



# **FUNERAL DIRECTORS GUIDE TO NEBRASKA VETERANS AID**

Published by the Nebraska  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
September 2016

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## Program Overview

The following excerpt was taken from:

### 40 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE VETERANS OF NEBRASKA 1947 - 1987

“Shortly after World War I, a group of ex-servicemen in Nebraska were discussing what the State might do for the returning veterans.

Dwight Griswold, then a member of the Nebraska State Legislature, later Governor of Nebraska and United States Senator, suggested that a fund be provided that would always be available to help any veteran or his dependents.

A measure was sponsored in the 1921 Legislature and the Nebraska Veterans’ Aid Fund, commonly called NVA, came into being in the principal sum of \$2,000,000.00, the income from which was to be used with the principal eventually reverting back to the State Treasury. these funds were to be administered by the State American Legion, through a State Fund Relief Committee. Veterans did not need to belong to any organization to obtain help. Food, clothing, fuel, shelter, funeral, medical and surgical items is what the Fund was to be used for. Widows of veterans and dependent children under 18 years of age were eligible.

Post Service Officers were set up in the local posts throughout the state, serving without pay, and they interviewed applicants checking to see that they had honorable discharges, that they were legal residents of Nebraska and whether or not other forms of relief - county, state or federal were due the applicant. It was ruled that emergency relief could not be provided for more than three months. The World War I veteran, recognizing the future needs of some 120,000 World War II veterans, prevailed on the Legislature to increase this principal fund \$1,000,000 a year from 1946 for six years until \$8,000,000.00 would be available, the income from which would be used in a similar way. The cost to the tax payers on this was \$4.70 per \$1,000.00 of valuation.

In July, 1947, the Nebraska State Legislature created a department of government to be known as the Department of Veterans’ Affairs, the chief administrative officer to be known as the Director of Veterans’ Affairs. Investments of funds were to remain as they had since the inception of these funds with the Board of Educational Lands and Funds, with the State Treasurer reinvesting the funds from time to time as designated by the Board. The interest accumulations to be held in trust with the Director drawing such funds as were needed and having the State Treasurer reinvest surplus funds which were not needed immediately.”



## Program Overview Continued

While NVA has experienced slight changes over the years, it still remains true to the original spirit under which it was envisioned and created. As the fund quickly nears the 100th anniversary of assisting veteran and dependents, it is important to recognize the efforts of everyone who participates to make this a successful program.

Per Nebraska law, NVA allowances for funeral services may be requested with the assistance of a Post Service Officer or County Veteran Service Officer (CVSO). The application along with any supporting documentation is then forwarded to the Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs (NDVA) for adjudication. Every attempt should be made to submit an application complete with all necessary documents. Any incomplete application submitted to NDVA will not be adjudicated and may be cancelled if not completed in a timely manner.

NVA must be requested for funeral services in an appropriate period of time after the death of the veteran or dependent. Any request after a year of the death may be rejected as not timely. Generally, the lack of awareness of NVA as a benefit does not entitle any applicant to submit an application past the one-year time limit.

**Disclaimer: This guide is meant only as a reference in applying for Nebraska Veterans Aid. The contents of this document could change at any time and the information contained herein does not guarantee the approval of any funds or benefits by the Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs.**



## Eligibility Requirements:

### Initial Eligibility

Eligibility for NVA begins with the veteran's service. A veteran who meets the required criteria establishes eligibility for himself/herself for his/her spouse and dependent children, including adult children dependent because of mental or physical disability. NDVA will verify the veteran's eligibility prior to approving funeral benefits by examining a qualifying discharge document.

Eligibility may be established by meeting one of the following categories:

- A. Served on active duty other than for training with honorable service; or
- B. Died while in service or as a direct result of such service; or
- C. Served honorably with an allied government on active duty other than for training.

### Qualifying Discharge Document

Discharge documentation, usually a Department of Defense Form 214 (DD 214) is required to clearly show the service member's name, qualifying service and/or service dates along with the **character of discharge**. DD 214's that state "trainee" or "training" are acceptable as long as the DD 214 shows an active component of the military.

National Guard and Reserve members who submit a DD 214 must show active duty service (Title 10) other than for training to be eligible for benefits. A reservist with a DD 214 showing honorable service under Title 32 is not eligible.

A DD 214 that does not show the veteran's name, branch of service, character of discharge or other pertinent information is not sufficient for NVA. Funeral home staff should work closely with the partnering CVSO to obtain the necessary documentation needed for a complete application. In the event of extenuating circumstances, the funeral home or CVSO is encouraged to contact NDVA as soon as any issues become apparent. NDVA maintains a repository of over 700,000 military discharges and may be able to provide the DD214 to a requesting CVSO.



## Eligibility Requirements Continued:

### Subsequent Eligibility

- A. Nebraska residency
- B. Insufficient resources preventing payment of the funeral services.

### Proving Legal Residency

There are many ways of proving legal residence. Receipts for payments of various items such as rent, Nebraska State Income Taxes (not Federal Tax forms), utilities, store accounts (which show dates, veteran's name and address), as well as statements from employers, banks, doctors, dentists, landlords, loan companies, utility companies, clergymen, hospitals, schools, etc., may be acceptable. Statements from the records of public officials are also acceptable.

**Documents signed by friends, neighbors, or relatives are generally not acceptable for NVA purposes.**

### Next of Kin Applying for Funeral Expenses

The next of kin may apply for NVA on behalf of the deceased. Availability of other resources to provide for burial costs apply to the next of kin the same as the veteran or dependent. The right to control the disposition of the remains of the deceased person vests with the person in the order named in State of Nebraska Statute, §38-1425, Deceased persons; control of remains; interment; liability. If NVA provides assistance based on a next of kin making application on behalf of the deceased, payments will be made directly to the funeral home and/or cemetery as appropriate and notice of payment forwarded to the service officer assisting the applicant with the NVA application.

No funeral home shall request NVA assistance for burial expenses. If there is a next of kin listed on the death certificate, that individual should make application for NVA assistance. In the event the next of kin is unable to apply for NVA because of extenuating circumstances, the CVSO may be the applicant for NVA.



## Nebraska Veterans Aid Fund Allowable Allocations:

### Funeral Expense Maximum Allowable Amounts: (last increase in December 2012)

- A. Cremation — **\$3,000 Maximum**
- B. Casket Burial — **\$5,600 Maximum**
- C. Opening and Closing of the grave — **\$750.**

Item C may be paid in addition to either item A or B up to \$750. A request for item C allowance for opening and closing the grave must be included with or on the Statement of Goods and Services and is paid with the other allowable expenses.

The Statement of Goods and Services may include the following eligible expenses:

- A. Basic Services of Funeral Director and Staff
- B. Embalming
- C. Other Preparation of the Body
- D. Use of Funeral Home Facilities
- E. Use of Funeral Home Staff at Another Facility
- F. Automobile Equipment
  - i. Removal Vehicle
  - ii. Hearse
  - iii. Pallbearer Car
- G. Acknowledgement Card
- H. Register Book
- I. Memorial Folders
- J. Minimum 20 Gauge Steel or Cremation urn.
- K. Outer Burial Container (Grave Liner)
- L. Crematory Charge
- M. Opening and Closing of Grave (Paid to the Cemetery)



## Nebraska Veterans Aid Fund Allowable Allocations Continued:

Other available resources (except the \$255 Social Security Death Benefit) must be included and are subtracted from the NVA allowable amount.

Information on U.S. VA Burial Benefits may be found at:

<http://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/claims-special-burial.asp>

Example:

1) A cremation (\$3,000) included a \$250 bill from the cemetery for opening and closing the grave. NDVA pays:  $\$3,000 + \$250 = \$3,250$ .

2) A casket burial (\$5,600) including \$400 opening and closing and eligibility for \$300 VA burial allowance. NDVA pays:  $\$5,600 + \$400 - \$300 = \$5,700$ .

Any Cash Advance Items, which may include, grave plot, opening and closing of the grave, setting of a grave marker, paid newspaper notices, organist, soloist, minister, flowers and reception charges are the responsibility of the family. If there are no family members, the above items may become part of the total expense due to the lack of other resources, not exceeding the maximum. **Cash advance items should be included on the Statement of Goods and Services so NDVA knows they are accounted for.**

Cemetery costs should be listed on a **signed** Statement of Funeral Goods and Services up to the \$750 maximum. If the cemetery charges are not included on a **signed** Statement of Funeral Goods and Services, NVA will require an itemized statement from the cemetery showing actual costs and any reduction to settle the account at or below the NDVA maximum allowable amount. The family must provide a copy of this statement. No cemetery charges will be provided for a cremation unless the cremains are physically buried at a cemetery and there are costs associated with a grave space and opening and closing of the grave.





## Nebraska Veterans Aid Fund Allowable Allocations Continued:

If the family selects or must pay more than the maximum for the items listed above NVA will not participate and the cost remains the responsibility of the family. Additionally, if NVA is used to reimburse any costs, the account must be considered **PAID IN FULL** (except cash advance items agreed to and signed for by the family) after reimbursement from NVA is accepted by the funeral home and/or cemetery.

**\*NOTE: As stated in the previous paragraph, participation in the program by a funeral home and/or cemetery constitutes an agreement that all goods and services (except cash items) are *Paid In Full* upon receipt of funds from NVA.** This agreement ensures that widows and widowers are not expected to provide additional funds above and beyond the cash items and are reassured that their loved one has been interred with no outstanding issues.



## NVA CHECKLIST FOR FUNERALS

The following documents must be submitted for an NVA application to be processed:

1. NVA application - (Completed by CVSO)
2. DD-214 – Showing Character of Service (Normally obtained by the family)
3. United States Citizenship Attestation Form (Signed by applicant)
4. Death Certificate - (Signed copy)
5. Marriage Certificate (*if needed to show a name change or relationship*)
6. Request for Funeral Expenses form (Completed by CVSO)
7. A signed copy of the Statement of Goods and Services



## NEBRASKA VETERANS' AID REQUEST FOR FUNERAL EXPENSES

Veteran/Applicant Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relation to Veteran: \_\_\_\_\_

Deceased Person's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Deceased's Relation to Veteran: \_\_\_\_\_

**Complete and attach this supplemental form to every Nebraska Veterans' Aid application requesting Casket Burial, Cremation or Cemetery expenses.**

1. Did the veteran/dependent have life insurance? YES  NO
- a) Name of insurance company: \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Beneficiary of policy: \_\_\_\_\_ c) Value of policy: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
2. Did the veteran/dependent have a burial plan or pre-arranged burial trust? YES  NO
- a) Name of plan: \_\_\_\_\_ b) Burial benefit amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
3. Did the veteran/dependent have an estate/property? YES  NO
- Executor of Estate: \_\_\_\_\_ Home/Land \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Vehicles \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Cash/Securities \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Other Properties \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- VALUE OF ESTATE \$ \_\_\_\_\_
4. Source of deceased's monthly income: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount of monthly income \$ \_\_\_\_\_

5. Original charges for Casket Burial, Cremation or Cemetery Expenses (prior to any deductions)  
TAKEN FROM STATEMENT OF FUNERAL GOODS AND SERVICES SELECTED FORM \$ \_\_\_\_\_
6. Discounts/credits from Funeral Home \$ \_\_\_\_\_
7. Was the veteran in receipt of VA Compensation, VA Pension, died in a VA Medical Center or died in a State Veterans' Home? YES  NO
8. Was the veteran's death the result of a service connected disability? YES  NO
9. If the answer to #7 or #8 is YES, please provide the total amount allowed for burial allowance and/or plot allowance by the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs (VBA). \$ \_\_\_\_\_
10. Is there a widow/widower to apply for the \$255 Social Security death benefit? YES  NO  \$ \_\_\_\_\_
11. Was the veteran/dependent a member of a Nebraska Veterans' Home? YES  NO
- a) Was there a trust account? YES  NO  b) Value of trust account \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- c) Person eligible to receive trust account: Name \_\_\_\_\_
12. How much will County Veterans' Aid (CVA) allow toward the funeral expenses? \$ \_\_\_\_\_
13. List other sources and amounts to assist with burial expenses (family, memorials, retirement funds, fraternal organizations, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_
14. AMOUNT REQUESTED FROM NVA \$ \_\_\_\_\_

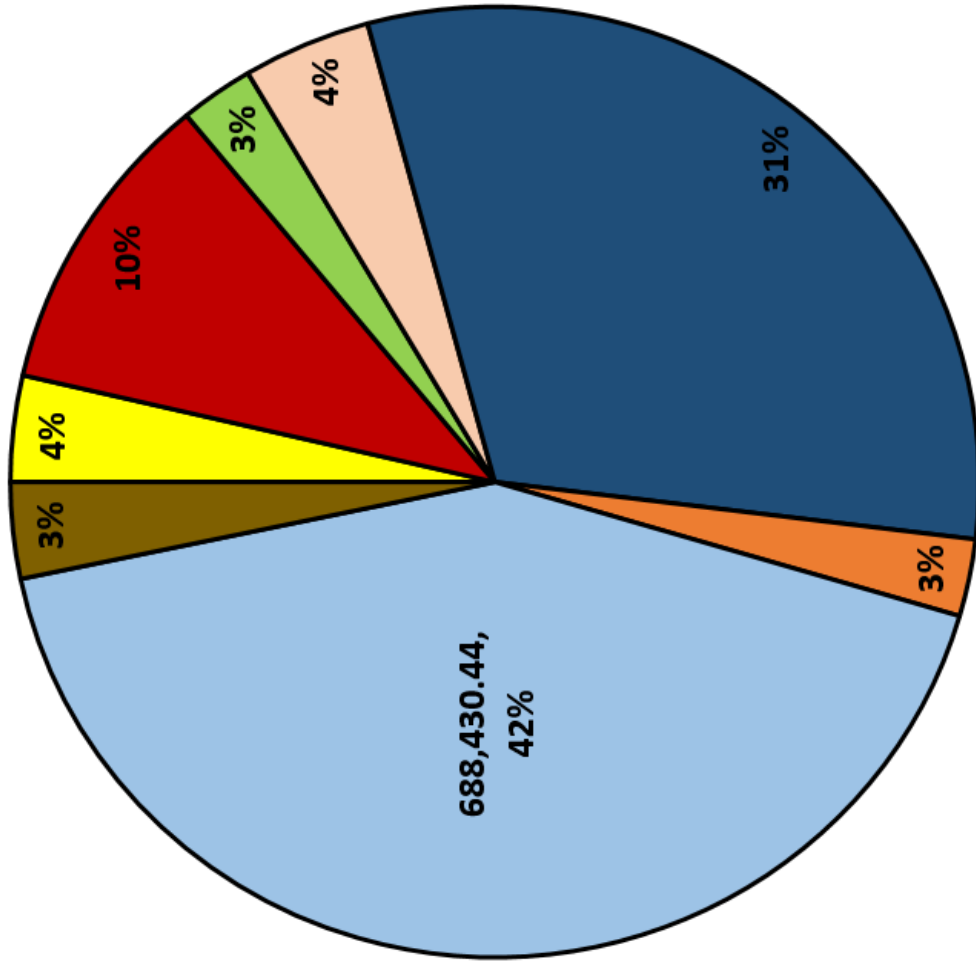
*The above is a true and accurate accounting of any and all funds available for the purpose of burial expenses to the best of my knowledge.*

Provided by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant's Name (typed or printed) Signature of Applicant

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**JULY 15-JUNE 16 NVA CATEGORY BREAKDOWN  
\$1,632,108.28 DISPERSED FROM NVA FUND**

- FOOD
- SHELTER/RENT/MORTGAGE
- MAINTENANCE ELECTRIC, GAS, WATER, GARBAGE, PHONE, CLOTHING
- MED SURG/DOCTOR, HOSPITAL
- MED DENTAL
- MED/EYEGASSES, HEARING AIDS, INSURANCE, OTHER MED ITEMS
- FUNERAL/BURIAL EXP/CREMATION
- TRANSPORTATION





## Title 443 – DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS’ AFFAIRS

### **Chapter 1 – NEBRASKA VETERANS’ AID FUND**

**001** The Nebraska Veterans’ Aid Fund is intended as a temporary emergency fund to assist eligible veterans and their dependents in time of need when an unforeseen emergency occurs disrupting their orderly method of living and funds available from constituted sources such as private resources (income, savings, loans, etc.), regular relief funds or agencies, pension, compensation, insurance, unemployment compensation and sick benefits, etc., are not sufficient for their immediate needs. The emergency deemed to exist as a condition to payment of aid from the Fund shall mean a condition including the following factors:

**001.01** Circumstances exist requiring immediate expenditure of funds for food, shelter, fuel, wearing apparel, medical or surgical aid, care or relief or funeral expenses which are not available through constituted sources.

**001.02** Applicant’s resources are insufficient to meet the need without jeopardizing his future security.

**002** Aid will not be granted to veterans whose emergency is caused by violation of law or misconduct, and as a general rule, will not be furnished to families of such veterans.

**003** Aid may normally be granted for a period of not to exceed sixty (60) days depending on the circumstances in each individual case.

**004** Voluntary unemployment or refusal to work does not constitute an emergency causing need unless the applicant would suddenly be confronted with illness or other situations which might occur at any time, even if still pursuing employment of the sort customarily followed by him or for which he is suited.

**005** Grants of aid by the Department are to be made for the payment of future expenses and prospective applicants should not incur liabilities in the expectation of securing a grant from this fund.

**006** Veterans should make use of free or low-cost services available in the nearest Veterans Administration Hospital or for themselves and dependents in other medical and hospital facilities offered by city, county, state and federal governments if they are financially unable to pay for such care in a private facility. Aid from the Fund is available on such medical and hospital expenses in a private facility if applicant is unable to pay, and his physical condition was such that it would have endangered his life to move him to a Veterans Hospital or other facility. When applying for such aid, the applicant must present fully itemized bills and physician’s statement of physical condition and treatment.

**007** The Fund is not intended to pay all of an applicant’s medical and hospital expenses, but it can be used to assist and participate with other sources to help alleviate such need.

**008** The Fund does not pay on ordinary maternity expenses unless there are other complications causing unexpected additional expense and applicant is unable to pay all of the cost.

**009** The Fund is available to assist in paying for dental care and such items as dentures and glasses, but before payment for this type of claim can be made, it is necessary that the applicant secure a statement from his doctor indicating that the service is necessary to maintain the normal health of the person and also present an itemized estimate of the cost of the services. No such claim will be paid if not previously authorized by the Director.

**010** Membership in a veterans’ organization is not necessary to apply for and receive aid from this Fund.



## Title 443 – DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS’ AFFAIRS, continued

**011** Application shall be made on the application form prescribed and provided by the Director. The applicant shall answer all questions and furnish the information requested and sign the application form in the proper place before a notary public, officer of the post or other competent authority. Only when a veteran is absent, physically unable, incompetent or deceased should application be filed by another member of the family, and the reason therefore should be shown in the proper space. The post officers then sign and make their recommendation and submit the facts as a result of their investigation of the case.

**012** On approved applications, checks are drawn jointly in the name of the service officer and the applicant (plus a third party if there is a creditor or other person eligible to receive same). The applicant is notified by mail in all cases where an allowance has been made and that the check has been mailed to the local service officer.

**013** On disallowed claims, the Director will reconsider the application upon request made by the applicant or post officer if filed within ten (10) days after date of mailing the notice of the decision and providing additional information or evidence pertinent to the case is submitted which might warrant a different decision.

**014** Recourse can be had by any individual or post of a recognized veterans’ organization from any decision made by the Director or Veteran’s Affairs or his Deputy on a claim for aid from the Nebraska Veterans’ Aid Fund, by appeal to the Veterans’ Advisory Commission. The majority decision of the appeal board shall be final on such appealed claim.

**015** The claimant or any officer of the service organization where in the claim originated may, within ten (10) days after date of mailing of the notice of the decision of the Director, file with the Chairman of the Advisory Commission a written notice of appeal, together with a petition setting forth facts and grounds for said appeal.

**016** The Chairman of the Advisory Commission shall fix a time and place for the hearing upon said appeal. This item shall not be later than three (3) months following the date of filing and aforesaid notice of appeal and petition for appeal. The applicant may appear in person at said hearing or be represented by legal counsel.

**017** The hearing shall be held before the Advisory Commission. A majority of the appointed members of said Commission shall constitute a quorum, and their decision shall be final.

**018** The appellant shall be granted the opportunity to present either oral or written testimony in support of his claim, whether or not same testimony has previously been submitted by the Director.

**019** The Director shall have the right to rebut or explain any testimony which might be submitted.

**020** During the hearing of appeals, the Commission shall have the power to grant continuance so as to afford either the appellant or the Director the opportunity to present his side of the case more completely.

**021** After affording the parties a fair and reasonable hearing, the Commission shall make its findings, and on the basis thereof, affirm, modify or reverse the decision of the Director.

**022** The findings and decision of the Commission will be reported to the Director.

**023** The appellant will be notified promptly of the findings and decision of the Commission by the Director.

**024** The Director will comply with the decision of the Commission within ten (10) days after receipt of its report.



**REVISED STATUTES OF NEBRASKA, 1943, RELATING TO ADMINISTRATION  
OF NEBRASKA VETERANS' AID FUND**

NOTE: The most current version of Nebraska Revised Statutes may be found at:  
<http://uniweb.legislature.ne.gov/laws/browse-statutes.php>

STATUTE #	STATUTE TITLE
<a href="#">4-108</a>	Public benefits; state agency or political subdivision; verification of lawful presence; employee; participation in retirement system; restrictions.
<a href="#">4-109</a>	Public benefits, defined.
<a href="#">4-110</a>	Public benefits; verification of lawful presence; exemptions.
<a href="#">4-111</a>	Public benefits; verification of lawful presence; attestation required.
<a href="#">4-112</a>	Public benefits; applicant; eligibility; verification; presumption.
<a href="#">4-113</a>	Public benefits; state agency; annual report.
<a href="#">32-116</a>	Residence defined.
<a href="#">38-1425</a>	Deceased persons; control of remains; interment; liability.
<a href="#">43-2101</a>	Persons declared minors; marriage, effect.
<a href="#">80-401</a>	Nebraska Veterans' Aid Fund; Aid Income Fund; created; purpose; investment; management; duties of state officers.
<a href="#">80-401.01</a>	Terms, defined.
<a href="#">80-401.03</a>	Director; duties; assistants; state service office.
<a href="#">80-401.05</a>	Comprehensive Health Insurance Pool; board of directors; Department of Insurance; duties.
<a href="#">80-401.09</a>	Veterans' Advisory Commission; duties; meetings.
<a href="#">80-401.10</a>	Director; seal; adopt; rules and regulations; fiscal year.
<a href="#">80-402</a>	Veterans' Aid; conscientious objectors denied relief.
<a href="#">80-403</a>	Veterans' relief; persons eligible; disbursements.
<a href="#">80-404</a>	Gifts, power to accept; property, exemption from tax
<a href="#">80-405</a>	Veterans' relief; obtaining by fraud; penalty.
<a href="#">80-406</a>	County service committee; members; appointment.
<a href="#">80-407</a>	County veterans service committee; duties; appointment of county veterans service officer; member of committee ineligible.

