VETERANS ASSISTANCE COMMISSION OF COOK COUNTY

Veteran Services Printable Book

21 service choices presented on the VACCC portal. Includes an index, a page for each service, basic document guidance, and important limits.

This book is a printable snapshot of the portal service descriptions, not a determination of eligibility or a promise of a specific payment. Program rules, amounts, documentation, and contacts may change. VACCC reviews each request. VA or another administering agency decides its own benefits.

To request help: Call (312) 433-6010 or email VACCC@cookcountyil.gov. State the service you need and the VACCC location or outreach site connected to your request.

The separate 67-page Veterans Guide V.2 is also restored to the portal as a historical reference. Verify its older information before relying on it.

Veterans, families, caregivers, and advocates: Please contact the VACCC office to confirm final service details. Changes are not expected, but updates may occur.

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EMERGENCY FINANCIAL SERVICES

Rental Assistance

Emergency help with eligible past-due rent, up to $2,000 per approved application.

Who may qualify / starting criteria

• Cook County residency and valid identification are required.

• The Veterans Guide lists qualifying military documentation and discharge/service requirements for Emergency Financial Assistance.

• Income or no-income verification is required at intake.

• Financial assistance is completed in person after VACCC reviews the required documents.

Documents to have ready

• DD-214 or qualifying military-service documentation

• Current Illinois photo ID

• Current annual lease

• Recent signed and notarized landlord/payment-company notice showing the overdue balance within the past 30 days

• Income verification

Important limits and decisions

• Up to $2,000, or the amount actually due if less

• Generally once every 12 months

• The guide lists subsidized housing, security deposits, informal/verbal leases, and Veteran-owned multi-unit housing as not eligible

Confirm current eligibility and amounts with VACCC or the agency that administers the benefit. Call (312) 433-6010.

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EMERGENCY FINANCIAL SERVICES

Mortgage Assistance

Emergency help with an eligible past-due mortgage, up to $2,000 per approved application.

Who may qualify / starting criteria

- Cook County residency and valid identification are required.
- The Veterans Guide lists qualifying military documentation and discharge/service requirements for Emergency Financial Assistance.
- Income or no-income verification is required at intake.
- Financial assistance is completed in person after VACCC reviews the required documents.

Documents to have ready

- DD-214 or qualifying military-service documentation
- Current Illinois photo ID
- Most recent mortgage statement within 30 days
- Recent signed and notarized payment-company notice showing the account is past due
- Income verification

Important limits and decisions

- Up to $2,000, or the amount actually due if less
- Generally once every 12 months
- Veteran-owned multi-unit housing is listed as not eligible

Confirm current eligibility and amounts with VACCC or the agency that administers the benefit. Call (312) 433-6010.

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EMERGENCY FINANCIAL SERVICES

Utility Assistance

Help with eligible overdue electric, gas, or water bills.

Who may qualify / starting criteria

- Cook County residency and valid identification are required.
- The Veterans Guide lists qualifying military documentation and discharge/service requirements for Emergency Financial Assistance.
- Income or no-income verification is required at intake.
- Financial assistance is completed in person after VACCC reviews the required documents.

Documents to have ready

- DD-214 or qualifying military-service documentation
- Current Illinois photo ID
- Recent overdue utility bill dated within the past 30 days
- Income verification

Important limits and decisions

- Up to $550 per approved application
- Only the eligible overdue amount is covered if it is less than $550
- Generally once every 12 months
- The guide lists Veteran-owned multi-unit housing as not eligible

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EMERGENCY FINANCIAL SERVICES

Emergency Food Assistance

Aldi gift-card assistance for an eligible Veteran household facing short-term food insecurity.

Who may qualify / starting criteria

• Cook County residency and valid identification are required.

• The Veterans Guide lists qualifying military documentation and discharge/service requirements for Emergency Financial Assistance.

• Income or no-income verification is required at intake.

• Financial assistance is completed in person after VACCC reviews the required documents.

Documents to have ready

• DD-214 or qualifying military-service documentation

• Current Illinois photo ID

• Marriage certificate and spouse photo ID when applicable

• Supporting documents for eligible children/dependents

• Income verification

Important limits and decisions

• $100 for the qualifying Veteran, with another $100 for each qualified spouse/dependent in the home

• Generally once every 6 months

• Extended family or individuals not listed during intake are not eligible under the guide

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EMERGENCY FINANCIAL SERVICES

CTA / Pace Transportation Support

CTA/Pace passes for verified medical, employment, interview, or school travel needs.

Who may qualify / starting criteria

• Cook County residency and valid identification are required.

• The Veterans Guide lists qualifying military documentation and discharge/service requirements for Emergency Financial Assistance.

• Income or no-income verification is required at intake.

• Financial assistance is completed in person after VACCC reviews the required documents.

Documents to have ready

• DD-214 or qualifying military-service documentation

• Current Illinois photo ID

• Weekly proof of scheduled activity such as medical appointments, job schedule/interview confirmation, school schedule, or accepted referral

• Income verification

Important limits and decisions

• CTA/Pace 7-day or single-day passes

• Guide lists up to 25 weeks with a valid referral, plus up to 5 emergency weeks without a referral

• Weekly documentation must be renewed for ongoing assistance

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EMERGENCY FINANCIAL SERVICES

Hygiene Assistance

Gift-card assistance for eligible basic hygiene and personal-care needs.

Who may qualify / starting criteria

• Cook County residency and valid identification are required.

• The Veterans Guide lists qualifying military documentation and discharge/service requirements for Emergency Financial Assistance.

• Income or no-income verification is required at intake.

• Financial assistance is completed in person after VACCC reviews the required documents.

Documents to have ready

• DD-214 or qualifying military-service documentation

• Current Illinois photo ID

• Marriage/dependent documentation when applicable

• Spouse photo ID when applicable

• Income verification

Important limits and decisions

• Up to $100 for the approved Veteran, with another $100 for each qualified spouse/dependent in the home

• Generally once every 6 months

• Extended family or individuals not listed during intake are not eligible under the guide

Confirm current eligibility and amounts with VACCC or the agency that administers the benefit. Call (312) 433-6010.

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EMERGENCY FINANCIAL SERVICES

Burial Financial Assistance

Financial assistance paid directly to a funeral home for qualifying burial expenses.

Who may qualify / starting criteria

• Cook County residency and valid identification are required.

• The Veterans Guide lists qualifying military documentation and discharge/service requirements for Emergency Financial Assistance.

• Financial assistance is completed in person after VACCC reviews the required documents.

Documents to have ready

• Veteran's DD-214 or qualifying military-service documentation

• Funeral-home invoice showing the current unpaid balance

• Veteran's death certificate

• Legal-authority or next-of-kin documents identified in the guide

• Photo ID of surviving spouse/designated next of kin when applicable

Important limits and decisions

• Up to $3,000 paid directly to the funeral home

• Request must be submitted within 60 days of the funeral service

• The guide excludes reimbursement to families and expenses already covered by life insurance or another agency

Confirm current eligibility and amounts with VACCC or the agency that administers the benefit. Call (312) 433-6010.

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EMERGENCY FINANCIAL SERVICES

Cell / Landline Bill Assistance

Limited help with an eligible past-due cell or landline bill needed to stay connected.

Who may qualify / starting criteria

• Cook County residency and valid identification are required.

• The Veterans Guide lists qualifying military documentation and discharge/service requirements for Emergency Financial Assistance.

• Income or no-income verification is required at intake.

• Financial assistance is completed in person after VACCC reviews the required documents.

Documents to have ready

• DD-214 or qualifying military-service documentation

• Current Illinois photo ID

• Current phone bill showing a past-due balance within 30 days and active service at the Veteran's residence

• Income verification

Important limits and decisions

• Up to $100

• Generally once every 12 months

• Bill must be in the Veteran's or spouse's name

• Bundled bills must clearly itemize the eligible phone portion; service must be at the primary residence

Confirm current eligibility and amounts with VACCC or the agency that administers the benefit. Call (312) 433-6010.

Veterans, families, caregivers, and advocates: Please contact the VACCC office to confirm final service details. Changes are not expected, but updates may occur.

EMERGENCY FINANCIAL SERVICES

Internet Bill Assistance

Limited help with an eligible past-due internet bill needed to stay connected.

Who may qualify / starting criteria

• Cook County residency and valid identification are required.

• The Veterans Guide lists qualifying military documentation and discharge/service requirements for Emergency Financial Assistance.

• Income or no-income verification is required at intake.

• Financial assistance is completed in person after VACCC reviews the required documents.

Documents to have ready

• DD-214 or qualifying military-service documentation

• Current Illinois photo ID

• Current internet bill showing a past-due balance within 30 days and active service at the Veteran's residence

• Income verification

Important limits and decisions

• Up to $100

• Generally once every 12 months

• Bill must be in the Veteran's or spouse's name

• Bundled bills must clearly itemize the eligible internet portion; service must be at the primary residence

Confirm current eligibility and amounts with VACCC or the agency that administers the benefit. Call (312) 433-6010.

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CLAIMS & BENEFITS ASSISTANCE

VA Disability Compensation Claims

Accredited VSO assistance with disability claims, increases, supporting evidence, and claim preparation.

Documents to have ready

- Military discharge papers (DD-214 or equivalent)
- VA decision/rating letters if this is not a first claim
- Relevant medical or service records and personal statements

Important limits and decisions

- VACCC assists with the claim. VA makes the eligibility and rating decision.
- The Veterans Guide recommends protecting the potential effective date with VA Form 21-0966 (Intent to File) and completing VA Form 21-22 for representation.

Confirm current eligibility and amounts with VACCC or the agency that administers the benefit. Call (312) 433-6010.

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CLAIMS & BENEFITS ASSISTANCE

VA Appeals & Review Assistance

Procedural VSO assistance with Supplemental Claims, Higher-Level Reviews, deadlines, and appropriate next steps after a VA decision.

Documents to have ready

- The complete VA decision letter
- Any new evidence or records related to the decision
- Military and medical records that may be relevant

Important limits and decisions

- VACCC is not legal counsel.
- The guide states VACCC can provide procedural support and refer a Veteran for legal representation when appropriate.

Confirm current eligibility and amounts with VACCC or the agency that administers the benefit. Call (312) 433-6010.

Veterans, families, caregivers, and advocates: Please contact the VACCC office to confirm final service details. Changes are not expected, but updates may occur.

CLAIMS & BENEFITS ASSISTANCE

VA Pension Benefits

VSO assistance evaluating and applying for needs-based VA pension benefits.

Documents to have ready

- DD-214 or qualifying service records
- Income and financial information required by the VA
- Medical/supporting records when applicable

Important limits and decisions

- VA determines pension eligibility, income/net-worth rules, and payment amount.

Confirm current eligibility and amounts with VACCC or the agency that administers the benefit. Call (312) 433-6010.

Veterans, families, caregivers, and advocates: Please contact the VACCC office to confirm final service details. Changes are not expected, but updates may occur.

CLAIMS & BENEFITS ASSISTANCE

VA Healthcare Enrollment

VACCC VSO help completing and submitting VA healthcare enrollment and identifying the appropriate VA access path.

Documents to have ready

- DD-214 or discharge documentation
- Government photo ID
- Health-insurance information if available
- Other enrollment information requested by VA

Important limits and decisions

- VACCC does not provide medical care.
- VA determines healthcare eligibility and enrollment.

Confirm current eligibility and amounts with VACCC or the agency that administers the benefit. Call (312) 433-6010.

Veterans, families, caregivers, and advocates: Please contact the VACCC office to confirm final service details. Changes are not expected, but updates may occur.

CLAIMS & BENEFITS ASSISTANCE

Education Benefits Guidance

Explanation and VSO guidance related to VA education benefits, including GI Bill and Veteran Readiness and Employment pathways.

Documents to have ready

- Military-service records
- Any VA education decision or eligibility letters already received
- School/program information when available

Important limits and decisions

- VACCC helps navigate the benefit process; the administering agency determines eligibility and payment.

Confirm current eligibility and amounts with VACCC or the agency that administers the benefit. Call (312) 433-6010.

Veterans, families, caregivers, and advocates: Please contact the VACCC office to confirm final service details. Changes are not expected, but updates may occur.

CLAIMS & BENEFITS ASSISTANCE

Dependency & Indemnity Compensation (DIC)

Claims assistance for eligible surviving spouses, children, or parents seeking DIC.

Documents to have ready

- Veteran's DD-214/service records
- Death certificate
- Marriage, birth, dependency, or relationship records as applicable
- Relevant VA rating/decision information

Important limits and decisions

- VA determines DIC eligibility and payment amount.

Confirm current eligibility and amounts with VACCC or the agency that administers the benefit. Call (312) 433-6010.

Veterans, families, caregivers, and advocates: Please contact the VACCC office to confirm final service details. Changes are not expected, but updates may occur.

CLAIMS & BENEFITS ASSISTANCE

Survivor Benefits Assistance

VSO assistance helping surviving family members identify and apply for applicable VA survivor benefits.

Documents to have ready

- Veteran's military-service records
- Death certificate
- Marriage/birth/dependency documents
- Any existing VA benefit or rating information

Important limits and decisions

- Available benefits and eligibility depend on the survivor's relationship and the Veteran's service/benefit history.

Confirm current eligibility and amounts with VACCC or the agency that administers the benefit. Call (312) 433-6010.

Veterans, families, caregivers, and advocates: Please contact the VACCC office to confirm final service details. Changes are not expected, but updates may occur.

CLAIMS & BENEFITS ASSISTANCE

Adding or Updating Dependents

Help reporting eligible spouses, children, or dependent parents and updating VA benefit records.

Documents to have ready

- Current VA benefit information
- Marriage, birth, adoption, or dependency records as applicable

Important limits and decisions

- VA determines whether the dependent qualifies and whether the change affects the benefit amount.

Confirm current eligibility and amounts with VACCC or the agency that administers the benefit. Call (312) 433-6010.

Veterans, families, caregivers, and advocates: Please contact the VACCC office to confirm final service details. Changes are not expected, but updates may occur.

CLAIMS & BENEFITS ASSISTANCE

Discharge Upgrade / Character-of-Discharge Guidance

Guidance on discharge-upgrade or character-of-discharge review options and the records needed to pursue them.

Documents to have ready

- DD-214/discharge documents
- Relevant military personnel records
- Supporting evidence or statements explaining the circumstances

Important limits and decisions

- VACCC does not approve or grant discharge upgrades.
- The responsible military board or VA makes the applicable decision.

Confirm current eligibility and amounts with VACCC or the agency that administers the benefit. Call (312) 433-6010.

Veterans, families, caregivers, and advocates: Please contact the VACCC office to confirm final service details. Changes are not expected, but updates may occur.

CLAIMS & BENEFITS ASSISTANCE

Military Records & Documentation

Help requesting DD-214s, military service records, VA decisions, and other records needed for benefits.

Documents to have ready

- Any identifying service information already available
- Existing copies of military/VA documents when available

Important limits and decisions

- VACCC assists with the request process; the agency holding the record controls release and processing.

Confirm current eligibility and amounts with VACCC or the agency that administers the benefit. Call (312) 433-6010.

Veterans, families, caregivers, and advocates: Please contact the VACCC office to confirm final service details. Changes are not expected, but updates may occur.

CLAIMS & BENEFITS ASSISTANCE

Burial & Memorial Benefits

VSO assistance identifying and applying for applicable VA burial and memorial benefits.

Documents to have ready

- Veteran's DD-214/discharge papers
- Death certificate when applicable
- Relationship documents when a survivor is applying
- Funeral/burial documentation when required

Important limits and decisions

- VA determines eligibility for national cemetery burial, memorial items, burial allowances, and related federal benefits.
- This is separate from VACCC Emergency Burial Financial Assistance.

Confirm current eligibility and amounts with VACCC or the agency that administers the benefit. Call (312) 433-6010.

Veterans, families, caregivers, and advocates: Please contact the VACCC office to confirm final service details. Changes are not expected, but updates may occur.

CLAIMS & BENEFITS ASSISTANCE

General VA Benefits Navigation

Not sure what benefit applies? An accredited VACCC VSO can review the situation and help identify appropriate VA benefit pathways.

Documents to have ready

- DD-214 or other service records if available
- Any VA letters or decisions you have
- Documents related to the issue you want help with

Important limits and decisions

- VACCC provides navigation and accredited claims assistance. The VA or other administering agency makes final eligibility decisions.

Confirm current eligibility and amounts with VACCC or the agency that administers the benefit. Call (312) 433-6010.

Veterans, families, caregivers, and advocates: Please contact the VACCC office to confirm final service details. Changes are not expected, but updates may occur.