



Financial Assistance Guidelines

Effective July 1, 2020

**Medina County Veterans Service Commission/Office:
Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and Policy Manual**

Policy: Veterans Assistance Program	Section: Financial Assistance	Number: 4.1
Issued: September 2009	Reviewed/Revised: May 2020	

The following guidelines for applying for, granting or denying immediate financial assistance by the Medina County Veterans Service Commission are to be used for all applicants.

1. Eligibility:

- a. Each applicant for financial assistance must meet the definition of a veteran as defined by Title 5901.01 of the Ohio Revised Code or be an active duty member of the Armed Forces of the United States, the spouse or surviving spouse, a dependent parent, minor child, or ward of the veteran or the active duty member.
- b. As used in section 5901.08 and other sections of the Revised Code with regard to applications for financial assistance under sections 5901.02 to 5901.15 of the Revised Code, “veteran” means either of the following:
 - i. A person who served in the armed forces of the United States on active military duty and was discharged from the service under honorable conditions, and who either served on active duty for reasons other than training or, while serving on active duty for training, incurred a disability recognized by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) or Department of Defense (DOD) as service-connected;
 - ii. A person who served in the United States Merchant Marine, who either served on active duty for reasons other than training or, while serving on active duty for training, incurred a disability recognized by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) or Department of Defense (DOD) as service-connected, and to whom either of the following applies:
 - 1. The person has an honorable report of separation from the active duty military service, form DD214 or DD215.
 - 2. The person served in the United States Merchant Marine between December 7, 1941, and December 31, 1946, and died on active duty while serving in a war zone during that period of service.
- c. Additionally, the Medina County Veterans Service Commission requires; the veteran must have completed the initial training period (i.e. basic training and advanced individual training). As well as performed service in the Armed Forces of the United States for a period of not less than 90 days during a period of war, as set forth by the Department of Veterans Affairs, or not less than 180 days during peacetime. Consideration may be given to those veterans who have less than the required time in service, if they were discharged with a service connected disability or due to a hardship, medical conditions or completion of the period of obligated service for which the veteran was called to federal active duty.
- d. Proof of Service must be established via a DD-214, Separation Papers, Certificate of Service, or equivalent.

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- e. Applicants must have been a bona fide resident of Medina County for a period of 3 months/90 days immediately preceding application. Proof of residency must be established. A post office box is insufficient to show residency. Incarceration, school attendance, or other reasons a non-resident may be temporarily in the county will not be considered for residency purposes.
 - i. Some examples of residency requirements are as follows:
 - 1. Lease/Mortgage (3 months/90 days)
 - 2. Utility bills (3 months/90 days)
 - 3. Childs school enrollment (3 months/90 days)
 - 4. Bank/Financial statements (3 months/90 days)
 - 5. Driver's License with Medina County address (3 months/90 days)
 - 6. Voters registration (3 months/90 days)
 - 7. Employment (3 months/90 days)
 - a. More than one of the above may be required as proof of residency and is not all inclusive.
 - b. Transients who attempt to establish residency in hotels/motels and other non-permanent living establishments are not to be considered residents.
 - c. Utility bills and rent must be paid for at least the 3 months/90 days to establish residency
- f. Former Spouses:
 - i. Former spouses who do not have legal custody of the veteran's child (ren) are not eligible for financial assistance.
 - ii. A former spouse who is not eligible for financial assistance who has legal custody of the veteran's child(ren) may receive supplemental assistance based upon the child's welfare and emergency need. Assistance amount is based on only the children and not the spouse or guardian.
 - iii. A former spouse who has legal custody of the veteran's child (ren) is eligible for financial assistance to the extent that the veteran has not paid his/her child support obligation.
 - iv. Both the veteran and the spouse cannot receive benefits, the veteran is the priority and it is their decision.
- g. Applicants who are incarcerated are ineligible for assistance. Applicants who are released from incarceration or court-ordered rehabilitative program must reside in the county for 3 months/90 days after their release to be considered for assistance unless they can prove residency immediately prior to their conviction.

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- h. The veteran/claimant must be present for the application unless (verification may be required):
 - i. The veteran is working.
 - ii. The veteran is hospitalized/homebound.
 - iii. The veteran has an injury/disability preventing his/her presence.
 - iv. The applicant is separated or divorced from the veteran and has children.

- 2. In-eligibility (not all inclusive):
 - a. Veterans/clients who are ineligible for this office's immediate assistance services:
 - i. Veterans/clients that have lied on an application or submitted fraudulent information to the Medina County Veterans Service Office or another County Veterans Service Office in the State of Ohio.
 - ii. Veterans/clients that have submitted fraudulent information to other county offices within the County of Medina or other State or Federal Agencies.
 - iii. Chronic drug/alcohol abuses (unless in rehab).
 - iv. Veterans/clients that are caught double dipping on social services.
 - v. Consistent abuse on food vouchers in accordance with this office policy.
 - vi. Veterans/clients that reside in a group homes or assisted living.
 - vii. Veterans who are considered transients and have not established the normal residency requirements.
 - viii. Veterans/clients who have a permanent situation (Permanency), i.e. living on a fixed income that is above the poverty level or will not change in the future and do not meet the disability requirements or are not 65 years old.
 - ix. Veterans or family members who have used all of their eligible benefits in another county will not be eligible for financial assistance within Medina County until their case is presented to the Commission or a new year of eligibility.

- 3. Updated Application:
 - a. Applicants must update applications monthly/every time they request assistance.
 - b. A new application is only good for a period of 12 calendar months from the original date of the most current application.
 - c. Release of Information:
 - i. The applicant, and veteran if applicable, must sign information release form(s) that may be used to verify employment, disability, or any condition or benefit deemed necessary by the Commission.

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- ii. The veteran/applicant may be required to apply for assistance at another organization that we direct them to (i.e. JFS, foodbank, etc.); failure to do so may disqualify you from benefits.
 - iii. The veteran/applicant may be required to attend counseling for one of the following:
 - 1. Financial management
 - 2. Life skills training
 - 3. Employment counseling
 - 4. Other
4. Documentation Required (they will be copied and retained in the FA file):
- i. The applicant must provide the veteran's DD214 or equivalent separation document
 - ii. Marriage certificates
 - iii. Divorce papers
 - iv. Children's/dependents birth certificates
 - v. Driver's license or state ID card They will be copied.
 - vi. This list is not all inclusive, failure to provide the requested documents may result in a denial.
5. The applicant's situation must be adequately documented as follows:
- a. Unemployed:
 - i. Employer's statement furnished upon application.
 - ii. MCJFS Employment Services verification of benefits/no benefits, furnished upon application.
 - iii. Verification of MCJFS Employment Services registration, furnished upon application.
 - iv. Continued unemployment for a period of time, which exceeds 18 months, may be seen as a reason to deny benefits if the veteran/applicant is employable.
 - b. Disabled:
 - i. Official medical documentation/statement of disability furnished upon application.
 - ii. Bureau of Workmen's Compensation (BWC) claim, furnished upon application if applicable.

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- iii. Social Security Disability (SSD) claim, furnished upon application if applicable.
- iv. Veterans Affairs rating of 70% combined with one disability being at least 40% or a single 60% disability or higher or individual unemployment.
- v. Disabled clients not eligible to receive disability benefits, i.e., those who have not established a disability with an appropriate agency, and who may upon verification of said disability by a medical doctor, may be eligible for assistance.
- vi. Over the age of 65 and on a permanent fixed income that is below our guidelines and eligible for SNAP.

c. Employed:

- i. Bills showing an unexpected compelling emergency expense, furnished upon application.
- ii. Estimate of repairs for an unexpected emergency expense, furnished upon application.
- iii. Unforeseen hardship not due to the individual's personal lifestyle.
- iv. Out of pocket paid medical expenses.

6. Eligibility Calculation:

- a. Eligibility will be calculated based upon the applicant's usual and normal household (NET) income for the preceding 30 days. Payroll receipt, employer statement or a statement from the applicable agency must verify income for family members living within the household. Additionally, the applicant may be required to provide a Form W-2 or other tax forms to show annual household income.
- b. The minimal income guidelines of 130% poverty level per U.S. Federal Poverty Guidelines must be met in order to approve immediate assistance. (guidelines are published yearly at <https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines>)
- c. If 65 or older and receiving SNAP benefits the minimal income guidelines of 150% poverty level per U.S. Federal Poverty Guidelines must be met in order to approve immediate assistance. (guidelines are published yearly at <https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines>)
- d. **Waivers:** There must be a compelling reason/circumstance to grant any of the waivers.
- e. If it is determined that the compelling need has been met, in some instances this can be waived to 150% of the U.S. Federal Poverty Guidelines. The director can waive the income amount to 165% not to exceed 200% of U.S. Federal Poverty Guidelines and only under extreme circumstances. Further waiver requires

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approval of the commission.

- f. Income of both veteran and spouse will be counted as household income. In the event where the veteran is living with someone; the total household income may be counted.
- g. Children under the age of 23 and living at home attending school full time will be counted as dependents.
- h. Income includes but is not restricted to:
 - i. Wages
 - ii. All types of Social Security
 - iii. Child support paid to
 - iv. VA Disability
 - v. Retirement
 - vi. Self-employment income
 - vii. Dividends & Interest
 - viii. Loan payments
 - ix. Rent received
 - x. Any other income
- i. Any assistance from another organization/s must be reported (i.e. JFS, food stamps, unemployment, catholic charities, veteran’s organization, etc.)
- j. Self-employed and Sub contractors must have both Form 1099 and Form 1040 with schedule “C” and any additional tax forms required.
- k. Net worth must not be excessive: *Net worth* means the net value of the assets of the veteran and his or her dependents. It includes assets such as bank accounts, stocks, bonds, mutual funds and any property other than the veteran's residence and a reasonable lot area. There is no set limit on how much net worth a veteran and his dependents can have, but net worth cannot be excessive. The decision as to whether a claimant's net worth is excessive depends on the facts of each individual case. All net worth must be reported, and the commission will determine if a claimant's assets are sufficiently large that the claimant could live off these assets for a reasonable period of time. MCVSO’s financial assistance program is not intended to protect substantial assets or build up an estate. Furthermore, monies or assets within a trust must also be accounted for.
- l. The only allowable deduction from income will be paid out-of-pocket medical expenses or paid funeral expenses of an immediate family member.
- m. In the instance where there are extreme extenuating circumstances, the eligibility calculation may be discarded, and temporary assistance may be granted on need solely. This may arise due to health, loss of job, or disaster.
- n. Likewise assistance may also be refused for someone who is under the financial eligibility guidelines and does not show the need for assistance, in other words someone who has enough income to cover their basic expenses or lives outside of their means (refer to; 2, a, viii).

7. Assistance Limits:

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- i. Immediate Assistance:
 - b. Is considered as immediate assistance and can be granted for the first month of benefits after which time the burden of proof is on the veteran/applicant and must be provided to continue benefits.
 - i. Assistance may be granted for up to three months within the 12-month application period for each of the following (a 6-month period can be granted for temporary medical conditions).
 - ii. Food
 - iii. Rent/Mortgage (Nursing Home & Assisted Living or Domicile is exempt)
 - iv. Utilities
 - v. Dental (MCHD)
 - vi. Medical (requires commission review)
 - vii. Other emergency services
 - c. After assistance is issued in the third month, the case will be closed unless the veterans/applicant requests an appeal. It will then go to the Commission for review. Only one 3-month period will be granted per household, (i.e. two vets that are married or living together) unless granted for medical condition or extenuating circumstances determined by the commission.
 - d. The Commission will do one of the following:
 - i. Close the case.
 - ii. Continue eligibility for a specified period, not to exceed 6 months.
 - iii. Continue eligibility until another benefit, such as a VA pension or Social Security Disability, is awarded or denied.
 - e. Continuation of Benefits:
 - i. Benefits will not be granted for more than 36 month/3 year(s) out of any 60 months/5-year period.
 - ii. Those Veterans that meet the criteria in paragraph (5. B) may be granted benefits that exceed requirements above.
8. Benefits:
- a. Food voucher x3 per application year may be given on a bi-weekly or monthly basis as determined by the Commission.

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- i. Food vouchers can be split up into weeks.
 - ii. Food restrictions (see Policy Letter #6)
 - iii. Those clients who do not comply with Policy Letter #6 will receive one warning letter after which time their case will be turned over to the commission for review and possible suspension.
 - iv. Food assistance amounts will be calculated based on the current SNAP benefits for the state of Ohio and applied per family size.
 - b. Rent/mortgage x3 per application year.
 - i. Rent restrictions (rent assistance will not be given to applicants living with relatives).
 - ii. You must provide a lease/contract for rent assistance in the veterans/applicant's name. If living with someone then the rent amount will be divided in half or sectioned.
 - iii. Mortgages will only be paid for the primary mortgage on the main residence; no second mortgages, reverse mortgages or lines of credit will be paid. Home and mortgage must be the veterans/applicants name.
 - iv. Maximum rent amount of \$800.00 for family of two or less. Maximum rent amount of \$1200.00 for family of three or more. Amounts above that may be granted per application with Commission approval.
 - c. Utilities x3 per application year.
 - i. Utilities must be in the veterans or spouses name (not the children).
 - ii. Utility restrictions (bills that are for multiple months and are excessive will be counted against your eligible months as determined by the Commission) or only one month will be paid.
 - d. Dental (refer to; 4.5 dental section).
 - e. Medical as determined by the Commission.
 - f. The absence of one type of bill does not mean that the commission will pay additional bills for another substance. (i.e. Vet with no mortgage or rent requests additional food). Benefits will not be swapped, without the director's approval and only under extreme circumstances.
 - g. Emergency or life-threatening situations as determined by the Commission.
- 9. Available Benefit:
 - a. The maximum amount of financial assistance given per month will be the difference between the family NET income after medical deductions and the

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250% of the poverty guidelines.

- b. **Waivers:** *There must be a compelling reason/circumstance to grant any of the waivers.*
- c. If it is determined that the compelling need has been met, the director can waive the income benefit amount to 300% U.S. Federal Poverty Guidelines and only under extreme circumstances. Further waiver requires approval of the commission.

10. Falsification:

- a. No person who is not a veteran, an active-duty member of the armed forces of the United States, or the spouse, surviving spouse, dependent parent, minor child, or ward of a veteran or an active-duty member of the armed forces of the United States shall knowingly represent that the person is a veteran, an active-duty member of the armed forces of the United States, or the spouse, surviving spouse, dependent parent, minor child, or ward of a veteran or an active-duty member of the armed forces of the United States and is eligible for any benefits or financial assistance related to veteran status for the purpose of receiving such benefits or financial assistance.
- b. Whoever violates this section is guilty of misrepresentation of veteran status, a misdemeanor of the first degree.
- c. Falsification on financial assistance applications shall be handled as follows:
 - i. If an order has not been issued, the Commission will review the case and determine appropriate action.
 - ii. If an order has been issued, an investigation will be completed, and a report made to the Commission. The client will be offered the opportunity to make full restitution within an agreed time period; if full restitution is made the case will be closed; if the client does not wish to make restitution, or does not make the agreed upon payments, the investigative report may be turned over to the Medina County Prosecutor.
 - iii. Further benefits may be suspended for a period of not less than 3 and not more than 10 years based on the severity as determined by the Commission.

11. Appellate Procedures:

- i. A financial assistance applicant who has been denied assistance by a case manager may appeal the denial to the Director/Veterans Service Officer. If the denial is upheld, the applicant may appeal to the Veterans Service Commission. In each case, a signed appeal shall be written and submitted

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on the form provided (Policy Letter # 2). An appeal to the Service Officer shall be addressed promptly by appointment. An appeal to the Veterans Service Commission shall be handled at the next regularly scheduled board meeting (2nd Thursday of every month at 4:00 PM; unless it falls on a holiday).

- ii. All applicants have the right to address the Medina County Veterans Service Commission on their current situation and need at any board meeting.

This policy is a guide for the Medina County Veterans Service Commission/Office to operate on a daily basis. It is only a guide, every case/appeal will be investigated on a case-by-case basis, and all extenuating circumstances will be considered when approving/disapproving a financial assistance case. Our intent is to assist the men and women that have defended our country when they may need it most, not provide a permanent long-term income. If the outcome you receive at our office is not one that you are satisfied with, please file an appeal to the commission in accordance with paragraph 10 of this section.