

March 15, 2023

VETERANS COMMISSION
Douglas County Board of Supervisors
Wednesday, March 22, 2023, 2:00 p.m., Government Center, Boardroom 201
1316 North 14th Street, Superior, Wisconsin
***OR JOIN BY PHONE: (US) +1 413-308-2380 PIN: 443 322 780#**
OR VIDEO: <https://meet.google.com/udt-sduc-woe>

Please call the Chair or County Clerk's Office (715-395-1569) if you cannot attend.

MEMBERS: Ron Leino, Chair Samuel Pomush Thomas "Butch" Liebaert

A G E N D A

Virtual attendance available to public; committee members must attend in-person to constitute a quorum and/or vote.
Committee to maintain a two-hour meeting limit or take action to continue meeting beyond that time.
All action items include attachments unless noted.

1. ROLL CALL

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. December 19, 2022

3. INFORMATIONAL ITEM(S)

a. Plan/Changes in Addressing Homeless and Returning Veterans

4. ACTION ITEM(S)/REFERRAL(S)

a. Soldier and Sailors Relief Fund Policies and Procedures:

1. Expand Types of Assistance; and
2. Process for Awarding Assistance.

5. RECRUITMENT OF ADDITIONAL/NEW MEMBERS

6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

7. ADJOURNMENT

*Attachment included

cc: Ann Doucette Kaci Lundgren Shelley Nelson (Telegram) County Board Supervisors Shonn DeVroy
Bill Whiteside Carolyn Pierce Erick Hudson Douglas County Website

NOTE: Agenda and attachments available on www.douglascountywi.org or in County Clerk's Office. Action may be taken on any item on the agenda. The County of Douglas complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. If you are in need of accommodation to participate in the public meeting process, please contact the Douglas County Clerk's Office at (715) 395-1341 by 4:00 p.m. on the day prior to the scheduled meeting. Douglas County will attempt to accommodate any request. TDD (715) 395-7521.

Posted: Courthouse, Government Center, Superior Telegram, Superior Public Library

 3-15-23
Name Date

VETERANS COMMISSION
Monday, December 19, 2022, 10:03 a.m.
Boardroom 201, Government Center
1316 N. 14th Street, Superior, Wisconsin

Meeting called to order by Chair Ron Leino.

ROLL CALL: Present – Ron Leino, Sam Pomush, Thomas “Butch” Liebaert. Others present – Erick Hudson, Kendra Schmidt, Committee Clerk.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion by Pomush, second Liebaert, to approve minutes from the June 28, 2022, meeting. Motion carried.

INFORMATIONAL:

Plan/Changes in Addressing Homeless and Returning Veterans: More funding is currently needed for possible shelter options within Douglas County. Possibility of having a Veterans expo on Veterans’ Day.

Soldiers and Sailors Relief Fund: WHEAP and Heat for Heroes are using fund money currently; but the fund has not been used as much as expected.

ACTION ITEMS:

Expand Types of Assistance: Referred to next meeting.

Process for Awarding Assistance: Referred to next meeting.

Recruitment of Additional/New Members: Leino to ask Bill Fennessey about joining commission.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: Schedule quarterly meetings; possible next meeting 10 a.m., Monday, March 20th, 2023.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Pomush, second Liebaert, to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 11:01 a.m.

Submitted by,

Kendra Schmidt, Committee Clerk

DOUGLAS COUNTY
SOLDIERS AND SAILORS RELIEF FUND
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

EFFECTIVE June 1, 2016



Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the Douglas County Soldiers and Sailors Relief Fund, hereinafter called SSRF, is to provide aid to needy veterans and their families. The SSRF shall provide financial assistance to eligible veterans their family members to assist with basic needs such as rent, food, transportation, utilities and emergency situations.

Funds Generated

The SSRF is generated from a tax levy by the Douglas County Board of Supervisors to provide aid for needy veterans, needy spouses, surviving spouses, minor and dependent children of such veterans and needy parents of veterans (See Wis. Stat. 45.86 for taxing authority). The SSRF also includes monies collected through fund raisers and donations.

Administration

The Douglas County Veterans Service Commission, which was established under Wis. Stat. 45.81, provides oversight of the SSRF. The Douglas County Veterans Service Officer is responsible for determining the eligibility of applicants and awarding assistance from the fund.

Eligibility

Only eligible veterans and their family members may receive assistance from the SSRF. The determination of eligibility and need for funding from the SSRF is made by the Douglas County Veteran Service Officer. Applications are valid for 90 days. It is the applicant's responsibility to report any changes in status during this 90 day period of time. After 90 days a new application must be completed.

Applications for assistance shall include the following:

1. The applicant must provide a Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty (DD Form 214) establishing that the veteran earned an honorable discharge.
2. The applicant must complete a Statement of Claim (VA Form 21-4138) along with a Financial Status Report (VA Form 5655) documenting the need for assistance and the requested aid amount.
3. The applicant must have been a resident of the State of Wisconsin for at least six months and have resided in Douglas County for a minimum of 30 days immediately prior to obtaining assistance from the SSRF. Post office boxes shall not be a means of establishing residency.
4. The applicant must be indigent. One or more of the following definitions shall be used to determine if an applicant is indigent:

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- Receiving one of the following types of public assistance: temporary assistance for needy families, general assistance, poverty-related Veteran's benefits, food stamps or food stamp benefits transferred electronically, refugee resettlement benefits, Medicaid, or supplemental security income.
- Receiving an annual income, after taxes, of one hundred and fifty percent or less of the current federally established poverty level. Income received during the 31 day period prior to the date of application shall be annualized to determine an annual income. **Note:** Income includes all funds received by the applicant and their spouse or domestic partner, and all other individuals in the household who will benefit from the assistance.*

* Examples of included income which must be reported on the financial statement for the purpose of determining income eligibility are as follows:

- Money, wages and salaries after any deductions;
- Net receipts from self-employment;
- Labor and industries payments;
- Savings;
- Workers compensation;
- Alimony;
- Veterans; compensation and disability;
- Military family allotments or other regular support from an absent family member or someone not living in the household;
- Retirement, pension (including veterans' pension) and annuities;
- Insurance payments;
- Dividends, interest, and periodic receipts from estates or trusts;
- Unemployment compensation;
- Child support;
- Social security other than supplemental security income;
- Foster child payments;
- Tax refunds, gifts, loans, lump sum inheritance, one-time insurance payments or compensation for injury or death;
- Dependency and indemnity compensation for service-connected death;
- Educational assistance benefits (including veterans' educational Assistance benefits not paid directly to the school for tuition and books), Vocational rehabilitation subsistence allowance, and work-study benefits (including veterans' work-study benefits)

Note: Grants, loans and Veterans' educational assistance for tuition and books paid directly to the training institution are not included as income. Applicants who report no income for the previous 30 days must provide additional documentation showing their means of support and verification showing they have applied for assistance from other government agencies and social services programs deemed appropriate by the Soldiers and Sailors Relief Fund staff of the Douglas County Veterans Service Office.

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Assistance

Financial assistance may be provided to eligible veterans and their family members to assist with basic needs such as rent, food, transportation, utilities and other emergency situations as deemed appropriate by the Douglas County Veterans Service Officer.

Types of Assistance

A. Rent or Mortgage

Eligible applicants 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 documents proving ownership of the property. The applicant must provide documentation establishing that he/she will be able to sustain rent or mortgage payments for 3 of months if assistance is provided.

Payments for rental assistance will be paid directly to the property owner, management company or the owner's legal representative. Payments will not be made to an property owners who are family members of the applicant . Rental assistance shall only be available for the applicant's primary residence.

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

B. Utilities

Eligible applicants may receive assistance with delinquent utilities including power, water, propane, oil and wood after utilizing Douglas County fuel assistance resources. No assistance shall be available for cable television or internet services..

The applicant must provide a utility bill, a shut-off notice or letter of impending disconnection from the power, water or fuel company showing the current amount owed. Payment shall be made directly to the utility or fuel company and may include shut-off and reconnection fees.

Payment shall be made to the utilities or fuel company for an account in the veteran or eligible family member's name only. Utilities shall only be paid for the residence where the veteran or eligible family member current and primary residence. **Note:** The veteran or eligible family member may be required to first utilize other energy assistance programs prior to the approval of funding from the fund.

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C. Telephone

Eligible applicants may receive assistance for telephone services only in circumstances in which a physician has provided written documentation that the telephone is required for medical assistance or emergencies.

D. Transportation

Eligible applicants may receive assistance for daily or monthly bus passes within Douglas County and the Twin Ports area. Assistance may also be provided for transportation for documented appointments at the United States Department of Veterans Affairs' Clinics in St. Paul / Minneapolis, Minnesota.

E. Care of Graves

Eligible applicants may receive assistance of up to \$500 for the burial or cremation of a eligible veteran or surviving spouse of a an eligible veteran who dies without leaving means sufficient to defray funeral expenses and does not have any known next of kin available.

F. Other Requests

Other requests for financial assistance not listed in these policies and procedures shall be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the Douglas County Veterans Service Officer and awarded or denied at his/her sole discretion.

Assistance Allocation

Eligible applicants may receive up to \$800 in financial assistance in a twelve month period of time. Additional assistance may be awarded at the discretion of the Douglas County Veterans Service Officer for cases of extreme need. There is no automatic annual entitlement to assistance.

All awards of assistance are subject to the availability of funds.

Eligible applicants who receive financial assistance for two consecutive years shall not be eligible for further funding for a period of twelve months.

Application Certification

All applicants by filing an application authorize the Douglas County Veterans Service Officer to verify the accuracy of the information provided by the applicant. The applicant acknowledges that providing fraudulent information in the application or to the Douglas County Veterans Service Officer shall be grounds for denial as well as prosecution under the law. Any assistance provided based

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upon fraudulent information shall be repaid by the veteran and/or family member. Lost or stolen payments may not be reissued.

If the Veterans Service Commission and Douglas County Veterans Service Officer determine that the applicant provided false information or the misuse of assistance funds has occurred, the recipient shall be ineligible for assistance from the SSRF for a period of up to ten years.

Appeal

Applicants who have been denied assistance may request a review of the denial by the chairman of the Douglas County Veterans Service Commission. Said appeals must be filed within twenty days of denial of assistance. The chairman or the designee may request additional information in order to make an informed decision and shall issue a decision within ten days of receiving the information. The chairman's or designee's decision is final.