

Marshall County Commission of Veterans Affairs
Kevin Huseboe, Executive Director
Marshall County Annex Building
101 E Main Street, Marshalltown, Iowa 50158
Ph. 641-754-6335 Fax 641-754-4177
www.marshallcountya.gov
va@marshallcountya.gov

Marshall County Veterans Affairs Commission By-Laws

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on your three-year appointment to the County VA Commission Board by the Marshall County Board of Supervisors.

You now have an opportunity to assist your fellow Veteran and or surviving spouses, make the most of it. Marshall County Veterans are one of our counties most valuable assets. No one has done more for this county than our county Veterans.

Marshall County and Iowa have been on the forefront of every War, Conflict, and Skirmish that this Nation has encountered. To show its appreciation for the sacrifices that the Veteran and their Dependents have made, in 1874 the State of Iowa established a Veteran Assistance Program. You are now a part of this rich heritage as a member of the Marshall County Commission of Veteran Affairs. Again, welcome and thank you.

MISSION STATEMENT

“The Mission of the Marshall County Veteran Affairs Commission is to assist all Veterans of Marshall County and any other veterans with their Veteran Disability Claims.”

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality and a Veteran’s or surviving spouse right to privacy is a high priority to Marshall County Veterans Affairs Department. Information obtained from or about the Veteran and or surviving spouse will be kept in strict confidence.

HEALTH INSURANCE PORTABILITY ACCOUNTABILITY ACT (HIPAA)

Marshall County is committed to HIPAA compliance. Each county department, board or commission must adhere to all of Marshall County policies and procedures. Policies and procedures must be reviewed annually to ensure that all general requirements of HIPAA are met. Specifically:

- “Ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and the availability of all electronic protected health information (EPHI) the county creates, receives, maintains or transmits.
- Protect against any reasonably anticipated threats or hazards to the security or integrity or such information.
- Protect against any reasonably anticipated uses or disclosures of such information that are not permitted or required.
- Ensure compliance with the security standards identified in the HIPAA regulations”.
- Marshall County Veterans Affairs staff are not allowed to talk about veteran’s issues with anyone without permission from the veteran.

ESTABLISHING THE COMMISSION

Chapter 35B of the Code of Iowa created the Commission. Chapter 35B gives Iowa's individual County Boards of Supervisors the authority to establish a County Commission of Veteran Affairs. Once Commissioners are appointed, the State Code states the following:

Section 35B.6(1)(a) This section of the code states that once the Commission is established by the Supervisors, the Commission shall employ an Executive Director and shall have the power to employ Veteran Service Officers, administrative or clerical assistants. The appointment and salaries will be recommended by the Commission and approved by the Supervisors.

The Commissioners, Executive Director and/or Administrator must meet the qualifications and responsibilities as dictated in Iowa Code (Chapter 35B)

The Executive Director must complete a certification training provided by NACVSO and then 16 CEU's per year to maintain accreditation provided by the State Department of Veteran Affairs and IACCVSO. Failure to comply and maintain certification you will be cause for removal from office.

OFFICE HOURS

A county's population determines office hours: Marshall County (39,853) 2021

A Veteran Affairs Commission Office with a county population of more than 30,000, but less than 60,000 must be open for a minimum of 30 hours per week. Exceptions to the required minimum office hours per week are when a staff member is on vacation and the other is sick or for an outreach program or during times when it is required that the staff attend training.

JOINT RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & COMMISSION

COMMISSION MEETINGS

There will be times when it is required for the commission to attend more than one meeting per month. The chair of the commission meets monthly with the Executive Director. The Chair of the Board of Supervisors serves as a non-voting Ex-Officio member of the Commission.

Schedule: Meetings will be scheduled monthly at Marshall County Veterans Affairs, or other reasonable venue at need or request. Efforts will be made to maintain a consistent schedule for meetings, confirmation of the next scheduled meeting will be addressed in each monthly agenda and posted with agendas and minutes appropriately. An online or call-in based component may be added as situations or need for a quorum may dictate. If a commissioner misses three unexcused meetings in a calendar year, they can be removed by the Commission / BOS.

Purpose: Monthly meetings are a time when the Executive Director reports on the office operation and a time when commissioners can refer veterans to the office and report on any activities, they were part of during the last month. The commission reviews expenditures, formulate new ideas, update policy, interview clients on appeal, implement new ideas, receive input from local county Veterans, Veteran organizations (American Legion / VFW / VVA) and the public or any other matter pertinent to the Veteran or Commission.

Meetings:

- Will be conducted with an awareness of Robert's Rules of Order.
- Will start at the pre-scheduled time.
- Will be conducted in a professional manner.
- Will follow the agenda.
- Will allow each Commissioner to be involved in discussions and decision-making.
- Will encourage Commissioners to be involved in special Veterans interests or to take charge of information gathering or sharing on Veterans issues or special projects on behalf of the Commission.
- Will end each meeting by giving each Commissioner the opportunity to address any issue they deem important.
- One meeting shall be held annually to prepare an estimated budget for all expenditures to be made in the next fiscal year and certify the budget to the board of supervisors pursuant to Iowa Code Section 35B.7.

Open Meetings Law: Iowa Code: Chapter 21.2 definitions state that a board, council, commission or other governing body expressly created by the statutes of this state or by executive order must comply with the open meetings law.

OUTREACH EVENTS

From time to time the Department has outreach events for county Veterans. The commissioners need to be part of these events as a good visual and name recognition for county Veterans to get to know their appointed commissioners.

OTHER MATTERS

Commissioners must always remember that the Commission is a team and should function as a team. All matters that concern the Commission shall be placed on the Commission's monthly agenda for full disclosure and discussion before any action is taken. An individual Commissioner cannot make a Commission decision or represent the Commission unless such representation is voted on and approved at an open meeting by a quorum of the Commission.

It is also important to remember that the Commission is a semi-autonomous body. This means that the Commission does not stand alone in its operation. The Supervisors provide for the budget, housing the staff of the Commission, physical maintenance of all equipment, telephone service, personnel office, health insurance, life insurance and payroll.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMISSION

POLICIES AND BUDGET

The Commission is responsible for the execution of Chapter 35B, Code of Iowa. The Commission is responsible for the formulation of the Marshall County VA By-Laws and to review the Executive Director's proposed budget along with attending the budget work session with the Board of Supervisors in January each year.

COUNTY POLICIES REVIEW

The Commission shall review all county policies enacted by the Board of Supervisors to determine their effect on the operation of the Commission under Chapter 35B, Code of Iowa.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/ADMINISTRATOR EVALUATION

The Commission is responsible for establishing an evaluation process setting the standards by which the Executive Director is evaluated. This process will aid the Commission in determining program progress and the Executive Director salary recommendation.

DUTIES OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/ADMINISTRATOR

The Executive Director, who is Nationally Certified, is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the County Commission of Veteran Affairs. The Executive Director has several duties which include but are not limited to, giving direction to the staff, and preparation of the budget for review. The Executive Director is also responsible for attending meetings on matters pertaining to the Veteran and/or Commission, interacting with the public, media, local, State and Federal legislators, monitoring the Commission budget, making policy recommendations, hearing appeals, keeping the Commission informed about the effectiveness of their policies, and social and economic trends affecting the Veteran. Confidentiality and a Veteran's right to privacy is a high priority to the staff of the County Veteran Affairs. Information obtained from or about Veterans will be kept in strict confidence.

Iowa Code Section 35B.6(d) specifically states the following:

"d. The duties of the executive director, employees shall include all of the following:

1. Inform members of the armed forces, veterans, and their dependents of all federal, state, and local laws enacted for their benefit.
2. Assist all residents of the state who served in the armed forces of the United States and their relatives, beneficiaries, and dependents in receiving from the United States and this State any and all compensation, pensions, hospitalization, insurance, education, employment pay and gratuities, loan guarantees, or any other aid or benefit to which they may be entitled under any law". (S.F. 2134 section 35B.6).
3. Complete and submit all forms required for federal, state, and county benefits.

The Executive Director is responsible for the administration of Service Work and Monetary Assistance, which are the two divisions of the administrative component of the Commission:

SERVICE WORK

The first division is Service Work. Service work is the filing of any and all Federal forms for the Veteran/Dependent to obtain Federal or State benefits. There are hundreds of forms that may be filed. Some examples of the benefits available are:

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|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Compensation benefits | • Surviving Spouse benefits |
| • Dependency and Indemnity | • Vocational rehabilitation |
| • Non-service-connected pension | • Enrolment in VA Health Care |
| • Compensation (DIC) | • Nursing home benefits |

It is the goal of Marshall County Veterans Affairs for 95% of the office staff's time to be spent assisting Veteran's with service work. Service Work is a priority of the office staff.

Millions of dollars are received by Veterans/Dependents in Marshall County each month. This money greatly enhances County and State commerce. Once a Veteran or Dependent starts receiving compensation/pension or vocational rehabilitation benefits, it helps to stabilize the Marshall County Veterans Affairs budget.

MONETARY ASSISTANCE

The second division of the administrative component is monetary assistance by referring to other agencies as available. Monetary assistance includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Rent/Mortgage
- Dental assistance
- Utilities
- Food Boxes
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APPEALS

If a Veteran / surviving spouse disagrees with a decision made by the Executive Director of Marshall County Veterans Affairs, they have 10 days to appeal to the chair of Marshall County Veterans Affairs Commission. After the Commission chair has had a chance to read the case file, the Chair will call a Commission meeting, the Commission's decision is final. The Commission meets outside of the monthly meeting for appeals without the Executive Director or office staff of the Marshall County Veterans Affairs Department and at a time that is convenient for the Veteran or surviving spouse.

GRIEVANCE

If a Veteran or surviving spouse would like to file a grievance, they can request a form from the office either by going to the office or calling. Any Veteran or surviving spouse has the right to have the grievance addressed by the Commission. A Grievance form must be filled out within 7 days and then sent to the Commission chair. The Commission chair has 7 days to address the issue with the Veteran or Surviving spouse or call a meeting with the Commission.

APPROVAL OF BY-LAWS

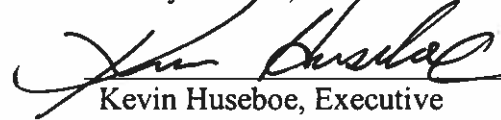
WE, AS MEMBERS OF THE MARSHALL COUNTY COMMISSION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, HAVE ADOPTED THE GUIDELINES IN THIS DOCUMENT ON THIS 13th DAY OF MARCH, 2024, AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON MARCH 13, 2024.

SIGNED:


Bob Grimes, Chair


David Streets, Member


Randy Kessler, Vice Chair


Kevin Huseboe, Executive Director

STATE VETERAN RESOURCES

IOWA VETERAN'S HOME

The Iowa Veteran's Home was founded in 1887 and is currently the third largest state-owned facility for Veterans in the nation. Any honorably discharged Veteran and their spouse who demonstrates either medical or financial need, and meets entry requirements may apply for admission. The Iowa Veteran's Home is located on a 150-acre campus in Marshalltown, Iowa. The Home provides professional care for a Veteran and their spouse in a friendly environment with a caring staff. The staff of the County Veteran Affairs Commission will assist the Veteran and their spouse in making applications.

IOWA VETERAN'S TRUST FUND

The State of Iowa has established a Veteran's Trust Fund to further assist Veterans defined under Iowa Code section 35.1 as residents of Iowa who served the armed forces of the United States, completing a minimum of 90 days of active duty or who are discharged for injury before 90 days. The staff of the County Veteran Affairs Commission is responsible for assisting Veterans in filing for Trust Fund assistance.

IOWA STATE VETERAN'S CEMETERY

The staff of the County Commission of Veteran Affairs informs Veterans/Dependents and acts as a referral agency in assisting Veterans/Dependents in applying for admittance to the Iowa State Veteran's Cemetery.

- The Iowa Veteran's Cemetery operational standards are set by the United States Department of Veteran's Affairs (USDVA). Eligibility is determined as follows:
- Discharged from "active duty" under conditions other than dishonorably, or
- Died while on "active duty", or
- Served at least 20 years in the National Guard or Reserves and qualified for military retirement pay (or would have qualified except death occurred before age 60). Reserve component personnel qualify if they otherwise served in a Presidential call up during their reserve component of military service. Active duty for training of reserve component personnel does not qualify as active service.
- Iowa residency is not required for burial in the Iowa Veteran's Cemetery.
- Veterans can pre-register for burial determination.
- Funeral Executive Directors are required to apply for Interment (submitted at the time of need).