

CLAYTON COUNTY VETERANS AFFAIRS MEETING
600 Gunder Road NE, Suite 6 Elkader, Iowa 52043
Clayton County Office Building/Public Meeting Room
March 14, 2023

Veterans Commission Meeting was called to order at 7:30 on March 14, 2023 by Commissioner Clark.

ROLL CALL Clark, Eilers and Jordan

MINUTES APPROVAL Motion was made by Clark to approve the minutes from February 14, 2023. Motion seconded by Eilers and motion was carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS There were no public comments

OLD BUSINESS

a) DAV Shuttle: Money has been approved for the Coordinator and Drivers by Supervisors. Tanya Millard has stepped forward to be the Coordinator effective April 1st, 2023. One driver has also stepped forward (Scott Clark) and is to begin mid-March. In this interim, Dick Eilers has been volunteering to drive the shuttle. Eilers said he has 2 more potential drivers he is in communication with. Scott Clark and other drivers will need to coordinate and follow through on getting physicals and “background checks” at the VAMC before beginning to drive. Eilers has volunteered to assist with “route training” for new drivers. Ken Seney has already been in communication with Tanya Millard and Chris is to speak with Ken regarding setting up the physical/background check appointments.

b) Beyond the Shadows - Women Veterans Event: This event was held March 11th at Marquette Iowa Wetlands Center. There were 8 attendees and 4 different counties were represented. Good sharing of information and interchange was reported. Questionnaire responses revealed interest in future such events.

c) Engagement Strategy: Chris has made effort to reach out to some of the local communities in Clayton County to inform them of our services and enlist their assistance to reach out to veterans. He reported there was little to no interest expressed in participating by these communities.

d) Internship: Chris has sent announcements to some local colleges (Eilers added U.I.U. to this list for possible future contact.) Chris has targeted select discipline departments he thinks would possibly be a good fit for our internship. This internship is salaried.

e) Discussion continued regarding “cards” stating our need for drivers (possibly on the back of business cards or otherwise “stand-alone” cards.) Discussion will continue.

NEW BUSINESS

a) Chris mentioned an increase in DIC work this past month. Also highlighted was the need for families of a deceased veteran to be alerted to the need for the Death Certificate to clearly state cause of death as it possibly relates to any service connected rating the veteran had. The difficulty in getting this awareness out to the families in a timely fashion during their time of grief was also noted by Clark. DIC was added to the Monthly Report “pie chart”.

b) Regarding "exposure concern" claims and limited to no computer access for some veterans, the VA is looking to make changes where this process will be more user-friendly to all veterans.

c) Chris reported attending training on the County Internet Sub-page for Veterans Affairs.

d) Chris shared an ad he placed in newspaper for drivers.

e) March 29th was noted as National Vietnam War Veterans Day

f) Clark will be providing VFW and AL magazines to Chris monthly

g) Reviewed and signed approval of claims for Beyond the Shadows - Women Veterans Event and for Commissioners payments

NEXT MEETING IS APRIL 10TH (day of week is changed due to Eilers also driving shuttle which could preclude his attendance on Tuesdays.)

Eilers made motion to adjourn and Clark seconded the motion – motion was carried. Meeting was adjourned at 9:00.

Respectfully Submitted by Greg Clark

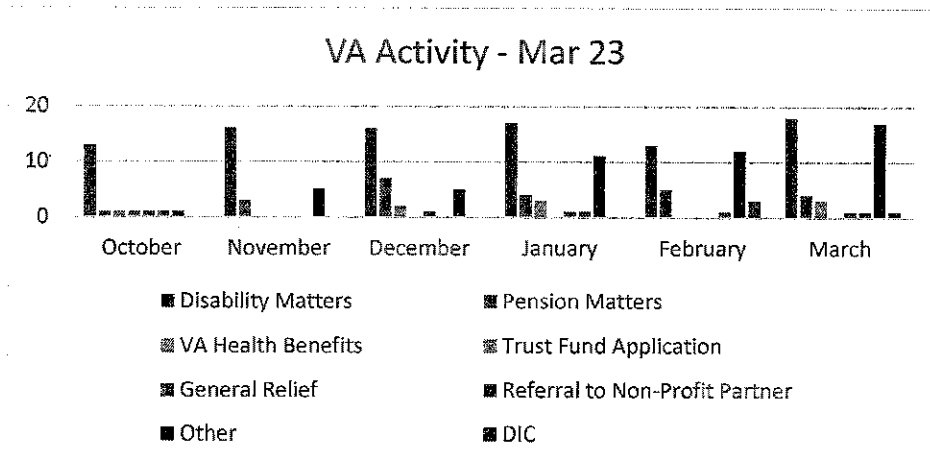
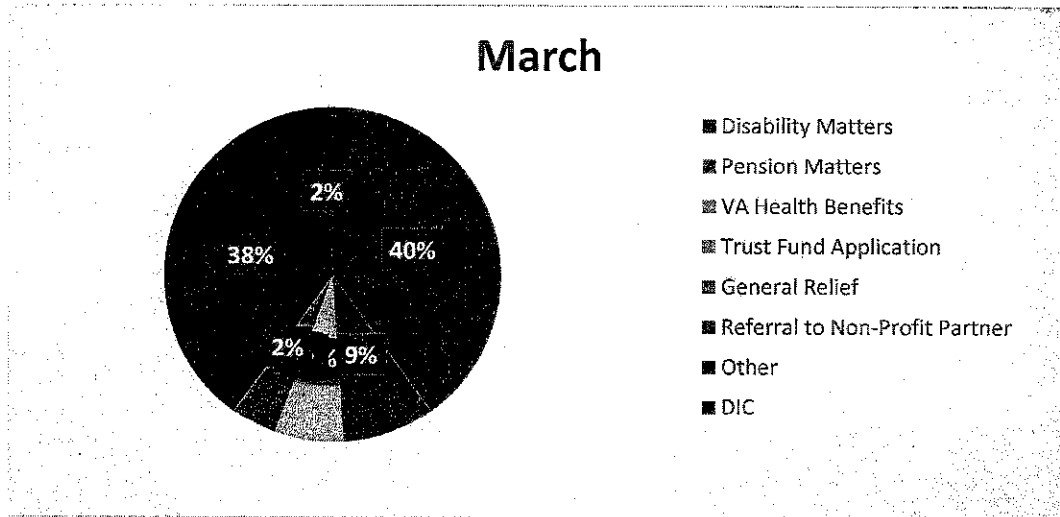
March Report

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

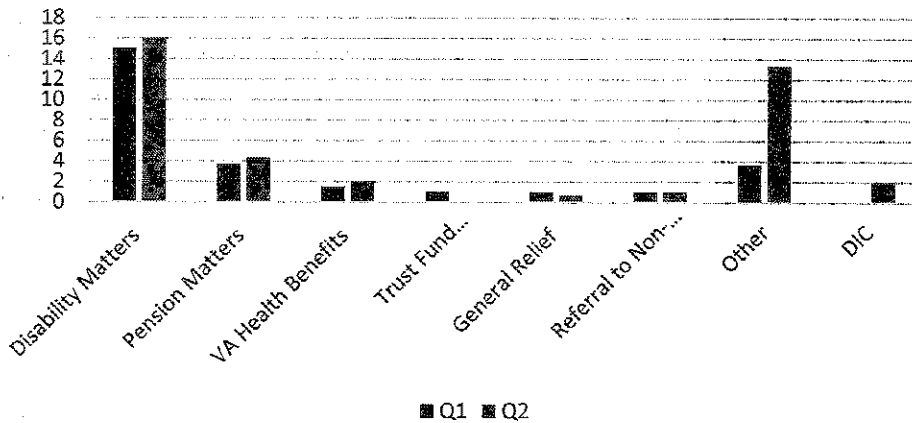
20 total office visits from Veterans.

1 veteran outreach meetings.

0 veteran home visit.



Comparison Q2-Q3 (Average of Matters)



Notable Inquiries:

The “Other” category covers inquiries / support that are unrelated to clients with existing claims. Ranges from request relating to updating fiduciary information, seeking guidance/resources information for a veteran family member or the counties military grave maintenance claim process. Often, these are not inquiries that related to Clayton County Veterans. However, there has been an uptick in third-party agencies or organizations seeking information to verify the status of VA filing and/or benefits. I will expect this to continue instances where veteran families may be looking to access various state benefits for a spouse. Noticing increased inquiries relating to transportation needs (i.e., Veterans in care facilities who are not ambulatory in need of transportation to CBOC or a older veteran needing transportation to visit spouse in a care facility). This is outside scope of services provided by our DAV shuttle program and further highlights the need for both specialized and affordable transportation options.

VA & State Updates:

Veterans can now electronically access copies of their disability claim decision notices on the VA.gov site via one of the sign-in options. Before Veteran had to wait to receive paper copies via mail. The service became available on January 17, 2023. This option not only expands the ability for Veterans to access this information but also reduces calls to National Call Centers. Access is only for closed matters and not pending claims.

As of March 1st, service members and qualifying veterans have access to increase life insurance coverage to up to \$500, 000 under two programs – Servicemembers Group Life Insurance (SGLI) and Veterans Group Life Insurance. The increase in life insurance is meant to align with the current cost of living. SGLI is a group term life insurance that all active-duty guard and reserved members are eligible for. This coverage also has options for traumatic injury coverage. Premiums are automatically deducted from service member’s paycheck. Service members may make changes to coverage on milConnect through SGLI Online Enrollment System. VGLI is the life insurance program for eligible veterans after they have separated from service. Service members enrolled in SGLI with \$450-\$500k in coverage and elect to convert their plan to VGLI in an amount that is at least equal to their SGLI coverage. Service members ending their tour of duty are encouraged to enroll in coverage within 120 days of separation to ensure that there isn’t a break in coverage.