

The Iowa American Legion Department Service Office has had an outstanding year—one marked by mission focus, teamwork, and results. Under the leadership of Department Service Officer Shane Pankonen, and with boots-on-the-ground dedication from Veteran Service Officers Josey Pester and our newest team member, Caleb Humphrey, we've been on the front lines advocating for Iowa's veterans and their families.

Our team has been locked in on the mission—handling claims, appeals, and High-Level Reviews (HLRs) with the precision and urgency our veterans deserve. These HLRs have become a near-weekly battle rhythm, and the results speak for themselves. In the past year alone, we've helped secure over \$450 million in earned benefits for Iowa veterans. That's not just a number—it's a lifeline. It's housing, healthcare, and stability for those who've worn the uniform.

Now, let's talk about how service connection works. To qualify for VA disability compensation through direct service connection, there are three key elements—think of them as your three-pronged approach to getting your claim squared away. First, you need a current, diagnosed condition—something affecting your mind or body. Second, there must be evidence of something that happened during your time in uniform—an injury, illness, or exposure while on active duty, AIT, drill weekend, or deployment. Third, there needs to be a medical link—a nexus—connecting that in-service event to your current condition.

But that's not the only route. You can also file a secondary claim—this is when a service-connected condition causes or aggravates another condition. For example, if your service-connected knee injury throws off your gait and leads to back problems, that back condition may be eligible as a secondary claim. And don't forget about presumptive conditions. For certain illnesses tied to specific service eras or exposures—like Agent Orange, burn pits, or Gulf War toxins—the VA presumes the connection. You don't have to prove the link, just that you meet the service criteria.

Now, what happens when a veteran passes away? Who can carry the torch and file a claim? The most common claimant is the surviving spouse—someone who was legally married to the veteran at the time of death. In some cases, common-law spouses or those separated but not divorced may still qualify. Unmarried dependent children may also be eligible—if they're under 18, between 18 and 23 and in school, or permanently disabled before age 18. Dependent parents may qualify for Parents' DIC if they relied on the veteran financially. And if no eligible family member is available, the executor or personal representative of the veteran's estate can file for accrued benefits—those are benefits the veteran earned

but didn't receive before passing. These claims must be filed within one year of the veteran's death.

The types of claims survivors can file include Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC), which is a monthly benefit for survivors of service-connected deaths; accrued benefits; burial benefits to help with funeral costs; and the Survivors Pension, which supports low-income surviving spouses and children of wartime veterans.

And here's something every veteran needs to know: the VA no longer issues paper checks for compensation and pension payments. It's all direct deposit now. This change is about security, speed, and making sure your benefits land in your account without delay or risk of theft. To set up or update your direct deposit, you can send in a voided check with VA Form 1199a, call the VA at 1-800-827-1000, or log in to your account at [va.gov](https://va.gov). If you need help navigating that process, our office has your six—we're here to walk you through it."

"In closing, I want to thank each of you for your service and remind you that our mission continues—to fight for the benefits you've earned and ensure no veteran is left behind. If you have any questions, now's the time—let's talk.



July 2025 Iowa VA Compensation

July 2025 Iowa VA Compensation								New Awards	Gross Amount
Live Compensation		Live Pension		Survivor Pension		DIC - Death Indemnity Com..		395	\$514,279
Count	Gross Amount	Count	Gross Amount	Count	Gross Amount	Count	Gross Amount	Terminated Awards	Prior Gross Amount
52,748	\$98,633,284	1,169	\$1,297,784	840	\$628,800	5,038	\$8,679,983	207	\$369,179

July 2025 Live Compensation

FYTD Live Compensation

Combined Disability	Count	Gross Amount	New Awards	Terminated Award	Gross Amount	New Awards	Terminated Award
000	74	\$9,311	0	1	\$93,490	5	6
010	10,368	\$1,829,193	111	5	\$18,309,969	1,073	61
020	3,839	\$1,352,917	46	1	\$13,605,724	310	28
030	3,328	\$1,958,086	30	0	\$19,846,426	260	14
040	3,726	\$3,176,938	21	1	\$31,660,408	239	14
050	2,828	\$3,386,901	23	0	\$33,752,988	215	5
060	4,399	\$7,009,027	27	1	\$69,186,015	273	20
070	4,422	\$9,780,439	33	1	\$95,969,022	229	12
080	4,566	\$11,580,881	23	0	\$111,197,908	161	9
090	4,346	\$12,527,382	15	1	\$120,173,898	145	7
100	10,864	\$46,022,209	47	1	\$421,963,799	380	42
null	140	\$0	0	140	\$0	0	1,121
Total	52,900	\$98,633,284	376	152	\$935,759,647	3,290	1,339

July 2025 - Power of Attorney

FYTD Awards

POA	Count	Gross Amount	Average Amount	New Awards	Terminated Award	Gross Amount	New Awards	Terminated Award
AL	26,750	\$47,942,470	1,792	208	22	\$447,703,190	1,885	148
AMVETS	389	\$626,417	1,610	0	0	\$6,297,175	4	4
DAV	7,943	\$15,951,826	2,008	15	1	\$155,830,348	235	27
IDVA	1,954	\$3,321,265	1,700	8	1	\$32,578,820	60	15
NACVSO	1,062	\$1,756,733	1,654	18	0	\$14,954,093	116	6
PVA	394	\$1,250,832	3,175	1	1	\$12,330,941	13	3
VFW	5,194	\$10,170,964	1,958	22	2	\$97,921,110	264	26
VVA	2,288	\$4,585,860	2,004	4	2	\$45,913,895	41	5
Other POA	1,644	\$3,535,787	2,151	14	0	\$33,366,833	61	4
Private Attorney	1,215	\$3,107,228	2,557	11	0	\$28,258,044	57	1
No POA	10,962	\$16,990,468	1,550	94	178	\$164,304,940	752	1,763
Grand Total	59,795	\$109,239,852	1,827	395	207	\$1,039,459,388	3,488	2,002



VA Benefits										
	Live Compensation		Live Pension		Survivor Pension		DIC - Death Indemnity Co..		Grand Total	
	Count	Gross Amount	Count	Gross Amount	Count	Gross Amount	Count	Gross Amount	Count	Gross Amount
ADAIR	112	\$205,978	1	\$905	2	\$297	11	\$18,535	126	\$225,714
ADAMS	60	\$123,212	2	\$1,929	1	\$205	8	\$13,030	71	\$138,376
ALLAMAKEE	228	\$445,908	9	\$11,363	6	\$3,388	36	\$62,319	279	\$522,978
APPANOOSE	263	\$436,175	5	\$5,716	5	\$2,006	35	\$60,489	308	\$504,385
AUDUBON	107	\$188,541	3	\$718	3	\$2,237	9	\$14,683	122	\$206,179
BENTON	422	\$839,774	7	\$6,952	8	\$10,197	49	\$85,428	486	\$942,350
BLACK HAWK	1,750	\$3,364,543	70	\$70,062	42	\$30,459	209	\$358,800	2,071	\$3,823,865
BOONE	626	\$1,125,889	3	\$3,845	5	\$4,129	46	\$78,849	680	\$1,212,712
BREMER	421	\$921,877	6	\$3,972	3	\$270	53	\$91,864	483	\$1,017,984
BUCHANAN	311	\$643,885	7	\$7,471	8	\$3,073	43	\$73,890	369	\$728,320
BUENA VISTA	271	\$517,410	8	\$5,024	7	\$5,763	26	\$45,495	312	\$573,692
BUTLER	236	\$446,774	3	\$3,456	4	\$5,782	23	\$39,728	266	\$495,740
CALHOUN	168	\$289,188	3	\$2,117	7	\$2,331	14	\$22,601	192	\$316,237
CARROLL	392	\$677,288	6	\$6,237	10	\$7,205	42	\$71,233	450	\$761,964
CASS	262	\$430,188	5	\$3,871	6	\$2,653	37	\$64,440	310	\$501,152
CEDAR	288	\$548,263	6	\$5,208	1	\$90	21	\$36,256	316	\$589,817
CERRO GORDO	865	\$1,429,697	44	\$44,284	25	\$25,966	90	\$157,309	1,024	\$1,657,256
CHEROKEE	238	\$399,010	3	\$1,429	2	\$1,139	19	\$33,573	262	\$435,151
CHICKASAW	189	\$350,092	7	\$6,470	3	\$2,226	29	\$52,795	228	\$411,583
CLARKE	188	\$324,875	4	\$2,960	3	\$3,120	21	\$37,172	216	\$368,127
CLAY	244	\$403,485	6	\$4,773	9	\$8,158	28	\$44,962	287	\$461,378
CLAYTON	301	\$617,688	10	\$7,010	8	\$3,080	36	\$64,172	355	\$691,950
CLINTON	742	\$1,422,461	18	\$17,081	17	\$20,051	91	\$159,557	868	\$1,619,150
CRAWFORD	229	\$332,140	5	\$4,508	4	\$4,068	36	\$56,434	274	\$397,150
DALLAS	1,274	\$2,490,296	15	\$19,949	26	\$20,258	95	\$161,189	1,410	\$2,691,692
DAVIS	135	\$248,197	2	\$148	6	\$1,988	17	\$29,721	160	\$280,055
DECATUR	159	\$292,700	9	\$6,148	6	\$1,494	13	\$22,192	187	\$322,534
DELAWARE	218	\$394,250	2	\$533	6	\$6,255	26	\$45,612	252	\$446,651
DES MOINES	619	\$1,265,161	17	\$13,832	7	\$7,469	68	\$118,407	711	\$1,404,869
DICKINSON	323	\$617,889	10	\$3,037	11	\$6,285	42	\$69,472	386	\$696,683
DUBUQUE	1,424	\$2,801,390	24	\$30,780	14	\$10,639	149	\$253,193	1,611	\$3,096,002
EMMET	226	\$430,028	7	\$6,864	6	\$1,303	26	\$45,905	265	\$484,100
FAYETTE	269	\$468,775	12	\$9,226	4	\$1,788	29	\$50,806	314	\$530,594
FLOYD	318	\$541,303	8	\$6,001	4	\$1,797	39	\$67,180	369	\$616,281
FRANKLIN	140	\$267,010	2	\$3,771	5	\$3,617	11	\$20,407	158	\$294,805
FREMONT	207	\$385,365	3	\$2,996	1	\$90	20	\$34,524	231	\$422,975
GREENE	180	\$346,620	4	\$4,661	3	\$594	23	\$39,834	210	\$391,710
GRUNDY	194	\$347,769	5	\$6,454	7	\$7,652	28	\$50,966	234	\$412,841
GUTHRIE	256	\$420,094	7	\$7,721	4	\$2,806	29	\$50,026	296	\$480,648
HAMILTON	283	\$495,271	8	\$10,098	3	\$1,695	19	\$33,923	313	\$540,986
HANCOCK	191	\$272,704	1	\$2,358	1	\$1,515	22	\$35,070	215	\$311,648
HARDIN	309	\$514,972	11	\$19,491	5	\$3,191	29	\$49,753	354	\$587,407
HARRISON	421	\$752,329	8	\$7,622	6	\$1,574	25	\$43,491	460	\$805,016
HENRY	294	\$607,113	4	\$3,035	5	\$3,105	50	\$86,120	353	\$699,373
HOWARD	197	\$302,473	10	\$7,796	6	\$545	21	\$35,231	234	\$346,045
HUMBOLDT	165	\$293,412	1	\$2,795	3	\$3,120	8	\$14,278	177	\$313,605
IDA	116	\$212,112	2	\$2,904	1	\$61	12	\$20,539	131	\$235,616
IOWA	255	\$526,067	4	\$4,766	6	\$5,674	27	\$46,798	292	\$583,305
JACKSON	370	\$733,923	10	\$12,695	6	\$3,590	37	\$62,724	423	\$812,932
JASPER	740	\$1,261,481	11	\$12,813	8	\$5,319	51	\$87,664	810	\$1,367,277



VA Benefits

	Live Compensation		Live Pension		Survivor Pension		DIC - Death Indemnity Compensation		Grand Total	
	Count	Gross Amount	Count	Gross Amount	Count	Gross Amount	Count	Gross Amount	Count	Gross Amount
JEFFERSON	186	\$408,030	25	\$14,438	4	\$2,643	31	\$52,766	246	\$477,878
JOHNSON	1,448	\$2,878,119	32	\$29,813	20	\$15,167	110	\$193,202	1,610	\$3,116,301
JONES	321	\$657,275	5	\$2,677	4	\$1,860	36	\$62,493	366	\$724,304
KEOKUK	160	\$341,448	4	\$5,997	5	\$3,559	20	\$33,763	189	\$384,768
KOSSUTH	257	\$476,885	9	\$4,815	4	\$1,091	27	\$47,558	297	\$530,349
LEE	576	\$1,147,091	16	\$14,058	8	\$6,216	68	\$112,573	668	\$1,279,937
LINN	3,268	\$6,521,911	82	\$94,544	44	\$43,956	315	\$545,624	3,709	\$7,206,035
LOUISA	158	\$311,110	3	\$3,085	4	\$2,544	18	\$31,569	183	\$348,308
LUCAS	177	\$323,781	1	\$625			10	\$19,163	188	\$343,570
LYON	168	\$282,072			3	\$270	22	\$37,636	193	\$319,977
MADISON	383	\$742,803			4	\$4,472	40	\$66,885	427	\$814,160
MAHASKA	269	\$584,648	16	\$12,006	12	\$9,542	25	\$45,188	322	\$651,384
MARION	659	\$1,259,364	8	\$6,912	2	\$2,463	52	\$83,626	721	\$1,352,365
MARSHALL	717	\$1,253,351	106	\$204,496	30	\$30,388	37	\$64,302	890	\$1,552,537
MILLS	589	\$1,167,769			3	\$3,627	39	\$63,477	631	\$1,234,873
MITCHELL	168	\$289,406	7	\$7,202	5	\$5,533	21	\$37,033	201	\$339,173
MONONA	185	\$302,724	4	\$3,298	4	\$1,920	9	\$16,340	202	\$324,282
MONROE	173	\$355,642			3	\$1,934	33	\$55,800	209	\$413,376
MONTGOMERY	215	\$392,925	4	\$3,368	4	\$2,034	30	\$49,437	253	\$447,764
MUSCATINE	565	\$1,109,137	18	\$13,020	9	\$3,797	71	\$122,380	663	\$1,248,334
OBRIEN	220	\$316,334	3	\$3,861	1	\$1,051	24	\$43,551	248	\$364,797
OSCEOLA	92	\$165,392	2	\$1,463	3	\$270	12	\$20,948	109	\$188,074
PAGE	322	\$592,244	4	\$4,786	3	\$1,834	35	\$61,893	364	\$660,757
PALO ALTO	190	\$295,035	7	\$10,771	4	\$273	29	\$52,444	230	\$358,523
PLYMOUTH	369	\$596,820	2	\$2,432	6	\$1,894	51	\$88,145	428	\$689,291
POCAHONTAS	106	\$178,477	7	\$4,848	4	\$1,727	12	\$19,837	129	\$204,889
POLK	8,616	\$16,341,783	150	\$182,466	106	\$91,124	706	\$1,223,641	9,578	\$17,839,014
POTTAWATTA..	2,262	\$3,906,551	43	\$49,812	14	\$11,739	208	\$362,455	2,527	\$4,330,557
POWESHIEK	305	\$557,357	5	\$6,828	4	\$360	26	\$45,144	340	\$609,689
RINGGOLD	95	\$150,653	1	\$690	1	\$205	17	\$29,155	114	\$180,703
SAC	191	\$271,595	5	\$4,648	4	\$3,762	22	\$38,181	222	\$318,186
SCOTT	3,109	\$6,458,977	58	\$71,194	44	\$36,895	273	\$461,839	3,484	\$7,028,905
SHELBY	252	\$459,541	2	\$1,503			20	\$35,168	274	\$496,212
SIOUX	358	\$651,311	4	\$3,973	14	\$4,590	29	\$49,184	405	\$709,058
STORY	1,108	\$1,928,710	10	\$10,630	16	\$14,218	80	\$135,495	1,214	\$2,089,053
TAMA	268	\$506,271	3	\$3,510	5	\$2,840	30	\$49,607	306	\$562,228
TAYLOR	116	\$191,457	3	\$1,221	2	\$582	8	\$13,984	129	\$207,244
UNION	235	\$393,641	2	\$532	3	\$2,123	30	\$50,100	270	\$446,396
VAN BUREN	145	\$309,398	5	\$3,689	3	\$1,101	15	\$27,078	168	\$341,266
WAPELLO	480	\$905,014	9	\$7,843	12	\$8,981	65	\$112,169	566	\$1,034,007
WARREN	1,334	\$2,574,488	6	\$10,554	8	\$6,965	67	\$118,343	1,415	\$2,710,351
WASHINGTON	334	\$696,024	13	\$7,436	6	\$4,815	39	\$69,287	392	\$777,562
WAYNE	116	\$198,114			2	\$193	12	\$19,837	130	\$218,144
WEBSTER	718	\$1,154,051	6	\$7,515	17	\$10,364	47	\$83,369	788	\$1,255,300
WINNEBAGO	225	\$341,601	2	\$1,503	5	\$631	20	\$36,045	252	\$379,780
WINNESHIEK	295	\$536,774	4	\$4,364	9	\$6,440	37	\$65,064	345	\$612,642
WOODBURY	1,642	\$2,747,735	32	\$30,010	19	\$17,500	146	\$245,788	1,839	\$3,041,033
WORTH	176	\$302,518	2	\$2,613	3	\$1,900	14	\$24,547	195	\$331,578
WRIGHT	231	\$326,881	1	\$880	1	\$90	22	\$38,229	255	\$366,080