



Henry County

Veterans Assistance Commission

Cambridge, Illinois 61238

SECTION 1: GENERAL POLICY STANDARDS

- 1.1 Purpose:** Provide consistent basic services to eligible veterans and their families as prescribed in 330 ILCS 45, the Military Veterans Assistance Act.
- 1.2 Enactment:** In order to maintain a high degree of compliance standards, this comprehensive policy is enacted by the Henry County Veterans Assistance Commission (HCVAC).
- 1.3 Policy Changes and Adherence:**
- A. This policy is subject to:
 - 1) Periodic updates are required to remain compliant with changes in federal and state laws.
 - a. The updated policy supersedes existing policy.
 - b. No “grandfathering” of current assistance recipients granted. Recipients are expected to comply with any policy changes to remain eligible for assistance.
 - B. Assistance recipients are subject to periodic internal and external reviews to avoid misuse and abuse of levied county funds.
 - C. Deviations, exceptions or excuses are authorized for any portion of this policy.
- 1.4 Accountability:** The HCVAC Board appoints the Superintendent as accountable and responsible for funds levied and expended. Furthermore, the HCVAC Board delegates the Superintendent the right to suspend or terminate any recipient that does not maintain his/her eligibility and/or willingness to comply with these program standards and requirements.
- 1.5 Applicants:** Individuals applying for assistance must:
- A. be a resident of Henry County, Illinois
 - B. provide proof of military service as specified in accordance (IAW) Section 2, Subsection 2.10.
 - C. adhere to a strict qualification process and periodic reviews.
 - D. complete the application process.
 - E. report changes to their income circumstances (i.e. job status, income, etc.) immediately which may affect their HCVAC benefits. If not reported and a change is discovered, it may result in denial, termination and any further assistance.
- 1.6 Determinations:** The HCVAC Superintendent will screen the completed application with supporting documentation IAW Section 3: EMERGENCY AND INTERIM ASSISTANCE APPLICATION to determine applicants eligibility based on this policy’s criteria and requirements of the laws that govern the issuance of assistance.

1.7 Categories: Assistance categories are limited to basic shelter, utilities, food and limited personal hygiene. Each category is prorated based on the applicant's COMBINED household income.

1.8 Responsibilities: For all intents and purposes, the HCVAC will not be taken advantage of. Nothing in the HCVAC assistance program is guaranteed. Applicants/recipients not willing to help themselves or demonstrate a genuine lack of responsibility are at risk of suspension or termination from the program.

A. The HCVAC assistance program is not intended as a long-term source of welfare. The applicant MUST pursue services from other assistance agencies.

B. The overall responsibility rests with the applicant to actively pursue possible income sources. The applicant does not help their employment situation by refusing employment referrals from IDES and other employment sources.

C. Applicants/recipients who voluntarily leave their jobs or are terminated for misconduct cannot apply for HCVAC assistance for 30 days from the termination date.

D. Applicants/recipients need to manage their income in a responsible manner or seek financial planning guidance. The HCVAC is not responsible for and will not support claimants that continually exhibit bad financial planning.

E. Applicants/recipients who fail to avail themselves for vocational or medical rehabilitation or employment educational programs so they can become employable will be dismissed from HCVAC assistance.

F. Family members are obligated to inform the HCVAC if the applicant/recipient becomes deceased.

G. Applicants/recipients are obligated to inform the HCVAC of any income change, (increase or decrease).

SECTION 2: DEFINITIONS

2.1 Veterans Eligibility: Applicants must have served the full period for which they were called to active duty and their most current discharge status must be honorably discharged or medically discharged due to a service connected injury or disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty. Some categories or narratives that reflect the individuals own misconduct or self-abuse as shown on general discharges (under honorable conditions) may also disqualify the applicant. Individuals with a bad or dishonorable discharge are automatically disqualified and not considered for assistance.

2.2 Income and Assets:

A. The monthly gross income from an applicant's household is all income derived by all household members. Examples of countable gross income sources are: employment, retirement, VA pension or compensation, Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, disability or workman's compensation benefits, income from real estate or rental properties, township general assistance, IL Public Aid Cash Grant or IL Public Aid Food Stamps, business, crops, earned interest, alimony and child support, settlements and annuities.

B. Assets are reportable during the application process. The home of residence (not a rental unit), family clothing, children's toys, one car and certain other personal items are not included as assets.

C. An applicant is **NOT** eligible for HCVAC assistance if receiving **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)**.

2.3 Denials: An application may be denied if the applicant did not meet the screening criteria established in this policy or requirements of laws that govern this assistance program.

SECTION 3: EMERGENCY AND INTERIM ASSISTANCE APPLICATION

3.1 Process: The applicant must furnish all applicable documents before the Superintendent can consider the application. Required documents are listed in Subsections 3.2 **Basic Forms**; 3.3 **Identification** and 3.4 **Proof of Income**.

3.2 Basic Forms:

A. Application Form – APPLICATION FOR EMERGENCY AND INTERIM ASSISTANCE (*This form will ascertain the applicants overall eligibility and help determine the type of assistance the applicant may be eligible to receive. Assistance is not guaranteed.*)

B. VETERAN'S CERTIFICATION OF APPLICATION (*Signed and dated*): Veteran certifies information contained with the application is true and correct to the best of his/her knowledge.

C. TERMINATIONS (*Signed and dated*) Veteran understands assistance may be terminated for violating the HCVAC policy for given reasons.

D. RELEASE OF INFORMATION AUTHORIZATION (*Signed and dated*) Veteran authorizes HCVAC Superintendent authorization for bank, corporation, transfer agent, institution or Bureau of IDPA account information and other information deemed pertinent as identified on the form.

3.3 Identification: HCVAC Superintendent required documents for identification purposes.

A. Military separation form (for example DD Form 214 or equivalent)

B. Proof of county residency. (i.e. Driver's License, Voters registration card, etc.)

3.4 Proof of Income: Before the application is considered, all applicable documents listed below must be furnished to the HCVAC Superintendent for the entire household during the application process and as change occurs, requested or annually. When determining income eligibility, any and all income produced by the household is considered. Refer to Subsection 2.2-**Income and Assets**.

A. All income produced by the household. (*Provided at time of application and/or upon request*)

B. Annual Social Security increases. (*Provided annually prior to 15 February*)

C. Monthly retirement and Annual Increase Statements. (*Provided annually prior to 15 February*)

D. Annual VA Compensation or Pension Statements. (*Provided annually prior to 15 February*)

E. VA Un-employability Statement. (*Provided annually prior to 15 February*)

F. Un-employment Benefits Statement (*Provided annually prior to 15 February*)

G. Workman's Compensation Statement (*Provide when benefits begin, change or end.*)

H. Other Income: Crops, rentals, annuities, alimony and/or child support, earned interest, investment returns, settlements, real estate & business transactions, etc. *(Provided at time of application and/or upon request)*

3.5 Application Calculations:

A. The Superintendent will total all income sources and amounts that have been provided by the applicant and the entire household.

B. The countable income is compared to the Federal Poverty Level Chart (150% rate) for the family unit size. If the countable income is below the amount listed, the application may be considered. If the income level exceeds listed amount, the application will be denied.

3.6 Evaluations: The Superintendent will review each application using the current Federal Poverty Level Chart (150% rate), household size, state and Federal compliance standards to determine eligibility.

SECTION 4: CATEGORIES & REQUIREMENTS

4.1 Categories: Shelter, Utility (electric, heating, water) and food & hygiene are the three basic categories the HCVAC provides assistance. The categories are subject to compliance with Federal and State of Illinois codes, guidance, regulations as identified in this policy.

4.2 Shelter Assistance:

A. The Superintendent will not grant shelter assistance until the requirements specified in this policy are completed.

B. The shelter allowance may be granted on a prorated basis determined by the current Federal Poverty Level Chart and based on the total applicant's household income.

C. The shelter allowance is provided for an existing situation such as monthly rent payments shown in the applicant's name.

D. The HCVAC will not make payments towards security deposits or mortgages.

E. The HCVAC will not make payments for a sub-lease of an existing residence to a blood or a legally adopted relative.

F. The HCVAC will not expend any money for past due amounts or late fees.

4.3 Utility Assistance.

A. The Superintendent may only grant utility assistance after all requirements specified in this policy are completed.

1. The applicant **must** make an appointment at the Illinois Department of Human Services, 207 West Second Street, Kewanee (309) 852-4565 to apply for LiHEAP (and/or Warm Neighbors – Ameren customers only) for winter and/or summer financial assistance. The primary purpose of LiHeap is to assist low-income households receive direct financial assistance, energy counseling, outreach and education. The process may take as long as three months.

2. If the applicant is approved by LiHEAP, HCVAC requires a copy of the approved amount.

B. HCVAC will only make payments for current months' bill. Past due charges, late fees or re-connection fees are the responsibility of the assistance recipient.

C. HCVAC will only accept municipal water/sanitary bills, heating/cooking gas bills and/or electric bills in the applicant's name.

4.4 Food and Hygiene Assistance.

A. The Superintendent will only grant food or hygiene assistance after specified requirements in this policy are completed.

B. The applicant must complete an application for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP (formerly food stamps) assists low-income individuals and families purchase nutritious food to maintain good health.

1. If IL Dept of Human Services (IDHS) approves the application, the HCVAC will require a copy of the approval showing approved amount and termination date. An IDHS recipient can receive a hygiene allowance from the HCVAC. IDHS makes no provisions for hygiene purchases.

2. If IDHS denies the application because the applicant did not meet program requirements, HCVAC can consider providing assistance. The applicant is required to furnish a copy of the denial letter from IDHS before assistance is considered.

SECTION 5 APPLICANT'S RIGHTS

5.1 Right of Non-discrimination.

A. All applicants have the right to be treated in a fair and impartial manner by the HCVAC.

B. No applicant will be discriminated against because of race, sex, religion, national origin, handicapped status or political affiliation.

5.2 Right of Confidentiality and Identity Protection.

A. Applicants are entitled to confidentiality. The HCVAC staff members signed confidentiality statements agreeing to treat the contents of each client's file with strict confidence.

B. Safeguards are in place to protect each client's personal information.