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**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY  
TAMPA, FLORIDA 33601**

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**SUBJECT:** **BOARD POLICY – SECTION NUMBER: 10.05.00.00  
Active Military Combat Duty and Veterans  
Disability Grant**

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** **March 18, 2009**

**SUPERSEDES:** **10.05.00.00 Policy Regarding Active Military Combat Duty and  
Veterans Disability Grant Adopted October 18, 2006**

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**Purpose:**

To provide financial grants to United States Armed Forces active duty uniformed military members who serve in combat, disabled veterans, and the surviving spouses of military members killed during combat duty whose primary residence is homestead exempt property located in Hillsborough County, as provided in this Policy, in order to assist them in the maintenance and support of their families.

**Policy:**

- I. It is the policy of the Board of County Commissioners that Qualified Military Members, as defined below, who satisfy the requirements of the Active Military Combat Duty Grant (the “Combat Duty Grant”) and this Policy be provided with a financial grant, as described in paragraph 2 below.
- II. It is the further policy of the Board of County Commissioners that, effective January 1, 2006, Qualified Disabled Veterans, as defined below, who satisfy the requirements of the Veterans Disability Grant and this Policy, be provided with a financial grant, as described in paragraph 3 below.
- III. It is the further policy of the Board of County Commissioners that Qualified Surviving Spouses, as defined below, be eligible to apply for the Combat Duty Grant for a maximum period of five consecutive Grant Years, as provided below.

## 1. Definitions

A. Active Military Combat Duty or Combat Duty. Active Military Combat Duty or Combat Duty means military personnel serving in an active, uniformed capacity, including but not limited to Active Duty Personnel, Reservists and National Guard Personnel, in a combat zone for a named United States military conflict. A combat zone is any area the President of the United States designates by Executive Order as an area in which the United States Armed Forces are engaging or have engaged in combat.

B. Grant Year. A Grant Year shall be a calendar year. Calendar year means the yearly period January through December.

C. Homestead Exemption. Homestead Exemption means the exemption from taxation provided in Section 6 (a), Article VII of the Constitution of the State of Florida.

D. Property Taxes. Property Taxes means all ad valorem taxes paid on the Qualifying Property, as defined in paragraph 1.G. below, by the individual applicant during the Grant Year for which a Combat Duty Grant or Veterans Disability Grant application has been filed, including those for schools, and other special taxing districts. This term specifically excludes non - ad valorem assessments included on the property tax bill however characterized or displayed.

E. Proof of Combat Duty Service. Proof of Combat Duty service may include the following: a copy of the appropriate Leave and Earning Statement, a copy of DD Form 214 or equivalent document, copy of official orders specifying actual dates of service accompanied by a copy of paid travel vouchers, letter from the respective unit commander or personnel office stating the active duty period, or similar documentation required by rules established by the Hillsborough County Veterans Affairs Office.

F. Qualified Military Member. Qualified Military Member means a Hillsborough County resident who, for the respective Grant Year for which his or her Combat Duty Application is received: (i) owned or resided in Qualifying Property, as defined in paragraph 1.G. below; (ii)

paid Property Taxes, as defined in paragraph 1.D. above; and (iii) served for an aggregate of forty-five (45) days of Combat Duty, as defined in paragraph 1.A. above, during the respective Grant Year for which the application is received. Notwithstanding the foregoing, when a uniformed military member is injured or dies during Combat Duty, such uniformed military member shall be considered a Qualified Military Member for purposes of this Policy even if only one day of Combat Duty service is performed by such injured or deceased uniformed military member during any respective Grant Year. In addition, uniformed military members who are unable to complete the full forty-five (45) days of Combat Duty service during a calendar year by such year's end, but who complete the forty-five (45) day period in the following calendar year, shall be considered a Qualified Military Member either in the earlier calendar year or the later calendar year, if a total of forty-five (45) aggregate days of Combat Duty are completed by such uniformed military member over such consecutive two-year period. If the uniformed military member serves more than forty-five (45) days in the later calendar year, then the applicant shall be considered a Qualified Military Member in both calendar years.

G. Qualifying Property. For the 2005, 2008, and subsequent Grant Years, Qualifying Property means, for the Combat Duty Grant and the Disabled Veterans Grant, if applicable, the primary residence of the applicant located anywhere in Hillsborough County upon which a homestead exemption has been granted as of January 1 of the respective Grant Year for which application is made. For the 2006 and 2007 Grant Years, for the Combat Duty Grant and the Disabled Veterans Grant, Qualifying Property means the primary residence of the applicant located in unincorporated Hillsborough County only upon which a homestead exemption has been granted as of January 1 of the respective Grant Year for which application is made.

H. Veterans Affairs Office. The Hillsborough County Veterans Affairs Office which has been charged by the Board of County Commissioners with the administration of the Combat Duty Grant and the Disabled Veterans Grant.

I. Qualified Disabled Veteran. Any Hillsborough County resident who meets all of the following criteria: (i) served at least one day of Combat Duty, as defined and described in paragraph 1.A. above; (ii) owned or resided in Qualifying Property, as defined in paragraph 1.G. above, at the time of the occurrence of the event or condition which was the basis of an award to such person of U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Service Connected benefits for Combat Duty; (iii) for the respective Grant Year for which the application is received, owned or resided in Qualifying Property, as defined in paragraph 1.G. above and paid Property Taxes, as defined in paragraph 1.D. above, on such Qualifying Property; and (iv) at the time of his or her Disabled Veterans Grant application (initial and subsequent) is receiving U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Service Connected benefits for Combat Duty performed during the Grant Year for which the Disabled Veterans Grant application is received.

J. Qualified Surviving Spouse. Qualified Surviving Spouse means a Hillsborough County resident who is the un-remarried surviving spouse of a deceased Qualified Military Member who (i) has not remarried at either the time of submission of such spouse's application for the Combat Duty Grant or at the time of Combat Duty Grant award; (ii) for the Grant Year for which the Combat Duty Grant application is being submitted, owned or resided in Qualifying Property, as defined in paragraph 1.G. above, and paid Property Taxes, as defined in paragraph 1.D. above, on such Qualifying Property; (iii) provides documentation sufficient to the Veterans Affairs Office evidencing that he or she was married to the deceased Qualified Military Member at the time of such person's death; and (iv) provides documentation sufficient to the Veterans Affairs Office evidencing that he or she remains unmarried at both the time of submittal of the Combat Duty Grant application and at the time of the Combat Duty Grant award. Notwithstanding the foregoing, a surviving spouse of a deceased Qualified Military Member shall not qualify as a Qualified Surviving Spouse in, nor make application for, a Combat Duty Grant for any Grant Year for which a Combat Duty Grant or a Disabled Veterans

Grant was previously awarded to, or on behalf of, such spouse's deceased Qualified Military Member

## **2. Active Military Combat Duty Grant.**

A. The first year of the Combat Duty Grant shall be the 2005 tax year. The maximum amount awarded under the Combat Duty Grant per Grant Year for each approved applicant shall not exceed \$1,500 or the total amount of the applicant's Property Taxes, as defined in paragraph 1.D. above, paid by the applicant, whichever is less. Combat Duty Grants are subject to sufficient funds being appropriated by the Board of County Commissioners.

B. All applications for the Combat Duty Grant must be received by the Veterans Affairs Office no later than December 31, two years after the end of the respective Grant Year for which the application is being submitted. Waiver of the two-year application period may be granted by the Veterans Affairs Office, up to an additional twelve (12) months, under exceptional and extenuating circumstances, as determined by the Veterans Affairs Office, such as, injury, sickness, or emergency situations.

C. When a Qualified Military Member is killed during Combat Duty, such member's unremarried surviving spouse, may apply to receive an annual Combat Duty Grant, even if only one day of Combat Duty is performed by such military member, for up to a maximum of five consecutive Grant Years, inclusive of the first Grant Year an award was made to such surviving spouse, provided that the surviving spouse meets, and continues to meet, all of the criteria given above in paragraph 1.J. above for a Qualified Surviving Spouse; and satisfies and continues to satisfy the other requirements of the Combat Duty Grant and this Policy.

## **3. Veterans Disability Grant.**

A. The first year of the Veterans Disability Grant shall be for the 2006 tax year. The maximum amount of the Veteran's Disability Grant per Grant Year for each approved applicant shall not exceed \$1,500, or the total amount of the applicant's Property Taxes, as defined in 1.D. above,

paid by the applicant, whichever is less. The amount of the Grant to be awarded to an applicant for a Veterans Disability Grant who is determined to be a Qualified Disabled Veteran will be calculated by multiplying the Veterans Affairs Disability Rating Percentage (the "Disability Rating Percentage") ascribed to such applicant, as determined by the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs, times the lesser of \$1500, or the total amount of Property Taxes paid by the applicant on Qualifying Property for the Grant Year for which an application has been submitted. For example, if a Veterans Disability Grant applicant who has been assigned a Disability Rating Percentage of 10% has paid Property Taxes in excess of \$1500 in a Grant Year, the resulting Grant award to that applicant would be \$150 ( $\$1500 \times 10\% = \$150$ ), provided the applicant met all of the requirements of the Veterans Disability Grant and this Policy. Alternatively, if a Disabled Veterans Grant applicant who has been assigned a Disability Rating Percentage of 20% has paid Property Taxes of \$1410 in a Grant Year, the resulting Grant award to that applicant would be \$282 ( $\$1410 \times 20\% = \$282$ ), provided the applicant met all of the requirements of the Disabled Veterans Grant and this Policy. Qualifying Disabled Veterans may apply for an annual Veterans Disability Grant award for up to a maximum of five consecutive Grant Years, inclusive of the first Grant Year an award was made to such Qualified Disabled Veteran, provided that the Qualified Disabled Veteran meets and continues to meet all of the criteria in paragraph 1.I. above for a Qualified Disabled Veteran; and satisfies and continues to satisfy all of the other requirements of the Veterans Disability Grant and this Policy. Annual verification of disability status, Property Tax payments, and homestead exemption are required. Veterans Disability Grants are subject to sufficient funds being appropriated by the Board of County Commissioners.

B. All applications for the Disabled Veterans Grant must be received by the Veterans Affairs Office no later than December 31, two years after the end of the respective Grant Year for which the application is being submitted. Waiver of the two-year application period may be granted by the Veterans Affairs Office, up to an additional twelve (12) months, under

exceptional and extenuating circumstances, as determined by the Veterans Affairs Office, such as, injury, sickness, or emergency situations.

#### **4. Application Process.**

A. To apply for an Active Military Combat Duty Grant or a Veterans Disability Grant, the applicant, including but not limited to a Qualified Surviving Spouse, must complete and file with the Veterans Affairs Office a signed application for such a grant, on a form approved by the County Administrator. An applicant may file annually for the respective grant, up to the maximum time period allowed by this Policy. The applicant must provide the proper documentation of the following, as required by the Veterans Affairs Office, for each Grant Year for which an application is submitted:

- (1) Proof of Combat Duty service of a minimum of 45 days during the respective Grant Year, or as otherwise provided in paragraph 1.F. above.
- (2) Proof of Homestead Exemption and payment of Property Taxes by the applicant on the Qualifying Property for the respective Grant Year.
- (3) Federal tax documentation, as specified on the grant application form.
- (4) Copy of proof of marriage, if the uniformed military member died during Combat Duty and his or her un-remarried surviving spouse is filing the application and documentation sufficient to the Veterans Affairs Office evidencing that the surviving spouse remains unmarried at both the time of submittal of the Combat Duty Grant application and at the time of the Combat Duty Grant Award.
- (5) U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs Rating Decisions and other documentation as necessary to verify the appropriate service connected disability rating of the applicant.
- (6) Such other documentation as the Veterans Affairs Office may request or require.

B. If the Veterans Affairs Office is satisfied that an applicant and his or her application for a Combat Duty Grant or a Veterans Disability Grant satisfies all of the requirements for a

Combat Duty Grant or a Veterans Disability Grant, respectively, and this Policy, then such application shall be approved and the applicant shall be eligible to receive a grant as provided by this Policy.

C. If a uniformed military member is injured or dies during Combat Duty during any respective Grant Year and, because of such injury or death he or she is unable to file an application for the Combat Duty Grant or Veterans Disability Grant in person, then, in the event of the death of the uniformed military member, the un-remarried surviving spouse of the deceased military member may file the application for the Combat Duty Grant, if the deceased military member was married; or, if the military member is injured, but not deceased, then the Combat Duty Grant application or the Veterans Disability Grant application may be filed on the military member's behalf by the military member's spouse, if the military member is married, or if not married, then by the military member's next of kin, or by any other person the military member has authorized in writing to file such an application. The original written authorization by the uniformed military member permitting that person to file a grant application on behalf of the uniformed military member must be submitted along with the application.

D. The Veterans Affairs Office shall promulgate rules and regulations to implement this Policy.

## **5. No Duplication of Grant Awards**

Irrespective of eligibility, a person may be awarded only one of the following grants for the same Grant Year: an Active Military Combat Grant or a Veterans Disability Grant, administered through Veterans Affairs Office of the Hillsborough County Health and Social Services Department

**Responsibility:** It is the responsibility of the Health & Social Services Director, under the direction of the County Administrator, to implement this Policy.

Approved By: Board of County Commissioners  
Date: March 18, 2009