

PROCEDURES TO BE USED IN RESPONDING TO REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE FROM LOCAL VETERANS (CONTINUED)

Assistance will only be provided to Veterans in the following categories:

- Post 543 members
- Veterans who live in the Post 543 service area.
(The 543 service area is defined generally as the route 211 corridor. More specifically this is the area bounded by the south side of the Intracoastal Waterway from Southport to Shallotte; Route 17 from Shallotte to the intersection with route 87; Route 87 through Boiling Springs and Southport to the south side of the Intracoastal Waterway.)
- Veterans who have served on active duty.
- Veterans who are willing to explore other sources of assistance.
- Exceptions may be granted but only after a complete vetting and explanation.

Requests for assistance will be vetted by the Post Service Officer based on information gathered by the Post Member Sponsor and other appropriate sources.

Federal and state laws often require complete privacy regarding the handling of personal information. This is particularly true regarding financial and Personal Health Information (commonly known as PSI). This is one of the more difficult obstacles to overcome. As a non-government agency, we have no access to records that could verify that the applicant's statements regarding his or her needs.

Likewise, contacting family, friends or neighbors without the applicant's written permission is not appropriate. You must have the applicant's written consent to contact any individual or agency. Such consent must be very specific. The "Applicants Authorization to Release Information" form to be used is attached.

One of the best ways to verify the need is a personal visit. However, we should only visit the inside of any property with the applicant's permission. A drive-by may be a good way to get an initial assessment and a knock on the door may be in order, but do not go inside without being invited. Any initial visit to the applicant should always be done by two people. The application and consent forms should be completed during this initial visit. The primary visitor would be the post member identified as the applicant's sponsor or sponsors. The second person should be the Post Service Officer or another member of the Executive Committee.

After the applicant has been properly vetted, the Post Service Officer will write a report to the Post Commander with a recommendation for endorsement or denial. If the recommendation of the Post Service Officer is to proceed, and if the Post Commander agrees, the Commander will add the request to the agenda of the next monthly Executive Board meeting. The Commanders report should not include the applicant's name, but should include a general outline of the type of assistance and an estimate of the maximum expense. The actual cost of the assistance may not exceed the estimate without further Executive Board approval.

Approval by the Executive Board and the Post Commander will be considered permission to allow the Post Treasurer to issue checks as requested by the Sponsor, the Service Officer and/or Post Commander.

Filling out forms and taking the time to get permission from the Post Commander and the Executive Committee can be frustrating. Please be assured your Commander and Committee stand ready to make this necessary process as fast and painless as possible.