necessary.
- 2.4 Family Member: A family member of a veteran is defined as a wife, husband, domestic partner, veteran’s minor children (under 18 years of age, or under 23 if they are a full-time student and the veteran is the natural parent, adoptive parent, stepparent, a person who has signed an affidavit acknowledging paternity, or determination, finding, decree, or order for support by an agency of this or another state), widow, widower, or surviving domestic partner.
- 2.5 Domestic Partner is defined at Title 26, Domestic Relations, of the Revised Code of Washington 2008 and Second Substitute House Bill 3104 (2008).
- 2.6 Indigence: Eligible veterans are considered to be indigent if they meet the following definition:
 - 2.7.1 One-Hundred Fifty Percent of Poverty: Receiving an annual (household/family) income, after taxes, not to exceed one-hundred fifty percent (150%) of the current federally established poverty level, Documentation to establish income may include but is not limited to copies of last three-month’s check stubs, bank statements, and/or most recent income tax returns.
- 2.7 Washington State Residency: Veterans or families of deceased veterans must show proof of residency in the State of Washington, for at least 12 consecutive months preceding the date of application for relief. Washington Driver license, ID card, utility or other bills, copies of applications for public assistance, rental agreements and bank statements.
- 2.8 County Residency: Applicants must reside in Clark County or shall show proof of moving into Clark County at the date of the application. Documentation may include, but is not limited to, Washington Drivers License, ID card, utility or other bills, copies of applications for public assistance, rental agreements, and bank statements.
- 2.9 Falsification: Any person receiving assistance through the Veterans Resource Fund, and found to have falsified their personal income or not disclosed all income for purposes of receiving assistance from the VRF, shall become ineligible for any assistance based on their current application for one year, and can be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

3. DIRECT EMERGENCY RELIEF (through Veterans Service Officer)

- 3.1 Overview: Clark County utilizes a contracted Veterans Service Officer (VSO) as one method to provide assistance to eligible veterans. Each Veterans Service Officer has access to information regarding community resources, other counties veteran's relief fund programs and the Veterans Administration. The VSO is charged with assisting the veteran respectfully and in a timely manner, while ensuring that the funds are used only when other resources have been exhausted. (Attachment B – Application)
 - 3.1.1 Assistance through other Contracted agencies: Veterans may not receive assistance through the Service Officer if they are receiving assistance from any other contracted agency through the Veterans Relief Fund.
- 3.2 Method of Payment: Emergency Assistance is to provide through a check payable directly to vendors/landlords/service agencies on behalf of the veteran. Checks/vouchers are issued within two business days of eligibility determination.
- 3.3. Documentation of Costs: Costs will be documented by invoice, purchase order, receipt or bill.
- 3.4. Rent Assistance: Payment of one month's rent in a 24 consecutive month period.
 - 3.4.1 Rental Agreement: Veteran must have a document stating rental agreement with the property owner, property management firm, or lease holder, and
 - 3.4.2 Eviction: Veteran must show proof of imminent danger of eviction including but not limited to an eviction notice, or notice to vacate. The assistance cannot be used to delay eviction; the veteran must be able to sustain rent in the ensuing months.
 - 3.4.3 Rent Limit: The maximum one month rental assistance may not exceed current HUD Fair Market Rent (Attachment A).
 - 3.4.4 Shared Dwelling: In case of veteran sharing a dwelling with another person (not a family member as described in Section 2.4) the rental amount will be prorated by the number of people living in the housing.
 - 3.4.5 Temporary Lodging Assistance: A homeless veteran may receive lodging assistance for up to three months prior to admittance into the approved course of treatment. Treatment programs must be state or federally certified. Veteran must show proof of acceptance into treatment program.
 - 3.4.6 Veteran must have an income that exceeds the gross monthly rent by 150 percent (150%) as determined on the Rent Assistance Calculation form (Attachment D – Rent Assistance Calculation Form).
- 3.5 Heating Assistance: Veteran may receive up to \$750 per 12 month period to be used for payments for heating. The assistance is available only for the utilities used during the months of October through April. Veteran must show evidence of denial of assistance through Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) or other energy assistance program.
 - 3.5.1 Utilities Notice: Veteran must have a disconnect or final notice from a utility company.

- 3.5.2 Alternative Heating Methods: In the case of wood, coal, or heating oil, a voucher can be issued for up to the maximum of \$750 per 12-month period.
- 3.5.3 Shared Dwelling: In the case of veteran sharing a dwelling with another person (not a family member as described in section 2.4) the heating assistance costs will be prorated by the number of people living in the house.
- 3.6 Food Assistance: Veteran may receive up to \$220* per 12 month period to be used for emergency food assistance. Veteran may not receive food vouchers if currently receiving food stamps.
- 3.7 Transportation Assistance: Veteran may receive one all zone bus pass (not an express pass) or up to the equivalent value in gasoline per month (not to exceed three months in a 12 month period) to be used for transportation assistance for appointments to medical or treatment services, social services (SSI, SSDI, DSHAS) or job interview.
 - 3.7.1 Gasoline: Veteran must show proof of vehicle ownership, insurance, and a valid operator's license.
 - 3.7.2 Public Transportation: If the veteran does not own a vehicle, bus passes may be issued.
- 3.8 Prescription Coverage: Veteran may receive up to \$679* per 12 month period to be used for doctor ordered medication. Prescription must be in veteran's name with a price quote from a licensed pharmacy.
- 3.9 Natural Disaster Assistance: Veteran may receive up to \$566* per 12 month period as a result of damage or loss of personal property due to a natural or catastrophic disaster. A natural or catastrophic disaster is defined as act of God including, but not limited to tornadoes, wind storms, ice storms, earthquakes, volcanoes, floods, fire, and mud slides. Vehicular accidents as a result of icy, snow-covered, or flooded roads are not included.
- 3.10 Burial or Cremation Assistance: Families of qualified veterans may receive up to \$1,399* to assist with the costs of burial or cremation of the veteran. The Veterans Fund can be used to supplement the cost of the burial or cremation only, if all other resources have been exhausted.
- 3.11 Clothing/Tools Assistance: Purchase of clothing and/or tools necessary for a veteran to become or remain employed not to exceed \$215 per 12 month period.
- 3.12 Other Assistance: Veterans may receive the following assistance not covered under the above sections up to \$111* per 12-month period.
 - 3.12.1 Auto Repair: Repair or parts necessary for the veteran to seek work, attend medical appointments, or maintain employment.
 - 3.12.2 Appliances: Purchase of necessary appliances or repair thereto (refrigerators, furnaces, ranges, etc.).
 - 3.12.3 Utilities: Payment for utilities such as electricity, sewer and water.

- 3.13 Consumer Price Index Changes: Food Assistance (3.6) Transportation Assistance (3.7), Prescription Coverage (3.8), Natural Disaster Assistance (3.9), Burial or Cremation Assistance (3.10), Clothing Assistance (3.11), and Other Assistance (3.12) shall be increased or decreased annually based on the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index change for the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan area. **Last Updated March 10, 2009 with 2008 Consumer Price Index annual change for Portland-Salem OR - WA*

4. VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER

- 4.1 General: The Veterans Service Officer (VSO) is hired under contract with a qualified Veterans service or state recognized organization that provides relief and services and support to area veterans. The VSO is responsible for determining eligibility and issuing vouchers/checks for emergency assistance.
- 4.2 Certification: The VSO shall be certified as such by a nationally recognized organization such as the Veterans Administration, American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, or other veteran's organization that has the ability to provide certification.
- 4.3 Screening: the VSO shall screen each individual applying for assistance and determine eligibility and degree of need based on the eligibility and limits of assistance describe in this document.
- 4.4 Community Resources: The VSO will make every effort to collaborate and coordinate with other community services such as food banks, shelters, Veterans Service organizations, state-funded services and services at the Veterans Administration.
- 4.5 Reporting: The VSO shall maintain all records for each veteran who applies for services. Information shall include name, social security number, address, eligibility documentation, amount and use of relief funds. All records must be kept for a minimum of five years.

5. APPEAL PROCESS

- 5.1 Filing an Appeal: the Veterans Resource Committee is responsible for hearing any appeal or dispute of Veterans Service Officer's decision. The Veterans Service Officer shall determine if each application is in compliance with the Clark County Code and Policies and Procedures for the Veterans Relief Fund. Any appeals or disputes of the VSO's decision must be made within 15 business days of the decision. Appeals shall be made in writing, include all supporting documentation and be mailed to:

Veterans Resource Committee (Appeals)
c/o Clark County Department of Community Services Veterans Program Coordinator
PO Box 5000
Vancouver, WA 98666-5000

- 5.2 Determination: A written determination as to the outcome of the appeal will be forwarded to the veteran within 15 business days of receipt. All committee's decisions on such appeals will be final. All copies of appeals and determination must be sent to the County Department of Community Services. The written decision of the Veterans Resource Appeals Committee will be mailed to the appellant within seven business days of Appeals Committee action. (Attachment C – Appeal Form)

- 5.3 Due Process: Section 5.1 and 5.2 in no way limit an applicant's constitutional right of Due Process of Law. If an applicant desires to continue their appeal beyond the Veterans Resource Committee, they have the every right to pursue legal action within the judicial system; however the venue shall be Clark County.

6. CLARK COUNTY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 6.1 Fiscal Management: The County Department of Community Services acts as the fiscal agent for the Veterans Resource Committee and provides the following assistance.
 - 6.1.1 Monthly Reimbursements: Process monthly reimbursements to the contracted agencies, including VSO, for the cost of assistance provided to the veteran.
 - 6.1.2 Oversight: Provide oversight to ensure accountability of funds. County will make a monthly review of the submitted invoices/checks from the subcontractors to determine if funds are appropriately spent.
 - 6.1.3 Annual Review: Work with the County Auditor's Office to schedule and perform an annual review of the Veterans Relief Fund.
 - 6.1.4 Annual Budget: Develop an annual budget, and process budget adjustments through the Supplemental Appropriation hearing process.
 - 6.1.5 Review Transactions: Compile revenue and expenditure documentation: perform internal auditing of vouchers and other expenses for compliance with state law and fiscal agency policies and procedures.
 - 6.1.6 Financial Statements: Provide fiscal information to the Veterans Resource Committee, as requested, but a minimum provide quarterly financial statements and annual financial reports.
- 6.2 Administrative Assistance: The County Department of Community Services provides administrative assistance to the Veterans Resource Committee, including the following:
 - 6.2.1 Procurement Process: Prepare an RFP for the Veterans Assistance Fund, following the county's procurement procedures. Ensure that all documentation is on file with the County's Purchasing Department. Assist with developing proposal rating sheets.
 - 6.2.2 Contracting: Prepare subcontracts, reviewed by the Veterans Resource Committee, that allocate funds to assistance organizations awarded subcontracts through the County procurement process.
 - 6.2.3 Monitoring: Provide subcontractor monitoring following the County's risk assessment process. Ensure oversight and documentation of organizations that make assistance determinations and process costs charged to the Veterans Assistance Fund. Monitoring includes ensuring that direct service providers have standard performance practices in accordance with county code, state, and federal laws.
 - 6.2.4 Planning: Assist the Veterans Resource Committee with evaluations regarding the effectiveness of the programs.

6.2.5 Indirect/ and indirect costs: Incurred in the administration of the Veterans Fund as authorized by RCW 73.08.080 and Clark County Code 2.29.095 Rule 7.

7. SERVICES THROUGH CONTRACTED AGENCY

- 7.1 Overview: Clark County utilizes contracts with area agencies to provide assistance to eligible veterans. Each agency has access to information regarding additional community resources and the Veterans Service Officer.
- 7.2 Eligibility: Agency staff will insure that a veteran meets the eligibility criteria outlined in Section 2.
- 7.3 Basic Agency Requirements: A contracted agency must have the following information:
- Washington State Tax Registration Number.
 - Employer Identification Number/Social Security Number
 - Business License.
 - Proof of professional/general liability and employee fidelity insurance
 - Process to conduct criminal background checks on staff that have contact with the public.
 - Proof that agency's facility/program location is ADA compliant.
 - Provide for security of veterans information.
 - Policies and Procedures approved and adopted by the agency's Board of Directors
 - A copy of the most recent financial statements, audit, or review (including the management letter from the CPA) or alternately, if the agency does not receive an annual audit or review, the most recent financial statements for the agency.
 - Information on ability to repay any disallowed costs.
 - A list of all members on organization's governing board.
 - A copy of the Agency's bylaws.
- 7.4 Reporting: The contracted agency shall maintain all records for each veteran who applies for services. Information shall include: name, social security number, address, along with address of service, type and amount of service.

Attachment A

HUD Fair Market Rent (FMR)

Rent (Monthly)	Studio	1	2	3	4	5	6
Fair Market Rent	\$565	655	757	1,102	1,324	1,523	1,721

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, April 12, 2008

2009 HHS Poverty Guidelines for Clark County
Annual Income by Family Size (after taxes)

Persons in Family	150 Percent of Poverty	
	Annual	Monthly
1	\$16,245	\$1,354
2	21,855	1,821
3	27,465	2,289
4	33,075	2,756
5	38,685	3,224
6	44,295	3,691
7	49,905	4,159
8	55,515	4,626

For each additional family member add \$3,740.

Source: Federal Register, Vol. 74, No. 14, January 23, 2009, p. 4199.

Consumer Price Index – Portland – Salem OR-WA

Year	Amount
2005	196.0
2006	201.1
2007	208.5
2008	215.4

Attachment B

**Clark County Veterans Assistance Program
1601 E Fourth Plain Boulevard
Building 17, Room A141
Vancouver, WA 98661
(360) 397-8478**

APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Section 1 RESIDENCY

Applicants must submit a copy of a valid WA Driver's License or Identification Card or some other proof of Washington Residency. Applicants must be a WA resident for at least one year prior to application.					
CURRENT RESIDENCE			MAILING ADDRESS (if different from Residence)		
Street Address		Apt. #	Street Address		PO Box # Apt. #
City	State	Zip Code	City	State	Zip Code
Telephone Number			If mailing address is different from residence, please explain:		
NOTE: If you are applying for subsistence, you MUST have a street address for mailing purposes.					

Section 2 VETERAN INFORMATION

SSN		
Last Name	First Name	MI
Date of Birth	Place of Birth (City & State)	
Date of Death (if deceased)	Place of Death (City & State)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced <input type="checkbox"/> Separated, living apart <input type="checkbox"/> Never married		

Section 3 SPOUSE/WIDOW INFORMATION

SSN		
Last Name	First Name	MI
Date of Birth	Place of Birth (City & State)	
Date of Death (if deceased)	Place of Death (City & State)	

Section 4 DEPENDENT/OTHER HOUSEHOLD MEMBER INFORMATION

List all other people living in the home even if you are not applying for benefits for them. Attach a separate sheet if necessary. A social security number and birth certificate are required for anyone applying for assistance

Name (Last, First, MI)	SSN	Date of Birth	Sex	Relationship to you

Section 5 HOUSEHOLD INCOME CURRENTLY RECEIVED OR EXPECTED

Note: You must list ALL money from ANY source. List the GROSS amount. If you are not yet receiving income, but have applied, list the date you applied.

Source of Income	Veteran		Spouse	
	Amount Currently Receiving	Date Applied For	Amount Currently Receiving	Date Applied For
Social Security, any type				
SS received on behalf of dependents				
VA Compensation				
VA Pension				
Military Retirement				
Public Assistance (MFIP, GA, MSA)				
Private Pension/Other Retirement				
Child Support Received				
Spousal Support Received				
Worker's Compensation				
Unemployment Insurance				
Earned Wages/Employment Income (see Sections 6 & 7)				
Self Employment Income (see Sections 6 & 7)				
Rental Income				
Short Term and/or Long Term Disability				
IWT and/or CWT from VAMC				
ANY other Money from ANY Source (Explain in CVSO Remarks)				
Total Household Income				

Section 6

VETERAN EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

You must provide the following requested information and list your monthly wages in Section 5 above in "Earned Wages/Employment Income." **If employed, you must submit copies of your last 3 pay checks, stubs or advisories.** If you are not currently employed, you must provide this information for your most recent employer.

Are you currently employed? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	What is your usual occupation?	
What is the date you last worked?	How often are you paid?	
Name of Employer	Telephone Number	
Address of Employer	City & State	Zip Code
Are you self-employed? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	What is your business?	
Do you receive any continuing income from the business? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	If yes, what amount?	

If you are self-employed, you must list income from **all** sources under "Self Employment Income" in Section 5 above. You must furnish a copy of your most recent Form 1040 with the appropriate schedules for the business and provide the business account information in Section 8 below.

Section 7

SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

You must provide the following requested information and list your monthly wages in Section 5 above in "Earned Wages/Employment Income." **If employed, you must submit copies of your last 3 pay checks, stubs or advisories.** If you are not currently employed, you must provide this information for your most recent employer.

Are you currently employed? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	What is your usual occupation?	
What is the date you last worked?	How often are you paid?	
Name of Employer	Telephone Number	
Address of Employer	City & State	Zip Code
Are you self-employed? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	What is your business?	
Do you receive any continuing income from the business? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	If yes, what amount?	

If you are self-employed, you must list income from **all** sources under "Self Employment Income" in Section 5 above. You must furnish a copy of your most recent Form 1040 with the appropriate schedules for the business and provide the business account information in Section 8 below.

Section 8

HOUSEHOLD FINANCIAL RESOURCES & LIQUID ASSETS

Liquid assets include checking and savings accounts, CDs IRAs, 401Ks and similar resources. You must include any business or self-employment accounts. You must submit copies of your most recent bank statement for each account.

Type of Account	Account Number	Current Balance	Name, address and phone number of financial institution

Section 9 COUNTY VETERAN SERVICE OFFICER ADDITIONAL REMARKS

Use this space for any additional information, comments, recommendations, etc.

Section 10 AFFIDAVIT

Both the veteran and spouse must read and initial the following:

“income” means earned and unearned income from any source, including windfalls, income tax refunds, property tax refunds, and rebates, reduced by amounts paid or withheld for federal and state income taxes, and social security taxes.

_____ / _____ I have reported **ALL** money received and expected to be received from **ALL** sources.

_____ / _____ I state that all of the information that I have provided on this application is true, correct and complete and that I have not withheld nor misrepresented any information.

It is my understanding that access to this information will be provided to the Clark County Veterans Resource Committee. No other use, not specifically authorized by law, will be made of this information without my prior written consent. I understand that I am under no obligation to supply the information requested, however, since eligibility cannot be determined without providing such information, the consequences of such refusal would make me ineligible.

Veteran's Signature	Date Signed	Spouse's Signature	Date Signed
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Attachment D
Rent Assistance Calculator Form

Client: _____

Rental Address: _____

Average total monthly household income for last three months:	\$
Gross monthly rent:	\$
150% of gross monthly rent (calculated)	\$

Average total household income for last three months exceeds 150% of gross monthly rent?	Yes/No
--	---------------

Number of bedrooms:		Fair Market	Rent	\$
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If average total household income for the last three months exceeds 150% of the gross rent, the veteran is eligible to rent assistance.

Rental assistance cannot exceed fair market rent adjusted for number of bedrooms.

Service Officer signature

Date

Financial Verification

Is veteran on any public assistance?
(Document if Yes)

If no, is there income less than 150% of poverty after taxes?
(Document with needed documentation)