

CLAYTON COUNTY VETERANS AFFAIRS MEETING
600 Gunder Road NE, Elkader, Iowa 52043
May 13 at 7:30 a.m.

Veterans Commission Meeting was called to order at 7:30 a.m. on May 13, 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 April 8, 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 \$15,406.56 during the month with 31.86% remaining in the budget. Eilers made the motion to approve the budget, Clark seconded the motion; motion carried.

V.) Old Business:

a). It was noted by Eilers that the DAV Office has vehicles that are sent out to veterans who are not mobile and will come to Clayton County. The hours of service are from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Appointments are limited to the Iowa City Medical Clinic. At present, the DAV office is short drivers for this option of transportation. Jordan noted that we would continue with EARL for rural transportation to Decorah and Waterloo Clinics for non-mobile clients. Transportation will be arranged by the Shuttle Coordinator to the VA facility serving veterans using grant dollars.

b). Discussion was held regarding the Van Drivers' Meeting held on April 12, 2024, beginning at 11:30 a.m. and ending at 1:00 p.m. Concerns were discussed regarding door-to-door service and/or a local site for pick-up. This appears to be a work in progress with the Shuttle Coordinator and Drivers. It was also noted that there would be no tipping of van drivers. Sign will be posted in van behind driver's seat declaring statement about the no tipping status. Should a rider want to tip, they will be encouraged to donate to the DAV in Iowa City. Location/storage of van is still being discussed especially when referring to the van's storage in a heated facility.

The Service Outline for transportation of veterans is as follows:

VA Social Worker – aware of service member's needs.

Shuttle Coordinator	
	V
Earl Transit	
	V
Clayton County	
	V

c). Spring Training of Veterans Service Officers was discussed. Legislation passed appropriate funding (\$3000) to support national training for county veteran service officers to maintain accreditation in accordance with US Department of Veterans Affairs This will take effect July 1, 2024. Continuation of the current rate of \$10,000 grant is yet to be determined.

d). All VSOs are required to obtain a Personal Identity Verification (PIV) card. PIV card is an identification card issued by a federal agency that contains a computer chip, which allows it to receive, store, recall, and send information in a secure method.

e). It was also noted at the VSO training that the new 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. Legislation now defines Veterans' status which also covers national guard and reservists.

f). Burial expense obligations are based on the county of residence rather than location of death.

g) The county has received 54 cemetery maintenance claims that have been processed, which represents a 96% processing rate to date.

h). Tentative Fall Training Date for County Commissioners is October 14, 2024, and October 15-17, 2024 for Veteran Service Officers.

i). The VA utilizes contracting companies to conduct examinations for Veterans who have filed disability claims. These are third party contractors who provide an independent examination and opinion of whether a Veteran's condition meets service-connection standard. Currently, the VA uses 3 contractors: Veterans Evaluation Services (VES), Optum Serve (formerly LHI) and QTC.

VI.) New Business

a). 1000 Pamphlets for Clayton County Veterans Affairs have now been purchased, printed, received, and are ready for distribution.

b). The April Statistical Report was distributed. 39 total number of calls received this month re: Veteran related concerns. 26 total office visits from Veterans, 2 home visits, and 1 training event.

c). The VA is launching a new program called Veteran Affairs Service Purchase ("VASP") to assist veterans avoiding 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.

VII. Review and approval of Claims.

VIII. Confirmation of Next Meeting. Next meeting will be on June 10, 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 8:44 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Gerrie Torkelson

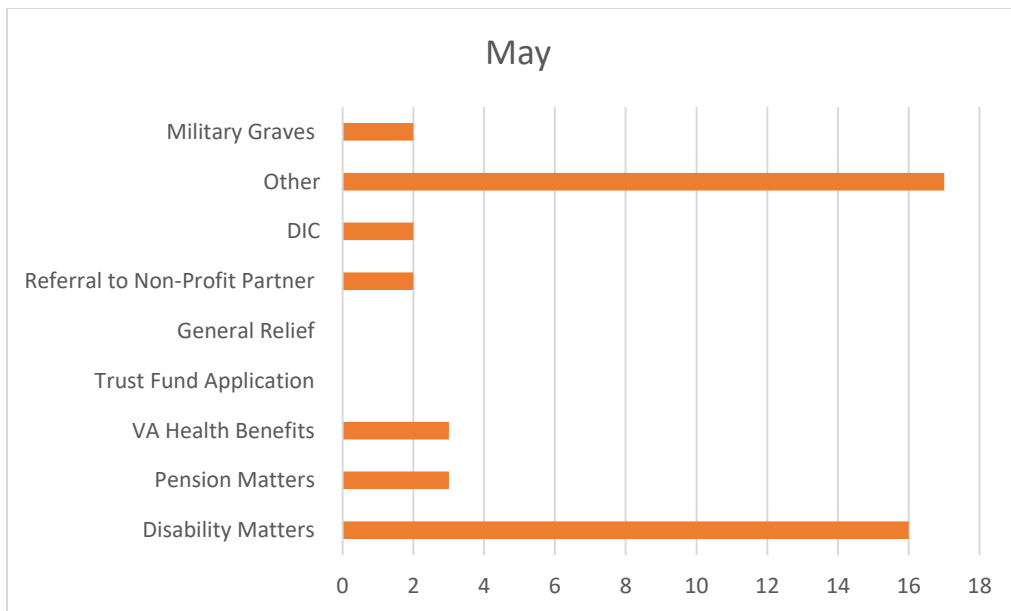
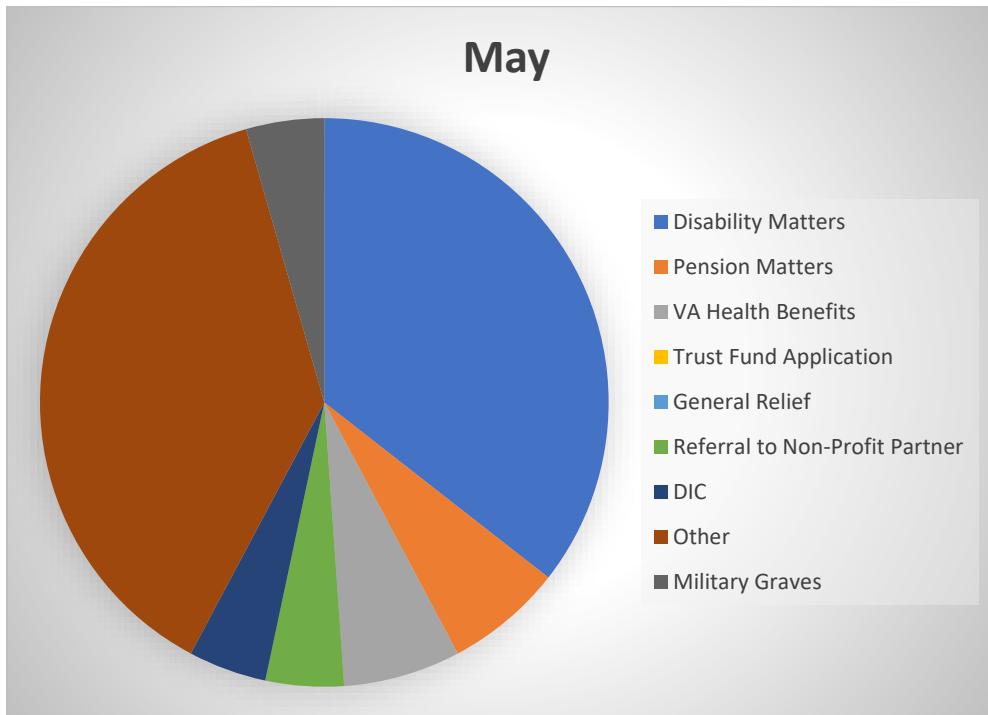
May Report

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

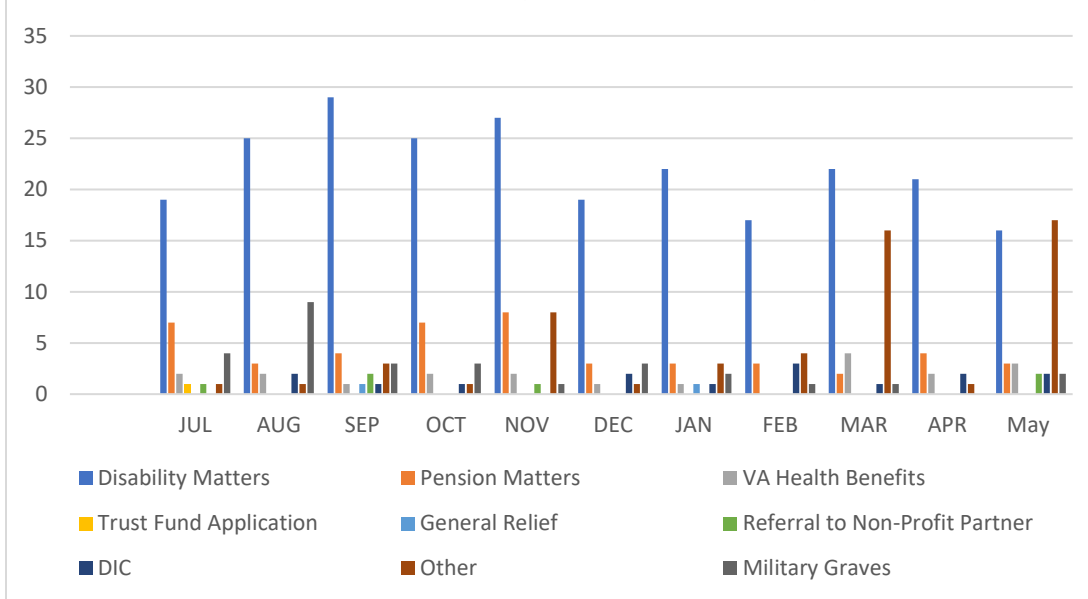
25 total office visits from Veterans.

0 home visits

0 training event



MTD-2024 Comparison - VA Activity



VA & State Updates:

VA Expands Care Access & Benefits – Character of Service

The Department of Veteran Affairs recently posted a final rule that amended regulations regarding character of discharge determinations. This change expands access to VA care and benefits for **some** former service members discharged under “other than honorable” or by “special court-martial” – this approach eliminates regulatory bar for homosexual acts; individuals discharged for willful and persistent conduct involving moral turpitudes. For veterans with such character of service discharges who then apply for VA benefits or services, the VA will review their records to determine if they (the VA) can provide the Veteran with the request care and/or benefit. The VA encourages former service members to apply for VA care and benefits.

The VA Announces New Grant Program to Support Military to Civilian Life Transition

The VA has created a new grant program to help service members and their spouses as they transition from military to civilian life. The grants are awarded to eligible organizations that provide employment-based resources and tools. These services can include resume assistance services, job recruitment training, interview training, employment placement services and other services that support successful transition. The program is part of a broader effort by the VA to help veterans with their careers after service. The VA offers additional services such as Personalized Career Planning and Guidance (PCPG) and Veteran Readiness and Employment Program that supports the VA overall mission.