

CLAYTON COUNTY VETERANS AFFAIRS MEETING
600 Gunder Road NE, Elkader, Iowa 52043
August 19, 2024 at 7:30 a.m.

Veterans Commission Meeting was called to order at 7:30 a.m. on August 19, 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 July 8, 2024. Motion was seconded by Clark; Motion carried.

III.) Public Comments: None.

IV.) Budget Review. Jordan distributed the current Fiscal Budget for July 2024. The Veterans Affairs office spent \$5173.51 during the month of July 2024. Jordan stated that the county has still not received the \$10,000 Veterans Grant Funding. The State is currently reviewing last year's grant regarding money spent on the allocation of furniture. Eilers made the motion to approve the budget, Clark seconded the motion; motion carried.

V.) Old Business:

a). Information pertaining to the Fall Training of Commissioners was distributed by Jordan. The training program will take place on October 14, 2024 beginning at 8:00 a.m. and concluding at 4:00 p.m. Location is Building S70, Freedom Center, Camp Dodge Joint Maneuver Training Center, 7105 NW 70th Avenue, Johnston, IA 50131. There is no registration fee. The Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs will host an ice breaker/social event for Commissioners, and anyone else coming to Central Iowa on Sunday for the Monday training. This event will take place at the Iowa Gold Star Military Museum, 7105 NW 70th Ave., Johnson, Iowa 50131 on Sunday, October 13, 2024, from 5:00-6:30 p.m.

VI.) New Business

a). Changes at the Veterans Administration on how to access health records and/or pending claims will be forthcoming. My HealtheVet will be retired January 21, 2025, and Login.gov and id.me will see changes in September 2025.

b). There will be a Mental Health Summit on September 20, 2024, from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the Coralville Public Library.

c). The Clayton County Veterans Service Office plans to participate in the Clayton County Fair next year in 2025.

d). Delaware County will be losing their Veterans Service Officer on September 20, 2024, due to funding issues. Our County may see an increase in clients coming to our office. Delaware County does have part-time staff conducting administrative responsibilities.

e). Jordan received a telephone call from Crawford County, Wisconsin stating that they would be interested in partnering with our County in offering a Community Outreach Program.

f). Transportation regarding Earl Transit to Clinic in Decorah was discussed. \$1,000 has been established in grant money to transport clients to the Decorah Clinic for appointments.

g). The Veterans Service Office has a good supply of flag holders for graves. The inventory consists of 20 aluminum Peacetime, 9 brass World War I, 23 brass World War II, 17 brass Korean War, and 62 brass Vietnam. The office sees an increase in flag holder distribution, especially during the Memorial and Veterans Day holidays.

h). VA warns veterans about business and job scams that target veterans, and the newest scams relate to business and/or job opportunities. Scammers use methods very similar to real employers (i.e. online advertisements) that promise to offer a job when they are collecting personal information and money.

i). The VA has specific eligibility criteria for dental care. Some or all dental care needs made be provided by the VA. It is best to understand the eligibility requirements (which involve several factors) and how to access care. Once enrolled in VA Health Care after dental eligibility has been established, a Veteran may contact the local VA medical center or their dental clinic to schedule an appointment. For veterans who do not meet eligibility criteria, they may consider securing dental coverage through the VA Dental Insurance Program (VADIP).

j). The June Statistical Report was distributed. 51 total number of calls received this month re: Veteran related concerns. 25 total office visits from Veterans, 0 home visits, 7 outreach events, and 0 training events.

VII. Review and approval of Claims.

VIII. Confirmation of Next Meeting. Next meeting will be on September 9, 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 8:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Gerrie Torkelson

August Report

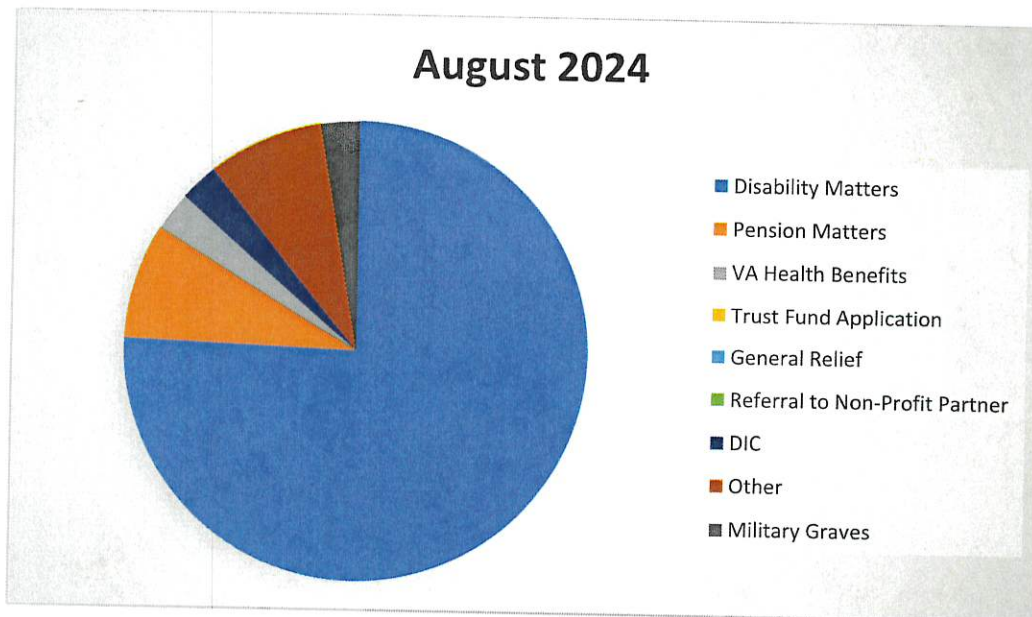
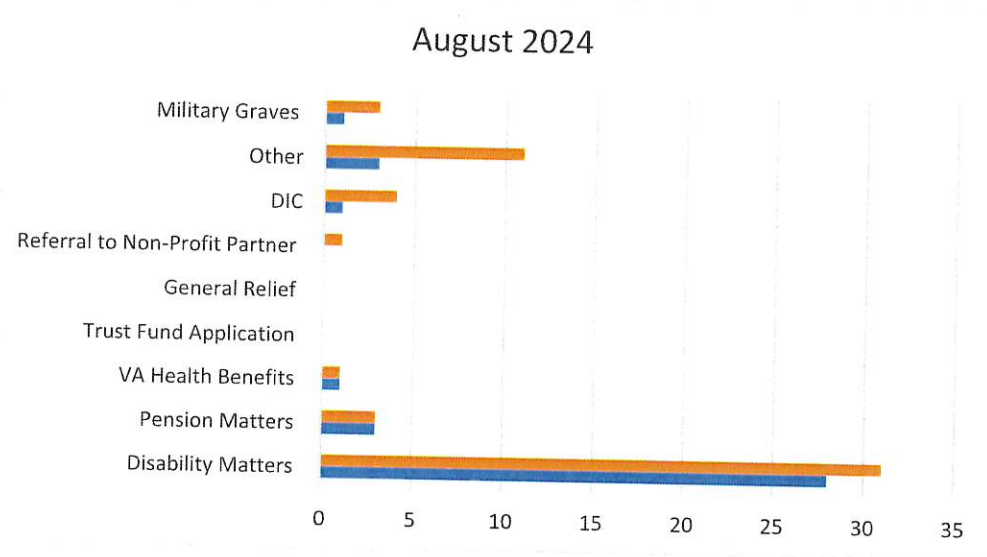
27 total number of calls received this month re: Veteran related concerns.

22 total office visits from Veterans.

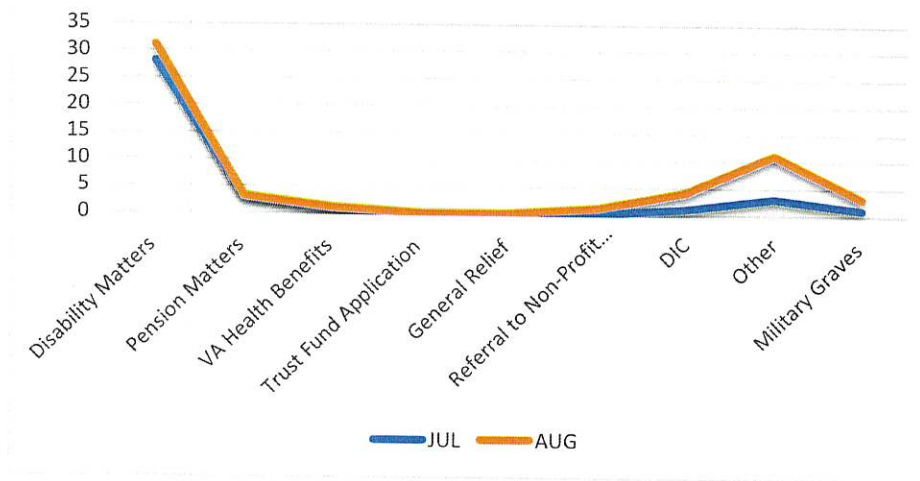
4 home visits

0 outreach events

1 training event



YTD Comparison



VA & State Updates:

How to Report a Veteran's Death to the VA

When a Veteran passes away, family members should report that death to the VA as soon as possible to stop current benefit payments. If the death is not promptly reported, the survivors or executors of the Veteran's estate may be required to repay overpayments made to the deceased Veteran. Family members may contact the VA by phone at **800-827-1000** and select option 5. Agents are available Monday-Friday from 8AM to 9PM EST. A family member may also report a Veteran's death in person by visiting a VA regional office. In person reporting will require the family to demonstrate their relationship to the Veteran and provide supporting documents that can help the VA verify Veteran's identity (i.e. death certification, discharge certificate). Another option would be to mail notice, along with support materials, to

**Department of Veterans Affairs
Claims Intake Center
P.O. Box 4444
Janesville, Wisconsin 53547-4444**

VA Takes Steps to Expand Access to Benefits – Veterans and Their Survivors Who Served in K2 (Karshi-Khanabad base in Uzbekistan)

The VA announced steps to expand access to VA benefits for veterans, as well as their survivors, who served at Karshi-Khanabad base in Uzbekistan after September 11, 2001. The plan would extend benefits to those with an undiagnosed illness and medically unexplained chronic multi-symptom illness – conditions would be considered presumptive. The conditions are usually commonly referred to a Gulf War illness and the cause of the conditions are not fully understood but is believed to be related to environmental exposures, chemical agents (i.e. jet fuel, volatile organic compounds, particulate matter, dust, asbestos roofing tile and lead-based paint) and possibly stress. The VA continues to work with the Department of Defense to conduct research to identify any additional exposures. When such a claim is filed, the VA will take into consideration this list of contaminants and where the Veteran was potentially exposed during their deployment. Additionally, Veterans who served in K2 and meet basic eligibility requirements will also be eligible to enroll in VA Health care.

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600 Gunder Road NE, Elkader, Iowa 52043
September 9, 2024 at 7:30 a.m.

- 1.) **Roll Call:** Commissioner Torkelson and Jordan, Director, present. There wasn't a quorum for the meeting. Therefore, the meeting was not held. Commission will meet again on October 21, 2024.

Submitted by Gerrie Torkelson

September Report

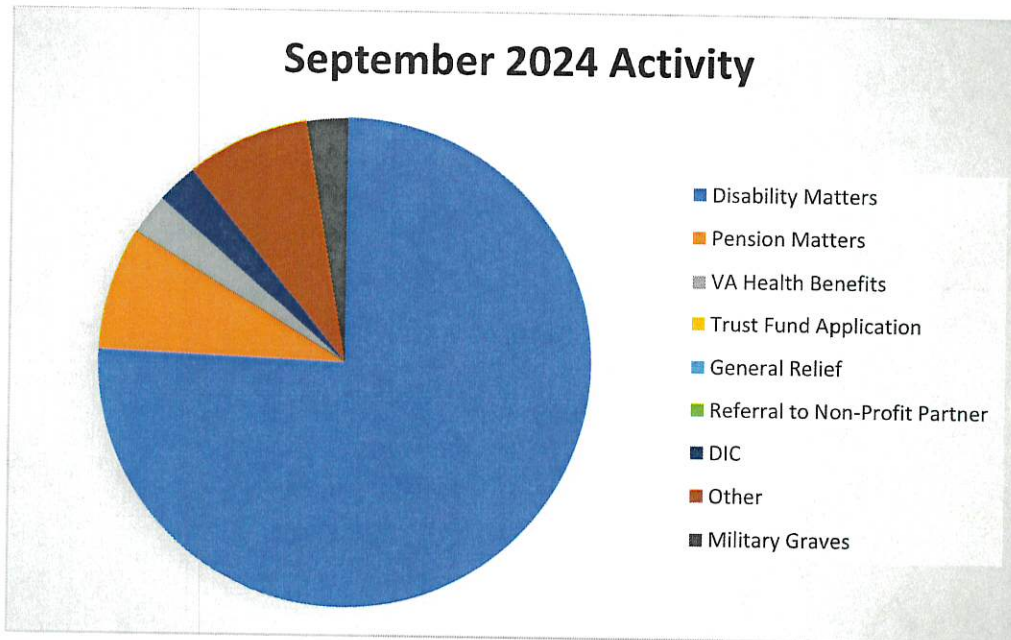
51 total number of calls received this month re: Veteran related concerns.

28 total office visits from Veterans.

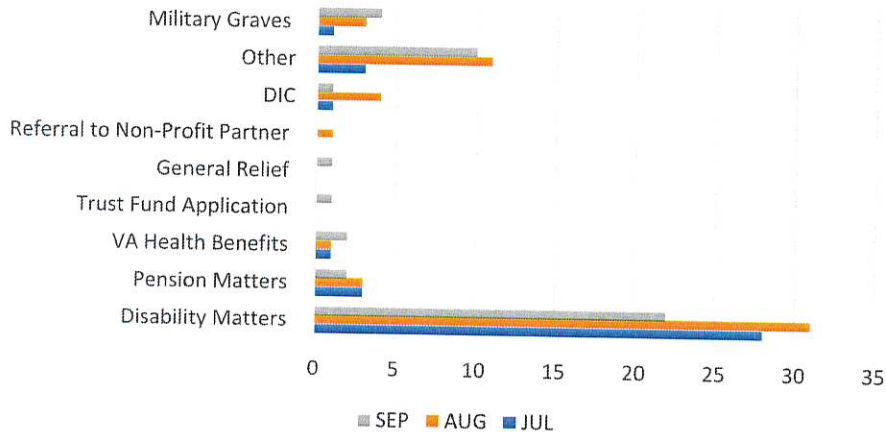
0 home visits

0 outreach events

0 training event



Q1-2025 Activity



VA & State Updates:

Improving Access to Mental Health Care for Veterans in Crisis

The VA is introducing programs to assist with Veterans in crisis. Both programs work with local law enforcement to ensure that veterans experiencing mental health crisis get the help that need.

Veterans Mobile Evaluation Team (VMET) goals is to prevent veteran suicides and boost participation in mental health care. The VMET team is comprised on VA clinicians and local law enforcement who respond to calls involving veterans in crisis. The VMET unit is engaged by local police to connect the Veteran with the right VA services and support.

Veteran Response Teams (VRT) is a program that trains local police officers – who are veterans themselves- on how to assist fellow Veterans in crisis. The idea is that veterans are helping fellow veterans given that they share military experience. This is a tool that can assist with de-escalating a situation and working to ensure that the veteran in crisis gets the support they need. VRT Programs are currently available in Philadelphia, Wilmington, Coatesville, Lyons and Birmingham VA facilities.

This fall, the VA is hosting virtual symposiums to help more VA facilities learn how to implement VMET and/or VRT programs.

Veteran Crisis Line is a 24/7 confidential support line for veterans. A veteran **does not need** to be enrolled in VA services to use the crisis line. Veterans can simply dial 988 and press 1.