Veterans Service Commission members, who are representatives of veterans organizations familiar with veterans problems, are given wide latitude under the law in determining which veterans receive financial assistance, the nature and level of assistance rendered, and the period over which it is given. Assistance may be available to those who have served in active federal military service, and also for their dependent parents, wives, widows, and/or dependent children. In the case of individuals who do not meet minimum time in service requirements, consideration will be given to those who were discharged by reason of hardship or service connected disabilities. Assistance may also be provided to any member, spouse, or dependent of any member of the Ohio National Guard, the Ohio Military Reserve, the Ohio Naval Militia, or a reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States serving active military duty because of an executive order issued by the President of the United States or an Act of Congress, until the benefits or pay and allowances to which the member, spouse, or dependent is entitled from the Armed Services are available.
5-1. Active service must have been performed in the armed forces of the United States for a period of not less than 90 days not to include active duty for training purposes only. Individuals who did not complete basic training and/or were discharged as “training failures” are not eligible for assistance. Reserve and National Guard veterans must have completed the period of service for which activated if less than the 90 days. Each applicant must show proof of residency in Wyandot County for at least three months prior to the date on which application is being made. These residency requirements apply to all applicants and cannot be waived.

5-2. No qualified applicant will be denied the opportunity to complete an application for financial assistance. Upon completion of the application, if the applicant requires immediate assistance that cannot be provided, he or she will then, and only then, be referred to another agency for assistance.

5-3. At the beginning of the regularly held monthly meeting, three (3) of the five (5) commission members will be identified to vote on assistance applications for that month. After a decision has been rendered by the voting members, an applicant who may disagree with the decision may file an appeal. This process is fully described in paragraph 5.14.

5-4. Members of the Veterans Service Commission and Veterans Service Office staff are eligible for financial assistance under the same policy guidelines. Commission members will abstain from voting on an application for financial assistance where a conflict of interest might be perceived, to include family members and business associates.

5-5. The Commission will make one member available to review emergency assistance applications in such cases where the assistance must be issued immediately to preclude utility shutoffs, evictions, or other adverse actions. The Commission will review such cases at the next regular meeting and complete formal actions on the case. In normal situations, the commissioner designated as Secretary will sign payment vouchers which have been prepared per instructions from the County Auditor. In an emergency requiring an immediate payment, any commissioner’s signature will suffice.
5-6. The law requires that the applicant, under penalty of law, make a complete and total disclosure of any and all income that the applicant may possess. Verification of financial information provides the Commission the means to determine whether or not assistance will be granted. It must be noted that no person is entitled to benefits through the financial assistance program; rather, they are entitled to fair consideration of their request for such benefits.

5-7. The basic information required for each case is listed below. This information must be presented upon initial application, and maintained current throughout the time that the applicant is receiving assistance from this office. It is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure that information is updated as needed. Anyone who fails to provide this information in compliance with Section 5901 of the Ohio Revised Code renders himself ineligible for assistance. Any person who falsifies such information may be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law, and may render himself/herself ineligible for any future assistance.

5-8. The following documents are required to be filed with the initial application for assistance.

5-8.1. DD 214/Honorable Separation from Military Service. **There is no acceptable substitute for this document.**

5-8.2. Proof of minimum 90 days residency in Wyandot County.

5-8.3. Completed assistance application and information releases, signed by the individual and any other household members as required.

5-8.4. Marriage certificates (in the case of common law marriage, proof of existence of the marriage prior to October 10th, 1991), birth certificates of children, adoption decrees where applicable, divorce decrees where needed to show custody of minor children. In the case of divorce with minor children involved, documents proving child support must be provided.

5-8.5. Verification of all income, including child support in the form of copies of checks, etc., for the previous month and through the present date.

5-8.6. Verification of employment status and/or verification of BUC entitlement/filing from ODJFS.
5-8.7. Doctors’/medical statements when applicant is unable to work due to medical conditions.

5-9. Each application will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Where deemed appropriate, policy(s) may be waived by the commission. Significant attention will be given to the applicant’s attempt to resolve the situation before applying for assistance. Numerous other factors are weighed in considering an application for assistance. Some of these factors are listed below.

5-10. Cases which are adjudged to be of a permanent nature will be referred to the appropriate agency as this agency provides only temporary and/or emergency assistance. Any case that cannot be resolved within four months will normally be considered one of permanency. Cases involving Workers Compensation situations will be handled the same as other cases.

5-11. Veterans recently discharged attending school full time who apply for DVA Educational Benefits are eligible for assistance pending receipt of DVA benefits and will not be required to meet work eligibility requirements. Those attending school on less than a full time basis may be required to meet work requirements.

5-12. All assistance rendered will be in the form of vouchers signed by Commissioners and forwarded to the County Auditor for payment. It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide due bills and other documentation as needed.

5-13. Any applicant who is denied assistance will be formally notified by letter, and will be advised of the right to appeal.

5-13.1 The denied applicant will be advised by letter that he/she may submit a written appeal within fifteen (15) days, and must appear in person at the next regularly scheduled commission meeting. Date, time, and place of the next regular meeting will be included in the notification letter. If the applicant cannot attend that meeting, he/she may be allowed to appeal at the 2nd following regular meeting. No appeal will be considered once two regular meetings have been held following the denial.

5-13.2 The applicant’s application and the reason for appeal will be discussed. Following a review and discussion, a vote will be taken and a decision made by all five commission members. This decision will be final.
5-14. Income Limits and Computation

5-14.1 The Commission considers an income limit based upon the current year’s guidelines for non-service connected pension, established by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

5-14.2 The total income of the household is considered when determining eligibility for financial assistance.

5-14.3 Total household income includes any benefits, monetary or food stamps, being received by any household member from ODJFS. The final decision of award amount will not be decreased due to food stamps.

5-14.4 All income, including pension, dividends, interest, rental income, child support and all other types of income of all household members must be reported and will be computed.

5-14.5 If the computed total income exceeds the limit set by the Commission, the applicant is not eligible for assistance. However, the Commission may make an exception in unusual circumstances that constitute an emergency.

5-15. In determining which individuals are to be granted assistance, and which individuals are to be denied assistance, or have existing assistance levels reduced, extreme care will be taken to ensure that no individual who is in need and deserving of assistance is denied. It is the intent of this Commission to ensure that every such deserving individual is provided the maximum degree of assistance possible. However, it is also the responsibility of the Commission to refuse assistance to those who are not deserving of taxpayer aid.

5-16. Restrictions

5-16.1 A veteran who is released from a penal institution will be considered to be a resident of the county of which he was a resident when he was incarcerated, regardless of the length of the stay in jail. Therefore, any veteran who is a resident of Wyandot County at the time of incarceration may be considered for assistance at the time of release.
5-16.2 Any person who quits a job, or who is terminated for cause, shall not normally be granted assistance.

5-16.3 In normal situations, an applicant who has not had sustained gainful employment during the two years immediately preceding date of application is not eligible. Assistance will not be granted until such time as the individual can produce proof of gainful employment.

5-16.4 Strikers will not be granted assistance. The principle behind this policy is concern of interference by a government agency in providing economic support in an issue in which both sides are legally using economic sanctions in hopes of forcing settlement of disagreements. Secondary victims of the strike may be provided assistance. For example, a mill is shut down because of a trucker’s strike, which prevents raw materials from reaching the mill. The mill workers are eligible for assistance, but the truckers are not.

5-16.5 Assistance will not be granted where investigation shows imprudent use of financial assistance previously granted. The Commission reserves the right in such cases to disburse financial assistance directly to those persons who will provide the goods or services needed by minor children.

5-16.6 If it is determined that an applicant for assistance suffers from substance abuse, that applicant will immediately be referred to another agency. Every effort will be made to ensure that they receive proper treatment through the appropriate agencies. No assistance will be granted until treatment has been obtained for the substance abuse.

5-16.7 All applicants physically capable of work must be actively seeking work. This condition is met by proof that the individual is making regular visits to ODJFS, and submission of the job search record that is provided to unemployed applicants at the intake interview. Any applicant who fails to meet this requirement will be denied financial assistance until such time as they comply with the provisions of this paragraph.
5-16.8 Former spouses of eligible individuals are not themselves eligible for assistance. In the event that the former spouse has custody of minor children, the only assistance to be granted will be in the form of food orders. Only the minor children will be considered when assessing the amount of assistance.

5-16.9 Common law marriages will not be recognized unless they were in effect prior to October 10th, 1991. It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide evidence of the validity of the marriage, and the responsibility of the Commission to weigh that evidence. If the marriage cannot be determined valid, the applicant is ineligible for financial assistance.

5-16.10 Residents of homeless shelters and other similar residential facilities are considered to be residents of the county from which they came. Such applicants will be referred to that county for financial assistance.

5-16.11 Rent will not be paid to family members on behalf of the claimant, nor will other bills be paid unless they are in the name of the veteran. Additionally, where a situation of cohabitation exists, the board will not pay rent to one of the two parties on behalf of the other party. Rent will not be paid for non-permanent dwellings, i.e., campers, lot rentals for campers, etc. Rent will only be paid for permanent dwellings.