



**CHAMPAIGN COUNTY BOARD  
COMMITTEE AGENDA**

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**VAC COMMITTEE**

**Brookens Administrative Center, Jennifer K. Putman Meeting Room  
1776 E. Washington, Urbana  
Monday, July 9, 2012 – \*4:00 p.m.**

**\*PLEASE NOTE TIME**

**CHAIR: Ralph Langenheim**

**MEMBERS: Astrid Berkson, Lloyd Carter, Stephanie Holderfield, Stan James**

<b><u>ITEM</u></b>	<b><u>PAGE NO.</u></b>
<b>I. <u>Call to Order</u></b>	
<b>II. <u>Roll Call</u></b>	
<b>III. <u>Approval of the Minutes</u></b> A. May 21, 2012	1-2
<b>IV. <u>Approval of Agenda/Addenda</u></b>	
<b>V. <u>Public Participation</u></b>	
<b>VI. <u>Approval of VAC Proposed Rules &amp; Eligibility Standards</u></b>	3-12
<b>VII. <u>VAC Update:</u></b> A. Intergovernmental Agreement Approved by County VAC Committee on May 21, 2012	
<b>VIII. <u>Next Meeting Date</u></b>	
<b>IX. <u>Other Business</u></b>	
<b>X. <u>Adjourn</u></b>	

1 CHAMPAIGN COUNTY BOARD  
2 COMMITTEE MINUTES  
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5 **VAC COMMITTEE**

6 **Monday, May 21, 2012**

7 **Brookens Administrative Center, Lyle Shields Meeting Room**

8 **1776 E. Washington St., Urbana**  
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10 **MEMBERS PRESENT:** Astrid Berkson, Stephanie Holderfield, Stan James, Ralph  
11 Langenheim (Chair)

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13 **MEMBERS ABSENT:** Lloyd Carter

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15 **OTHERS PRESENT:** Deb Busey (County Administrator), Dave DeThorne (Senior  
16 Assistant State's Attorney), Ron DuFrane, Brad Gould (Urbana  
17 VFW Post 630), Ron Hubert (Champaign VFW Post 5520), Alan  
18 Kurtz (County Board Member), Kay Rhodes (Administrative  
19 Assistant), C. Pius Weibel (County Board Chair)

20 **Call to Order**

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22 Langenheim called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.  
23

24 **Roll Call**

25  
26 Holderfield, James, and Langenheim were present, establishing the presence of a quorum.  
27

28 **Approval of the Minutes**

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30 **MOTION** by James to approve the March 21, 2012 meeting minutes; seconded by  
31 Holderfield. **Motion carried with unanimous support.**  
32

33 **Approval of Agenda/Addendum**

34  
35 **MOTION** by Holderfield on to approve the agenda; seconded by James. **Motion carried**  
36 **with unanimous support.**  
37

38 There was no public participation.  
39

40 **Proposed Intergovernmental Agreement**

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42 Busey explained the proposed Intergovernmental Agreement between Champaign County  
43 and the Champaign County Veterans' Assistance Commission was modeled after the Du Page  
44 County's VAC Program Agreement.  
45

46           **MOTION** by James to approve the Intergovernmental Agreement between Champaign  
47 County and the Champaign County Veterans' Assistance Commission to be sent to the VAC for  
48 approval prior to presentation to the County Board for approval; seconded by Holderfield. **Motion**  
49 **carried with unanimous support.**

50

51           **Establishment of Rules and Eligibility Standards**

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53           Langenheim requested that the VAC bring its set of rules and eligibility standards back to the  
54 next meeting for review and approval. These rules and eligibility standards could be modeled after  
55 those of McHenry or Du Page County.

56

57           Berkson entered the meeting at 4:13 p.m.

58

59           **Proposed Budget**

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61           **MOTION** by James to approve the Champaign County Veterans' Assistance Commission  
62 Budget to be presented for FY2013 budget process; seconded by Holderfield. **Motion carried with**  
63 **unanimous support.**

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65           The next meeting date is July 9, 2012. There was no other business.

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67           The meeting adjourned at 4:23 p.m.

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69           Respectfully Submitted,

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71           Kay Rhodes

72           Administrative Assistant

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**VETERANS ASSISTANCE COMMISSION  
OF CHAMPAIGN COUNTY  
PROGRAM**

**July 1, 2012**

**SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION**

The Veterans Assistance Commission Program (VACP) is an assistance program of the VAC Executive Board, an entity composed of delegates from the major veterans organizations in Champaign County. The program is funded by the Champaign County Board under Illinois laws, for the benefit of veterans living in Champaign County. The program is designed to assist an individual veteran, his spouse, or the veteran's minor children through some difficult financial hardships.

The Veterans Assistance Program is not public aid, township general assistance, or welfare. It is assistance given exclusively to or on behalf of military veterans whose last discharge was honorable or who have been discharged under honorable conditions, and who have served a minimum of 180 days of active duty. Their military service in the Armed Forces of the United States is gratefully recognized and therefore this financial assistance has been made available. National Guard veterans must have been federalized for active duty for no less than 180 days to qualify for benefits.

Assistance is furnished to eligible recipients to alleviate difficult circumstances or to assist in attaining self-sufficiency. This assistance may include but not be limited to Emergency Assistance, Case Management, Advocacy, and Transportation Support. Eligibility for financial assistance shall be a household gross income of not more than 250% of the HUD established poverty level.

The VACP is a temporary financial assistance program and should not be considered as an on-going financial support program.

VAC financial assistance is never awarded in cash. Assistance, in all categories, is provided by the issuance of gift certificates to local merchants or by use of the Champaign County Payment Voucher and Champaign County Payment Check directly to the service provider and/or vendor. Payment vouchers must be signed by the applicant, VAC Superintendent or designee, and the Champaign County Board Chairman or designee. Any payment voucher of one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) or more must also contain the signature of the service provider and/or vendor.

Applicants requesting assistance for the payment of debts must provide a statement-of-claim (invoice) from the vendor. The invoice should contain the vendor's name and address where the payment is to be mailed. The VAC requires the applicants to sign the invoice(s). The applicant's signature verifies that the payment is owed to the vendor. The VAC does not pay debts or future services in advance of the actual liability.

The VAC strongly recommends that, while their papers are being processed, applicants for Veterans Assistance also apply at the Champaign County Human Services Department, the Illinois Department of Public Aid, their local Township General Assistance Office, and area Resource Centers where food and clothing may be obtained. These referrals are made during the interview process. Failure to utilize staff referrals to other agencies may affect eligibility and/or levels of assistance.

## SECTION II RIGHTS, PRIVILEGES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following are the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of applicants for assistance through the VAC Program.

### Applicants have the following Rights and Privileges.

- \* You have a right to file a written application for assistance and to receive help in completing the application.
- \* You have the right not to be discriminated against because of your race, religion, national origin, gender, age, physical impairment or political affiliation.
- \* You have the right of privacy regarding the information you provide to the VAC. It *must* be kept confidential unless the VAC requires disclosure of the information to determine your eligibility for assistance or to coordinate your assistance with other agencies.
- \* You have a right to be treated with respect and in a courteous and considerate manner.
- \* Your living arrangements must conform to VAC rules. The VAC has the right to deny rent payments to parents and to third parties in sub-lease situations.
- \* You have a right to choose where you will obtain the goods and services for which the VAC will provide financial assistance. However, you may be required to get estimates in advance for the services you are requesting. As all bills are processed through the County Finance Department, vendors should not expect immediate payment. The VAC has no control over whether any provider will give you specific goods and services in exchange for payment by the VAC.
- \* You have a right to ask questions about your application and inspect, in the presence of VAC personnel, the case file containing your records and information during regular VAC office hours. However, the case file may contain certain information which has been provided to the VAC on the condition that it would not be revealed to you. The VAC has a right to remove such confidential information from your case file before you see it.
- \* You are encouraged to contact other agencies and apply to other programs that may be of assistance. A list will be furnished to you at the time of the interview.
- \* You have a right to expect the VAC to make a decision on your application for assistance within 30 days. You have a right to a decision in writing. If your income and assets are more than VAC guidelines allow, you have a right to see how the VAC calculated them.

- \* You have a right to appeal-in writing- any action, inaction, or decision of the VAC office to the President of the VAC Board or his/her designated representative. VAC staff will provide you with a “Notice of Appeal” and assist you in completing the form. The Board President will convene a hearing to examine your case. Hearing officers will include the following: Board President or designee, Judge Advocate or designee, and at least one other member. Their decision will be final.
- \* You have a right to voluntarily repay the VAC for any assistance they provide to you. You are encouraged to do so.

Applicants have the following RESPONSIBILITIES.

- \* You have the responsibility to treat the personnel working in the VAC office with courtesy and consideration. Any action or threat made by you to harm a VAC employee or behavior that is insulting and disrespectful may be grounds for denial of VAC assistance, expulsion from the building, and/or arrest.
- \* You must complete a written “Application for Assistance”. The application will contain information used in evaluating your case.
- \* A current photograph of all applicants is required in the VAC case file.
- \* You must keep all scheduled appointments with VAC personnel. If a circumstance arises that prevents you from keeping your appointment, you must contact the VAC promptly.
- \* You must provide the VAC with all the information needed for a determination of your eligibility and must assist the VAC in obtaining any other documentation that may be required.
- \* You must apply at the ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (IDHS) office, and/or your township of residence if applicable, before assistance may be granted from the VACP. The *result* of your application from IDHS and your township is required documentation to add to your file before any assistance is provided from the VAC.
- \* You must maintain current registration for employment at the Job Service section of the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) and apply for unemployment compensation if eligible.
- \* You must accept and follow through in good faith *any* referral by the VAC to any other agency or person or for any benefit that might alleviate your present needs. If you are referred to another human service agency for assistance and refuse to apply for help from that agency, the VAC will determine that you are ineligible for financial assistance on the basis that you failed to seek services and financial aid that might be available from a primary source.

- \* You must notify the VAC of any change in your personal status such as a job change, an altered family situation, a different dependent status, or any other material fact that would alter your eligibility.
- \* You must consent to and sign “Truth Acknowledgement” and “Release of Information” statements so the VAC can obtain information and verify data given on your application. Providing false, fraudulent, or misleading statements disqualifies applicants from receiving any assistance from the VAC and will result in criminal prosecution to the fullest extent of the law.

### SECTION III

#### VETERANS ASSISTANCE COMMISSION PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

In order to receive financial assistance, all applicants shall first prove his/her eligibility and submit information on all documents requested.

##### Right to Apply

Every veteran whose last discharge was honorable or who was discharged under honorable conditions from active duty of no less than 180 days with the Armed Forces of the United States, his/her spouse, and minor children has the right to submit a written application for Veterans Assistance. A completed application and appropriate evidence of the veteran’s military service (Discharge Certificate and/or Form DD 214) is required for consideration of eligibility.

Eligibility for Veterans Assistance to the surviving spouses and minor children of deceased veterans is also based upon the presentation of a Form DD 214 from the active Armed Forces of the United States given “Under Honorable Conditions”. In addition, a marriage certificate and birth certificates for minor children are required along with the veteran’s death certificate,.

In exceptional cases, the review and re-grading of an applicant’s *less than honorable* discharge by the Veterans Administration will be considered by the VAC before a final determination of benefits is rendered.

##### Residency Requirements

Applicants must present valid documentation to prove residency. Current Utility bills, mortgage payment books, and rental payment slips are acceptable documents. Temporary shelters will be contacted by the VAC for residency confirmation. Persons who reside outside Champaign County will, as a courtesy, be referred to their home County for available services.



### Income qualification standard

To be eligible for financial assistance from the VAC, the total income of the veteran Assistance Unit (veteran, spouse, and minor children) can be no more than two hundred and fifty percent (250%) of the Illinois Public Aid Standard of Need for the size of the applicant family. The following factors are taken into consideration:

- \* VAC Board allowances based on State and County guidelines
- \* The size of the family unit (veteran, spouse, and minor children)
- \* The current and anticipated family income
- \* The applicant's current employment status
- \* The applicant's ability to remain employed

### Eligibility Procedures/Rules

To be considered for assistance, the following steps must be followed:

1. The VAC Superintendent, Administrative Assistant/Secretary, or Caseworker must interview all applicants. Special arrangements will be made when the applicant cannot come to the VAC office due to a physical impairment.
2. Documentation of employment, application for unemployment compensation or proof of ineligibility for unemployment compensation is required. If an applicant is unemployed and not receiving unemployment compensation, documentation is required which states that he/she is seeking employment on a regular basis.
3. An applicant must validate his/her income or methods of support for the ninety (90) days prior to filing for assistance. This validation may include the signing of an *Estimated zero-income affidavit*.
4. Applicants who have voluntarily quit employment, or who have been terminated for cause, may be denied assistance through the VAC. In an event that unemployment insurance rulings have not been made related to an individual's particular case, assistance may be granted on a one-time basis.
5. If an applicant has dependent children and has little or no income, he/she must make an application to the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) to determine eligibility for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and/or Medicaid, and/or the LINK Card Food Assistance Program.
6. Each eligible applicant for VAC assistance who is not exempt from employment shall apply to and maintain current registration with the Job Service Section at the Illinois Department of Employment Security before financial assistance can be authorized.
7. If a VACP applicant is not working due to a strike and the strike is not sanctioned by union management or is prohibited by law, eligibility for Veterans Assistance does not exist.



8. An applicant who is eligible for Veterans Administration or State of Illinois funding for school or vocational training benefits is strongly encouraged to apply for a course within an approved training program.

### Application Process

In order to be considered for financial assistance from the VAC, a specific process of documentation must be followed. The requirements that must be met are outlined below.

1. An *Application for Assistance*, plus *Truth Acknowledgement* and *Release of Information* forms shall be completed in full and signed by the applicant.
2. Applicants shall identify income sources for their family, including future income, settlements, spousal income, and income of minor children or adult children living in the household. In order for future assistance to be awarded, statements concerning financial status must be sworn to and notarized. Applicants who claim *no* income shall be required to sign an *Estimated/zero income affidavit*.
3. Applicants are required to list their current and last home address, their current and/or last employer, and the inclusive dates of their employment.
4. Applicants are advised that expected future monetary settlements may affect the financial assistance being granted or may require mandatory reimbursement to the VAC when more income becomes available to the applicant.
5. Applicants are required to furnish the VAC, within thirty (30) days of the Application for Assistance, all the information required for the VAC to make a determination regarding eligibility. An additional fifteen (15) day extension may be granted at the request of the applicant, if a good reason is given.

### Notice of Eligibility

Decisions concerning eligibility for assistance will be forwarded in writing to the applicant's current or last known address within thirty (30) days of the receipt of a completed application and all required documentation.

If the applicant is denied assistance by the VAC, a notice of this decision stating the reasons for denial and a "*Notice of Appeal*" will be mailed to the applicant's current or last known address.

The VAC is required to inform applicants of their right to appeal if any dissatisfaction is expressed and each and every time a denial of service is made.

## SECTION IV

### ASSISTANCE CATEGORIES

The VAC provides for the following basic needs:

**FOOD-** Food assistance is provided no more than four times a year in an amount determined by the VAC Executive Board using State and County guidelines. A thirty-day interval is required between each service. Veterans in need will be encouraged to utilize local food pantries. The VAC will supplement this assistance with food certificates at a rate established by the VAC Executive Board in amounts consistent with family size and established practices. The VAC will purchase these food certificates from chains that offer the most food for the dollar amount. The applicant may choose any store location that he/she wishes to patronize if that store will accept the issued certificates. If the needs of a family are severe, the VAC Superintendent is authorized to exceed the usual monthly allotment.

**PERSONAL NEEDS –** Family essentials for daily living may also be acquired through the use of food certificates. Personal needs include toilet items, paper products, personal hygiene items, first aid supplies, and over the counter medication such as aspirin or cold medicine.

**MEDICAL –** The VAC does not normally provide assistance to pay outstanding medical bills. Neither will payment be made for medical care or treatment on a continuing basis. Applications must be made to other agencies that provide for this type of assistance such as The Illinois Department of Human Services, Hines Veterans Hospital or local free clinics. The VAC may authorize necessary treatment, care and supplies for an applicant in the case of an emergency or urgent need.

The VAC may pay for prescribed medications on a temporary basis while the applicant is awaiting pharmaceutical supplies from the Veterans Administration program or from another medical assistance agency. The cost of this type of assistance must be authorized by the VAC prior to consideration for payment.

**TELEPHONE –** Under normal circumstances, telephone bills will not be paid. An exception would be if life threatening medical conditions exist within a family unit that make it mandatory that a telephone or cell phone be available at all times. This must be verified by a medical provider, doctor, or medical department to the satisfaction of the VAC. Only the basic service charge will be paid by the VAC.

**SHELTER –** Shelter includes rent, home mortgage payments, and mobile home payments as well as lot rental. Before shelter assistance will be provided, the applicant must present proof of ownership or tenancy in Champaign County. In cases where clients are living with relatives, payments will not be made.

Under normal conditions, the VAC will not pay security deposits. To qualify for housing assistance, a client must demonstrate the ability to pay subsequent housing obligations.

The VAC will normally pay for no more than one month of the rent owed and only one time in a twelve month period. Additional benefits may be approved in exceptional circumstances.

The VAC will *not* provide housing assistance if any of the following conditions exist:

- \* The property is subject to a foreclosure proceeding.
- \* The property is subject to a sales contract.
- \* The tenants have been served with an eviction notice.
- \* A tenant or mortgagee is more than one month delinquent unless the VAC obtains a commitment from another agency to also provide housing assistance.

**EMERGENCY SHELTER** – The VAC may arrange limited temporary shelter in cases of unexpected and unavoidable homelessness.

**UTILITIES** – Clients are required to apply for available programs such as LIHEAP from local agencies before obtaining help from the VAC. The VAC may provide a single payment for heating and cooking fuel, electricity, water, or natural gas consumed by an eligible veteran's immediate family. This benefit may be given only one time in a twelve-month period. The client must provide verification that he/she is responsible for the utility payments under the terms of the rental or lease agreement. Assistance for utility *deposits* is at the discretion of the VAC. Clients will be required to sign up for and faithfully participate in monthly budget plans sponsored by the utilities.

Home utility essentials such as water heaters, furnaces, and air conditioners will be considered for repair or replacement at the discretion of the VAC. The veteran's immediate family must meet all requirements for assistance. At least two estimates for equipment repair or replacement are required, as directed by the VAC, to ensure the lowest cost to the county.

**TRANSPORTATION** - The VAC may provide applicants assistance in obtaining and maintaining vehicles. *Proof of ownership and a valid drivers license is required.* Payments may be made for the following reasons:

- \* An automobile purchase agreement payment *for a single month in a twelve month period.*
- \* Limited essential automobile repairs ( 2 repair quotes required )
- \* Six months coverage of *liability* automobile insurance ( 2 agency quotes required )
- \* License and city sticker fees.

**WORK RELATED EXPENSES** – The VACP will consider assisting applicants with work related expenses such as the purchase of eye glasses, safety equipment like shoes, head gear, eye shields, etc. and work related clothing such as caps, coveralls, and gloves.

The VAC will evaluate each request for work related equipment on its own merits, with the knowledge that each client's needs may be different from another client's needs. The VAC understands that providing small items as these can result in big rewards for applicant veterans and their families.

OTHER – The VAC recognizes that uncommon and unusual circumstances may arise in all family units. The VAC will evaluate each case on its own merits as verifications are made and facts are documented.

BURIAL – Expenses Paid by County, 55 ILCS 5/5-27003, is an act to provide for the burial of needy deceased Military Veterans. This act provides, in part, that the County shall pay the expenses of such burial and headstone if the veteran or his/her spouse, or minor children are residing in Champaign County at the time of death. The County Board, in such counties under township organization, is authorized and directed to audit the account and pay the said expenses in a similar manner as other accounts against such county are audited and paid.

The VAC will provide morale support to the family of an eligible deceased veteran, his deceased spouse, or deceased minor child. At the request of surviving members the VAC may coordinate internment procedures with the office of the County Coroner, local funeral directors, the Veterans Administration, and other agencies as needed. Applications for benefits must be made using the two pages “Burial Report” forms and be accompanied by a copy of the death certificate of the deceased.

If requested by the surviving family members, the VAC may provide burial spaces for deceased veterans and members of their immediate families in local cemeteries in accordance with guidelines developed by the VAC Executive Board.

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
COUNTY OF CHAMPAIGN

I, BRAD GOULD, SUPERINTENDENT OF THE VETERANS ASSISTANCE COMMISSION IN THE COUNTY AND STATE AFORESAID, AND KEEPER OF THE RECORDS AND FILES THEREOF, DO HEREBY CERTIFY THE AFORESAID DOCUMENT TO BE A TRUE AND CORRECT COPY OF THE PROGRAM OF THE VETERANS ASSISTANCE COMMISSION (VACP) ADOPTED BY THE VAC EXECUTIVE BOARD AT A MEETING HELD AT THE CHAMPAIGN CENTER, 421 N. COUNTY FARM ROAD, WHEATON, ILLINOIS, ON THE \_\_\_\_ DAY OF \_\_\_\_\_ A.D.  
\_\_\_\_\_.

ALL OF WHICH APPEARS FROM THE RECORDS OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF SAID EXECUTIVE BOARD NOW IN MY FILES.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND OFFICIAL SEAL AT WHEATON, ILLINOIS  
THIS \_\_\_\_ DAY OF \_\_\_\_\_ A.D. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
MEMBER AND  
SUPERINTENDENT OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD  
OF THE  
VETERANS ASSISTANCE COMMISSION  
OF CHAMPAIGN COUNTY, ILLINOIS

FILED WITH THE CLERK OF  
THE CHAMPAIGN COUNTY BOARD,  
\_\_\_\_\_