

VETERANS' ASSISTANCE FUND

What is the Veterans' Assistance Fund?

Washington law requires each county to establish a fund for needy veterans and their families and the families of deceased veterans. The law is found at Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 73.08.010. Each county is authorized to levy a tax to support the fund. The fund is usually referred to as the "Veterans Assistance Fund" or sometimes it is called "Veterans Relief."

What Type of Assistance is Available?

The type of assistance varies from county to county. For example, some counties provide direct cash assistance to pay for emergency needs such as shelter, utilities, medical needs, or food. Some counties provide vouchers for certain needs. There is a dollar limit to the amount of assistance and the number of times per year that one can get it and this, too, varies from county to county.

Who is Eligible for Veterans' Assistance?

To be eligible for assistance the veteran or widow/widower must meet (or have met in the case of a deceased veteran) the following four criteria:

1. The veteran must have been a resident of the State of Washington for at least one year; and
2. The veteran or widow/widower must be indigent, that is, in financial need; and
3. The veteran must have received an honorable discharge; and
4. The veteran must have served in at least one of the following capacities:
 - a) As a member 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 initial military service obligation;
 - b) As a member of the women's air forces service pilots;
 - c) As a member of the armed forces reserves, national guard, or coast guard, and has been called into federal service by a presidential select reserve call up for at least one hundred eighty days;
 - d) As a civil services crewmember with service aboard a U.S. army transport service or U.S. Naval transportation service vessel in oceangoing service from December 7, 1941 through December 31, 1946; or
 - e) As a member of the Philippine armed forces/scouts during the period of armed conflict from December 7, 1941 through August 15, 1945.

How do I Apply for Veterans' Assistance Fund?

In most counties the fund is administered by one or more veterans' service organizations (VSO) such as VFW, American Legion, or D.A.V. Because each county has its own plan, where and how to apply varies. To find out how to apply in your county, call the county government main office and ask for the person who has the Veterans Assistance Fund or Veterans Relief plan. **Or**, the County Veterans Coalition website at <http://cvcwashington.org/> has application information for all the counties in Washington.

Many times the service officers of the organizations are also very knowledgeable about other sources of help in their own communities and they can refer you to them.

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