

# Veterans Relief Fund Guidelines

## 1. Organizational Purpose and Policies

The purpose of the Asotin County Veterans Relief Fund, hereinafter called VRF, is to provide for the relief of indigent veterans, their families, and the families of deceased indigent veterans as defined in Washington State RCW 73.08.005. The VRF is funded by the taxpayers of Asotin County to aid in timely emergency or crisis relief for eligible veterans and/or eligible family members and not to replace assistance from any other agency. Assistance is granted on a case-by-case basis and is not guaranteed. There is no entitlement for assistance and the provision of assistance is subject to availability of funds. The Asotin County VRF is not intended to provide continuing assistance on a routine basis.

The Asotin County Veterans Advisory Board, hereinafter called VAB, was established by resolution by the Board of County Commissioners in 2014. The mission of the VAB is to administer the VRF resources and programs to veterans and their families and advise the County Commissioners on the needs of local veterans as defined in Washington State RCW 73.08.005.

## 2. Eligibility Policies

Prior to assisting the indigent veteran, immediate family member or widowed spouse, veteran's eligibility must be determined by verifying the below. Items 1 and 2 are mandatory. Item 3 is required for the widowed spouse. Eligibility requirements may be waived by majority vote of members at a meeting where a quorum is present. Proxy votes are not permitted.

Washington State RCW 73.08.005 "Veteran" means:

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-existent 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.

A. Required Documentation

- 1) DD214 or Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) card and a picture ID.
- 2) For widowed spouses, marriage license for proof of marriage at time of death of veteran and veteran's death certificate.
- 3) In case of dependent family member of living veteran, proof of marriage and/or legal dependency.
- 4) Birth certificate of child if living at home.

B. Proof of residency

- 1) Applicants must have been residents of Washington State for at least six months immediately prior to obtaining assistance from the VRF.
- 2) Applicants must have been residents of Asotin County for at least 31 days immediately prior to obtaining assistance from the VRF.
- 3) Proof of residency includes, but is not limited to: Voter registration, WA State driver's license, WA State ID Card, or official correspondence; e.g., letters from the VA, Social Security, State or Local Government, or utility bills (in the applicants name only). If the above documentation does not clearly establish residence in either the State or County, additional documentation may be requested.
- 4) Exceptions may be granted if the veterans recently moved to Asotin County for work, school, family emergency, or other compelling reason.

C. Certification by widowed spouse that he/she did not remarry after veteran's death.

D. Indigent Determination

Determination of indigent status will be determined in accordance with Washington State RCW 73.08.005 paragraph 3 as follows:

- 1) "Indigent" means a person who is defined as such by the county legislative authority using one or more of the following definitions:
- 2) Receiving one or more of the following types of public assistance: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), 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;
- 3) Receiving an annual income, after taxes, of up to one hundred and fifty percent (150%) or less of the current federally established poverty level, or receiving an annual income not exceeding a higher qualifying income established by the county or legislative authority; or
- 4) Unable to pay reasonable costs for shelter, food, utilities, and transportation because his or her available funds are insufficient.
- 5) Applicants who report no income or little income for the previous 31 days must be eligible and apply for or receiving Washington State Department of Social and Health Services Basic Food Assistance and/or Medicaid in order to be indigent for the VRF.

### 3. Financial Policies

Eligible veterans or family members with no other family members in the household may receive up to \$1,600 in financial assistance for allowable expenses (A through E) in a 12-month period of time and \$3,200 lifetime. If there are two or more eligible family members in the household, up to \$2,000 in financial assistance for allowable expenses (A through E) may be provided in a 12-month period of time and \$4,000 lifetime. The 12-month period starts the day following the payment of the first assistance.

- A. Emergency Housing Assistance – Eligible veterans and/or family members may receive assistance with emergency housing in a hotel, motel or other similar temporary facilities. Emergency housing is limited to a one month stay in a 12-month period and no more than two consecutive time's total, paid to the provider. (Due to fluctuating emergency housing costs, stays may exceed the annual and lifetime financial assistance caps but all other rules apply)
- B. Rent or Mortgage Assistance

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

The applicant must provide a written rental agreement or billing from landlord/owner or documents providing ownership of the property. The veteran or family member must be able to sustain rent or mortgage payments in the months to come.

Past due mortgage or rent will be paid only 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 12-month period.

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

- 1) Once per 12-month period and no more than two consecutive time's total, paid to provider.
  - 2) Must provide required documentation, i.e., past due mortgage payment notice, eviction notice, contract, notification of late payment, etc.
  - 3) Deposit on a residence may be paid one time only and shall not exceed \$1,600.
- C. Transportation to VA or other medical facilities when Disabled American Veterans (DAV) or other no cost transportation is unavailable.
- 1) Once per month or by exception on a case-by-case basis.
  - 2) Travel for compensation and pension exams/hearings will not be paid to veterans. (VA PAYS)
  - 3) Transportation costs may be paid to the veteran if personal vehicle is used.
  - 4) Transportation cost may be paid if veteran is not eligible for travel reimbursement from the VA. This applies to the VA Priority Groups 6, 7, or 8.
  - 5) Paid travel will be based on MapQuest mileage from Asotin County Court House to Walla Walla VA (105 Miles), Portland VA (348 Miles), Seattle VA (314 Miles), and Spokane VA (116 Miles). Other facility travel will be based on mileage between the veteran's residence and the facility.
- D. Transportation for non-VA travel, i.e., family emergencies, medical, dental and vision treatment programs.
- 1) Bus ticket out of area, one time only; not to exceed \$200. Paid to provider.
  - 2) Local bus pass/tokens.

E. 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 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 will only be paid for the residence where the veteran or eligible family member currently resides.

- 1) Once per 12-month period; up to three months' charges
- 2) Maximum of \$600 paid to provider.

F. Medical / Dental / Optometry

- 1) No elective procedures
- 2) Once per 12-month period, two times total.
- 3) Not to exceed \$500 paid to provider

G. Mental Health Counseling

- 1) Veterans with a VA PTSD Service Connection may be reimbursed for travel to appointments with a WDVA Councilor if they are not receiving travel reimbursement by the VA. <https://www.dva.wa.gov/counseling/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/find-ptsd-counselors>
- 2) Note: Indigent determinations requirements will be waived for this program but all other requirements apply.

H. Education

- 1) Post-Secondary College, Trade, GED.
- 2) After application to Work Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) through Rural Resource / WorkSource if applicable.
- 3) Veterans that are not eligible for GI Bill.
- 4) GED/College books; maximum of \$500.
- 5) Trade School: Supplies, tools, books; maximum of \$500.
- 6) Lifetime cumulative maximum of \$2,000.

I. Administrative supplies as approved by VAB.

- J. VAB travel expenses as approved by VAB and Board of Commissioners.
- K. Conference/training fees as approved by VAB and Board of Commissioners.

Approved by the Chair, Veterans Advisory Board

\_\_\_\_\_  
Randy Martz, Board Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Stacy Harmon, Clerk of the Board

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Approved by County Commissioners:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Charles Whitman, Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chris Seubert, Vice Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Brain Shinn, Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date