



**Story County Commission of Veterans Affairs**  
**Brett D. McLain, Director**  
Story County Human Services Center  
126 S. Kellogg Ave. Suite 001, Ames, Iowa 50010

Ph. 515-956-2626 Fax 515-956-2627  
www.storycountylowa.Gov  
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## Story County Commission of Veterans Affairs Monthly Meeting

Date: May 4, 2020 @ 11:30 am

### Conference Call

- a. Dial 918-221-0224
- b. Enter the meeting ID when prompted: 2225929465#

1. Call to Order @11:30 am by Commission Chair
2. Pledge to the Flag
3. Guests: None
4. Review copy of April meeting minutes, vote then post:
5. Note: Commission Organizational meeting, June for FY-21 chair, secretary -members
6. Certification and approval of claims
7. Director's Monthly Report
8. **New Business**
  - a. Department Mission Statement: Commission
  - b. Gift Card Policy - Commission
  - c. Veterans Benefits Manual Policy - Commission
  - d. Burial Guidelines Policy - Commission
  - e. Appointment letter July 1, 2020 – June 30 2021 for Director Story County VA –  
Commission Chair
  - f. NACVSO – June 2020 - Brett

g. Reusable Red Bag Program – May 2020 - Brett

**9. Old Business**

a. Supermarket

1. Date: (November 13, 2020 The Plex 9-2)

b. Hometown outreach programs: attentive agenda: May 20 Slater, May 27  
Gilbert, June 3 Huxley,

c. County VA rent income threshold study - Board of Supervisors Agenda May 5,  
2020.

d. Commission Remarks.

e. Next Meeting in June \_\_\_\_\_ 2020.

10. Motion to Adjourn.

**Note:** QT reports are due in Auditors Office January, April, July, and October



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May 4, 2020

TO: Story County Commission of Veterans Affairs

FROM: Story County Veterans Affairs Director

RE: Gift Card Policy

From time to time Story County Veterans Affairs receives donated gift cards from non-profit organizations and private donors.

These gift cards are then given to Veterans and Surviving Spouses who contact the office with a need for assistance of a gift card.

Gift cards we receive are for gas, food, and supplies.

This Gift Card Policy would include Story County Veterans and Surviving Spouses for eligibility.

Our gift cards are in increments of \$20 or \$25 each.

The recipient of our gift cards must be a resident of Story County and not a transient.

The frequency to receive a gift card is two gift cards per fiscal quarter and no more than six gift cards per fiscal year.

This policy will be effective on July 1, 2020.

This policy expires on June 30, 2021.

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Story County VA Commission Chair

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Date

# STORY COUNTY VETERAN BENEFITS MANUAL

- I. General Provisions
- II. Eligibility of a Veteran and Eligible Family Member(s)
- III. Administration
- IV. Guidelines for Investigation and Determination of Eligibility
- V. Requirements for Receiving Assistance
- VI. Guideline Expenditures
- VII. Appeal

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## I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Chapter 35B of the Code of Iowa outlines the legal basis for the County's Commission of Veteran Affairs. In Story County, the Veterans Affairs Director administers the Veterans Affairs Program, under the general supervision of the Veterans Affairs Commission. Temporary benefits are granted for **two months in a 12-month period** to indigent Veterans and eligible family members. Story County Commission of Veterans Affairs emphasizes that benefits are for the indigent, on a temporary basis. A County pension program is not available. We assist one month at a time. An application must be filled out for each month with a maximum of 15 calendar days for completion.

## II. ELIGIBILITY OF A VETERAN AND ELIGIBLE FAMILY MEMBER(S)

Veteran assistance is temporary aid to needy Veterans and/or their **surviving spouse or eligible dependents** when the Veteran meets all of the following criteria:

- A. Has legal residence in Story County for the last 90 consecutive days;
- B. Has been discharged from the Armed Forces under "Honorable" conditions;
- C. Is a Veteran as defined by State of Iowa Code 35.1
- D. Served 90 consecutive days of full-time active federal duty, not counting training;
  - 1. Net income will be the aggregate of all income of household members (pensions, compensations, railroad retirement, social security, retirement pensions, 401K, child support, alimony, assistance from family members, worker's compensation, etc.) earned and unearned income.
  - 2. Medical expenses and prescriptions, paid in the previous month will be deducted from net income.

## **“Veteran” means any of the following:**

*a.* A resident of this state who served in the Armed Forces of the United States at any time during the following dates, and who was discharged under honorable conditions:

- (1) World War I from April 6, 1917, through November 11, 1918.
- (2) Occupation of Germany from November 12, 1918, through July 11, 1923.
- (3) American expeditionary forces in Siberia from November 12, 1918, through April 30, 1920.
- (4) Second Haitian suppression of insurrections from 1919 through 1920.
- (5) Second Nicaragua campaign with marines or navy in Nicaragua or on combatant ships from 1926 through 1933.
- (6) Yangtze service with navy and marines in Shanghai or in the Yangtze valley from 1926 through 1927 and 1930 through 1932.
- (7) China service with navy and marines from 1937 through 1939.
- (8) World War II from December 7, 1941, through December 31, 1946.
- (9) Korean Conflict from June 25, 1950, through January 31, 1955.
- (10) Vietnam Conflict from February 28, 1961, through May 7, 1975.
- (11) Lebanon or Grenada service from August 24, 1982, through July 31, 1984.
- (12) Panama service from December 20, 1989, through January 31, 1990.
- (13) Persian Gulf Conflict from August 2, 1990, through the date the president or the Congress of the United States declares a cessation of hostilities. However, if the United States Congress enacts a date different from August 2, 1990, as the beginning of the Persian Gulf Conflict for purposes of determining whether a veteran is entitled to receive military benefits as a veteran of the Persian Gulf Conflict, that date shall be substituted for August 2, 1990.

*b.* (1) Former members of the reserve forces of the United States who served at least twenty years in the reserve forces and who were discharged under honorable conditions. However, a member of the reserve forces of the United States who completed a minimum aggregate of ninety days of active federal service, other than training, and was discharged under honorable conditions, or was retired under Tit. 10 of the United States Code shall be included as a veteran.

(2) Former members of the Iowa National Guard who served at least twenty years in the Iowa National Guard and who were discharged under honorable conditions. However, a member of the Iowa National Guard who was activated for federal duty, other than training, for a minimum aggregate of ninety days, and was discharged under honorable conditions or was retired under Tit. 10 of the United States Code shall be included as a veteran.

(3) Former members of the active, oceangoing merchant marines who served during World War II at any time between December 7, 1941, and December 31, 1946, both dates inclusive, who were discharged under honorable conditions.

(4) Former members of the women’s air force service pilots and other persons who have been conferred veterans status based on their civilian duties during World War II in accordance with federal Pub. L. No. 95-202, 38 U.S.C. § 106.

(5) Former members of the armed forces of the United States if any portion of their term of enlistment would have occurred during the time period of the Korean Conflict from June 25, 1950, through January 31, 1955, but who instead opted to serve five years in the reserve forces of the United States, as allowed by federal law, and who were discharged under honorable conditions.

(6) Members of the reserve forces of the United States who have served at least twenty years in the reserve forces and who continue to serve in the reserve forces.

(7) Members of the Iowa National Guard who have served at least twenty years in the Iowa National Guard and who continue to serve in the Iowa National Guard.

c. A resident of this state who served on active federal service, other than training, in the armed forces of the United States and who was discharged under honorable conditions.

99 Acts, ch **180, §2**; 2003 Acts, ch 142, §4, 11; 2005 Acts, ch **115, §2 – 4, 40**; 2009 Acts, ch **164, §1, 7**; 2010 Acts, ch **1061, §180**

2009 amendment to subsection 2 takes effect July 1, 2010; 2009 Acts, ch **164, §7**

See Code editor's note to **§8A.402** at the end of Vol VI

Federal Act reference updated pursuant to Code editor directive

Subsection 2 amended

### III. ADMINISTRATION

The Veterans Affairs Director will determine eligibility of each applicant according to the guidelines set in this manual, arrange for vendor payments by a voucher system, and assist Veterans and/or their family members to attain self-sufficiency.

A. The Director will place a copy of the discharge certificate in the client file and determine the type of discharge as follows:

1. DD FORM 214 Report of Separation from Active Duty (began in 1951)
2. DD FORM 215 Correction to DD Form 214
3. DD FORM 217 Certification of Service. Used to place officer and enlisted personnel on Temporary Disabled Retired List (TDRL)

B. The Director will:

1. Accept applications for Veterans assistance from authorized Veterans and/or their authorized family members.
2. **See office (SOP) standard operating procedures.**

### IV. GUIDELINES FOR INVESTIGATION AND DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY

The Director will investigate the statements made on all applications. The following circumstances would make it prudent to make further inquiry into an individual's eligibility status: A denial may be given if:

- A. Applicant's situation indicates potential unused resources.
- B. Applicant's property or cash reserves are near or equal to the financial limitations in this manual.
- C. Applicant's living expenses are greater than income.
- D. Applicant has a known history of misrepresentation or consistent use of veteran's assistance program.
- E. Applicant is a transient or someone who changes his/her address frequently or who has no permanent place of residence, or who temporarily relocated for employment purposes.

### V. REQUIREMENTS FOR RECEIVING ASSISTANCE

The Veteran's Assistance fund will not be utilized until all other sources of public assistance have been exhausted.

- A. The applicant must be a resident and reside in Story County for a minimum of 90 days and current with their rent or mortgage to be eligible for assistance. An applicant located in Story County who has legal residence in another county of the State of Iowa may receive assistance as the Director deems appropriate, after examining the eligibility rules of the applicant's county

of residence. The Director shall then bill the applicant's county of legal residence for any assistance provided.

- B. The applicant must complete and sign a pre-screening form, application form and a release of information for medical information and financial information and all required document before assistance from Story County Commission of Veterans Affairs can be granted.
- C. If physically and mentally able, the **applicant must do a job search** and actively seek employment.
  - 1. **A person is not eligible for assistance if unemployed for the purpose of seeking post high school training or education unless that person is participating in a vocational program that is part of an Individual Comprehensive Plan (ICP) developed by their social worker, case manager, or the Veterans Vocational Rehabilitation Service.**
  - 2. **An applicant who is unemployed due to voluntarily quitting a job or is justifiably discharged from a job is not eligible for assistance for a period of three months after leaving the job.**
- D. If physically or mentally unable to work, must provide doctor's written verification of diagnosis and length of illness.
- E. If eligible, must apply for Public Assistance Programs, such as Family Investment Program (FIP), Social Security, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability (SSDI), Unemployment Compensation, and Food Stamps.
  - 1. **If the applicant and their adult family members through action or inaction has created an ineligibility for assistance or a reduced level of assistance from any federal/state financial assistance programs they will be ineligible for assistance until they are eligible for federal/state financial assistance programs with DHS.**

## VI. GUIDELINE EXPENDITURES

The guideline expenditures have been established by Story County Commission of Veterans Affairs, with approval by Story County Board of Supervisors. Veterans Assistance will pay for current bills only. We never pay delinquent bills, late fees, deposits, taxes, penalties, civil fines and criminal fines and court debt, or civil judgments. After eligibility is established and verified, the Director shall *disburse* the Veterans Assistance granted according to the guidelines of this manual in the following categories:

### A. Rent Benefits

- 1. Mortgage payments would be the same amount as the rental **payments**.
- 2. Rent/Mortgage will not be paid to relatives and will only be paid to owners of the property or mortgage holders.
- 3. The total amount of rent or mortgage allowed for one person living in the home is **\$450**; if utilities are included, we can assist with **\$500**. With two or more persons living in the home, rent or mortgage allowed is **\$550**; if utilities are included, we can assist with **\$600**. The max we can pay is **\$600**.
- 4. When a single person has a roommate who pays their portion of the rent and or utilities, we can only pay the Veterans portion.
- 5. We cannot pay any past due rent, **late fees** or assessments for damaged property.

### B. Utility Benefits

- 1. Utility payments will be made to gas, electric, water/sewer, and fuel oil companies who may provide another type of fuel needed for heating or cooking.

**This is capped at \$350.00 maximum for current bills, past due will not be paid.**

2. The amount authorized will be the current amount billed by the utility company or budget billing. Taxes will not be paid.
3. We cannot pay past due utilities.
4. Utilities must be in the name of the applicant or another member of the household. If the expense of utilities is being shared with a non-applicant, the payment will be pro-rated.
5. No hook-up charges or deposits will be paid.

### **C. Food Benefits**

Applicants will be referred to food pantries or other sources before issuing a voucher for food. Story County would be the funder of last resort.

1. This category includes food and non-food expendable household items such as soap and paper products, household cleaning supplies, and personal grooming supplies.
2. All applicants receiving food stamps are not eligible for a food voucher. We cannot supplement food stamps. The Veteran must use the food pantries in Story County prior to issue of a food voucher.
3. A food voucher will not be used for luxury items such as pop, candy, potato chips, etc. A food voucher may be given to an applicant for an amount of \$40.00 for a single person and an additional \$10.00 for each additional person, made out to the grocery store of the applicant's choice.
4. Client must make application for food stamps if not in receipt of food stamps.

### **D. Medical Benefits**

1. The Veteran should utilize the nearest Veterans Medical Center for all routine visits. If they are in the hospital locally, they should notify First Nurse and the VAMC at 1.800.294.8387 within 24 hours. Payment may be made by VAMC if they meet the 24-hour rule. Medical appliances may be available through the VAMC, such as hearing aids, wheelchairs, and special shoes, etc. When stable, hospital staff should request a transfer to the VAMC in Des Moines.
2. Authorization for payment must be obtained from the Director prior to incurring medical expenses, if the applicant wants medical payment from this Commission. In the case of an emergency, when it is impossible to obtain prior authorization, our office must be contacted the first working day following the emergency. Under no circumstances will medical benefits be considered under numbers three and four of this section if prior authorization was not obtained from the Director.
3. Payments may be made for prescriptions and also for some medical needs that require no prescription, such as insulin needles, bandages, gauze, etc. Payment for prescription or non-prescription drugs shall be limited to \$200.00 per eligible family member each month. Veterans should utilize the VA Medical Center or CBOC for all prescriptions when they fall within the means test and have eligibility.
4. Payment may be made for dental work necessary to alleviate pain. Payment for necessary dental work may include denture repair or replacement. Dental vendor payments are limited to \$200.00 for extractions or restoration and the cost of dentures, not to exceed \$600.00 full plate or \$300.00 ½ set, if needed.

5. Vendor payment may be made for refraction and glasses. (Limited to Title XIX frames and lenses only.) Limited to \$150.00.

## **E. Transportation Benefits**

The Commission shall consider transportation to Veterans Administration Medical Centers, University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, Iowa nursing homes, Iowa Veterans Home, Marshalltown, Fort Dodge CBOC Community Base Outpatient Clinic or local hospital, providing the eligible person does not have sufficient funds to cover transportation costs. If a Veteran is 30% SC or more, they can use the transportation funds paid by VA for their transportation. The DAV van goes from Ames to the VAMC Des Moines on Monday through Thursday with pick up and drop off at Burger King on 13<sup>th</sup> Street in Ames.

1. The Commission may reimburse eligible Veterans or volunteers who drive Veterans to VA Medical Centers, University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, Iowa nursing homes, Iowa Veterans Home, or local hospitals at a rate of **\$.50** per mile.
2. Transportation assistance for transients may be in the form of a voucher payment not to exceed fifteen (15) gallons of gasoline. **This assistance will be limited to one time only.**
3. Voucher payments for bus tickets no farther than the closest city bordering Iowa can be issued by the Director. This assistance will be limited to one time only.

## **F. Funeral Expenses**

1. Insurance, assets, resources or family contributions must be applied toward funeral expenses and may make a person ineligible for assistance. Veteran's benefits may be denied for vendor services that have not been approved by the Director prior to services being rendered.
3. For allowable costs, please see the Burial Guidelines and contract.
4. The Commission of Veteran Affairs must have an itemized statement of all funeral expenses before a check will be issued to the vendor.
6. This policy shall not create a contract for vendors or be construed as a benefit to vendors.
7. The commission is responsible for the interment in a suitable cemetery of the body of any veteran, (as per section 35.1 Iowa State Code), or the spouse, surviving spouse, or child of the person, if the person has died without leaving sufficient means to defray the funeral expenses. The commission may pay the expenses in a sum not exceeding an amount established by the board of supervisors.

8. Burial expenses shall be paid by the county in which the person died. If the person is a resident of a different county at the time of death, the county of residence shall reimburse the county where the person died for the cost of burial. In either case, the board of supervisors of the respective counties shall audit and pay the account from the funds provided for funeral services in the manner as other claims are audited and paid.

## **G. Grave Markers**

The Commission will furnish a grave marker to all honorably discharged veterans buried in Story County who have 90 days or more of active military service, one day of which was during a period of war. Honorably discharged peacetime veterans must have served 90 days of active military service before 1981 or 2 years active military service after 1981. National Guard Retired with 20 years of honorable service.

## **H. Iowa Veterans Home**

The Commission will assist Veterans and/or their spouse in making application for admittance to the Iowa Veterans Home. They must be a resident in Story County.

## **Federal and State Benefits**

Additional services the Commission offers include assistance with making application for the various federal, state benefits and programs; requesting military documents, certificates, service medals; and assisting with correspondence to VA Facilities.

## **VII. APPEAL**

Every applicant shall be informed of the applicant's right to appeal. The written appeal shall be made to the Director within ten (10) days of the Director's determination. The appeal hearing will be held at the next regularly scheduled monthly Story County Commission of Veterans Affairs meeting. The Commission shall make a decision on the appeal within ten (10) working days after the hearing. Any person who is denied benefits after a hearing with the Story County Commission of Veterans Affairs shall be informed that they have a right to request a hearing before the Story County Board of Supervisors.

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The Story County Commission of Veterans Affairs reserves the right to amend, delete or make revisions to the policies and guidelines contained in this manual at a future meeting.

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WE, AS MEMBERS OF THE STORY COUNTY COMMISSION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, HAVE ADOPTED THE PROVISIONS AND GUIDELINES CONTAINED IN THIS FORMAT THIS THIRD DAY OF APRIL, YEAR OF 2018 AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON APRIL 3, 2018.

THIS STORY COUNTY VETERANS BENEFITS MANUAL WILL BE IN EFFECT ON JULY 1, 2018.

SIGNED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Patrick Peakin, Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Amy Rosenberg, Secretary, Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nicolas Briseno, Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Monty Woodward, Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Luke Vance, Member



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## **STORY COUNTY VETERANS AFFAIRS BURIAL GUIDELINES FY-2020**

- A. Covered Funeral Home Expenses for Traditional Burial Include (up to \$1,658)  
Removal from place of death to funeral facility  
Embalming  
Cloth covered casket  
Outer Burial Container (concrete grave liner, non-protective)  
Tent/vault set up and delivery  
Private viewing (one hour of private family visitation)  
Graveside Service – Monday through Friday  
Transportation to local cemetery
- B. Covered Cemetery Expenses Include (up to \$335.00)  
Opening and Closing of gravesite
- C. Covered Funeral Home Expenses for Cremation Include (up to \$1,993)  
Removal from place of death to funeral facility  
Cremation of remains/cremation process  
Basic alternative cremation container  
Private viewing (one hour of private family visitation)  
Memorial service at church, funeral home, or graveside – Monday through Friday  
Transportation to local cemetery  
Fees and permits (incl. medical examiner cremation permit)

D. Up to **\$1,548** may be supplied by the family (note: this is optional and must be agreed to in writing by the next of kin or officially designated representative and the Funeral Home and must be paid to the Funeral Home before the time of service. ) for the following:

1. Printed materials – register book, service folders
2. Clergy or music honorariums
3. Hairdresser/Barber
4. Flowers
5. Certified death certificates
6. Luncheon or reception charges
7. Obituaries
8. Other cash advance items

E. Conditions:

1. The assistance available through the Story County Veterans Affairs is intended to help cover costs of funeral home services associated with burial or cremation, as well as expenses related to the interment of remains (ie cemetery fees). The funeral home will work with next of kin or officially designated representative to limit the services to meet the guidelines of this policy.
2. The funeral home shall furnish complete invoices to Story County Veterans Affairs Director as well as the next of kin or officially designated representative. The total cost of services is not to exceed **\$3,541.00**, and the burden for any cost in excess of this total is the responsibility of the funeral home, cemetery, or participating vendors.
3. **As per state code 35B payment for out of county or out of state funerals will be provided.**

Brett D. McLain, Director  
Story County Veterans Affairs



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May 4, 2020

TO: Story County Board of Supervisors  
FROM: Story County Veterans Affairs Commission  
RE: **Recommendation of VA Executive Director**

Pursuant to Iowa Code Chapter 35B.6, the county board of supervisors is required to annually approve the Executive Director for the county Veteran Affairs Office.

Story County Veterans Affairs Commission recommends Brett McLain, Director, and County Veteran Service Officer to serve as the Story County Veterans Affairs Director for FY 2021.

Appointment: July 1, 2020 - June 30 2021.

The Commission respectfully requests the Story County Board of Supervisors to support this recommendation.

Thank you.

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Story County Veterans Affairs Commission Chair

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Date

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Story County Board of Supervisors Chair

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Date