

CLAYTON COUNTY VETERANS AFFAIRS MEETING  
600 Gunder Road NE, Elkader, Iowa 52043  
April 8, 2024, at 7:30 a.m.

Veterans Commission Meeting was called to order at 7:30 a.m. on April 8, 2024, at the Clayton County Office Building Meeting Room.

**I.) Roll Call:** Commissioners Clark, Eilers, Torkelson and Jordan, Director, present.

**II.) Approval of Minutes:** Motion was made by Eilers to approve the minutes from March 18, 2024. Motion was seconded by Clark; Motion carried.

**III.) Public Comments:** No public comments noted.

**IV.) Budget Review.** Jordan distributed the current Fiscal Budget for 2023-2024. The Veterans Affairs office spent \$10,786.08 during the month with 49.16% remaining in the budget. Eilers made the motion to approve the budget, Clark seconded the motion; motion carried.

**V.) Old Business:**

a). The District 2 Meeting was held at the Diamond Joe Casino in Dubuque March 22, 2024 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Jordan and Torkelson attended. Torkelson shared information obtained during the conference with the other commissioners. Jordan also reviewed what was discussed at the meeting with the commissioners.

b). Spring Schooling Dates for Veteran Service Officers are scheduled for April 16-18 in Johnson County. Jordan will be attending.

c). The glass floor mat in Jordan's office was purchased and installed.

d). New brochure packets outlining the VA state and federal disability benefits using a larger print will be forthcoming. Jordan said that these brochures would be distributed to clients during the face-to-face visits in his office.

e). Calendars, pens, and notebooks were ordered and received to distribute to veterans in the Clayton County Veterans Affairs Office.

f). Jordan has been in contact with EARL, the rural transit option with the possibility of serving veterans who are not mobile. Monies have been allocated to contract with EARL. Transportation will be arranged by our Transportation Director to the VA facility serving veterans using grant dollars.

g). Jordan said that there would be a Van Driver's Meeting in the large conference room on April 12, 2024, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

**VI.) New Business**

a). The March Statistical Report was distributed. 28 total number of calls received this month re: Veteran related concerns. 17 total office visits from Veterans, 1 home visit, and 1 training event.

b). Veterans who were exposed to toxins or other hazards during their military service are now eligible to enroll in VA healthcare. This change expands eligibility to include all veterans served (whether in the US or abroad) in the Vietnam War, Gulf War, Iraq or Afghanistan or another combat zone after September 11, 2011. Additionally, who were never deployed but were exposed to toxins or hazard while training or on active duty in the US. These veterans are now eligible to enroll and may enroll directly without applying first for VA disability compensation benefits.

c). The VA has announced implementation of new steps to expand preventative services, healthcare and benefits for Veterans with cancer. The VA will expand access to genetic, lung and colorectal cancer screenings for veterans. The VA also plans to ensure that each VA medical facility can perform lung cancer screenings.

**VII. Review and approval of Claims.**

**VIII. Confirmation of Next Meeting.** Next meeting will be on May 13, 2024, at 7:30 a.m.

**IX. Adjourn.** Eilers made the motion to adjourn, Clark seconded the motion; Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Gerrie Torkelson

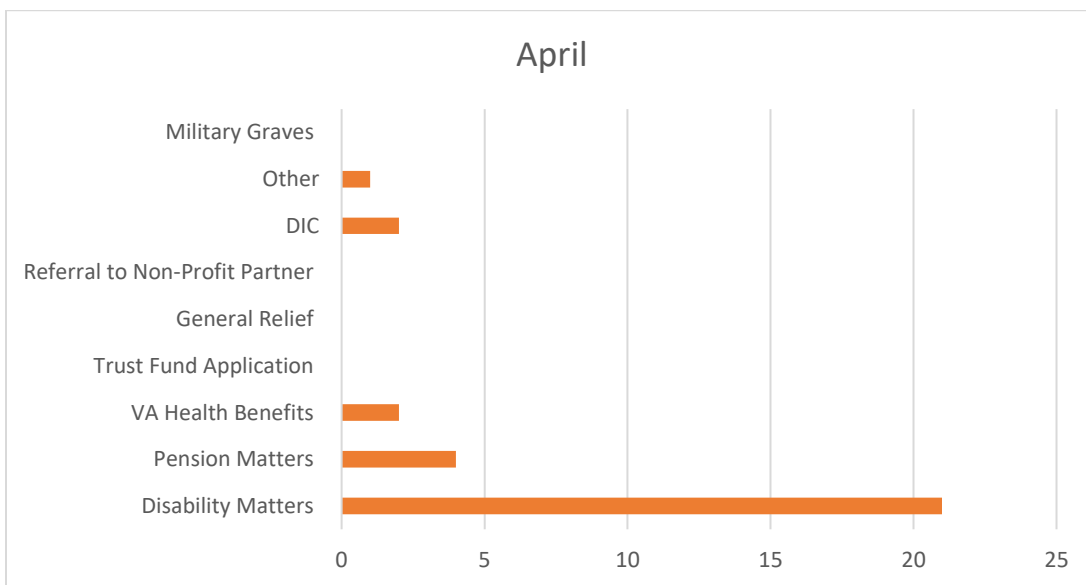
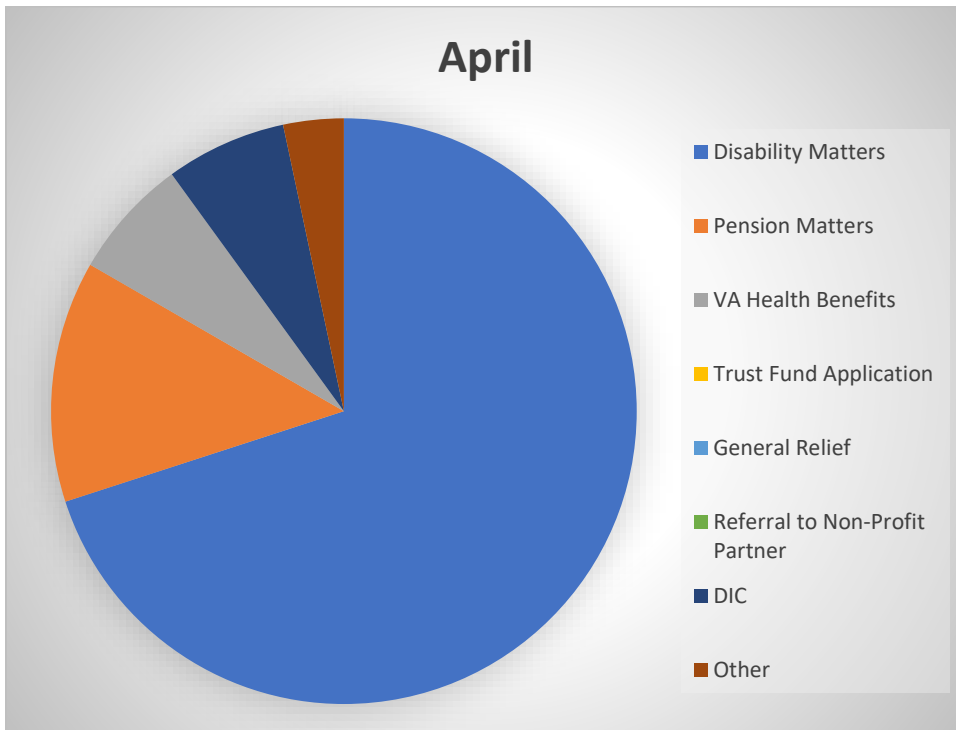
## April Report

**39** total number of calls received this month re: Veteran related concerns.

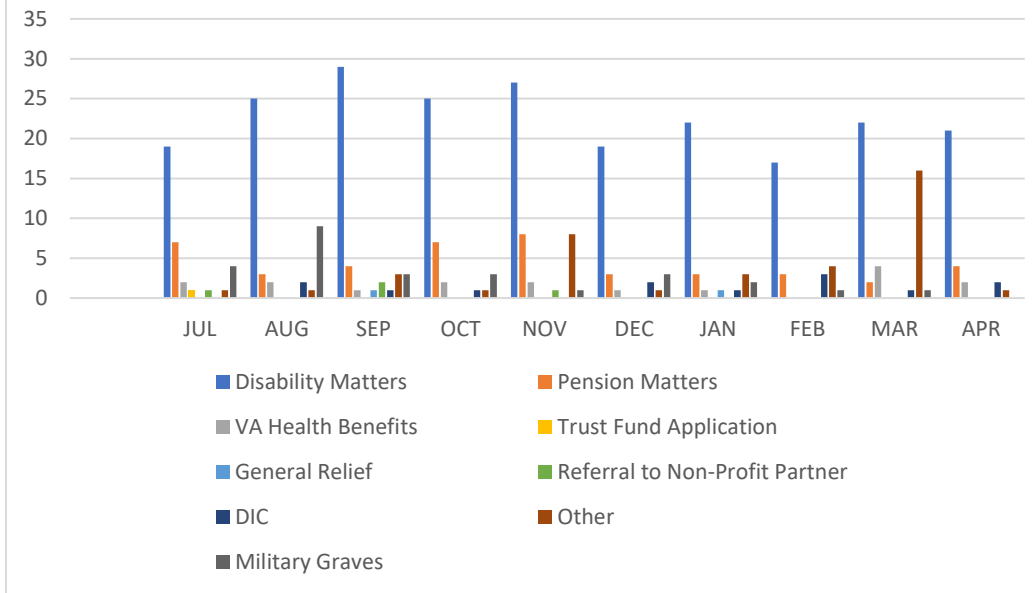
**26** total office visits from Veterans.

**2** home visit

**1** training event



## MTD-2024 Comparison- VA Activity



### VA & State Updates:

#### New State Legislation

Legislation passed appropriate funding (\$3,000) to support national training for county veteran service officers to maintain accreditation in accordance with US Department of Veterans Affairs. Additionally, state law now requires each county office executive director or administrator; within one year of hire, to obtain a personal identification card to access the veteran benefits management system. Failure to maintain accreditation and obtain an access card shall result in individual's removal from office. In extenuating circumstances, County Commission of Veteran Affairs may make request to commandant of IDVA to extend time to allow for individual to obtain access card. This legislation also changes the makeup of each county veterans affairs commission. Rather than having a commission that is comprised of veterans who served during a different action/conflict, the commission, when possible, shall be comprised of veteran members who served in different branches of the military. This requirement would preclude a veteran who has served in more than one branch of the military from membership.

#### VA's New Program to Help Veteran Stay in Their Homes

The VA is launching a new program called Veteran Affairs Service Purchase ("VASP") to assist veterans avoid foreclosure on their home. The VASP program is open to eligible veterans, service members and surviving spouses who are experiencing severe financial hardship and have a VA guaranteed home loan. Under the program, the VA will purchase defaulted VA loans from mortgage services, modify the loans, and place them into VA owned portfolio as direct loans – enabling the VA to work directly with eligible Veterans to adjust their loan and monthly payments. The rates would be fixed at 2.5% interest for the term of the loan. Veterans will not apply directly for VASP, but rather, starting May 31 mortgage servicers will identify qualified borrowers and submit requests on behalf of the veteran. Veterans facing financial hardships that impact their ability to meet loan payments should work with their mortgage servicers to explore all available options. For those who are facing foreclosure, they should contact a location technician at 1 877 827-3702 to explore options to avoid foreclosure.