

VETERANS EMERGENCY FUND

- The Veterans Emergency Fund (VEF) provides a tax-free payment to Veterans and their families who are facing a financial emergency that is threatening their health and well-being.
- The fund can cover essential needs that, if removed or unavailable, could lead to a crisis or emergency situation. Examples of essential needs include food, shelter, clothing, uninsured essential one-time medical or dental needs, etc.
- Applicants will also be referred to other internal and external resources to help them in the longer-term.
- \$8.6 million was distributed to Veterans and their families between April 1, 2018 and March 31, 2024.
- In 2023-24, VEF supported 842 distinct Veterans and their family members 1,053 times with almost \$1.65M in funding.

WHEN PRESSED:

Q1 – What happens when the fund's million dollars runs out?

Every year since program implementation in April 2018, the demand for the Veterans Emergency Fund has surpassed the million dollars of annual funding. To ensure the continued safety and well-being of at-risk Veterans and their families, the Department has internally reallocated resources to top-up the fund.

Q2 – Why are members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police not eligible?

VAC does not have an agreement with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) to provide Veterans Emergency Fund (VEF) to current or former RCMP members. A current or former RCMP member, who is also a Veteran of the Canadian Armed Forces, can receive VEF funding. RCMP members can apply for emergency funding through the Legion at [The Legion - Financial Assistance](#).

Q3 – How is a Veterans Emergency Fund applicant assisted over the longer-term?

When a Veteran or their family member applies for Veterans Emergency Fund support, they will be referred to other internal and external resources to help with their well-being over the longer term. Some examples include:

- VAC Case Management Services
- VAC Rehabilitation Program
- Financial counselling
- Operational Stress Injury Social Support (OSISS)
- Military Family Resource Centers

Q4 – How long will it take an applicant who has had their Veterans Emergency Fund application approved to receive a payment?

A Veterans Emergency Fund (VEF) application decision will be rendered within 2 business days of VAC receiving all of the necessary supporting documentation. If the VEF application is approved, a payment will be processed within 2 business days from the decision date.

Q5 – Are applicants required to access other funds prior to applying for Veterans Emergency Fund?

Veterans and their families do not need to access other programs or services before applying for the Veterans Emergency Fund. VAC encourages Veterans and their families to collaborate with other community agencies (i.e., Legion, Support Our Troops, food banks, Vets Canada, etc.) to meet their needs.

BACKGROUND — VETERANS EMERGENCY FUND

The purpose of Veterans Emergency Fund (VEF) is to enable Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) to provide prompt, non-taxable financial assistance to eligible Veterans and their families who are facing an emergency that is threatening their health and well-being. Applicants will also be referred to additional resources for longer-term support.

VEF has received \$1 million of funding every fiscal year since program implementation in April 2018. Over \$1.6 million was distributed to Veterans and their families in 2023-24. Every year, VAC has been required to internally reallocate resources to top up the fund to continue to assist in-need Veterans and their families

VEF qualifications are intentionally broad to assist as many Veterans and their families as possible who require urgent financial help. An applicant does not need to be in receipt of other VAC benefits in order to qualify for the fund.

The following groups of individuals can qualify for VEF funding if they are a Canadian resident and a(n):

- Veteran of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF).
- Current spouse/common-law partner of a Veteran.
- Survivor of a deceased Veteran or deceased CAF member.
- Orphan of a deceased Veteran or deceased CAF member (or the legal guardian if the orphan is under the age of 18).

Each VEF application is assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Decision makers are authorized to approve a maximum of \$2,500 (or up to \$10,000 in exceptional circumstances) per Veteran's household per fiscal year (April 1 to March 31) for essential needs, food, shelter, clothing, and personal care items. An exceptional circumstance is one that was unavoidable or unexpected, and for which there was insufficient time to take the necessary action to resolve it. If an applicant is experiencing homelessness and they are requesting funding to access housing, their situation will always be considered as an exceptional circumstance.

VEF applicants are expected to use the liquid assets at their disposal to help alleviate the financial emergency.

Once a completed VEF application is received, a decision will be rendered within 2 business days. If the VEF application is approved, a payment will be released within 2 business days of the decision date.

The decision maker will determine which of the following payment methods is appropriate based on the circumstances:

- credit card to the third-party
- cheque to the third-party
- direct deposit to the applicant
- cheque to the applicant

A VEF payment will be made directly to the third party, whenever possible.