
ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
SOLDIERS' AID COMMISSION
2022-2023

JULY 2023

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

**The Honourable Michael Parsa
Minister of Children, Community and Social Services**

Dear Minister Parsa:

**I am pleased to present this Annual Report on
behalf of the Soldiers' Aid Commission.**

**This report outlines the history and mandate of
the Commission and summarizes its activity
throughout the 2022-2023 fiscal year.**

Sincerely,

**Philip ten Kortenaar
Chair**

HISTORY, ORGANIZATION AND MANDATE

HISTORY

The Soldiers' Aid Commission is an Operational Service Agency, established in 1915, "to take care of and to find employment for members of the Canadian Expeditionary Force...". This was later expanded to include Canadian and allied Veterans who served in the Second World War and the Korean War. In November 2006, the Commission's mandate was extended to include Veterans who served with the armed forces in Canada and in 2011, those who saw service with the Merchant Navy. In January 2021, the mandate was revised and now includes all former members of the Canadian Armed Forces who have completed basic training and are released from service.

The Soldiers' Aid Commission receives its legislative authority from the *Soldiers' Aid Commission Act, 2020 and Regulations made under the Act*.

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS), through the Developmental and Supportive Services Branch, is responsible for the administration of the legislation under which the Commission operates.

ORGANIZATION

The Commission operates at arm's length from the government, with respect to the provision of assistance, members may be appointed to hold office for a term of up to three years at the pleasure of the Lieutenant Governor in Council and may be reappointed.

The Commission shall consist of at least three members and no more than 11 members, with the majority of the board comprising Veterans or individuals who are either the parent, spouse, child or sibling of a Veteran. The Lieutenant Governor in Council shall designate a member as the Chair of the Commission and another member as the Vice-Chair. The current Commission comprises a Chair, Vice-Chair, and five other Commissioners.

Members are not remunerated but are entitled to such reimbursement for reasonable expenses as determined by the Travel, Meal and Hospitality Directive.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Ministry and the Commission was signed by the Minister and the Chair in January 2021.

MANDATE

The mandate of the Soldiers' Aid Commission is to administer a financial assistance program for eligible Veterans and eligible family members of Veterans who reside in Ontario. The Commission accepts applications for financial assistance made by Veterans in need or their dependents by way of the Royal Canadian Legion and

Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC). The Royal Canadian Legion or Veterans Affairs Canada receives applications for assistance and completes an initial screening to confirm Veteran's status, obtain financial/income documentation and quotes for services being requested. These applications are then forwarded to the Commission for review.

FUNDING, ELIGIBILITY AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

FUNDING

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services provides the Commission with annual funding up to **\$1.55M** for payments to eligible Veterans and/or their eligible family members. This funding also includes expenses related to the Commissioners travel and meal costs. The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services directed some of the underspend in the program to provide \$806K to the True Patriot Love Foundation to improve Veterans' access to mental health and support services and assist them to transition back to civilian life. Any residual funding is used to support pressures in the broader Developmental and Supportive Services and Community Services Sector.

ELIGIBILITY

An eligible Veteran is any person who resides in Ontario, and a former member of the Canadian Armed Forces who has completed basic training and was released from service or has enlisted in any branch of the Canadian military (or with an allied nation) and served overseas or in Canada during WWI, WWII or the Korean War and is in financial need.

Veterans who served in the Merchant Navy during WWII are also eligible for assistance from the Commission.

- An eligible family member of a Veteran can be the spouse of a Veteran, the surviving spouse of a deceased Veteran or a child of a Veteran or Veteran's spouse who is financially dependent, or the child of a deceased Veteran or Veteran's spouse.
- The applicant must also demonstrate financial need and make a reasonable effort to access funds from other Veteran-specific programs and show that they cannot reasonably cover the cost of the service/support being requested.

The Commission reviews all applications and employs a screening tool to assess financial need before eligibility determination.

Financial assistance is available to resolve a specific problem when all other resources have been exhausted. Funding is provided on an individual basis and is not provided for long-term, ongoing assistance. Applications that are declined are usually due to a determination that the individual is "not in true financial need" or that the requested assistance is to meet an ongoing debt.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

All applications for assistance are reviewed by the Commission in a timely manner. Financial assistance can be granted over a 12-month period up to \$2,000.

The Commission will consider applications to support eligible recipients with financial assistance for essential expenses in the following categories:

- housing-related items, modifications or repairs that support mobility, accessibility or health and safety
- assistance to secure or maintain housing
- specialized equipment and assistive devices to support mobility, accessibility or health and safety
- health-related items and services to support physical and mental health
- personal items, services and expenses to support basic needs
- employment-related supports to remove barriers to employment or improve employability

The decisions to provide assistance to an individual are not subject to approval by the Minister or any official of the Ministry, nor are they subject to appeal. The applications are reviewed by the board to determine whether to fund all, part or none of the application.

CONSIDERATIONS

The Commission took a more active role in promoting and engaging within the Veteran sector during the past fiscal year.

This included working with the ministry to develop business cards, a poster, postcards, banner and presentation material that were utilized to help spread the word of the program. The poster campaign was launched over the summer that included sharing these materials both digitally and physically with various Veteran organizations and stakeholders throughout the province.

The Commission held meetings with both senior staff at the Royal Canadian Legion and Veterans Affairs Canada to help determine how the Commission could better interact and assist these organizations with providing funding to Ontario's vulnerable Veterans and their families. The aim was to focus on what SAC could do to compliment programs already offered by both organizations.

The Commission successfully attended multiple Legion Service Officer Seminars and presented directly to front line Legion staff to help with program awareness.

The focus over the past year and moving forward is to maintain and expand the connections between the Commission and both key program conduits in the Royal Canadian Legion and Veterans Affairs Canada. Through these connections and with

more regular engagement the Commission is anticipating increased awareness for frontline staff that would ultimately lead to more applications being submitted.

The Commission participated in the Warriors Day Parade during the Canadian National Exhibition (CNE) by handing out promotional materials during and after the event. Additionally, the Commission was able to work with the CNE Air Show to have 30 second advertisement segments played over the loudspeaker during the show.

The Commission had the opportunity to meet with the True Patriot Love Foundation to discuss linkages and how the True Patriot Love Foundation could utilize some of their networks to assist with the Commission's outreach goals.

Commissioners took part in Remembrance Day ceremonies in their local communities. Additionally, the chair of the Commission laid a wreath, from the Soldiers' Aid Commission, during Ontario's Remembrance Day ceremony at Queen's Park.

Virtual meetings were held with senior staff within the Military Family Resource Centres in Ontario to learn more about their programs and how they can potentially utilize the Commission's support to assist newly release Veterans and their families as they transition back to civilian life.

A new chair (Philip ten Kortenaar) was formally appointed to the Commission in January 2023. As part of the transition process the new chair is reviewing how best to work on program outreach with the goal of reaching a wider network of Veterans and Veteran based organizations in fiscal year 2023-24. The continued goal of the Commission is to work on increasing overall program uptake to assist more Veterans and their families.

The Commission has made a commitment to ensure applications are reviewed and a decision is made in a timely manner to allow for quicker overall turnaround times to better assist an applicant in getting the funding they need in a more expeditious manner. Applications are reviewed when received and may be processed outside of formal meeting times.

The Commission will continue to engage and increase awareness of the program via other Veteran support organisations. This includes actively engaging with groups such as Wounded Warriors, Helmets to Hard Hats, CF Military Transition teams and other military associations. The goal is to make these programs aware of the benefit of SAC and how it can help a Veteran or their immediate family.

APPENDIX 1– Total Disbursements

2022-2023 APPLICATIONS RECEIVED/FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED

Month	Applications Received	# Declined	# Approved	Financial Assistance Provided
Apr – 2022	1	0	1	\$2000.00
May – 2022	1	0	1	\$2000.00
Jun – 2022	2	0	2	\$3,522.00
Jul – 2022	1	0	1	\$2,000.00
Aug – 2022	8	0	8	\$12,559.00
Sep – 2022	0	0	0	\$0
Oct – 2022	0	0	0	\$0
Nov – 2022	3	0	3	\$5,700.00
Dec – 2022	2	0	2	\$4000.00
Jan – 2023	2	1	1	\$2000.00
Feb – 2023	2	0	2	\$3500.00
Mar – 2023	0	0	0	\$0
TOTAL	22	1	21	\$37,281.00*

2021-2022 Disbursement

TOTAL	31	0	30	\$47,331.67
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APPENDIX 2 -Other Expenses

Types of Expenses	Total
Bank Service Charges	\$79.80
Total Other Expenses	\$79.80

* This does not include costs managed by the Developmental Services and Supports Branch budget including travel and meal (commissioner expenses) or operating costs (e.g., IT, mail and communication material costs).