VETERANS ASSISTANCE POLICY

SECTION 1: POLICY STANDARDS

1.10 PURPOSE: The purpose is to provide consistent services and assistance to eligible veterans and their un-remarried widows as prescribed in 330 ILCS 45 of the Military Veterans Assistance Act. Under this law the veterans assistance commissions (VACs) are the designated advocates for veterans’ assistance at the county level.

1.11 ENACTMENT: To maintain accountability and compliance with these standards, this policy has been enacted by the Veterans Assistance Commission of Kendall County (VACKC).

1.12 ACCOUNTABILITY: The VACKC Board is responsible for the budget and is accountable for all funds expended.

1.13 ADMINISTRATION: The administration of veteran’s assistance in Kendall County shall be in accordance with state and federal laws. The VACKC Board has extended administrative powers to the superintendent for:

   A. Maintaining the accuracy of fund balances.
   B. Modifying the standards of this policy.
   C. Denying any application that does not meet the criteria established in this policy.
   D. Suspending or terminating any recipient that does not maintain their eligibility.

1.14 REVISIONS: Periodic adjustments are required to remain compliant with state and federal laws and VACKC policies and budget. The updated policy will supersede the existing policy. Each recipient shall be informed via certified mail of any policy changes at least 30 days prior to the effective date of such changes.

SECTION 2: APPLICANTS RIGHTS

2.10 RIGHT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION: Each applicant shall have the right to be treated by the VACKC in a fair, respectful and impartial manner. No applicant will be discriminated against because of race, sex, religion, national origin, handicapped status, sexual orientation or political affiliation.
2.11 **RIGHT OF CONFIDENTIALITY:** Each applicant is entitled to confidentiality. All VACKC staff and board members have signed confidentiality agreements requiring them to treat the contents of each client file with the strictest of confidence.

2.12 **RIGHT OF INCLUSION:** Each applicant shall receive copies of all signed VACKC forms at the conclusion of the application process.

2.13 **RIGHT OF REVIEW:** Each applicant shall be granted the right to present additional information to the VACKC that may have a bearing on an application.

2.14 **RIGHT OF NOTIFICATION:** Each applicant shall be notified via certified mail of the results of each application.

SECTION 3: APPLICATION PROCESS

3.10 **ELIGIBILITY:**

A. Applicant must provide certified copy of veteran’s separation document (DD-214) showing an honorable discharge.

B. Applicant must provide proof of at least 90 consecutive days of residency in Kendall County.

C. Applicant must provide a credit report generated within 30 days of application for each household member aged 18 and over. This will be obtained by VACKC staff.

D. Applicants and their spouses, who are under the age of 65 and able to work, must be actively seeking employment.

E. Applicants enrolled in any college or post-secondary education program are ineligible.

F. Applicants in receipt of SSI or TANF benefits are ineligible.

G. Applicants who reside in subsidized housing are ineligible for shelter assistance.

H. Applicants must review/sign *Statement of Understanding*

3.11 **PROCEDURE:** Applicants should obtain the following documents from the VACKC website ([http://www.co.kendall.il.us/veteransassistance/](http://www.co.kendall.il.us/veteransassistance)): VACKC-200 - Assistance Policy and VACKC-201 - Assistance Checklist. After reviewing the Assistance Policy, applicants must obtain all of the applicable documents listed in the Assistance Checklist. When all of the required documents are available, the applicant should make an appointment with the VACKC.

3.12 **GUIDELINES:**

A. For purposes of this policy, the applicants “family” includes the veteran, the veteran’s spouse or widow and any biological or legally adopted children under the age of 18; children between the ages of 18 and 22 that are students may qualify as family members, but proof of current full-time (12 credit hours during fall/spring; 6 credit hours during summer) enrollment in a post-secondary educational program is required.
B. All taxable and non-taxable monetary income and benefit amounts from all Federal, State, County or township programs will be added to the applicant’s monthly income.

C. In compliance with Illinois state law, “household” refers to all persons utilizing a structure as their principal place of dwelling; accordingly, any and all income received by all household members will be included in calculating the applicant’s monthly income.

D. The current Federal Poverty Level (FPL) chart will be used to determine maximum income levels; assistance rates will be based on family size, not household size; currently, the VACKC uses the 150% level of the FPL, but reserves the right to change this guideline at any time with notice to recipients.

E. Applicants in receipt of Social Security benefits will only have their net award counted towards their income, and be granted a $250 per month exemption from their actual monthly income.

F. Court ordered alimony, child support or wage garnishments will be deducted from the applicant’s monthly income (documentation required); if documentation is provided, any amount paid toward a medical payment plan may be deducted from countable income.

G. In the case of an applicant whose spouse is also a veteran, assistance will not be doubled; one of the veterans must identify as the applicant and the other as the spouse of a veteran.

3.13 DECISIONS: Each application will be reviewed for completeness and accuracy. Decisions will be based on the documentation received and all applicable assistance laws. The superintendent will consult with the VACKC Board to sanction hardship cases. A written statement of the decision will be sent to the applicant via certified mail.

3.14 DENIALS: Applications may be denied for any of the following reasons:

A. Applicant fails to provide ALL requested documentation within 10 days of original application

B. Applicant submits fraudulent documentation

C. Applicant’s countable income is in excess of the FPL

D. Applicant fails to file for all available Federal, State and County benefits

E. Applicant has been convicted of a felony within two (2) years of application

3.15 PROSECUTION: 720 ILCS 5, Chapter 16, Section 1, pertains to the theft of government supported property which includes taxpayer funded assistance benefits and 720 ILCS 5, Chapter 17, Section 6, which pertains to state benefits fraud. Veterans and/or widows who falsify or fail to disclose information on a VACKC assistance application subject themselves to possible civil and criminal charges. In the case of abuse by falsifying information on the application, providing fraudulent military discharge information, failure to disclose all required documents and income information or impersonating a veteran, the VACKC will immediately deny the application. Additionally, the VACKC may seek full restitution through the Kendall County State’s Attorney’s Office for the amount expended on the applicant or recipient and any court costs incurred.
SECTION 4: RECIPIENTS RESPONSIBILITIES

4.10 DURATION OF BENEFITS: The expiration date for each veterans assistance claim is November 30th of each year. Available assistance benefits for each fiscal year will be dictated by the approved VACKC budget and/or availability of funds. Recipients must reapply for assistance each year. Reapplication must be complete by December 1st of each year in order to avoid interruption of assistance.

4.11 GUIDELINES:

A. VACKC Veterans Assistance is not intended to be a long-term source of welfare.

B. All recipients are expected to comply with all applicable policy changes and notify the VACKC within five (5) business days of any changes in residence, household income, family size or job status; supporting documentation is required.

C. All recipients and their spouses under the age of 65 that are unemployed but able to work may be required to meet with the representative in workforce development no less than twice per month and may be required to provide two employment applications per week with contact numbers. Such recipients will be eligible for assistance for a period of four (4) months or until they attain employment, whichever comes first. Such recipients who reject ANY bona-fide offer of employment will be immediately terminated.

D. All recipients must manage their income in a responsible manner and will be held accountable for any expenses or income deemed to be questionable; recipients may be required to attend a personal finance education session/s or risk losing assistance benefits.

E. All recipients are responsible, on a MONTHLY basis, to provide bank and credit card account statements, pay stubs if applicable, and/or medical payment plan statements if applicable; recipients must provide detailed monthly statements for each and every household account. Shelter assistance recipients must show their portion of rent/mortgage payment.

4.12 SHELTER ASSISTANCE: This benefit will only be available to applicants with existing mortgages or leases which show the applicant’s name. The VACKC will never make payments directly to the recipient. Additionally, the VACKC will not pay for past due amounts, late fees, security deposits, closing costs, home owner association fees, property taxes, or mortgages once a property has been placed in foreclosure or a reverse-mortgage has been approved.

4.13 UTILITY ASSISTANCE: This benefit is only available for applicants who do not qualify for shelter assistance. Current electric and heating billing statements showing the applicant’s name must be provided. All applicants must apply for LIHEAP on an annual basis. When receiving LIHEAP benefits, VACKC utility assistance will cease and resume once LIHEAP benefits have been exhausted.

4.14 FOOD ASSISTANCE: All applicants/recipients are required to apply for IDHS/SNAP benefits every six (6) months. Recipients may qualify for Aldi food certificates based on income and family size. Receipt of Aldi food certificates will occur at the same time required monthly documentation is furnished.
4.15 **SUSPENSION:** A suspension is a temporary removal from the veterans assistance benefit program. Suspensions will last 30 days and a written statement of suspension will be sent to the recipient via certified mail. If the recipient has not resolved the issue that led to the suspension within 30 days, the recipient will be terminated. One (1) suspension will be allowed per recipient per fiscal year before termination.

4.16 **REINSTATEMENT:** If the issue resulting in suspension is resolved within 30 days of the suspension, the recipient’s assistance benefit will be reinstated on the first day of the following month.

4.17 **TERMINATIONS:** A recipient may be terminated for the balance of the fiscal year if they are found to be in violation of any portion of this policy. A recipient will be terminated indefinitely for misconduct, abuse, fraud or the conviction of a felony. A written statement of termination will be sent to the recipient via certified mail.

**SECTION 5: ASSISTANCE APPEALS**

5.10 **BOARD APPEALS:** Any assistance decision can be appealed. Each appeal must be submitted to the VACKC Board in writing and must be filed within thirty days of the decision. It is noted that all appellants have signed a form affirming that they have read and will comply with all policy standards, rights and responsibilities.

5.11 **APPEAL PROCESS:** All appeals will be conducted in the following manner:

A. Within five business days of receiving the appeal, the VACKC Board will convene a special meeting for the purpose of conducting a hearing.

B. The appellant must be present at this meeting.

C. The appellant shall be granted the right to present additional information.

D. Both the appellant and the superintendent will be granted the opportunity to present their case.

E. At the conclusion of the presentations, the appellant and the superintendent will be excused while the Board reviews the evidence and makes a decision.

F. Once a decision has been made, the appellant and the superintendent will return to the meeting and the Board President will inform the appellant of the Board’s decision.

G. A written statement of the decision will be sent to the appellant via certified mail.

H. In all cases, the decision of the VACKC Board shall be final.
## SECTION 6: MONTHLY ASSISTANCE RATE

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X  Jeff Cox  
VAC Board President

X  Chad Lockman  
VAC Superintendent