

BEFORE THE BOARD OF STEVENS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

IN THE MATTER OF THE VETERANS
RELIEF FUND

Resolution No. 20-2018

REPEALING RESOLUTION
NO. 73-2007 AND ADOPTING
A NEW VETERANS RELIEF
FUND MANUAL

WHEREAS, the Board of Stevens County Commissioners finds the current Stevens County Veterans Relief Fund Manual was adopted in 2007; AND

WHEREAS, the Board finds that certain changes should be considered, particularly with respect to the maximum amount of relief furnished per year to a veteran or qualifying dependent; AND

WHEREAS, there are sufficient funds in the Veterans Relief Fund to increase the maximum amount allowed per year to a veteran or qualifying dependent.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED AND ORDERED by the Board of Stevens County Commissioners:


1. Resolution No. 73-2007 is hereby repealed; and
2. Exhibit 1 **attached hereto** and incorporated herein is hereby adopted as the Stevens County Veterans Relief Fund Manual and all distributions of monies for the assistance of indigent veterans and their families shall be made pursuant to the provisions of said manual.

Passed by the Board of Stevens County Commissioners meeting in regular session at Colville, Washington, by the following vote, then signed by its membership and attested to by its Clerk in authorization of such passage the day of March, 2018.

 3 YEA; 0 NAY; 0 ABSTAIN; and 0 ABSENT

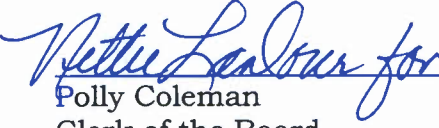
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF
STEVENS COUNTY, WASHINGTON


Chairman Wes McCart


Commissioner Don Dashiell


Commissioner Steve Parker

Attest:


Polly Coleman
Clerk of the Board

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Stevens County Veterans Relief Fund is to provide **emergency** relief to **indigent veterans** who currently reside in Stevens County to the extent that funds are available. Stevens County will assist the local veterans associations in their efforts to administer these funds and to provide fiscal accountability to the control of these funds.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Veterans Assistance Fund program is established under the authority of RCW 73.08.080 to provide temporary emergency financial assistance to indigent veterans, their families, and the families of deceased indigent veterans in the event of severe financial difficulties. **This is not an entitlement program like VA benefits.** The need for emergency assistance must be defined and be able to be verified. If assistance is provided to you through this program, there are no promises or guarantees of any future assistance. Our goal is to assist you through a **temporary financial hardship.** We will provide help through the voucher program. It is the responsibility of each veteran to seek additional help through other available resources, with the help of organizational veteran's service officers.

ADVISORY BOARD

A veterans' advisory board consisting entirely of veterans will be established to advise the Stevens County legislative authority on the needs of local indigent veterans, resources available to local indigent veterans, and programs that could benefit the needs of local indigent veterans and their families. Under the direction of RCW 73.08.035, the board shall consist of a majority of members representing local branches of nationally recognized veteran's service organizations. The remainder of the advisory board shall be comprised entirely of veterans residing within Stevens County. The advisory board shall meet with the Stevens County legislative authority not less than annually. If requested, Stevens County shall reimburse advisory board members for relevant travel expenses at the current county rates.

ADMINISTRATION

Nationally recognized veterans service organizations wishing to provide assistance to indigent veterans will submit a list of relief fund committee members at least once each year to the Stevens County Auditor's Office. Relief fund committee members shall be responsible for investigating all claims and ensuring that the veteran has provided all required paperwork. The committee members shall submit the application to the Stevens County Auditor's Office along with a recommendation to either approve or disapprove the application. All applications submitted to the Auditor's Office shall be reviewed and processed in a timely manner.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

RESIDENCY: You must have been a resident of Washington State for at least one consecutive year prior to your request for assistance. You must be a current resident of Stevens County, for a minimum of 90 days.

VETERAN STATUS: You must meet the requirements of RCW 73.08.005. "Veteran" includes, but is not limited to, every person who has served in any branch of the Armed Forces of the United States including the National Guard and Armed Forces Reserves and has fulfilled his or her military service obligation; and has received an honorable discharge or a discharge for medical reasons with an honorable record.

NEED: Your need for emergency assistance must be defined and be able to be verified through proper documentation.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

In accordance with RCW 73.08.010, Stevens County will provide a veterans relief fund to provide assistance to indigent and suffering veterans. The county legislative authority shall consult with the Veterans' Advisory Board to determine the appropriate services needed for local indigent veterans.

R.C.W. 73.08.080 requires that the legislative authority in each county shall levy, in addition to the taxes now levied by law, a tax in a sum equal to the amount which would be raised by not less than one and one-eighth cents per thousand dollars of assessed value, and not greater than twenty-seven cents per thousand dollars of assessed value against the taxable property of their respective counties. Expenditures from the veteran's relief fund may be used only for authorized veterans assistance programs, the burial or cremation of a deceased indigent veteran or deceased family member of an indigent veteran, or the direct and indirect cost incurred in the administration of the fund.

The maximum amount of relief furnished per year to a veteran, or qualifying dependent, shall be **\$500.00**. At the request of the veteran's organization, the Board of County Commissioners may authorize additional assistance on a case by case basis where unique circumstances justifying such additional assistance are shown to exist. The amount awarded should be directly related to the need for assistance. Awarding excessive amounts is an abuse of the fund and contributes to the depletion of the fund balance. This could mean a needy person being denied due to lack of funds.

It is the responsibility of the veteran's organizations to assist the veteran with the application/intake process. In all cases the organization should look for alternative resources to assist the veteran or his/her dependents. This program is not an entitlement and the veteran must prove a financial hardship before funds will be issued. Disability is not proof of financial hardship. All household income shall be considered when determining financial eligibility.

The veteran shall provide all required documentation and attest as to the accuracy of his/her completed application. All documents will be reviewed by the county and veteran organization and checked for accuracy (has the veteran claimed all sources of income, etc.).

DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED:

- < **Veteran application** form
- < **Voucher form** approved by investigative committee
- < **DD214**
- < **Original invoice**, receipt, contractual obligation, or estimate of services to be provided

Other items may include:

- < **Picture Identification** (Drivers License, State ID, etc.).
- < **Marriage License & Birth Certificates** of minor children (to prove dependency).
- < **Rent or Lease Agreement.** Must have landlords name, address and monthly rent amount and effective date. The landlord must provide a statement that rent is past due.
- < **Income Verification.** You must bring documentation of **all** income sources including your spouses (pay stubs, award letters, bank statements, etc.).
- < **Certified copy of Death Certificate** (of deceased veteran).
- < **Name changes from the DD214** require a copy of marriage license, court papers, etc. to provide the link for new names

The fund shall be limited to providing essential items:

- a. nutritional food
- b. medical care
- c. housing rent or repair
- d. heat, light, water or sewer service
- e. personal hygiene
- f. transportation assistance for medical purposes
- g. other emergency needs to be determined on a case by case basis, with pre-approval by the County Commissioners

The voucher may be used up to the maximum approved amount, not to exceed the annual limit set by the Board of County Commissioners. If the purchases/services are less than the approved amount, in no case is cash to be returned to the veteran. If the purchases/ services come to more than the approved amount, the veteran is responsible for the additional payment. If eligible for work, you must be currently working or registered with Washington State Job Service and actively seeking work.

An original invoice/shut-off notice/receipt/rental agreement/etc. must accompany the voucher in all cases. Food vouchers will be used for the purchase of **necessary items only**. The purchase of tobacco, alcohol, magazines, pet food and other non-essentials is not appropriate. The purchase of such items will be the financial responsibility of the veteran.

POINT OF CONTACT

The initial point of contact shall at all times be the nearest local veterans organization participating in the program. The organization's service officer will investigate the claim and then obtain approval or denial from the organization's officers and relief committee. All claims denied by local veteran organizations are to be returned to the Stevens County Auditor's Office for future reference. All approved applications are to be submitted to the Auditor's Office for review. Applications approved by the organizations shall require a minimum of two signatures from the veteran's relief committee.

The county's auditing officer shall review the application, voucher, and documentation for correctness and appropriateness within the county's guidelines. All food, gas, or other vouchers that require pre-approval shall then be sent to the Board of County Commissioners for final approval. Approved vouchers for food or fuel are returned to the organizations for release to the applicant who will then present the voucher directly to the vendor for purchases or services. The vendor will then return the original voucher and invoice to the Stevens County Auditor's Office for payment. All other payments for services shall be processed through the county's normal voucher system and the vendor shall be paid directly from the county. Stevens County will strive to ensure prompt and accurate relief to the veteran or his/her qualifying dependents.

DENIALS

Stevens County reserves the right to deny any application if there is proof that the veteran does not qualify for or is abusing the relief program. Claims may also be denied due to insufficient funds within the program. All denied applications will be returned to the veteran's organization which submitted the original request. The organization must notify the veteran as soon as possible so that alternate arrangements can be made. If an application has been denied, the veteran has the right to make a written appeal to the Stevens County Board of Commissioners within 15 days of notification. The appeal will then be reviewed and a response issued in a timely manner. The veteran must be informed of the reason for denial.

Direct the appeal to: **Stevens County Board of Commissioners**
215 South Oak Street
Colville, WA 99114

The emphasis of this fund should at all times be the veteran or his/her qualifying dependents and meeting their short term emergency needs. For long term needs, remember there is a long list of available resources that the veteran may not be aware of. By communicating and working closely with other agencies, we will be able to best serve the veterans needs.