

COMMISSION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mandy Coates, Director
Bill Blanchard, Chairperson
Larry Hingtgen, Secretary

JoAnne Downes
Chad Gerdes
Jacob Korbakes

JOHNSON COUNTY VETERAN AFFAIRS TEMPORARY EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE GUIDELINES AND POLICY

Iowa Code § 35B.14 outlines the legal basis for the Temporary Emergency Assistance Program. In Johnson County, this program is administered by the Veterans Affairs Director under the general supervision of the Commission of Veterans Affairs and the Board of Supervisors.

I. DEFINITIONS

A. Veteran

1. A person who meets the criteria per Iowa Code § 35.1 (available online and in the Veterans Affairs office). The Veteran must have received an Honorable Discharge or General Discharge Under Honorable Conditions. If the Veteran has more than one military discharge, all discharges must meet this requirement.
2. In general, a “Veteran” in Iowa is
 - a. A resident who has served at least 90 consecutive days of active duty other than training with an honorable discharge; or
 - b. A former member of the National Guard or Reserves who has retired with 20 years of service, or who continues to serve; or
 - c. A person who is in receipt of a VA recognized service-connected disability.

B. Temporary Emergency Assistance – A county payment made on behalf of an eligible Veteran or family unit. This includes:

1. Rent
2. Utilities
3. Groceries
4. Transportation
5. Emergency medical services and devices
6. Funeral and burial services

C. Family Unit

1. The Veteran, spouse, and dependent children under 18 that reside with the Veteran.
2. A disabled adult child unable of self-support who lives with the Veteran.
3. If the Veteran is deceased, a surviving spouse who has not remarried and their eligible dependents.

D. Resident of Johnson County

1. A Veteran who resides in Johnson County and has for at least 30 days with the intent to remain in Johnson County for a permanent or indefinite amount of time.
2. A resident of another county who comes to Johnson County for the purpose of receiving services or residing in a hospital, correctional facility, nursing facility, or for the purpose of attending a college, is not considered a resident.

E. Income

1. Gross wages and salary before any deductions are withheld from wages, including but not limited to taxes and benefits
2. Social Security Retirement, Social Security Disability, and Supplemental Security Income
3. Veterans Affairs Federal Compensation and Pension
4. Education stipend
5. Retirement pension
6. Rental income
7. Cash, money in bank or financial accounts, interest, return credit, Family Investment Program (FIP), child support, unemployment, gifts, liquid assets, tax refunds, and other monies available.
8. Other property or resources as determined by the Veterans Affairs Director

F. Federal Poverty Level – (FPL) is a yearly income threshold that is set by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It determines eligibility for various benefit programs. The FPL is based on household size and income before taxes. See Appendix A.

II. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS AND STANDARDS

Applicants who meet the eligibility criteria and have their household income at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Income Level Guidelines may be considered for assistance. The applicant must have an emergent need that cannot be met by other means and is not due to their own imprudent financial practices. Verification of all income is required to determine eligibility. If income exceeds 185% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines for the last 30 days at the time of application, no assistance will be granted. Johnson County Veteran Affairs has a maximum lifetime assistance amount of \$7,500.00. Once this lifetime amount is reached, no further emergency temporary assistance funds will be provided.

Three months of emergency assistance may be provided in a rolling calendar year. Approval of an application provides for one time assistance only and does not guarantee continuation of eligibility. Each applicant will need to reapply each month and determine their eligibility. This program is intended to provide temporary emergency assistance to help applicants become self-sufficient.

Staff will conduct a reasonable eligibility investigation and may make further inquiry into factual details to establish eligibility. The Johnson County Veterans Affairs office will file and maintain the application and all supporting documents. All applications, findings, and documents will be kept confidential in accordance with Iowa Code § 35B.10.

III. ELIGIBILITY AND VERIFICATION

- A. Documents that may be used to verify eligibility with Veteran status:
 - 1. DD-214 showing character of discharge
 - 2. NGB-22 or NGB-23 and retirement orders
 - 3. A current letter from the Department of Veterans Affairs showing receipt of a service-connected disability
 - B. Documents that may be used to verify proof of Johnson County Residency:
 - 1. Current rental lease signed by both landlord and tenant(s)
 - 2. Utility bill in the Veteran's name
 - 3. Driver's license
 - 4. Voter ID
 - 5. Any other current official document
 - C. Applicants must provide all household income for the last thirty (30) days.
 - 1. This includes all complete bank account statements, transactions and pay stubs for each member of the household. (for example, including but not limited to: Checking, Savings, CDs, Money Market Accounts, etc.)
 - 2. A PDF statement may be emailed or faxed prior to the appointment if unable to be printed out. Print screens (screenshots) are not acceptable for verification, as hard copies are required for the file and auditing purposes.
 - D. If not currently employed or employed less than full-time, applicants and all adult members in the household must be actively seeking employment.
 - 1. The employment must be sufficient to exceed the Emergency Assistance Income Guidelines above the Federal Poverty Level Guideline of 185%.
 - 2. One parent may be waived of this requirement if caring for a child under the age of five (5) or disabled dependent child.
 - 3. For second or third requests, applicants must return a job search log showing that the applicants have applied for at least ten (10) jobs within the last month and meet with Iowa Workforce Development.
 - 4. Applicants who are collecting Social Security retirement must follow the same guidelines unless approved for a medical exemption.
 - E. Applicants and dependents who state they are unable to work due to a mental or physical illness will be required to submit a medical verification letter before they will be considered for second or third assist.
 - 1. An approved medical provider may be a licensed physician, physician's assistant or a nurse practitioner.
 - 2. The verification letter must state the primary health condition, whether it is permanent, and the date the applicant is anticipated to be able to return to work, along with provider's contact information and signature.
 - F. The Veteran, or a household member of a veteran, who is registered in post high school training or education is not eligible for assistance.
-

- G. The Johnson County Veterans Affairs Commission reserves the right to refuse benefits to an applicant who does not meet the eligibility criteria, or who does not provide the required documents requested. All applicants must complete and sign the application and release of information.

IV. ASSISTANCE

A. RENT

1. The Commission of Veterans Affairs does not provide application fees, rental deposits, first month's rent, last month's rent, or pay mortgages.
2. A current, formal lease signed by both landlord and tenant(s) in the Veteran or spouse's name is required. The landlord/property manager must complete a W-9 to accept payment.
3. Rental assistance will not be paid to supplement Section 8 Housing, HUDVASH, SSVF or other subsidized housing programs.
4. Rent will not be paid to businesses that operate for the primary purpose of short-term lodging, such as hotels or vacation rentals.
5. Rent shall not be paid to parents, grandparents, children, or grandchildren of the applying household.

B. UTILITIES

1. The Commission of Veterans Affairs utility assistance is intended to assist with the current month's bill: not late fees, reconnect fees, past due balances, or deposits.
2. In extenuating emergency circumstances, staff may call the respective utility company credit department and offer a "promise to pay" consisting of the current month and a percentage of past due/disconnect fees to allow the continuance of service. This will only be allowed once per year at the director's discretion.
3. Utility assistance shall not be granted for utilities for housing units that are subsidized by the federal government or other programs where a utility allowance is included in the program for housing assistance.
4. Utility bills must be in the name of the Veteran or spouse.
5. Authorized utilities included fuel or electricity for the purpose of heating, cooking, cooling, lights, and water.
6. Utility assistance will not be granted for bills more than six (6) months old, or bills accrued at a prior address. The applicant must have made an attempt to pay their utility within the last six (6) months.

C. GROCERIES

1. Financial assistance with food may be provided through a voucher for a local grocery store.
2. Assistance is authorized for basic food staples, e.g., milk, bread, cereal, vegetables, fruit, sandwich meat, and inexpensive cuts of meat. Vouchers may not be used for prepared meals, alcohol, tobacco, pop, canned drinks, candy, or over-the-counter medications.
3. Food vouchers will not be provided to households already receiving food assistance or SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program). Applicants must apply for

SNAP through the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services before they will be considered for a second or third assist.

4. Receipts for groceries must be returned to the director immediately. Failure to return a food voucher receipt will result in denial of future assistance.
5. If food vouchers are used to purchase items that are not allowed, the applicant may be barred from receiving such vouchers for a period up to two years.

D. MEDICAL/DENTAL

1. Eligible Veterans are expected to use the Veterans Affairs Medical Center. Veterans who are not eligible for the Veterans Affairs Health Care shall be limited to assistance with primary care provider office visits and generic prescriptions. Limited health care supplies may be granted on an emergency basis.

E. TRANSPORTATION

1. A gas voucher for up to \$35 or a monthly bus pass for Coralville, Iowa City, or SEATS may be provided.

V. APPEALS

- A. All applications will be reviewed by the Veterans Affairs Director for final approval or denial. Applicants have the right to appeal their eligibility for assistance or the amount of assistance.
- B. It is the responsibility of the appellant to request an appeal by notifying the Veterans Affairs Director within ten (10) working days of being denied in writing. The appeal hearing will be placed on the agenda for the next regularly scheduled monthly meeting of the Commission of Veterans Affairs, provided that such appeal shall not be heard sooner than five days after appeal is taken. The appellant will be informed by the Director of the date, time, and location of the hearing via USPS mail and phone. The applicant must be present at the appeal hearing. The Commission of Veterans Affairs shall make their decision on the day of the appeal in a closed session where the director and applicant will present their case. The applicant will be informed of the decision by telephone within two working days and postmarked via USPS thereafter. The decision shall state the reasons for the action along with the statute or policy applied.
- C. The applicant wishing to appeal the County Veteran Affairs Commission's decision may appeal to the Johnson County Board of Supervisors. This shall be done in writing within ten (10) working days after the denial of assistance by the Johnson County Commission of Veterans Affairs. The appeal shall be forwarded by the Director to the Board of Supervisors and placed on the agenda for the next regularly scheduled board meeting as applicable in a closed session. The applicant shall be permitted to present evidence in support of the appeal. The Board may set a reasonable length of time for presentation by both parties. The Board may question the applicant, and the Director shall present the reasons for the Director's determination or the reasons for the Commission's decision during a closed session. Applicant's failure to attend the meeting at which the applicant's appeal is heard by the Board may result in a dismissal of applicant's appeal.

- D. The Board's findings shall be based solely upon the evidence presented at the hearing. The Board shall issue their decision in writing, as promptly as possible, and within five (5) working days of the hearing date. The decision will be mailed to the applicant via USPS via the last known address provided.

VI. ASSISTANCE OF AN EXTENDED NATURE

Veterans will not be provided with financial assistance for more than three months per 12-month period unless an exception is approved by the Commission of Veterans Affairs, which would require the applicant to meet directly with the Commission at the monthly meeting. At the Director's discretion, assistance for emergency needs on a case-by-case basis may be granted in an exceptional circumstance when no other funding support is available, or the applicant's health or housing stability is threatened without assistance.

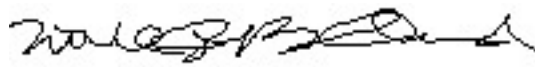
VII. RIGHT OF THE COMMISSION

The Commission reserves the right to amend or revise the general policies and procedures contained in this document at a future Commission of Veterans Affairs meeting. The Director and staff have the right to ask the applicant for any evidence or document that may assist with determination of eligibility for benefits or assistance. Any applicant providing false or inaccurate information shall be subject to prosecution under any and all applicable state and local laws. The applicant shall be subject to repayment for fraudulently received benefits. The applicant and household members shall be subject to ineligibility for further assistance for a period of up to two years from the date of discovery.

VIII. INCOME AND ASSISTANCE GUIDELINES AND LIMITATIONS

Household Size	Maximum Monthly Rent	Maximum Monthly Utility	Maximum Monthly Grocery	Maximum per Month	Maximum per 12 Months
1	\$700	\$200	\$100	\$700	\$2,100
2	\$750	\$225	\$180	\$750	\$2,250
3	\$800	\$250	\$260	\$800	\$2,400
4 or more	\$850	\$275	\$340	\$850	\$2,550
An amount of \$3,200 may be provided for burial or \$2,200 for cremation paid directly to the funeral home. An Additional \$1,000 may be provided for plot allowance. See Johnson County Veterans Affairs Burial Policy and Procedures for requirements.					

The Johnson County Commission of Veterans Affairs approved the policies and procedures contained in this document to supersede the General Policies and Procedures of Johnson County Commission of Veterans Affairs.

Signed: 

Bill Blanchard, Chair, on Behalf of Johnson County Commission of Veterans Affairs

Effective Date: 11/19/2025

Appendix A – Federal Poverty Level Guidelines

2025 Monthly Federal Poverty Level Guidelines

*Household must be under 185% FPL

Household Size	Temporary Emergency Assistance				Iowa Veterans Trust Fund			
	175%	180%	185%	200%	225%	250%	275%	300%
1	2,282.29	2,347.50	2,412.71	2,608.33	2,934.38	3,260.42	3,586.46	3,912.50
2	3,084.38	3,172.50	3,260.63	3,525.00	3,965.63	4,406.25	4,846.88	5,287.50
3	3,886.46	3,997.50	4,108.54	4,441.67	4,996.88	5,552.08	6,107.29	6,662.50
4	4,688.54	4,822.50	4,956.46	5,358.33	6,028.13	6,697.92	7,367.71	8,037.50
5	5,490.63	5,647.50	5,804.38	6,275.00	7,059.38	7,843.75	8,628.13	9,412.50
6	6,292.71	6,472.50	6,652.29	7,191.67	8,090.63	8,989.58	9,888.54	10,787.50
7	7,094.79	7,297.50	7,500.21	8,108.33	9,121.88	10,135.42	11,148.96	12,162.50
8	7,896.88	8,122.50	8,348.13	9,025.00	10,153.13	11,281.25	12,409.38	13,537.50
9	8,698.96	8,947.50	9,196.04	9,941.67	11,184.38	12,427.08	13,669.79	14,912.50
10	9,501.04	9,772.50	10,043.96	10,858.33	12,215.63	13,572.92	14,930.21	16,287.50