VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

HELLO.

Welcome to VA. Let's get started.

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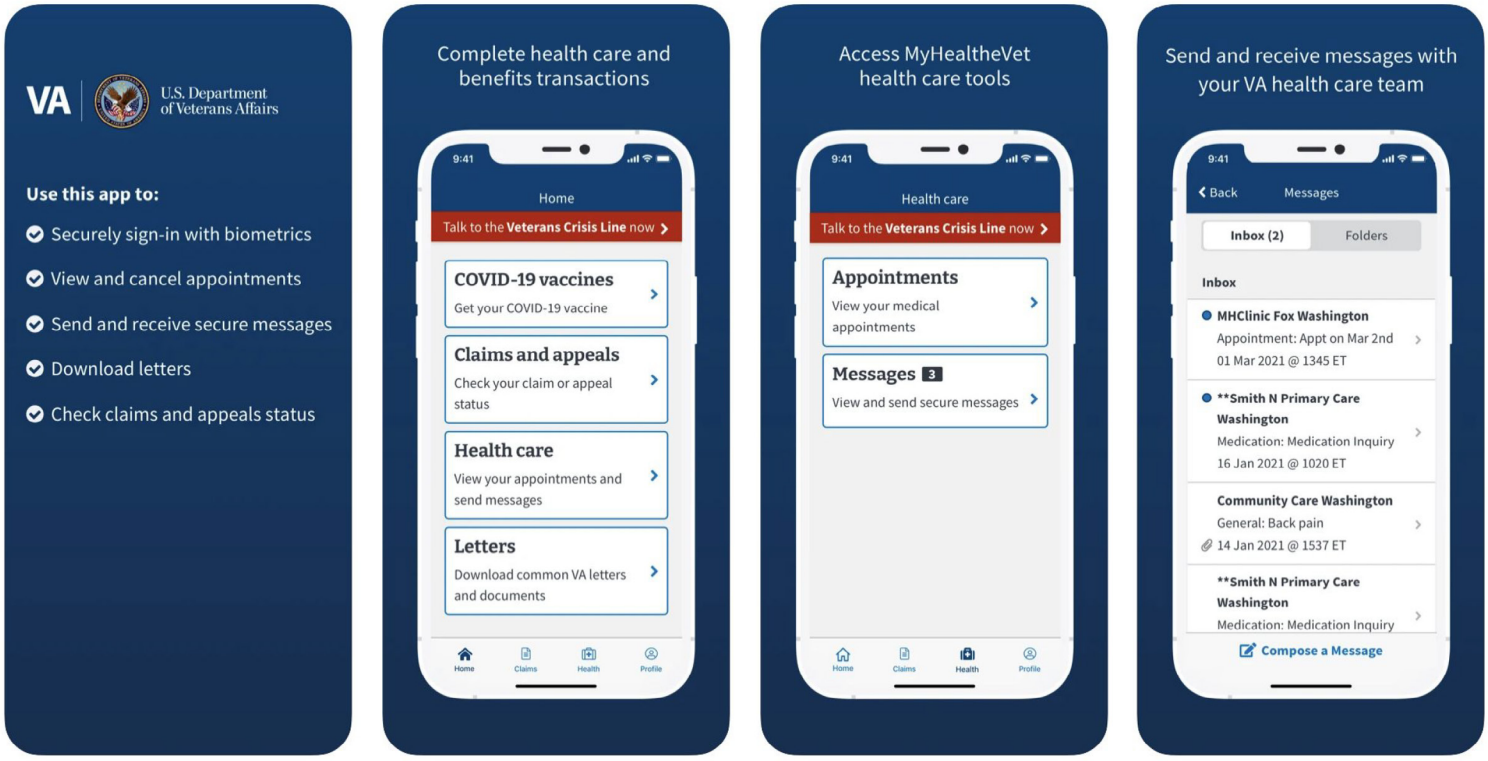
VERSION 7.0 – MAY 2026

VA: Health and Benefits Mobile App

An app to help Veterans quickly and easily manage their VA benefits and services

VA's app allows Veterans to check the status of their services and complete simple transactions across health and benefits.



Voices from Veterans

"Everything that I would go on there for is readily available, so I like it...VA.gov has changed and it's straightforward. This is giving me the same feeling."

"I love that I can manage my benefits on here. Thank you!"

"Easy to use, quick to access, great info right at your fingertips, and it looks great. Well done, VA. Thank you!"

"I love the sign-in options. The biometrics are a huge time saver."

Download on the App Store

GET IT ON Google Play

Key Features

Biometric login: Enable face, fingerprint, or iris biometrics as a more convenient method for authentication.

Profile: View and edit personal information, including disability rating, and direct deposit information for payment.

Claims and Appeals Status: View claim statuses and upload additional evidence if needed for some claims.

Facility Locator: Use phone location services to find the nearest VA facilities.

Appointments: View or cancel appointments, integrated with native phone features such as the calendar and map apps.

Veteran Crisis Line: Access the crisis line with SMS integration.

Secure Messaging: Communicate with your VA health providers directly through the app.

Learn what VA can do for you

VA can support you and your loved ones in different ways throughout your life. Your VA Welcome Guide provides a broad overview of services VA can offer you. To access more information about VA benefits and services, visit us at **https://www.va.gov**.

GET HELP FOR YOURSELF OR A FRIEND IMMEDIATELY

Call the **Veterans Crisis Line** at **988** and **press 1**, or refer to the emergency resources (page 16) to find additional support and access immediate care.

Health Care

- Basic and Specialty Care
- Mental Health Care
- Long-Term Care
- Crisis Support
- Well-Being Services

Finances

- Monthly Disability Payments
- Life Insurance
- Burial Allowances

Housing

- Home Loans
- Refinancing Options
- Adapted Housing Assistance

Employment

- Skills Training and Counseling
- Online Career Tools
- Hiring Events

Education

- GI Bill
- Training Programs

Memorialization

- Burial and Committal Services
- Headstones and Markers
- Burial Flags

More Support

Organizations outside of VA can help you find the support you need:

- Veterans Service Organizations
- Local Community Resources

Understand your eligibility

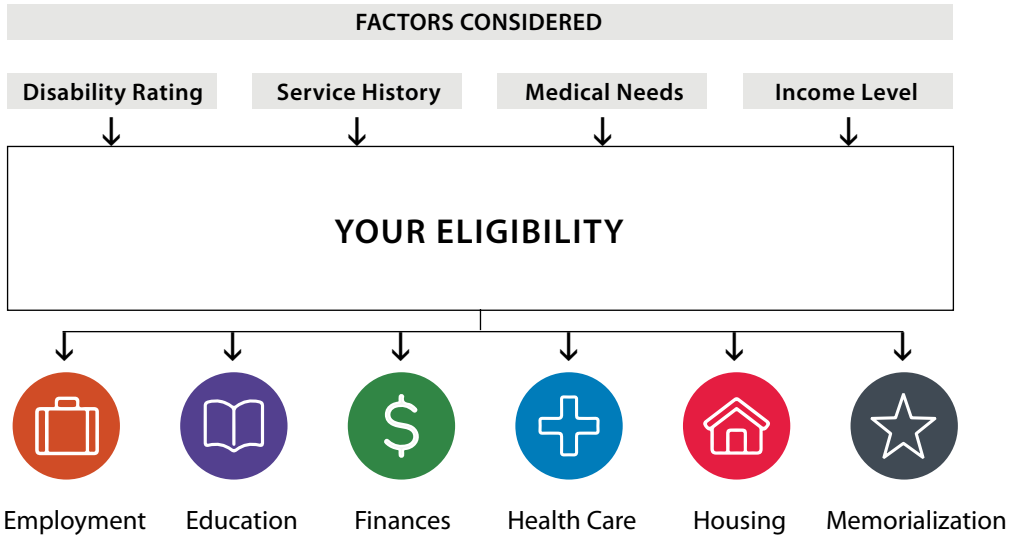
Access to VA benefits and services depends on your eligibility. Eligibility is determined using different factors based on the specific benefit. While a lot of information is used to determine your eligibility for benefits, **one critical factor may be your disability rating.**

What is eligibility?

VA uses "eligibility" to describe the benefits and services a Veteran can access. Each benefit you want to access may require a different set of eligilibilty factors. For example, you may be eligible for the GI Bill but not for enrollment in VA health care. If you are interested in a certain benefit, work with VA to determine your eligibility.

How is eligibility determined?

VA considers a different combination of factors for each benefit, which could include your **disability rating, service history, medical needs**, and **income level.**



Understand your Disability Rating

Your disability rating is one of several factors that affect your eligibility for benefits and services. **Your disability rating is important because there are a number of services available only to Veterans with a disability rating.**

What is a disability rating?

A disability rating is a **rating VA gives you to describe how much your service-connected disability impacts your daily life, particularly your ability to work**. A "service-connected" disability is an injury, disease, or condition that resulted from or was made worse during military service. **Disability ratings range from 0%–100%.** 0% means your disability does not affect your everyday life. Any rating, including a 0%, makes you eligible for certain services. While you might feel your condition is not serious, you should still consider applying for a rating.

How is a disability rating determined?

You must file a claim for disability. VA determines your rating based on the evidence you provide (which includes your medical records and DD214 and the severity of your condition.) Once your claim is processed, you will receive a disability rating. To find out more about filing a claim, call 800-827-1000 or visit **https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim**.

WHAT BENEFITS AND SERVICES CAN YOU ACCESS WITH A DISABILITY RATING?

Some benefits and services include:

- Disability Compensation
- Enrollment in VA health care
- Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E)
- Federal hiring preference
- VA Home Loan fee exemption
- Specially Adapted Housing Assistance

Visit the following link for a comprehensive list of VBA benefits and services, **https://www.benefits.va.gov/atoz/**.

WHERE CAN YOU GET IN-PERSON HELP?

You can receive help preparing your claim from a Veterans Service Organization (VSO). To find a VSO, visit **https://www.va.gov/get-help-from-accredited-representative/find-rep/** and search by state or zip code. You can also get help in-person at a VA Regional Office.

Find out where VA fits into your life

No two Veterans are the same. You might experience many of these important life moments in a different order. **Based on where you are in your life, VA can serve you in different orders.** Use this map to explore how VA can support you both now and in the future.

WHAT DO YOU NEED?

Health Care · Finances · Housing · Employment · Education · Memorialization · More Support

JOINING

ENLIST

SERVING

SEPARATE

VA can help you even before separation from the military

GETTING OUT

Engage VA to access benefits and services

Get a solid start by talking to VA representatives when they call during your first year post-separation

Transition your health care needs by meeting on-site or virtually with VA transition and care management at a VA medical center of your choice

Complete your paperwork

STARTING UP

Find something to do

Balance finances

Attend to your health and well-being needs

Find a place to live

Re-establish and create relationships

How can I use this map?

- Determine where you are in your journey.
- Review the benefit information related to your current stage.
- Read ahead to discover how VA may be able to support you in the future.

If you are interested in VA benefits, make sure to work with VA to determine your eligibility as soon as possible.

BUILDING YOUR CAREER

p11

- Translate your military skills
- Get the appropriate education skills and credentials
- Find the right job
- Build your professional reputation
- Build your local network

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

p10

- Recognize and address mental health issues
- Manage primary care and chronic health issues
- Seek support for a severe health event
- Maintain your health

PUTTING DOWN ROOTS

p12

- Revisit housing
- Maintain your health
- Take care of your family
- Save for your retirement and secure life insurance
- Connect with and serve your community

RETIRING

p13

- Find additional sources of income
- Take care of your health
- Participate in meaningful activities

AGING

p14

- Manage and maintain your health
- Adapt your support network to your new needs
- Decide how and where to be memorialized
- Schedule and plan a funeral service
- Seek survivor benefits
- Maintain social and community connections

Some ways VA can help you while you're...
GETTING OUT

WHAT IS YOUR GOAL?	WHAT CAN YOU DO?	WHAT SERVICES CAN VA PROVIDE?	VISIT US ONLINE	GIVE US A CALL	VISIT US IN PERSON
Engage VA to access benefits and services	**Get a Solid Start**	VA is calling every newly separated Service member three times during their first year of separation. Qualified VA representatives will be reaching out to help you better understand the benefits available to you and help you get a solid start on your civilian life.	Find out more: https://benefits.va.gov/benefits/solid-start.asp	Ask us a question: **MyVA411– 800-MyVA411 (800-698-2411)**	Locate facilities: https://www.va.gov/find-locations
	Transition your health care	**Transition and Case Management** Team members will help Post-9/11 Veterans navigate their way through the VA health care system	https://www.va.gov/post911veterans/	Health Care Line: **877-222-8387 (press 0)**	Transition and Care Team Locator: https://www.va.gov/post911veterans/
	Apply for enrollment in VA health care	**VA Health Care** Inpatient and outpatient health services at VA Medical Centers, clinics and potentially in the community	https://www.va.gov/health-care	Health Care Line: **877-222-8387 (press 1)**	Your local VA Medical Center
	Continue your education	**GI Bill** Helps pay for education for Veterans and/or their dependents	https://www.va.gov/education/about-gi-bill-benefits	Education Center: **888-442-4551** From Overseas: **001-918-781-5678**	Your VA Regional Office
	Obtain educational and career counseling	**Personalized Career Planning and Guidance** Receive personalized, professional planning and guidance to help you choose how to use your education benefits to support your career goals	https://www.va.gov/careers-employment/education-and-career-counseling	VA Benefits Line: **800-827-1000**	Your VA Regional Office
	Prepare to find a job	**Careers and Employment** Veterans with service-connected disabilities receive individualized support for their education, training, or credentialing needs for employment	https://www.va.gov/careers-employment	VA Benefits Line: **800-827-1000**	Your VA Regional Office for Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E)
	Become a homeowner	**VA Home Loans** VA can help you obtain a VA guaranteed loan	https://www.va.gov/housing-assistance/home-loans/	Regional Loan Center: **877-827-3702**	Your VA Regional Loan Center
	Apply for a disability rating	**Disability Compensation** Compensation paid to Veterans for a disability related to service	https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim	VA Benefits Line: **800-827-1000**	Your VA Regional Office
	Plan for your family's financial future	**VA Life Insurance** Life Insurance for service members, Veterans, and their families. Some benefits must be applied for shortly after separation	https://www.va.gov/life-insurance/	SGLI/VGLI: **800-419-1473** All Other VA Life Insurance: **800-669-8477**	Your VA Regional Office
	Apply for supplemental income	**Veterans Pension** Supplemental income available to low-income wartime Veterans	https://www.va.gov/pension	VA Benefits Line: **800-827-1000**	Your VA Regional Office
Complete your paperwork	**Request your service records and discharge papers**	Request military records, such as your DD214	https://www.va.gov/records/get-military-service-records/	National Personnel Records Center: **314-801-0800**	N/A

To find out more, visit us anytime online at **https://www.va.gov**, or ask us a question at **800-MyVA411** (800-698-2411).

WHAT DO YOU NEED?

Health Care · Finances · Housing · Employment · Education · Memorialization · More Support

Some ways VA can help you while you're…
STARTING UP

WHAT IS YOUR GOAL?	WHAT CAN YOU DO?	WHAT SERVICES CAN VA PROVIDE?	VISIT US ONLINE	GIVE US A CALL	VISIT US IN PERSON
Find something to do	**Continue your education**	**GI Bill** Helps pay for education for Veterans and/or their dependents	https://www.va.gov/education/about-gi-bill-benefits	Education Center: **888-442-4551** From Overseas: **001-918-781-5678**	Your VA Regional Office
	Obtain educational and career counseling	**Personalized Career Planning and Guidance** Receive personalized, professional planning and guidance to help you choose how to use your education benefits to support your career goals	https://www.va.gov/careers-employment/education-and-career-counseling	VA Benefits Line: **800-827-1000**	Your VA Regional Office
	Get help finding a job	**Careers and Employment** Veterans with service-connected disabilities receive individualized support for their education, training, or credentialing needs for employment	https://www.va.gov/careers-employment	VA Benefits Line: **800-827-1000**	Your VA Regional Office for Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E)
Balance your finances	**Apply for a disability rating**	**Disability Compensation** Compensation paid to Veterans for a disability related to service	https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim	VA Benefits Line: **800-827-1000**	Your VA Regional Office
Attend to your health and well-being	**Apply for enrollment in VA Health Care**	**VA Health Care** Inpatient and outpatient health services at VA Medical Centers, clinics and potentially in the community	https://www.va.gov/health-care	Health Care Line: **877-222-8387** **(press 1)**	Your local VA Medical Center
	Seek help for mental health needs	**Mental Health Care** Inpatient and outpatient mental health services	https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/get-help/	Health Care Line: **877-222-8387** **(press 0)**	Your local VA Medical Center or Vet Center
Find a place to live	**Become a homeowner**	**VA Home Loans** VA can help you obtain a VA guaranteed loan	https://www.va.gov/housing-assistance/home-loans/	Regional Loan Center: **877-827-3702**	Your VA Regional Loan Center
	Housing to accommodate your disability	**Specially Adapted Housing Assistance** Financial help for certain Veterans to acquire or adapt a home made necessary by certain service-connected disabilities	https://www.va.gov/housing-assistance/#get-veterans-housing-assistance-grants	VA Benefits Line: **800-827-1000**	Your VA Regional Office
Re-establish and create relationships	**Meet Veterans and people who can help**	**Veterans Service Organizations (VSO)** Variety of services and community opportunities for Veterans and their loved ones	Find a VSO near you: https://www.va.gov/get-help-from-accredited-representative/find-rep/	N/A	N/A

To find out more, visit us anytime online at **https://www.va.gov**, or ask us a question at **800-MyVA411** (800-698-2411).

Some ways VA can help you while you're…
TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

WHAT IS YOUR GOAL?	WHAT CAN YOU DO?	WHAT SERVICES CAN VA PROVIDE?	VISIT US ONLINE	GIVE US A CALL	VISIT US IN PERSON
Recognize and address mental health needs	**Address mental health needs**	**Mental Health Care** Inpatient and outpatient mental health services	https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/get-help/	Health Care Line: **877-222-8387** **(press 0)**	Your local VA Medical Center or Vet Center
	Use counseling services	**Vet Center** Counseling, outreach, and referral services to eligible service members, Veterans, and their families	https://www.vetcenter.va.gov	Vet Center Line: **877-927-8387**	Your VA Regional Office
	Maintain your health and well-being	**Well-Being Services** Maintain your whole health and well-being by participating in self-care, peer-led groups, and other well-being services such as Yoga, Tai Chi, Mindfulness, and Acupuncture.	https://www.va.gov/wholehealth	Health Care Line: **877-222-8387** **(press 0)**	Your local VA Medical Center
Manage primary care and chronic health issues	**Get regular medical care**	**VA Health Care** Inpatient and outpatient health services at VA Medical Centers, clinics and potentially in the community	https://www.va.gov/health-care	Health Care Line: **877-222-8387** **(press 0)**	Your local VA Medical Center
	Potentially visit a doctor in your community	**Community Care** Covered access to non-VA health care	https:/www.va.gov/communitycare	Community Care National Contact Center: **877-881-7618**	Your local VA Medical Center
Seek support for a severe health event	**Get help with an urgent medical need**	**Urgent Care** For urgent health events (examples: colds, sore throat, ankle sprain)	https://www.va.gov/resources/getting-urgent-care-at-va-or-in-network-community-providers/	MyVA411: **800-myVA411** **(800-698-2411)**	Your VA Regional Loan Center
	Get help in an emergency	**Emergency Care** Emergency medical care at your local VA Medical Center with an Emergency Department (examples: chest pain or stroke symptoms)	https://www.va.gov/resources/getting-emergency-care-at-non-va-facilities/	Health Care Line: **877-222-8387** **(press 0)**	Your local VA Medical Center
Maintain your health	**Get regular checkups**	**Preventive Care** Services such as vaccinations and health screenings to help you stay healthy	https://www.prevention.va.gov/	Health Care Line: **877-222-8387** **(press 0)**	Your local VA Medical Center
	Get woman-specific care	**Women Veterans Health Care** Women-specific health care	https://www.womenshealth.va.gov/	Women's Health Care Line: **855-829-6636**	Your local VA Medical Center
	Keep track of your health	**My HealtheVet** Online tool to make health decisions and manage care	https://www.va.gov/health-care/manage-health/	My HealtheVet Help Desk: **877-327-0022**	Your local VA Medical Center

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Some ways VA can help you while you're…
BUILDING YOUR CAREER

WHAT IS YOUR GOAL?	WHAT CAN YOU DO?	WHAT SERVICES CAN VA PROVIDE?	VISIT US ONLINE	GIVE US A CALL	VISIT US IN PERSON
Translate your military skills	**Put your military skills to use**	**Careers and Employment** Receive personalized, professional planning and guidance to help you choose how to use your education benefits to support your career goals	https://www.va.gov/careers-employment	VA Benefits Line: **800-827-1000**	Your VA Regional Office
Get the appropriate education, skills, and credentials	**Continue your education**	**GI Bill** Helps pay for education for Veterans and/or their dependents	https://www.va.gov/education/about-gi-bill-benefits	Education Center: **888-442-4551** From Overseas: **001-918-781-5678**	Your VA Regional Office
	Obtain educational and career counseling	**Personalized Career Planning and Guidance** Receive personalized, professional planning and guidance to help you choose how to use your education benefits to support your career goals	https://www.va.gov/careers-employment/education-and-career-counseling	VA Benefits Line: **800-827-1000**	Your VA Regional Office
	Get help finding a job that suits your disability	**Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E)** Veterans with service-connected disabilities receive individualized support for their education, training, or credentialing needs for employment	https://www.va.gov/careers-employment/vocational-rehabilitation/	VA Benefits Line: **800-827-1000**	Your VA Regional Office
Find the right job	**Explore your job options**	**Careers and Employment** Personalized career planning, guidance, and hiring events	https://www.va.gov/careers-employment	N/A	N/A
	Consider working for the federal government	**Veterans' Preference** Gives Veterans an advantage in the application process for federal government jobs	https://www.va.gov/careers-employment	VA Benefits Line: **800-827-1000**	Your VA Regional Office
Build your professional reputation	**Compete for federal contracts**	**Veteran-Owned Small Business Program (VOSB)** Helps Veteran-owned small businesses compete for federal contracts set aside for VOSBs	https://www.va.gov/osdbu/	Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization: **866-584-2344** **(press 1)**	Meet with a Verification Assistance Counselor in your area
Build your local network	**Connect with other Veterans**	**Veterans Service Organizations (VSO)** Variety of services and community opportunities for Veterans and their loved ones	Find a VSO near you: https://www.va.gov/get-help-from-accredited-representative/find-rep/	N/A	N/A

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Some ways VA can help you while you're…
PUTTING DOWN ROOTS

WHAT IS YOUR GOAL?	WHAT CAN YOU DO?	WHAT SERVICES CAN VA PROVIDE?	VISIT US ONLINE	GIVE US A CALL	VISIT US IN PERSON
Revisit housing	**Become a homeowner**	**VA Home Loans** VA can help you obtain a VA guaranteed loan	https://www.va.gov/housing-assistance/home-loans/	Regional Loan Center: **877-827-3702**	Your VA Regional Loan Center
	Refinance existing home loans	**VA Refinance Loans** Refinance loan benefits can allow for refinancing of existing home loan	https://www.va.gov/housing-assistance/home-loans/	Regional Loan Center: **877-827-3702**	Your VA Regional Loan Center
Maintain your health	**Address mental health needs**	**Mental Health Care** Inpatient and outpatient mental health services	https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/get-help/	Health Care Line: **877-222-8387 (press 0)**	Your local VA Medical Center or Vet Center
	Improve your well-being	**Well-Being Services** Maintain your whole health and well-being by participating in self-care, peer-led groups, and other well-being services such as Yoga, Tai Chi, Mindfulness, and Acupuncture.	https://www.va.gov/wholehealth/	Health Care Line: **877-222-8387 (press 0)**	Your local VA Medical Center or Vet Center
	Assistance with social work needs	**Social Work** Helps with housing, income, social, and emotional needs	https://www.socialwork.va.gov/	Health Care Line: **877-222-8387 (press 0)**	Your local VA Medical Center
Take care of your family	**Apply for VA educational benefits**	**GI Bill** Helps pay for education for Veterans and/or their dependents	https://www.va.gov/education/about-gi-bill-benefits	Education Center: **888-442-4551** From Overseas: **001-918-781-5678**	Your VA Regional Office
	Obtain educational and career counseling	**Personalized Career Planning and Guidance** Receive personalized, professional planning and guidance to help you choose how to use your education benefits to support your career goals	https://www.va.gov/careers-employment/education-and-career-counseling	VA Benefits Line: **800-827-1000**	Your VA Regional Office
Save for your retirement	**Apply for supplemental income**	**Veterans' Pension** Supplemental income available to low-income wartime Veterans	https://www.va.gov/pension/	VA Benefits Line: **800-827-1000**	Your VA Regional Office
Connect with and serve your community	**Meet and serve fellow Veterans**	**Veterans Service Organizations (VSO)** Variety of services and community opportunities for Veterans and their loved ones	Find a VSO near you: https://www.va.gov/get-help-from-accredited-representative/find-rep/	N/A	N/A

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Some ways VA can help you while you're…
RETIRING

WHAT IS YOUR GOAL?	WHAT CAN YOU DO?	WHAT SERVICES CAN VA PROVIDE?	VISIT US ONLINE	GIVE US A CALL	VISIT US IN PERSON
Receive income for disabilities	**Apply for a disability rating**	**Disability Compensation** Compensation paid to Veterans for a disability related to service	https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim	VA Benefits Line: **800-827-1000**	Your VA Regional Office
Assess need for life insurance	**Apply for VA insurance coverage**	**VA Life Insurance** Offers financial security for service members, their spouses, and dependent children, as well as Veterans	https://www.va.gov/life-insurance/	SGLI/VGLI: **800-419-1473** All Other VA Life Insurance: **800-669-8477**	Your VA Regional Office
Take care of your health	**Get regular medical care**	**VA Health Care** Inpatient and outpatient health services at VA Medical Centers, clinics, and potentially in the community	https://www.va.gov/health-care	Health Care Line: **877-222-8387** **(press 0)**	Your local VA Medical Center
	Address hearing needs	**Audiology** Care for hearing aids and/or other hearing assistive devices for Veterans	https://www.prosthetics.va.gov/psas/Hearing_aids.asp	Health Care Line: **877-222-8387** **(press 0)**	Your local VA Medical Center
	Address vision needs	**Optometry and Blind Rehabilitation** Rehabilitation services for blind and low-vision Veterans	https://www.va.gov/optometry/ or https://www.prosthetics.va.gov/blindrehab/index.asp	Health Care Line: **877-222-8387** **(press 0)**	Your local VA Medical Center or Blind Rehabilitation Center
Participate in meaningful activities	**Volunteer in your community**	**Veterans Service Organizations (VSO)** Variety of services and community opportunities for Veterans and their loved ones	Find a VSO near you: https://www.va.gov/get-help-from-accredited-representative/find-rep/	N/A	N/A

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Some ways VA can help you while you're…
AGING

WHAT IS YOUR GOAL?	WHAT CAN YOU DO?	WHAT SERVICES CAN VA PROVIDE?	VISIT US ONLINE	GIVE US A CALL	VISIT US IN PERSON
Update your life insurance benefit	**Make sure you have updated your beneficiaries**	**VA Life Insurance** Offers financial security for service members, their spouses, and dependent children, as well as Veterans	https://www.va.gov/life-insurance/	SGLI/VGLI: **800-419-1473** All Other VA Life Insurance: **800-669-8477**	Your VA Regional Office
Manage and maintain your health	**Get regular medical care**	**VA Health Care** Inpatient and outpatient health services at VA Medical Centers, clinics, and potentially in the community	https://www.va.gov/health-care	Health Care Line: **877-222-8387** **(press 0)**	Your local VA Medical Center
	Seek long-term care for later in life	**Geriatric and Extended Care** Veterans who need care and are unable to remain in their home may be eligible for hospice care or nursing home care	https://www.va.gov/geriatrics/	Health Care Line: **877-222-8387** **(press 0)**	Your local VA Medical Center
	Seek assistance with advance directives	**Social Work** Assists with Advance Directives so you can decide what actions should be taken if you are no longer able to make decisions for yourself due to illness or incapacity	https://www.va.gov/GERIATRICS/pages/advance_care_planning_topics.asp	Health Care Line: **877-222-8387** **(press 0)**	Your local VA Medical Center
Adapt support network to your new needs	**Seek in-home support**	**Home and Community Based Services** At home support services are available to assist Veterans with remaining at home, such as skilled home care, homemaker/home health aide, adult day care, and more	https://www.va.gov/geriatrics/pages/Home_and_community_based_services.asp	Health Care Line: **877-222-8387** **(press 0)**	Your local VA Medical Center
	Get financial support for daily medical assistance	**Aid and Attendance and Housebound Benefit** Payments for Veterans who are housebound or require the aid of another person in daily life	https://www.va.gov/pension/aid-attendance-housebound/	VA Benefits Line: **800-827-1000**	Your VA Regional Office
Make burial arrangements	**Decide how and where to be memorialized**	**Burial Benefits** Apply for pre-need determination eligibility Schedule and plan funeral and burial arrangements	https://www.cem.va.gov https://www.va.gov/find-forms/about-form-40-10007/	NCA Scheduling Office: **800-535-1117** Email: **nca.scheduling@va.gov**	Your nearest VA National Cemetery
Finance your burial	**Get financial assistance for burial services**	**Burial Allowance** Financial assistance for funeral and burial services	https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/veterans-burial-allowance/	VA Benefits Line: **800-827-1000**	Your VA Regional Office
Seek survivor benefits	**Talk about the future with loved ones**	**Survivor's Benefit** Various benefits available to the survivors of a deceased Veteran	https://www.va.gov/family-and-caregiver-benefits/	VA Benefits Line: **800-827-1000**	Your VA Regional Office
Maintain social and community connections	**Engage with fellow Veterans and people who can help**	**Veterans Service Organizations (VSO)** Variety of services and community opportunities for Veterans and their loved ones	Find a VSO near you: https://www.va.gov/get-help-from-accredited-representative/find-rep/	N/A	N/A

To find out more, visit us anytime online at **https://www.va.gov**, or ask us a question at **800-MyVA411** (800-698-2411).

Get started today

Use the checklist below to get started accessing the VA benefits and services you deserve.

1

RESEARCH

□ Identify VA services that can meet your goals

□ **Prioritize time-sensitive benefits**

□ Work with VA to **identify which benefits and services you and your loved ones might be eligible for**:

- → **Visit** https://www.va.gov
- → **Call** myVA411 at 800-698-2411 to speak with a VA representative.
- → **Talk** with a member of a Veterans Service Organization (VSO)

2

PREPARE

□ Prioritize which benefits you want to pursue **now.**

□ Consider applying for a disability rating:

- → **Visit** https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim to learn more

□ Get a copy of your **discharge papers.**

□ Collect other information as necessary, which may include:

- → **Military personnel records**
- → **Orders** (if activated from the Guard or Reserves)
- → **Military and private medical records**
- → Your most recent **tax return**

3

APPLY

□ Complete the form for the service you want to apply for:

- → **Online** at https://www.va.gov
- → **In-Person** or **by mail** to your VA Regional Office (https://www.va.gov/find-locations)

4

REVISIT

□ Check back over time as your needs change. For example, you could:

- → **Apply for a higher disability rating** if your disability gets worse.
- → **Apply for a VA Pension** when you are 65 or receiving home care.
- → **Decide where and how to be memorialized** using burial benefit.

WHICH BENEFITS ARE TIME SENSITIVE?

- **Dental Care**
  (180 days post-separation for certain dental care)
- **Life Insurance**
  (240 days from date of separation to apply for Veteran's Group Life Insurance (VGLI) without proof of good health)

  (1 year and 120 days from separation to apply for VGLI with proof of good health)

  (2 years from date of separation to apply for Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) Disability Extension)

  (2 years from date of notification for a new service-connected condition for Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance (S-DVI)

  (Before age 70 for Veteran's Mortgage Life Insurance (VMLI)
- **VA Health Care for recent Combat Veterans**
  (5 years post-separation)
- **Montgomery GI Bill**
  (10 years post-separation)
- **Post 9/11 GI Bill (Forever GI Bill)**
  (15 years post-separation if last discharged prior to January 1, 2013. Forever GI Bill now means that qualifying Veterans discharged after that date have lifetime benefits for their Post 9/11 GI Bill)
- **Veteran Readiness & Employment (VR&E)**
  (12 years since receiving your disability rating post-separation, though there are exceptions. If you are interested in VR&E, make sure to work with VA to determine your eligibility as soon as possible)

WHAT DOES A VSO DO?

Representatives from Veterans Service Organizations may offer free help to Veterans applying for VA benefits. Go to **https://www.va.gov/get-help-from-accredited-representative/** for more information.

WHAT ARE DISCHARGE PAPERS?

Your discharge papers–also known as your DD214–are the most important documents to keep. They are necessary to get access to VA benefits. **Request yours** at **https://www.va.gov/records/get-military-service-records/**.

Get help right now

Contact the resources below to get immediate help for yourself or a friend. These resources are designed to support Veterans during difficult times.

WHAT SERVICES CAN VA PROVIDE?	VISIT US ONLINE	GIVE US A CALL
Veterans Crisis Line	https://www.veteranscrisisline.net Click "chat or chat online".	Call **988,** then **press 1** Text **838255** 24 hours a day/ 7 days a week
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	https://www.va.gov/health-care Click "VA mental health services", then "talk to the Veterans Crisis Line now".	Call **988,** Text **988,** or Chat 24 hours a day/ 7 days a week
Military Sexual Trauma Support VA offers cost-free counseling services for Military Sexual Trauma (MST) survivors. You don't have to be enrolled in VA health care to access MST services.	Find a Medical Center or Vet Center https://www.va.gov/find-locations	Call your local Medical Center or Vet Center. At Medical Centers, ask to speak to the MST coordinator.
National Call Center for Homeless Veterans	https://www.veteranscrisisline.net Click "chat now".	**877-424-3838** 24 hours a day/ 7 days a week
Women Veterans Call Center	https://www.womenshealth.va.gov/ Click "live chat".	Call or Text: **855-VA-WOMEN (855-829-6636)** M-F, 8AM–10PM EST Sat, 8AM–6:30PM EST
Intimate Partner Violence Assistance Program Coordinators can assist Veterans and intimate partners who seek safe, healthy relationships.	https://www.socialwork.va.gov/IPV/	National Domestic Violence Hotline: **800-799-SAFE (7233)**
VA Caregiver Support Line	https://www.caregiver.va.gov/	**855-260-3274** M-F, 8AM–8PM EST

WHERE CAN I FIND IN-PERSON HELP?

To locate your nearest VA Medical Facility, VA Regional Office, Regional Loan Center, Vet Center, National Cemetery, and other facilities, visit https://www.va.gov/find-locations.

HEAR FROM OTHER VETERANS

To hear stories from Veterans who sought help, visit https://maketheconnection.net.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SERVING YOU.

Can't find what you need?

To access a complete list of VA benefits and services:

VISIT US ONLINE	https://www.va.gov
GIVE US A CALL	MyVA411: 800-698-2411
VISIT US IN PERSON	Visit your local VA Medical Center or VA Regional Office
ONLINE GUIDE	https://www.va.gov/welcome-kit

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Apply for VA Health Care

This guide will help you apply for VA health care, which includes regular checkups, prescriptions, and access to specialists, such as cardiologists, gynecologists, and mental health providers.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

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A checklist to help you apply for VA health care:

1 PREPARATION

☐ Collect the following information:

- ☐ **Discharge papers** (**DD214 member-4** or equivalent)
- ☐ Your most recent **tax return**
- ☐ **Social security numbers** for yourself and your dependents
- ☐ **Account numbers** for insurance programs you are enrolled in
- ☐ Your **VA Disability Rating Decision** (if applicable)

2 APPLICATION

☐ **Apply** by completing the health care application form (VA Form 10-10EZ) in one of these ways:

- → Visit us **online** at https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application.
- → Give us a **call** at **877-222-8387 (press 1)**; M–F, 8AM–8PM EST.
- → Visit us **in-person** at a VA Medical Center.
- → Print out and **mail** the completed form to:
  Health Eligibility Center, Enrollment and Eligibility Division, P.O. Box 5207, Janesville, WI 53547-5207

3 REVIEW AND DECISION

☐ **Call 877-222-8387 (press 0)** if you haven't heard back from VA more than one week after you've submitted your application.

4 NEXT STEPS

If approved, take steps to access the benefits you are eligible for:

- ☐ **Review priority group assignment** and personalized benefit handbook mailed by VA after enrollment.
- ☐ Contact your local VA Medical Center to **set up an appointment.**
- ☐ Make an appointment to obtain your **Veterans Health Identification Card (VHIC).**

WHERE CAN I FIND MY DISCHARGE PAPERS?

Visit https://www.va.gov/records/get-military-service-records to request a copy of your DD214.

HOW WILL I FIND OUT ABOUT VA'S DECISION?

If **accepted**, you'll receive a phone call from VA and a personalized benefits handbook in the mail. If **denied**, you'll receive a letter indicating the reason.

WHAT ARE PRIORITY GROUPS?

During enrollment, each Veteran is assigned to one of eight priority groups based on different factors. Your priority group may affect how much (if anything) you will need to pay for those services.

WHAT IS A VHIC?

A **VHIC** is a photo ID that will give you access to VA Health Care facilities. You can get a VHIC by making an appointment with your local VA Medical Center.

Information you'll need to know to access VA Health Care:

Am I eligible for VA Health Care?

Eligibility for VA Health Care depends on a number of factors:

- VA has rated you for a service-connected disability.
- You received a Purple Heart or are a former Prisoner of War.
- You are a combat Veteran who separated within the last 5 years.
- You are eligible for Medicaid benefits.
- Your family income is below the income threshold.
- You served in Vietnam, Southwest Asia during the Gulf War, or Camp Lejeune during certain periods of time.

Note: **Not all Veterans are eligible for VA Health Care. Work with VA to determine your eligibility as soon as possible.**

What does it mean to be assigned to a priority group?

If you are eligible to enroll in VA Health Care, you will be assigned to a priority group based on your eligibility. **Your health care eligibility determines what type of VA Health Care services you can access and how much you will need to pay for those services.**

How do I schedule my first appointment?

- **On your health care application**, you can ask VA to call you to schedule your first appointment.
- **Call** your local VA Medical Center to schedule an appointment.

What if I live far away or can't get an appointment?

VA provides health care for Veterans from providers in your local community outside of VA. Veterans may be eligible to receive care from a community provider when VA cannot provide the care needed. This care is provided on behalf of and paid for by VA. Community care is available to Veterans based on certain conditions and eligibility requirements, and in consideration of a Veteran's specific needs and circumstances. Community care must generally be authorized by VA before a Veteran can receive care from a community provider.

- **Visit** https://www.va.gov/communitycare/ to learn more.

Will I be covered for emergency care?

The most important thing in an emergency is to get to the nearest hospital or emergency department. If this is a VA hospital, you may be covered based on priority group eligibility. VA is continuously reviewing and increasing appropriate services to cover, however, will only pay for emergency care at non-VA facilities **under certain circumstances**.

- After receiving emergency care at a non-VA facility, **call VA immediately** to understand what VA services may be covered.

Where is my nearest VA Medical Center:

- To locate **your nearest VA facility**, visit https://www.va.gov/find-locations.

OTHER QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

What are my health care options for myself and my family?

VA Health Care is one of many health care options Veterans may have, including TRICARE, Medicare/Medicaid, and private insurance plans. In most cases, **family members and dependents are not eligible for VA Health Care**. It's important to figure out which option is best for you.

VA Health Care counts as your health insurance under the Affordable Care Act. However, **Veterans enrolled in VA Health Care are not eligible for health insurance subsidies.**

→ Visit https://www.healthcare.gov/veterans/ to learn more

How does VA support recent combat Veterans?

Combat Veterans c**an get five years of cost-free health care** following separation and remain eligible for VA Health Care as long as they enroll within five years of separation.

How does VA support Military Sexual Trauma (MST) survivors?

VA offers cost-free **counseling and support services** that help Veterans recover from trauma. You don't have to be enrolled in VA Health Care to access MST services.

What services are included in VA Health Care?

- Preventive Care (e.g. vaccines, health screenings, needed check-ups)
- Outpatient care (e.g. mental health care and substance abuse counseling)
- Inpatient care (e.g. surgery)
- Medications and supplies
- Well-being services (e.g. peer groups, complementary and integrative classes such as acupuncture, yoga)

Get Started with Mental Health Services

This guide will help you access mental health services, which may include treatment and support for mental health problems like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), the effects of military sexual trauma (MST), depression, grief, substance use problems, and anxiety-related conditions.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

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I need help now.

Call, text, or chat online with our caring, qualified responders at the Veterans Crisis Line. Many of the responders are Veterans themselves. The confidential line is **open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.**

- **Call 988,** and **press 1.**
- **Text** a message to **838255.**
- **Online** https://www.veteranscrisisline.net, click "chat or chat online".

For emergency mental health care, **you can also go directly to your local VA medical center**—regardless of your discharge status or enrollment in other VA health care.

I'm not in crisis, I'm just having problems sleeping, controlling my anger, or readjusting to civilian life.

You are not alone. Over 1.7 million Veterans received mental health care at VA last year. Mental health professionals at VA specialize in the mental health needs of Veterans. Services range from peer support with other Veterans to counseling with a mental health professional to medication. You may be eligible for these services or VA may connect you with mental health resources in your community.

- **Online** http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/get-help/index.asp

Am I eligible for VA mental health care?

Most former service members can access VA mental health care services, but costs may vary. Here are some common scenarios:

I separated recently from uniformed service with an honorable discharge.

- All former service members can access emergency VA mental health care. Call or visit your local VA medical center to determine your eligibility for non-emergency VA mental health care. Many programs and services do not require a payment. When payment is required, cost depends on many factors.

I am a recently separated combat Veteran with an honorable discharge.

- You may be eligible to enroll in VA health care and receive care for conditions related to your combat service at no cost for 5 years after your date of discharge.
- You are automatically eligible for Vet Center services at no cost, without time limitation or need to enroll in VA health care.

I separated from uniformed service many years ago.

- All former service members can access emergency VA mental health care. Call or visit your local VA medical center to determine your eligibility for non-emergency VA mental health care. Many programs and services do not require a payment. When payment is required, cost depends on many factors.

I am a current or former member of the National Guard or Reserves.

- You may be eligible for VA mental health care or Vet Center services.

If you have any questions, please give us a call at 877-222-VETS (877-222-8387).

HOW DO I SCHEDULE MY FIRST APPOINTMENT?

If you are already signed up for VA health care, **call or visit your local VA medical center or Vet Center.**

- Find locations and phone numbers **online** https://www.va.gov/find-locations.

Depending on what best meets your needs, you will receive a face-to-face visit with a clinician, or a phone or video call with a nurse, or a prescription filled the **same day**. If you are not already signed up for VA health care, **call** us or visit your local VA medical facility to find out what services may be available to you.

- 877-222-VETS
  877-222-8387
  Mon.–Fri., 8AM–8PM EST

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

VA considers a combination of your **disability rating, service history, medical need,** and **income level** when determining how much you might have to pay for services.

Please don't let the possibility of paying "out-of-pocket" stop you from getting mental health care.

What if I have an Other-than-Honorable (OTH) or "bad paper" discharge?

You may receive emergency VA mental health care. You may also be eligible for non-emergency VA mental health care. Call or visit your local VA medical facility to find out what services may be available to you.

Do I have to be enrolled in VA health care to access VA mental health services?

No. There are some VA mental health services you can access without being enrolled in VA health care. For example, regardless of disability claim or enrollment status, community-based Vet Centers offer confidential individual and group counseling for eligible Veterans, service members and their families at no cost. Vet Centers also provide counseling for survivors of military sexual trauma (MST), and their families, regardless of when or where you served and may provide other services, such as:

- Readjustment Counseling
- VA Benefits Assistance
- Bereavement (grief) counseling
- Employment Counseling
- Substance Abuse Assessment and referral
  - → **Call 877-WAR-VETS** (877-927-8387), confidential and open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.
  - → **Find** a Vet Center at https://www.va.gov/find-locations.

If you do enroll in VA health care, you will have access to VA's full range of health care services. Even if you do not enroll, you may be eligible for other VA **benefits**, such as housing, employment, job training, and education—all of which can affect mental health. We encourage all former Service members to contact us so we can determine how to best support you.

Will using mental health services at VA put my career at risk?

Medical records are protected by privacy laws. A mental health diagnosis or seeking mental health care does not automatically jeopardize work-related credentials such as security clearances. Generally, employers recognize that healthy employees who get the help they need are more productive and effective in their jobs.

Am I able to see a mental health provider outside of VA?

VA provides health care for Veterans from providers in your local community outside of VA. Veterans may be eligible to receive care from a community provider when VA cannot provide the care needed. This care is provided on behalf of and paid for by VA. Community care is available to Veterans based on certain conditions and eligibility requirements, and in consideration of a Veteran's specific needs and circumstances. Community care must generally be authorized by VA before a Veteran can receive care from a community provider.

- **Visit** https://www.va.gov/communitycare to learn more.

OTHER QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

It can be difficult for me to visit VA facilities. Are there services I can access online?

VA Video Connect is a telehealth service where you can talk to a VA mental health provider on a mobile device, a computer in your home, or at a local VA Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC). VA can offer the necessary equipment if you don't already have it.

Ask any of your VA health care providers for help connecting you with the VA Video Connect Telehealth program.

What other options do I have?

Make the Connection is an online resource where you can hear stories from other Veterans who sought help with mental health challenges.

- → **Online** https://maketheconnection.net

Military OneSource provides many resources for active-duty Service members, Veterans (up to one year after separation), and their immediate family members.

- → **Call 800-342-9647**
- → **Online** https://www.militaryonesource.mil

What if I have lost my housing or I am in danger of losing it?

The National Call Center for Homeless Veterans can help.

- → **Call 877-4AID-VET** (877-424-3838) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year

Are there VA mental health resources for family and caregivers of Veterans?

Caregiver Support Coordinators are social workers and nurses with extensive knowledge of VA benefits and services. They can help you connect with the resources you need.

- → **Call** the Caregiver Support Line **855-260-3274**, Monday–Friday 8 AM–8 PM EST
- → **Online** https://www.caregiver.va.gov
- → **Find** a Caregiver Support Coordinator in-person at a VA Medical Center

Understanding Community Care

This guide will help you understand the process for receiving care from a local provider in your community.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

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Am I eligible to see a community care provider?

You may be eligible to see a community provider if you meet one of these six eligibility criteria:

1. **Service Unavailable** – You need a service that is not available at VA (e.g., maternity care, in vitro fertilization).
2. **Facility Unavailable** – You reside in a U.S. state or territory without a full-service VA medical facility.
3. **Grandfathered Choice** – You were eligible for community care under the Veterans Choice Program distance criteria.
4. **Medical Interest** – Your VA provider determines it is in your best medical interest to be referred to a community provider.
5. **Quality Standards** – You need care for a medical service that VA determines does not meet VA's quality standards.
6. **Access Standards** – You meet the access standards for average drive time or wait time for a VA appointment.

What are the drive time access standards?

You may be eligible to see a community provider if your average drive time from home to a VA medical facility that provides the service you need takes more than:

- 30 minutes to receive primary care, mental health, and non-institutional extended care services (including adult home day care).
- 60 minutes to receive specialty care services.

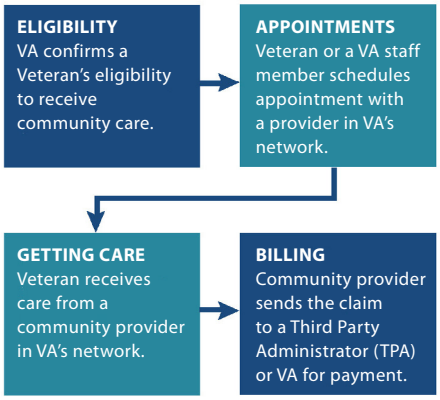
What are the wait time access standards?

You may be eligible if the wait time for an appointment at a VA medical facility that provides the service you need exceeds:

- 20 days for primary care, mental health, and non-institutional extended care services.
- 28 days for specialty care from the date of request with certain exceptions.

ACCESS STANDARD	Primary Care, Mental Health, Non-Institutional Extended Care	Specialty Care
Drive Time	30 Minutes	60 Minutes
Wait Time	20 Days	28 Days

COMMUNITY CARE PROCESS OVERVIEW



View and/or print the entire VA Welcome Kit at https://www.va.gov/welcome-kit

OTHER QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

Do I need to meet all six criteria to be eligible for community care?

No. Meeting any one of the six eligibility criteria can result in a referral to a community provider.

Does VA need to officially authorize the care I receive through a community provider?

Yes, usually. Regardless of which eligibility criterion you meet, community care must generally be authorized in advance by VA before you can make an appointment with and receive care from a community provider.

Can I go to any community provider I want?

If you're eligible for community care, you will be able to receive care from a community provider member in the VA's network. To locate these approved community providers, please visit https://www.va.gov/find-locations.

What is the process for getting prescription medication?

You can receive a 14-day supply (or fewer) of your prescription from a pharmacy in your community. However, prescriptions for longer than 14 days must be filled by VA.

Do I have to pay a copayment for community care?

Copayment charges work the same way for community care as they do for care received at a VA medical facility. Usually, this means you will be charged a copayment for nonservice-connected conditions. Copayment charges and payments are made through VA, not through your community provider.

Do I have to pay a copayment for urgent care?

Copayments for urgent care depend on your assigned Veteran priority group and the number of urgent care visits per calendar year. Copayments are not paid out-of-pocket at the time you visit an urgent care provider. After the visit, VA will bill copayments separately. For more information visit https://www.va.gov/communitycare.

Does VA pay beneficiary travel expenses if I am referred to a community provider?

If you are eligible for beneficiary travel, your eligibility does not change. Beneficiary travel is paid the same way whether the care is provided at a VA medical facility or through a community provider.

When would it be in my best medical interest to receive community care?

Your VA provider will discuss with you what is in your best medical interest. Possible reasons include the nature of care you need, the frequency of that care, or the need for an attendant.

Who schedules my community care appointments?

There are several ways you **may** be able to schedule a community care appointment:

- Directly schedule an appointment yourself and inform a VA staff member about the appointment
- Use VA online scheduling to request an appointment for certain types of routine services
- Have a VA staff member schedule the appointment
- Have a VA Third Party Administrator (TPA) schedule the appointment

Make sure VA has officially authorized you to receive community care (through a referral) before scheduling an appointment.

Can I still see a VA provider even if I am eligible for community care?

Yes, and you have the choice to have your primary or specialty care continue at VA, even when you are receiving care from a community provider.

How do I get help with adverse credit reporting and debt collection issues that might arise from using community care?

Call 877-881-7618 for assistance.

Accessing Urgent Care

This guide will help you understand how to access urgent care services from a provider in VA's contracted network.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

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What is the urgent care benefit?

VA offers eligible Veterans an urgent care benefit for the treatment of minor injuries and illnesses at retail and urgent care providers who are part of VA's contracted network. The urgent care benefit is offered to Veterans in addition to urgent care and same-day services VA provides through its medical facilities.

What type of care do urgent care providers provide?

Urgent care providers treat injuries and illnesses that require immediate attention but are not life-threatening, such as the common cold, minor burns and skin infections.

Am I eligible for urgent care?

To be eligible for the urgent care benefit, you must:

1. Be enrolled in the VA health care system, **AND**
2. Have received care through VA, from either a VA or a community provider within the last 24 months.

How do I access urgent care?

Use VA's Facility Locator at https://www.va.gov/find-locations. To find an urgent care location, select the "Urgent care" VA facility type and then "Community urgent care providers (in VA's network)" from the service type drop-down. You can also call your local VA medical facility to find an in-network urgent care provider.

What do I do when I arrive?

Tell the urgent care provider you would like to use your VA urgent care benefit and confirm that they are part of VA's network. They will confirm your eligibility for the benefits. If there is an issue verifying your eligibility or if you have any other issue at an urgent care location in AK, AS, AZ, CA, CO, GU, HI, ID, MP, MT, NM, NV, OR, TX, UT, WA, and WY call **866-620-2071**. In DC, PR, VI, and all other states, call **888-901-6609**.

HOW DO I CONFIRM I AM ELIGIBLE?

To check eligibility call MyVA411 at **800-698-2411** or contact your local medical facility.

HOW CAN I CONFIRM THAT THE PROVIDER IS IN VA'S NETWORK?

You can determine if a provider is in-network by using the VA's facility locator at at https://www.va.gov/find-locations. For telephone assistance finding locations, please **call 877-881-7618** (8AM–8 PM EST).

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?

If you believe your life or health is in danger, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away. You do **NOT** have an insurance card for this benefit.

Do **NOT** pay a copayment at the time of visit—if you are eligible for this benefit. VA will bill you separately for any applicable copayment.

OTHER QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

Will I have to pay any fees or copayments out-of-pocket?

You may be charged a copayment that is different from other VA medical copayments. Urgent care copayments depend on your assigned priority group and the number of times you visit an urgent care provider in a calendar year.

Priority Group	Copayment Amount (per calendar year)
1-5	• First three (3) visits: $0 • Fourth and > visits: $30
6	If **related** to a condition covered by a *special authority: • First three (3) visits: $0 • Fourth and > visits: $30 If **not related** to a condition covered by a *special authority: • $30 per visit
7-8	• $30 per visit
1-8	• $0 copay for a visit consisting of only a flu shot

There is no limit on the number of times you can access urgent care.

Copayments are **NOT** paid out-of-pocket at the time you receive care. They are billed separately by VA.

Can I use urgent care as a replacement for my primary care needs?

No. Urgent care is not a replacement for preventive health care or management of chronic or complex health conditions. You should work with your primary care provider for this type of care. **If you go to an urgent care provider and receive non-covered services, you are responsible for the full cost of care.**

Is urgent care prescription medication covered by VA?

VA will pay for or fill prescriptions resulting from your urgent care visit.

Urgent care prescriptions for medication longer than a 14-day supply must be sent to VA to be filled.

You can fill a 14-day supply of medication written by an urgent care provider at a contracted pharmacy within the VA network, a non-contracted pharmacy, or directly at a VA pharmacy. Opiates are limited to seven days or fewer, consistent with state law that applies to the pharmacy location.

If a non-contracted pharmacy is used, you must pay for the prescription and then file a claim for reimbursement with your local VA medical facility.

Do I have to pay a copayment for urgent care prescription medication?

You may be required to pay a copayment for medication. The copayment will be billed separately by VA as a part of VA's billing process.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

What services are covered?

Find a list of services at: https://www.va.gov/resources/getting-urgent-care-at-va-or-in-network-community-providers/

How do I find an in-network pharmacy?

Visit VA's facility locator at https://www.va.gov/find-locations.

How do I find a VA medical facility?

Use VA's facility locator at https://www. va.gov/find-locations.

Does VA reimburse beneficiary travel for an urgent care visit?

VA reimburses beneficiary travel for eligible Veterans that must travel to receive community care. Payment is made for the distance to either the nearest VA medical facility or community medical facility that could have provided the care or services.

What are special authorities?

Special authorities include those related to combat service and exposures (e.g. Agent Orange, active duty at Camp Lejeune, Ionizing radiation, Project Shipboard Hazard and Defense (SHAD/ Project 112), Southwest Asian Conditions as well as Military Sexual Trauma, and presumptions applicable to certain Veterans with psychosis and other mental illnesses.)

Getting Started with the Caregiver Support Program

This guide will help caregivers of Veterans access support at VA that may include caregiver education and training, mental health counseling, peer mentor support, access to health care benefits, monetary stipend and respite care.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

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Am I a "caregiver"?

Often people do not identify themselves as a "caregiver." Most of us, at some point in our lives, will be in a caregiver role. Caregivers are daughters, wives, husbands, sons, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, partners and friends. Caregivers manage a wide range of responsibilities. Here's how you know if you are in a caregiver role.

Do you:

- ☐ Make medical appointments or drive to the doctor and pharmacy to pick up prescriptions for a Veteran?
- ☐ Help a Veteran get dressed, take a shower, or take medicine?
- ☐ Help transfer a Veteran in and out of bed, or with physical therapy, injections, feeding tubes or other medical procedures at home?
- ☐ Talk with doctors, nurses, social workers, and others to understand what medical care or other services a Veteran might need?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you are a caregiver and may be eligible for caregiver services at VA. The Caregiver Support Program (CSP) provides services and support to Veterans and caregivers through two programs, the **Program of General Caregiver Support Services (PGCSS)** and the **Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC)**.

Who can help me determine which CSP programs and services may be available to me and to the Veteran I care for?

Caregiver Support Coordinators (CSCs) are social workers, nurses and psychologists with extensive knowledge of VA services and can help connect you with the resources you need. To find your CSC:

→ **Call** the Caregiver Support Line at **855-260-3274.**

→ **Visit** us online at https://www.caregiver.va.gov.

→ **Find** a CSC in-person at a local VA Medical Center https://www.caregiver.va.gov/support/New_CSC_Page.asp.

Program of General Caregiver Support Services

All caregivers who provide personal care services to Veterans enrolled in VA health care have access to PGCSS. Caregivers who enroll in PGCSS have access to education and training, including courses at local VA medical centers. In addition, caregivers can participate in support services and take advantage of VA home and community based care. No formal application is required to enroll in PGCSS. Contact your local community-based services for assistance with PGCSS enrollment.

HOW DOES VA SUPPORT CAREGIVERS OF VETERANS?

The following programs and services may be available to Veterans and caregivers according to availability of service in that area and Veteran eligibility:

- VA Caregiver Support Line
- Peer Support Mentoring
- Monthly caregiver education groups by telephone
- Mental health counseling for caregivers
- Online workshop through Building Better Caregivers™
- In-home health care
- Help with daily tasks (like bathing, dressing) and rehab programs
- Comfort care and help with managing pain
- Adult day health care centers
- Telehealth
- Home care supplies and equipment
- Veteran clothing allowance
- Home modification benefits

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION ABOUT FAMILY AND CAREGIVER HEALTH SERVICES?

Download the VA PCAFC Expansion Fact Sheet at https://www.caregiver.va.gov/.

Visit us online at https://www.caregiver.va.gov/docs/PGCSS_Fact_Sheet.pdf.

Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers

The Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) is a program of enhanced clinical support for caregivers of eligible Veterans who are seriously injured. These changes are based on the new "Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) Improvements and Amendments Under the VA MISSION Act of 2018" Final Rule, RIN 2900-Aq48 effective October 2020. These changes include Veterans who incurred or aggravated a serious injury in the line of duty in active military, naval, or air service on or after September 11, 2001, or on or before May 7, 1975.

How do I apply for PCAFC?

- A Veteran who has a single or combined service-connected rating of 70% or more AND who is in need of in-person personal care services for a minimum of six (6) continuous months based on either an inability to perform an activity of daily living (ADL) each time the activity is performed, or a need for supervision, protection, or instruction, which means a functional impairment that directly impacts his/her ability to maintain his or her personal safety, on a daily basis, or
- A Veteran who sustained or aggravated a serious injury (now includes serious illness) in the line of duty **on or before May 7, 1975** or **on or after September 11, 2001**.

Your CSC can provide you with more information.

PCAFC 10-STEP PROCESS

Due to the recent expansion of the PCAFC, the application process has changed. Effective October 1, 2020, there is a 10-step process that will result in an eligibility decision within 90 days of application receipt. For more information about applications, visit https://www.caregiver.va.gov/CAREGIVER/support/support_benefits.asp.

1. **Application Submission** – Veteran and caregiver complete the application for PCAFC – VA Form 10-10CG. You may ask VA to help you fill out the form.
2. **Application Intake** - A member of the local CSP Team conducts the application intake with the Veteran and each caregiver applicant.

Note: If the Veteran and at least one caregiver applicant meet the specific eligibility requirements, the following steps will occur:

3. **Veteran Assessment** - A member of the Local CSP Team conducts a clinical assessment with the Veteran.
4. **Veteran Functional Assessment** - A CSP Clinical Assessor completes the Functional Assessment instrument with the Veteran.
5. **Caregiver Assessment** – A local CSP Team conducts a clinical assessment with each Family Caregiver applicant.
6. **Initial Application Review** - The CSP Centralized Eligibility and Appeals Team (CEAT) conducts a review of the application.

Steps 7 through 10 are followed only when the CEAT determines the Veteran and family caregivers will continue with the application process.

7. **Caregiver Training** – Each family caregiver applicant completes the required training.
8. **Home-Care Assessment** - The CSP Clinical Assessor conducts the Home-Care Assessment with the Veteran and each family caregiver applicant.
9. **Final Application Review** - The CSP CEAT, which conducts the final review of the application.
10. **Notification** – Within 90 days of the application being received by VA, a member of the CSP Team will call the Veteran and family caregiver applicant(s) to notify them of the determination. An official letter will also be mailed.

OTHER QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

How do I apply for the PCAFC?

You and the Veteran will need to apply together and participate in an Application process to determine if you're eligible for the PCAFC. You'll both need to sign and date the application and answer all questions for your role.

To apply:

Online at https://www.va.gov/family-and-caregiver-benefits/health-and-disability/comprehensive-assistance-for-family-caregivers/apply-form-10-10cg/introduction

By mail, fill out a joint Application for the PCAFC (VA Form 10-10CG). **Download** the instructions and application at https://www.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/10-10CG.pdf Call the Caregiver Support Line at **855-260-3274**.

In-Person: Bring your completed VA Form 10-10CG to your local VA medical center's CSC. To find the name of your local coordinator, you can visit: https://www.caregiver.va.gov/support/New_CSC_Page.asp.

Note: Do not send medical records along with the application. VA will follow up after the application is received. If you need assistance with completing the application or would like to check the status of your 1010CG application please **call 855-488-8440**, option 3.

Getting Started with Vet Center Services

Vet Centers are community-based counseling centers located in easily accessible neighborhoods near Veterans, service members, survivors, and their families. Vet Centers are located separately from VA organizational sites to ensure confidential counseling and reduce barriers to care.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

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What are Vet Centers?

There are 300 Vet Centers and 83 Mobile Vet Centers (MVCs) and nearly 1,000 community access points across the country that provide a broad range of counseling, outreach, and referral services. Services are also available in the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Guam and American Samoa. Vet Centers are community-based counseling centers that provide social and psychological services including professional readjustment counseling to eligible Veterans, active duty Service members, Reserve components and their families.

What is readjustment counseling?

Readjustment counseling is offered to assist in making a successful transition from military to civilian life or after a traumatic event experienced in the military. Services include:.

- Individual and group counseling for Veterans, service members, and their families
- Marital and family counseling for military-related readjustment issues
- Bereavement counseling for families who experience an active-duty death
- Military sexual trauma counseling and referral
- Post Deployment Health Reassessment assistance
- Substance abuse assessment and referral
- Employment assessment and referral
- VA benefits explanation and referral
- Screening and referral for medical issues including traumatic brain injury, depression, etc.

Who is eligible to receive services at Vet Centers?

Any Veteran or active-duty service member, including members of Reserve components, is eligible if any of the following applies:

- ☐ Have served on active military duty in any combat theater or area of hostility
- ☐ Experienced military sexual trauma
- ☐ Provided direct emergent medical care or mortuary services, while serving on active military duty, to casualties of war
- ☐ Served as a member of an unmanned aerial vehicle crew that provided direct support to operations in a combat zone or area of hostility
- ☐ Vietnam-era Veterans who accessed care at a Vet Center prior to January 2, 2013
- ☐ Members of the Armed Forces, including the Reserve component and National Guard, who actively served in response to a national emergency or major disaster declared by the President or under orders of the chief executive of a state in response to a disaster or civil disorder
- ☐ Current or former members of the United States Coast Guard involved in drug interdiction operations, regardless of where the interdiction occurred
- ☐ Family members of Veterans and service members, including members of Reserve components, who require:
  - Assistance coping with deployment
  - Bereavement counseling after experiencing an active-duty death
  - Assistance helping their Veteran or service member readjust from military to civilian life or after a traumatic event in the military

WHAT ARE THE COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH USING VET CENTERS?

Services are provided at no cost, without time limitation, to eligible individuals.

DO I HAVE TO BE ENROLLED IN VA HEALTH CARE TO RECEIVE VET CENTER SERVICES?

You do not have to be enrolled in VA health care or have a service-connected disability.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO BE SEEN?

Anyone who visits a Vet Center will be seen that day and a plan to obtain further services will be discussed. You may also call and schedule an appointment at a time that works for you, including non- traditional hours.

Do I need to bring documentation?

A Vet Center team member will look for one or more of the following: discharge documents (such as a DD214), receipt of certain awards or pay stubs. If these documents are not readily available before you visit, someone will help you obtain these when you come in.

What is Bereavement Counseling?

Bereavement counseling is assistance and support to eligible individuals with emotional and psychological stress after the death of a loved one. Bereavement counseling includes a broad range of transition services including outreach, counseling, and referral services to family members.

What is Military Sexual Trauma Counseling?

Military sexual trauma counseling may include individual or group counseling, marital and family counseling, referral for benefits assistance, liaison with community agencies or substance abuse information and referral to help you deal with the emotions of military sexual trauma and regain confidence in your everyday life. Any eligible Veteran who was sexually traumatized while serving in the military is eligible to receive counseling regardless of gender or era of service. Onsite counseling, assessment and referral for sexual trauma is available at all Vet Centers.

Will Vet Centers share my information with VA or the Department of War (DoW)?

Confidentiality is very important. Vet Centers are safe places to discuss feelings or experiences that may arise after transitioning out of the military or from events such combat or military sexual trauma. Vet Center records are not linked to your VA medical records, and DoD must obtain a signed release of information from the Veteran or service member before records can be shared.

Contact a Vet Center:

You can visit your local Vet Center to find out what is available to you, or call the Vet Center Call Center and talk to a counselor 24/7 about any questions or concerns. The number is **877-WAR-VETS** (877-927-8387).

Where are Vet Centers located?

Vet Centers are community based to be more accessible in areas where you live. To locate a Vet Center near you visit http://www.va.gov/find-locations.

OTHER QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

Will staff provide assistance outside of the Vet Centers?

In addition to the 300 Vet Centers, staff provide counseling, outreach, and referral services at several outstations and community access points. This assistance can range from a few times a week to a couple times per month. Services may be offered in universities, community centers, churches, and other locations.

Are any additional services or activities offered?

In addition to the services mentioned, Vet Centers also offer opportunities to build community and connect with men and women who have shared similar experiences. They are designed and created to meet the unique needs of those in the community they serve. Some common group activities offered at Vet Centers across the country, or through their community partners include:

- Gardening
- Music groups
- Creative writing classes
- Yoga
- Tai Chi
- Mindful Meditation
- Potluck dinners and holiday gatherings
- Painting
- Photography
- Outdoor activities
- Community service projects
- Guest speakers and other educational opportunities

Get Started with Services for Aging Veterans

This guide will help you access services that may be of interest to aging Veterans, which may include financial benefits, health care, caregiver support, home health care and nursing home care. VA can provide specialized health care, and support services for aging Veterans and help you plan for the future.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

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What types of benefits and services are available for aging Veterans and their families?

A wide variety of benefits and services are available to Veterans of all ages. Some of the benefits and services may be of more interest to aging Veterans, such as Aid and Attendance and Housebound Allowance.

Disability Pension is payable to Veterans who served in a period of war who are permanently and totally disabled or who are age 65 or older, and whose annual income is below certain levels prescribed by statute.

Aid and Attendance is a higher monthly pension amount paid if you meet at least one of the following conditions below:

- You require help performing activities of daily living, which may include bathing, eating or dressing
- You are bedridden, in that your disability or disabilities require that you remain in bed apart from any prescribed course of convalescence or treatment
- You are a patient in a nursing home due to mental or physical incapacity
- Your eyesight is limited to a corrected 5/200 visual acuity or less in both eyes or a decrease in visual field to 5 degrees or less

Housebound Allowance is a higher monthly pension amount paid if you are substantially confined to your immediate premises because of a permanent disability.

For more information about Disability Pension, Aid and Attendance or Housebound benefits, call MyVA411 at 800-698-2411. You can also go online at:

- **Disability Pension Eligibility** - https://www.va.gov/pension/eligibility
- **Aid and Attendance or Housebound Benefit-** https://www.va.gov/pension/aid-attendance-housebound/

IT CAN BE DIFFICULT FOR ME TO VISIT VA FACILITIES. ARE THERE SERVICES I CAN ACCESS ONLINE?

VA's Telehealth is a program where you can talk to a provider, nurse, social worker, or health care team on a mobile device, a computer in your home, or at a local VA Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC). Ask any of your VA health care providers for help connecting you with the Telehealth program, and about eligibility requirements for VA health care.

WHERE CAN I FIND INFORMATION ABOUT BURIAL BENEFITS?

Burial Benefits and Memorial Services include a gravesite in any of 136 national cemeteries, government headstone or marker, burial flag, and Presidential Certificate at no cost to the family. For more information go to:

Burial Benefits

http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/burial_benefits/index.asp

VA Health Care available to aging Veterans

Geriatrics is health care for Veterans facing the challenges of aging, disability, and chronic diseases. Extended care – also known as Long Term Services and Support or long-term care – is a broad spectrum of services for Veterans of all ages who need the daily support and assistance of another individual. Veterans of any age can receive Geriatric and Extended Care services at home, at VA medical centers and clinics, and in the community:

- Geriatrics programs in hospitals and clinics, including geriatric research
- Home Based Services including skilled home care, Home Based Primary Care and Home Health Aide
- Community Based Services including adult day health care and caregiver respite
- Skilled nursing facility and nursing home care provided in VA, Community and State Veterans Home facilities
- Dementia care in all care settings
- Hospice and palliative care in the home, hospital, or nursing facility

How can I apply for these VA Benefits and Services?

You can apply in any of these ways:

- Apply **online** using https://www.va.gov.
- Work with an accredited Veteran Service Organization (VSO) or agent. You can find a VSO at https://www.va.gov/get-help-from-accredited-representative/find-rep/.
- **Call** MyVA411 at 800-698-2411 and talk to a VA staff member.
- **Go** to a VA regional office and have a VA employee assist you.

What will I need to apply?

- DD214 or other official separation paperwork
- Copies of any evidence such as reports from an attending physician validating the need for Aid and Attendance or Housebound type care
- Complete VA Form 21-2680, Examination for housebound status or permanent need for regular aid and attendance. You can find the form here: https://www.va.gov/find-forms/about-form-21-2680/
- VA can assist you in obtaining records needed to apply for benefits

OTHER QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

Who is a caregiver?

A caregiver is a person who cares for a Veteran who needs assistance with everyday activities such as bathing, dressing and eating. This may be a spouse, adult child, relative or close friend.

Are there VA resources for caregivers of Veterans?

Yes, you and your caregiver may be eligible for benefits and programs such as:

- Caregiver education and training
- Mental health services and counseling related to the Veteran's treatment
- Respite care

Family Caregivers of eligible Veterans in the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers may also be eligible for:

- A monthly stipend
- Certain travel expenses
- Access to health care benefits through the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA)

For more information:

- **Call** the Caregiver Support Line at 855-260-3274, Monday–Friday: 8 AM–8 PM EST.
- **Visit** us online at https://www.caregiver.va.gov/.
- Find a Caregiver Support Coordinator **in-person** at a VA Medical Center.

Getting Started with Women Veterans Health Services

This guide will help you apply for Women's Health Care, which includes regular checkups, prescriptions, and access to specialists, such as cardiologists, gynecologists, and mental health providers.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

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A checklist to help you apply for VA health care:

1 PREPARATION

- ☐ Collect the following information:
  - ☐ **Discharge papers** (**DD214 member-4** or equivalent)
  - ☐ Your most recent **tax return**
  - ☐ **Social security numbers** for yourself and your dependents
  - ☐ **Account numbers** for insurance programs you are enrolled in
  - ☐ Your **VA Disability Rating Decision** (if applicable)

2 APPLICATION

- ☐ **Apply** by completing the health care application form (VA Form 10-10EZ) in one of these ways:
  - → Visit us **online** at https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application.
  - → Give us a **call** at **877-222-8387 (press 1)**; M–F, 8AM–8PM EST.
  - → Visit us **in person** at a VA Medical Center.
  - → Print out and **mail** the completed form to:
    Health Eligibility Center, Enrollment and Eligibility Division, P.O. Box 5207, Janesville, WI 53547-5207

3 REVIEW AND DECISION

- ☐ **Call 877-222-8387 (press 2)** if you haven't heard back from VA more than one week after you've submitted your application

4 NEXT STEPS

If approved, take steps to access the benefits you are eligible for:

- ☐ **Review priority group assignment** and personalized benefit handbook, which will be mailed by VA after enrollment.
- ☐ Contact your local VA Medical Center to **set up an appointment**.
- ☐ Make an appointment to obtain your **Veterans Health Identification Card (VHIC)**.

WHERE CAN I FIND MY DISCHARGE PAPERS?

Visit https://www.va.gov/records/get-military-service-records to request a copy of your DD214.

HOW WILL I FIND OUT ABOUT VA'S DECISION?

If **accepted**, you'll receive a phone call from VA and a personalized benefits handbook in the mail. If **denied**, you'll receive a letter indicating the reason.

WHAT ARE PRIORITY GROUPS?

During enrollment, each Veteran is assigned to one of eight priority groups based on different factors. Your priority group may affect how much (if anything) you will need to pay for those services.

WHAT IS A VHIC?

A **VHIC** is a photo ID that will give you access to VA Health Care facilities. You can get a VHIC by making an appointment with your local VA Medical Center.

Information you'll need to know to access VA Women's health care:

Once you have determined your eligibility for care through the VA, you can go to the nearest VA Medical Center and enroll. You will be offered assignment to a designated Women's Health Primary Care Provider, who may be working in a women's clinic, or mixed gender clinic, depending on local arrangements at your site of care. Both provide comprehensive primary care and specialty care to meet the specific health needs and risks of women Veterans.

Can I transfer to a women's health care team if I am already enrolled in a primary care team?

Yes, if you are assigned to a Primary Care Provider who is not a Women's Health Provider, you will have the opportunity to be reassigned to a Women's Health Provider and Patient Aligned Care Team. Contact your Women Veteran Program Manager to discuss.

What health care services are available to Women Veterans?

- **Well-being Services**
  - ☐ Health Coaching
  - ☐ Mind-body therapies, yoga, and stress reduction
- **General Health Services**
  - ☐ Primary care- care for acute and chronic conditions,
  - ☐ Immunizations and cancer screenings, such as mammograms, Pap tests, and colonoscopies
  - ☐ Birth control
  - ☐ Family planning and preconception counseling
  - ☐ Menopause care
- **Specialty Care Services**
  - ☐ Gynecology care- including infertility counseling, treatment for pelvic pain, and gynecologic cancers
  - ☐ Management of chronic or complex conditions
- **Maternity Care Services**
  - ☐ VA covers full maternity care from the time of the first positive pregnancy test through delivery and follow-up appointments
  - ☐ Full physical exams, lab tests, and ultrasounds
  - ☐ Genetic tests and specialty consultations
  - ☐ First seven days of newborn's care
  - ☐ Support for breast feeding
- **Mental Health Services**
  - ☐ Evaluation, counseling and treatment for depression, mood and anxiety disorders
  - ☐ Alcohol and drug use and addiction
  - ☐ Intimate partner violence/sexual and domestic abuse
  - ☐ Military sexual trauma
  - ☐ Posttraumatic stress
  - ☐ Stress adjustment from deployment

To learn more about the benefits you've earned, visit: https://www.benefits.va.gov/persona/veteran-women.asp

OTHER QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

How does VA support Military Sexual Trauma (MST) and combat PTSD survivors?

- VA offers free counseling and support services that help Veterans recover from trauma. You don't have to be enrolled in VA Health Care nor have service-connected disabilities to access MST services. Visit https://www.va.gov/health-care/health-needs-conditions/military-sexual-trauma for more information.

Vet Centers also offer mental health services and counselling. For more information and their location, visit: https://www.vetcenter.va.gov.

What other resources are available?

- Center for Women Veterans (CWV): https://www.va.gov/womenvet

  Its mission is to monitor and coordinate VA's administration of health care, benefits services and programs for women Veterans. CWV serves as an advocate for cultural transformation and raising awareness of the responsibility to treat women Veterans with dignity and respect.
- **Women Veterans Call Center (WVCC):**

  Call 855-VA-WOMEN (855-829-6636).

  The WVCC staff is trained to provide women Veterans, their families and caregivers information about VA services and resources. The call is free, and you can contact them as often as you like. The Call Center is available Monday through Friday 8 AM–10 PM EST, and on Saturdays from 8 AM–6:30 PM EST. Call, chat or text available.
- **Veterans Crisis Line** at 800-273-8255 and press "1" to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- **VA HUD-VASH PROGRAM:**
  If you are at risk of becoming homeless, visit https://www.hud.gov/findshelter for assistance or ask to speak to a social worker at your VA Medical Center.

Getting Started with Whole Health

VA wants you to live your best possible life through exploring your Whole Health. This guide will help you find resources on your "Live Whole Health" journey.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

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What is Whole Health?

Whole Health is VA's cutting-edge approach to care that supports and empowers you to take charge of your health and well-being. Whole Health centers around what matters to you, not what is the matter with you. This means your health team will get to know you as a person before working with you to develop a personalized health plan based on your values, needs and goals. You are a critical member of your health care team and we want to partner with you.

What Whole Health services are available to me?

There are currently two Whole Health courses designed for and led by Veterans.

1. **Introduction to Whole Health:**
   A 1- to 2-hour course for all Veterans and spouses. Any Veteran can attend regardless of their discharge status from the military or enrollment in VA health care. **All Veterans and spouses are invited to attend!** You will be given the **Personal Health Inventory (PHI)** to start you on your journey.

   PHI helps you explore what matters to you and self-care areas of your personal life where you are and want to be in the future. Veteran and VA Staff will help you create goals to develop your very own PHI. VA uses your PHI responses to find the combination of clinical and well-being services you need to achieve your goals. Learn more about PHI at https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTH/docs/10-773_PHI_May2020.pdf.

2. **Taking Charge of My Life and Health**:
   More in-depth discovery of what matters to you and providing team support from Veteran peers and staff to help you live the best version of you; helping you explore well-being skills, complete your Personal Health Inventory, and create your Personal Health Plan. Online resources are available to help you run, manage, and participate in these courses.

Where can I find the Whole Health Course?

To find Whole Health Courses, contact your nearest VA Medical Center (https://www.va.gov/find-locations) and ask to speak to Whole Health, Veteran or Patient Educators.

HOW DO I GET STARTED WITH WHOLE HEALTH?

There are several ways to get started. You can"

- Visit https://www.va.gov/wholehealth.
- Start a conversation with your health team or peer support specialists.
- Learn about Whole Health services from other Veterans through the Introduction to Whole Health by downloading the Whole Health App on your smartphone at https://mobile.va.gov/app/live-whole-health.

VA Health

DO I HAVE TO BE ENROLLED IN VA HEALTH CARE TO ACCESS WHOLE HEALTH?

Veterans do not need to be enrolled in VA Health Care to attend the Introduction to Whole Health Classes; however, if you choose to pursue Whole Health, you will need to enroll. For more information about enrolling in VA, visit https://www.va.gov.

What services/treatments does Whole Health offer?

If you are interested in learning more about these VA-approved Whole Health and Complementary & Integrative Health Approaches as a part of your care, contact your primary care provider. They may also be available virtually via telehealth.

- **Whole Health Coaching -** Coaches work with Veterans one-on-one, in group settings, or virtually to empower the Veteran to develop and achieve self-determined goals related to health and wellness. Coaches support Veterans in mobilizing internal strengths and external resources, and in developing self-management strategies for making sustainable, healthy lifestyle, behavior changes. As partners and facilitators, while working closely with the Veteran's Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) and/or other health care professionals, coaches support Veterans in achieving their health goals and behavioral goals.

- **Acupuncture -** An approach to health care that may be used alone or in conjunction with other East Asian Modalities, where thin needles are inserted into the body at different acupuncture points.

- **Biofeedback -**A process that uses your body's own signals like heart rate and body temperature to bring about healthy change. It can improve health issues that are caused or worsened by stress. Using a two-step process, biofeedback helps your body relax and reduces stress.

- **Clinical Hypnosis -** The process of deliberately triggering a trance state and then utilizing that state to encourage helpful cognitive, emotional, or physical healing responses. A trance is a natural biological state of inner absorption, concentration, and focused attention.

- **Chiropractic Care -** Diagnosis and management of musculoskeletal problems using treatment options including manual spinal adjustments, other joint and soft-tissue therapies, exercise and lifestyle advice.

- **Massage Therapy -** The manipulation of the soft tissues of the human body for therapeutic purposes. Currently in VA, massage therapy is recommended primarily for pain conditions for which there is an evidence base.

- **Meditation –** A practice or technique, often arising from a contemplative tradition, that primarily focuses on training attention regulation processes, with the intent of cultivating general mental well-being and/or specific capacities such as concentration, compassion or insight.

- **Guided Imagery -** Involves using a series of multi-sensory images designed to trigger specific changes in physiology, emotions, or mental state for the purpose of increasing healing response or unconscious changes. It often begins with relaxation techniques, but it is not required.

- **Tai Chi -** A mind-body exercise combining slow-flowing intentional movements with breathing, awareness and visualization. Rooted in the Asian traditions of martial arts, Chinese medicine and philosophy, Tai Chi enhances relaxation, vitality, focus, posture, balance, strength, flexibility, and mood.

- **Qigong -** An ancient Chinese healing art, older than, and like tai chi, with a focus of cultivating the body's vital energy or qi. It involves the coordination of the breath, posture, awareness, visualization, and focused movements. Qigong may be a stationary or moving meditation.

- **Yoga -** A mind and body practice with origins in ancient Indian philosophy. The various styles of yoga typically combine physical postures, breathing techniques, and meditation or relaxation.

Helpful Links

Whole Health-
https://www.va.gov/wholehealth/

#LiveWholeHealth Self-Care Series-
https://news.va.gov/category/health/livewholehealth/

VA Medical Center Locator-
https://www.va.gov/find-locations

Get Started with Food and Nutrition Services

In support of your Whole Health and well-being, this guide will help you understand the healthy food classes and nutrition services available from VA and USDA, and help you apply for food assistance benefits if needed.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

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Are you and your family members getting enough nutrition?

VA's Nutrition and Food Services (NFS) and the U.S Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) are working together to address Veterans' nutritional needs and food insecurity.

What is food insecurity?

Food insecurity means your access to adequate food is limited by a lack of money and other resources.

What programs are available to me and my family members?

Some of the programs available to Veterans and their family members include:

- **USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** – Helps low-income individuals and families buy nutritious food with an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card, similarly to a debit card.
- **USDA SNAP Employment and Training (SNAP E&T)** – SNAP recipients can receive services through the SNAP E&T Program which helps participants gain the skills, training and work experience they need to increase their ability to obtain regular employment and meet the needs of employers.
- **VA MOVE!** – A Weight Management Program that is available to every Veteran receiving VA health care and provides Veterans with a variety of ways to participate in a comprehensive lifestyle intervention.
- **VHA Healthy Teaching Kitchen** – A VA program through which Veterans learn to prepare, cook, and eat healthy dishes that support nutrition and self-care.
- **VHA Whole Health** – A VA program that empowers and equips you to take charge of your health and well-being. It centers around what matters to you, not what is the matter with you. This means your health team will get to know you and develop a personalized health plan specifically for you, taking into account your values, needs, and goals to live your best life.

NOTE: You do not need to be enrolled in the VA system to participate in SNAP. For more information, please visit https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/recipient/eligibility.

HOW DO I APPLY FOR SNAP?

You must apply for SNAP in the state where you currently live because each state has a different application form and process. A member of your household must contact your state agency directly to apply.

WHAT DO I DO IF I AM PHYSICALLY UNABLE TO GO TO A SNAP OFFICE OR CONTACT THE OFFICE?

If you are unable to go to or call your local SNAP office and do not have access to the internet, you may have another person act as your authorized representative by applying and being interviewed on your behalf. You must designate your authorized representative in writing.

Note: Please contact your SNAP state agency directly to apply and to request information about the status of your application. USDA FNS does not process applications or have access to case information.

WHERE CAN I GET MY STATE SNAP INFORMATION?

You can contact your state agency by visiting your local SNAP office, visiting your state agency's website, or calling the toll-free SNAP Information Number at 1-800-221-5689. You can find your state SNAP agency online at https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/state-directory.

How do I get into VA Nutrition and Food Programs?

What you eat is very important to your health. Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs) provide nutrition education and counseling for Veterans across VHA's health care facilities and most clinics. There are many programs, telehealth visits, groups, or individual appointments available to you. Visit https://www.nutrition.va.gov to learn more.

How do I get help from a Dietitian?

RDNs are VA's food and nutrition experts. RDNs have special training to offer medical nutrition therapy and work as part of the health care team and Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) in the treatment and prevention of disease. RDNs promote healthy lifestyle choices and create personal nutrition plans for individuals of all ages using a Whole Health approach. To contact a dietitian:

- **Call** your local VA to schedule an appointment
- **Ask** your local VA about same-day appointment availability
- **Ask** your VA PACT or health care team for a referral
- **Send** a secure message via MyHealtheVet by signing in at https://www.va.gov/health-care/manage-health/

How do I avoid gaining weight or how do I lose weight?

MOVE! is a weight management, health promotion program designed to improve the lives of Veterans. MOVE!'s core ideas—encouraging healthy eating behavior, increasing physical activity, and promoting even small weight losses—are easy to follow and based on the latest nutrition science. With the help of your MOVE! care team, you can reduce health risks, prevent or reverse certain diseases, improve your quality of life, and even live longer!

For more information about MOVE!, visit https://www.move.va.gov/.

What foods should I eat?

MyPlate is the Federal nutrition symbol, developed by the USDA that serves as a general healthy eating guide on what and how much to eat from each of the five food groups – fruits, vegetables, grains, protein, and dairy. To learn what the right amounts are for you to eat and drink based on your age, sex, height, weight and activity level, etc. Get your own MyPlate Plan at https://www.myplate.gov/myplate-plan.

MyPlate encourages simple ways to get started on eating healthy. Download the Start Simple with MyPlate app on your phone to set simple, achievable, daily goals to help you eat healthy or visit https://www.myplate.gov/ for more tips and resources to get started today.

OTHER QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

How do I know if I am eligible for SNAP?

You a must meet certain income and resource requirements to be eligible for SNAP and receive benefits. If our state agency determines you are eligible to receive SNAP benefits, you will receive benefits backdated to when you submitted your application.

Are there other USDA programs my family and I may be eligible for?

You or your family members may be eligible for assistance through other USDA programs such as the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs, the Summer Food Service Program and USDA food distribution programs. Please visit the USDA FNS website at https://www.fns.usda.gov/military/usda-supports-americas-heroes for a complete listing of nutrition assistance programs that may be available to you.

Helpful Links

USDA SNAP
https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/recipient/eligibility

USDA SNAP E&T
https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/et

VHA NFS FOOD INSECURITY
https://www.nutrition.va.gov/Food_Insecurity.asp

VHA NFS RECIPES
https://www.nutrition.va.gov/Recipes.asp

GET HELP FROM A DIETITIAN
https://www.nutrition.va.gov/Get_Help_from_a_Dietitian.asp

WHOLE HEALTH
https://www.va.gov/wholehealth

VA MEDICAL CENTER LOCATOR
https://www.va.gov/find-locations

WIC
https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic

MYPLATE
https://www.myplate.gov/

Apply for a Disability Rating

This guide will help you submit a disability claim and obtain a disability rating. This rating is between 0%–100%. Your rating may give you access to certain VA benefits, such as compensation and ongoing health care.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Choose VA

A checklist to help you file your disability claim and get your disability rating:

1 PREPARATION

☐ Learn about different **types of claims** you can file (refer to back)

☐ **Collect the documents** necessary to file a claim

- → **Discharge papers** (**DD214 MEMBER-4** or equivalent)
- → **Military medical records**
- → **VA medical records/hospital reports** related to your disability
- → **Private medical records/hospital report**s related to your disability

☐ Submit any medical evidence related to your illness or injury (like doctor's reports, X-rays, and medical test results)

2 APPLICATION

☐ Apply by submitting all documents in **one** of these ways:

- → Submit a claim online by visiting https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim
- → Complete a claim form **in-person** at a VA Regional Office

3 REVIEW AND DECISION

☐ Visit us **online** at https://www.va.gov/claim-or-appeal-status to **track the status** of your claim

☐ Provide more information/documentation if requested by VA

☐ Attend VA medical examination(s) if requested by VA

4 NEXT STEPS

If approved, take steps to access the benefits you are eligible for:

☐ Review your award letter to understand your rating

☐ Review the VA benefits handbook that is sent to you

GET HELP

You can receive free help with preparing your claim from a VA-accredited representative or an employee at a VA Regional Office. Refer to back for more information.

WHERE CAN I FIND MY DISCHARGE PAPERS?

To find out more about how to get your military service records visit https://www.va.gov/records/get-military-service-records

CAN VA HELP OBTAIN PRIVATE MEDICAL RECORDS?

Yes, you can obtain records from private doctors or hospitals yourself or you can sign a release authorizing VA to obtain these records for you.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

The length of time it takes to process a claim depends on:

- The type of claim file
- How many injuries/disabilities you claimed
- How long it takes for VA to gather supporting evidence
- How many claims were in line when your claim was filed

Information you'll need to know to file your claim and get your disability rating:

Am I eligible for benefits?

You may be eligible for VA disability benefits **if VA finds that you have a disease, injury, or condition that resulted from service or was made worse during your military service.**

Common conditions include:

- Hearing loss and ringing in the ears
- Knee, ankle, or back pain or injury
- PTSD, anxiety, depression
- Traumatic brain injury
- Respiratory disease
- Ulcers
- Loss of range of motion
- Cancer from hazardous exposures

***Note:* If you believe you have an illness or injury caused (or made worse) by your military service, you should file a claim with VA.**

Who can file a disability claim?

- Veterans
- Service members preparing to separate from the military
- Survivors/family seeking benefits owed to Veterans on a pending claim
- Veterans Service Organization (VSO) on behalf of Veterans and service members

Who can help me?

You can receive free help with preparing your claim from a VA-accredited representative or an employee at your VA Regional Office.

Accredited representatives are individuals or organizations that are familiar with the process of filing a claim. Many accredited representatives work for VSOs, and may provide help free of charge.

Note: It is unlawful for any person or organization to charge a fee for assistance in preparing an application for VA benefits. VA-accredited agents and attorneys may charge fees for assisting with a claim for VA benefits only after VA has made its first decision on the claim.

- To find a representative, visit us online at https://www.va.gov/get-help-from-accredited-representative/find-rep/
- To locate your nearest VA Facility, visit https://www.va.gov/find-locations

How do I file a claim?

There are several ways to get your claim started. **Review the chart below** to determine what best fits your circumstances. For more information, visit: https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/when-to-file

OTHER QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

Why is receiving a disability rating important?

If you have a service-connected disability, you may be entitled to additional VA benefits and services, including:

- Disability compensation
- Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E)
- Level of VA health care coverage
- Increased preference in federal hiring
- VA Home Loan funding fee exemption
- Specially Adapted Housing Assistance
- To find out more please visit, https://benefits.va.gov/benefits/derivative_sc.asp

***Note:* You can apply for a disability rating anytime throughout your life.**

How does my disability rating affect my family?

If you are eligible for disability compensation, you may be paid additional amounts if you have a spouse, dependent child(ren), or dependent parents, and they may be eligible for additional benefits

- To learn more, **call** us at: 800-827-1000, or visit us **online** at https://www.va.gov/disability

WHEN YOU FILE	HOW TO FILE	WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?
Pre-discharge More information at: https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/when-to-file/pre-discharge-claim	Benefit Delivery at Discharge (BDD)	Filed 180 - 90 days before separation; processed faster than post-discharge claims
Post-discharge More information at: https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/evidence-needed/fully-developed-claims	Standard	VA can help you gather documents
	Fully-developed	You gather your own documents; processed faster than most post-discharge claims

Do You Disagree with Your VA Decision?

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Choose VA

This guide will help you understand how the modernized decision review process enables Veterans to seek faster resolution of their disagreement with a VA decision. The Appeals Modernization Act establishes a decision review process for disagreements with VA decisions that is timely, transparent, and fair.

The decision review process has changed.

As of February 19, 2019, you can choose one of three options to have your disagreement reviewed: as a supplemental claim, through a higher-level review, or by appealing directly to the Board of Veterans' Appeals. If you continuously pursue the claim through one of the decision review lanes, your effective date remains protected.

Option 1: A Supplemental Claim

You are adding new evidence that is relevant and supports your claim. VA will assist you in gathering the evidence. A reviewer will look at all the evidence and determine whether it changes the decision. You will receive a decision within approximately 125 days from the date you filed your supplemental claim.

Option 2: Higher-Level Review

You want another review of the same evidence by a senior reviewer. The senior reviewer will take another look at the evidence already in your file and determine whether the decision can be changed based on a difference of opinion or an error that VA made. No additional evidence may be submitted, but you and/or your representative may speak with the reviewer on the phone to tell them why you think the decision should be changed through an informal conference. You will receive a decision within approximately 125 days from the date you filed your higher-level review.

Option 3: Appeal to the Board

This option allows you to appeal directly to the Board of Veterans' Appeals. You can choose between three options:

- **Direct Review:** You do not want a Board hearing, and do not want to submit any additional evidence in support of your appeal.
- **Evidence Submission:** You want to submit additional evidence in support of your appeal, which you must submit within 90 days from the date your appeal was filed, but you do not want a Board hearing.
- **Hearing with a Veterans Law Judge:** You want a Board hearing, and have the opportunity to submit additional evidence in support of your appeal within 90 days after the hearing.

HOW CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION ON APPEALS MODERNIZATION?

Call 800-827-1000 to speak with a VA representative.

Visit us online at https://www.va.gov/decision-reviews to see what review option is best for you.

If you have a VA accredited representative, contact them for more information on Appeals Modernization.

HOW DO I CHECK THE STATUS?

Go to https://www.va.gov/claim-or-appeal-status to check the status of your appeal.

HOW DO I GET STARTED?

Consult your decision notice letter for the required forms and ways to submit your request for review.

For a **supplemental claim**, complete
VA Form 20-0995, Decision Review Request: Supplemental Claim
https://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-20-0995-ARE.pdf

For a **higher-level review**, complete
VA Form 20-0996, Decision Review Request: Higher-Level Review
https://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-20-0996-ARE.pdf

Send or fax the forms for **supplemental claims or higher-level reviews** to**:**
Department of Veterans Affairs
Claims Intake Center
P.O. Box 5235
Janesville, WI 53547-5235
Fax: 844-531-7818

To **appeal to the Board**:
VA Form 10182, Decision Review Request: Board Appeal (Notice of Disagreement)
https://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA10182.pdf

Send or fax the form to:
Board of Veterans' Appeals
P.O. Box 27063
Washington, DC 20038
Fax: 844-678-8979

OTHER QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

Can someone help me with my request for review?

Yes, VA recognizes and accredits attorneys, claims agents, and Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) representatives to assist VA claimants with their benefits claims. VSOs and their representatives are not permitted to charge fees or accept gifts for their services. Only VA-accredited attorneys and claims agents may charge you fees for assisting in a claim for VA benefits, and only after VA has issued an initial decision on the claim and the attorney or claims agent has complied with the power-of-attorney and the fee agreement requirements. For more information on the types of representatives available, or how to change your representative, **visit** **https://www.va.gov/decision-reviews/gethelp-with-review-request**.

Contact your local VA office for assistance with appointing a representative or **visit** **https://www.va.gov/get-help-from-accredited-representative/find-rep/**.

What happens if I do not submit my request for review on time?

If you do not request a review option of an initial claim decision within the required time limit, you may only seek review through the following options:

- File a supplemental claim along with new and relevant evidence to support your issue(s). Where a supplemental claim is filed after the time limit to seek review of a decision, the effective date for any resulting award of benefits generally will be tied to the date that VA receives the supplemental claim.

- File a request for revision of the decision based on a clear and unmistakable error in the decision.

Getting Started with Veteran-Owned Small Business Support

This guide will help Veterans get started on establishing a small business as well as qualify for VA contracts targeted for a Veteran-Owned Small Business.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Choose VA

I've never owned a business before, and would like to start one. Where do I start?

Visit https://www.sba.gov/business-guide for information to assist you in your decision-making process. The steps you will take will depend on how you intend to fund your business.

☐ If self-funding will be used, follow these steps:

- ☐ Determine the appropriate location for your business based on local zoning requirements. Zoning requirements can be obtained through your local government office.
- ☐ While you are there, ask about requirements for obtaining a business license.
- ☐ Check with your Secretary of State's office to determine business license requirements.
- ☐ Write a business plan–see https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/plan-your-business/write-your-business-plan.
- ☐ Begin operating your business after all requirements have been met.

☐ If loans will be required to get started, determine whether you are eligible. Many banks provide SBA Small Business Loan funding or contact the SBA directly by:

- → **Call 800-827-5722**.
- → **Visit** https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans.
- → Once you are satisfied, and you meet the requirements, follow steps 1 through 5 under self-funding as these requirements will also apply to your business model.
- → For information, visit https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/plan-your-business/buy-existing-business-or-franchise.

What other resources are available to me to start my own business?

The SBA has several additional resources available to Veterans. The eligibility requirements may vary for each program. Some of the programs are:

Boots to Business: An entrepreneurial education and training program for transitioning Service members and their spouses.

- ☐ https://www.sba.gov/sba-learning-platform/boots-business

Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC): This program has multiple locations around the country that are designed to provide entrepreneurial development services such as business training, counseling and resource partner referrals to transitioning service members, Veterans, National Guard and Reserve members and military spouses interested in starting or growing a small business.

- ☐ https://www.sba.gov/page/veterans-business-outreach-center-vboc-program

For more information on these programs and additional SBA Veterans Business Development Resources, visit https://www.sba.gov/vets.

WHAT INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE TO ASSIST ME IN OBTAINING CONTRACTS WITH VA?

OSDBU HOME PAGE

https://www.va.gov/OSDBU/index.asp

VENDOR INFORMATION PAGES

https://www.vetbiz.va.gov/

OSDBU HELP DESK

866-584-2344
(Monday – Friday)
8:00 AM to 6:00 PM (EST).

What is the Direct Access Program?

One mission of OSDBU is to serve as an advocate for U.S. government purchases through the use of the procurement ready VOSB process. This is enabled by providing VOSBs with opportunities to attend Direct Access Program (DAP) events. DAP events provide unique opportunities for firms to build partnerships, maximize networking, and gain access to Procurement Decision-Makers (PDMs) through structured events. A PDM represents a program office's interest in acquiring professional services or products to support VA's primary customer, our nation's Veterans.

A DAP event may entail a PDM from VA, another government agency, or industry informing the audience about an upcoming procurement opportunity. The information presented at a DAP event helps participants gain insight about upcoming procurement opportunities. Upcoming and new events are added periodically; view current events at https://vetbiz.va.gov/events.

Who is the Strategic Outreach and Communications Team?

The Strategic Outreach and Communication (SOC) team provides VOSBs and firms in other socioeconomic categories, such as small business training. Free training topics include the below:

- Doing Business with VA at https://www.va.gov/opal/fo/dbwva.asp.
- Procurement Readiness Training at https://vetbiz.va.gov/businessdevtraining/.
- Direct Access On-Demand Training at https://vetbiz.va.gov/dap/.
- Small Business Liaisons (SBL) are located nationwide to offer advice to Veteran-owned and other small businesses on doing business with VA.

If I'm already open for business, who can assist me with selling to the federal government?

The National Apex Accelerator Alliance (APEX) can help with the required documentation and registration to bid on government contracts. Find the nearest APEX at http://www.napex.us/locations/.

Apply for VA Survivor Benefits

This guide will help you identify VA survivor benefits and services you may be eligible for after your Veteran loved one has passed. It provides information about the different VA survivor benefits and programs available, contact information, required forms, application process, and where to find assistance.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Choose VA

A checklist to help Veteran spouses and dependents apply for survivor benefits:

1 PREPARATION

☐ Learn about the survivor benefits and services that you and your family members may be eligible to receive (see back for list)

☐ Collect the documents necessary to apply for survivor benefits:

- → Veteran's Discharge paperwork (DD214 or other separation documents)
- → Veteran's death certificate (copy)
- → Proof of your relationship to the Veteran (marriage certificate, birth certificates)

2 APPLICATION

☐ Apply by submitting all required documents, including the applicable VA Form and the Veteran's death certificate, to the required servicing location (see back for more information) in one of these ways:

- → **Mail** to the appropriate VA office that serves your state. You can find the VA mailing addresses at https://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/mailingaddresses.asp, OR
- → Work with an accredited Veterans Service Organization (VSO). You can find a VSO at https://www.va.gov/get-help-from-accredited-representative/find-rep/, OR
- → Go directly to your VA Regional Office (RO) for assistance. You can find your local RO at https://www.va.gov/find-locations.
- → For VA Life Insurance claims, **call 800-669-8477**.

3 NEXT STEPS

☐ Visit us **online** at https://www.va.gov/claim-or-appeal-status/ to track the status of your claim.

☐ Provide more information or documentation (if requested by VA).

☐ If approved, take steps to access your awarded benefits.

WHERE CAN I FIND A VETERAN'S SEPARATION DOCUMENTS?

To find the separation documents of the Veteran, you can visit https://www.va.gov/records/get-military-service-records to request a copy of the DD214 or other separation documents of your loved one.

Surviving family members should make duplicate copies of all documents and retain them for their personal files before mailing them to a processing center.

Survivors can also receive free, in-person help preparing the claim from a VSO. Find an accredited VSO online by visiting: https://www.va.gov/get-help-from-accredited-representative/find-rep/.

Survivors can also receive free, in-person help applying for benefits at a VA Regional Office.

Information a spouse or dependent(s) will need to know to file a claim and receive the survivor benefits they may be eligible for:

How would a spouse or dependent(s) know if they are eligible for VA survivor benefits?

Surviving family members can access detailed information to determine if they are eligible for survivor benefits that may be available to them by:

→ Visiting https://va.gov/survivors

→ Contacting VBA directly at 800-827-1000

→ Contacting the Office of Survivors Assistance at 202-461-1077

What benefits and services are available to surviving family members?

These are the benefits and services that may be available to eligible spouses and dependent family members.

BENEFITS

- ☐ Interment in a national cemetery
- ☐ Memorialization and Legacy Programs (https://www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/docs/VASurvivorsKit.pdf)
- ☐ Financial Burial Benefits (VA Form 21P-530)
- ☐ Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (VA Form 21P-534EZ)
- ☐ Parents' Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (VA Form 21P-535)
- ☐ Survivor's Pension (VA Form 21P-534EZ)
- ☐ Dependent's Educational Assistance Program (VA Form 22-5490)
- ☐ Fry Education Scholarship
- ☐ VA Home Loan Benefits
- ☐ Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA)

SERVICES

- ☐ Bereavement counseling is available at VA Vet Centers and VA Medical Center Clergy Services (visit https://www.va.gov/find-locations) or **call** the White House VA Call Center at 800-MYVA411 (800-698-2411), available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Callers can press Option 9 to connect directly with a VA service recovery specialist to share concerns, offer recommendations, or ask questions. You can also **call, text, or chat** for help at the VA Crisis Line at 988, Press 1.
- ☐ Educational and Personalized Career Planning and Guidance (VA Form 28-8832)
- ☐ Beneficiary Financial Counseling Service (BFCS), available for beneficiaries to receive services for two years from date of payment at no charge.

Visit https://www.va.gov/family-and-caregiver-benefits/burials-and-memorials/ for more information or **call** 800-827-1000.

OTHER QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

As a surviving spouse, am I eligible for health care?

VA offers Civilian Health and Medical Program of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA) health care coverage to family members who meet specific eligibility criteria. CHAMPVA is a comprehensive health care program through which VA shares the cost of covered health care services and supplies with eligible beneficiaries in a manner similar to Medicaid and TRICARE. For more information, **call** MyVA411 (800-698-2411) or **visit** https://www.va.gov/family-and-caregiver-benefits/health-and-disability/champva/.

What is the difference between DIC and SBP?

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) is an entitlement benefit paid to eligible survivors (spouse, unmarried child or possible parent) of certain deceased Service members and Veterans who meet specific criteria. DIC is managed by VA. To learn more about DIC, please **visit** https://www.va.gov/disability/dependency-indemnity-compensation.

The Survivor Benefit Program (SBP) is a voluntary annuity program offered for purchase to service members as a retirement benefit for family members and is managed by the Department of War (DoW). Service members who die on active duty and who have never contributed to SBP are automatically covered. Participation in this program is voluntary and not all Service members opt to participate. To learn more about SBP, please **visit** https://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary.

Where can I find information about burial benefits?

Survivor Benefits Guide at https://www.va.gov/SURVIVORS/images/SBB_February_2026_Digital_Edition.pdf.

Apply for VA Education Benefits

This guide will help you apply for VA education benefits, which include the Post-9/11 GI Bill, the Montgomery GI Bill, other educational assistance programs, on-the-job training, and career counseling.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Choose VA

A checklist to help you apply for VA education benefits:

1 RESEARCH

☐ Decide which type of education benefit you want to use.

☐ Learn about schools that offer VA-approved programs by using the GI Bill Comparison Tool (https://www.va.gov/gi-bill-comparison-tool) to:

- → Determine your out-of-pocket costs for each school.
- → Compare school statistics (i.e., graduation and loan repayment rates).

2 PREPARATION

☐ Apply to the program that is best for you:

☐ Collect the following information:

- → **Discharge papers** (**DD214 MEMBER-4** or equivalent)
- → **Orders**, if activated by the Guard or Reserves

3 APPLICATION

☐ Apply by submitting all documents in one of these ways:

☐ Submit your application online by visiting https://www.va.gov/education/how-to-apply/

- → Complete an application **in person** at a VA Regional Office.
- → Work with your school's VA certifying official (this person is usually in the registrar or financial aid office **at the school of your choice**).

4 DECISION

☐ For further information about your benefits, call the Education Call Center at 888-442-4551.

HOW DO I DECIDE WHAT IS BEST FOR ME?

VA provides personalized career planning and guidance to help you decide how best to use your education benefits to support your career goals.

Visit https://www.va.gov/careers-employment/education-and-career-counseling.

WHERE CAN I FIND MY DISCHARGE PAPERS (DD214)?

Visit https://www.va.gov/records/get-military-service-records/ to request a copy of your DD214 records.

Information to know to apply for education benefits:

Am I eligible for VA Education Benefits?

Your eligibility depends on a number of factors, including length and era of service, type of discharge, and time since separation. It's difficult to summarize eligibility because requirements are different for each type of GI Bill. Refer to the table below and **visit** https://www.va.gov/education/about-gi-bill-benefits to learn more about eligibility.

Note: **Work with VA to find out if you are eligible for education benefits as soon as possible. Not all Veterans are eligible.**

Do I have to use education benefits for college?

You can use the GI Bill for more than just academic programs, such as advanced training and certifications in your area of expertise. Examples include:

- Work Study
- On-the-Job Training and Apprenticeships
- Co-op Training
- Non-College Degree Programs
- Entrepreneurship Training
- Flight Training
- National Tests (e.g., SAT, GRE)
- Licensing and Certifications

What are the different types of education benefits?

The GI Bill is the umbrella term for many VA Educational Benefits programs. Review the chart below to determine which GI Bill benefit you should apply for. (This is only a basic summary—these are NOT the only eligibility criteria.)

BENEFIT TYPE	BASIC ELIGIBILITY	WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?
Post-9/11 GI Bill	Qualifying active service on or after 9/11/01	Payment for 40% -100% of tuition; for housing and books
Montgomery GI Bill—Active-Duty	Qualifying active service, high school diploma, or GED	Monthly stipend for tuition and fees (refer to rates table online)*
Montgomery GI Bill—Selective Duty	Six-year commitment to Selected Reserve (usable only while serving)	Monthly stipend for tuition and fees (refer to rates table online)*
Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance	Spouse or dependent of a qualifying Veteran	Monthly stipend for tuition and fees (refer to rates table online)*

*To find the rates for monthly stipends, **visit** https://www.va.gov/education/benefit-rates

Where is my nearest VA Regional Office?

• To locate your nearest VA Facility, **visit** https://www.va.gov/find-locations.

OTHER QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

What is the Yellow Ribbon Program?

The Yellow Ribbon Program helps cover costs that are not covered by the Post-9/11 GI Bill, such as higher tuition at private colleges or those paying out-of-state tuition.

→ **Visit** https://www.va.gov/education/about-gi-bill-benefits/post-9-11/yellow-ribbon-program to learn more.

How does my disability rating affect my benefits?

Additional benefits, including personalized job training and academic counseling, may be available for Veterans with disability ratings of at least 10%. These programs are separate from the GI Bill and must be applied for separately.

→ **Visit** https://www.va.gov/careers-employment/education-and-career-counseling to learn more.

Can I transfer my Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to my family?

Service members may be eligible to transfer up to 36 months of benefits to eligible dependents. This is a military retention benefit administered individually by each military service. For Veterans who have transferred entitlement prior to separating from service, VA provides the benefits to the eligible dependents.

→ **Visit** https://www.va.gov/education/transfer-post-9-11-gi-bill-benefits to learn more.

Are survivors and dependents eligible for benefits?

Dependents or survivors of a Veteran may be eligible for educational assistance through a GI Bill program if one of the following applies to the Veteran:

- Died while on active duty
- Is a prisoner of war or missing in action
- Died or is permanently and totally disabled due to a service-connected disability
- Is hospitalized or receiving outpatient treatment for a service-connected permanent disability and is likely to be discharged for that disability

Apply for Burial in a VA National Cemetery and for Memorial Products

This guide will help you apply for burial in a VA national cemetery, a Government-furnished headstone, marker, or medallion for burial in a private cemetery, a Presidential Memorial Certificate and a burial flag for a loved one.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Choose VA

Apply for VA Burial and Memorial Products:

1 PREPARATION

□ Decide whether burial will be in a VA national cemetery, state or tribal Veterans cemetery or a private cemetery and desired memorial benefits

□ For burial in a VA national cemetery, a private cemetery (for a headstone, marker, or medallion) or for a Presidential Memorial Certificate, collect the following information and submit it with your application, if available:

- → **Discharge document(s) (DD214 Member-4** or equivalent)
- → **Orders**, if activated by Executive Federal Order from the National Guard or Reserves
- → **Pre-need determination approval letter** (if previously completed)

2 APPLICATION

□ **Apply** for burial in a VA national cemetery by:

- → **Faxing** discharge document(s) to 866-900-6417, **or**
- → **Scanning** discharge document(s) to **NCA.Scheduling@va.gov**, **and**
- → **Calling** the National Cemetery Scheduling Office at 800-535-1117

□ **Apply** for a Government-furnished **headstone, marker or medallion** for placement in a private cemetery by submitting a:

- → **VA Form 40-1330**, Claim for Standard Government Headstone or Marker, **or**
- → **VA Form 40-1330M**, Claim for Government Medallion for Placement in a Private Cemetery

□ **Apply for a Presidential Memorial Certificate** by submitting a:

- → **VA Form 40-0247**, Presidential Memorial Certificate Request Form

□ **Apply for a burial flag** by submitting a:

- → **VA Form 27-2008**, Application for United States Flag for Burial Purposes

□ Forms are available at: https://www.cem.va.gov

3 DECISION

□ For more **information** or to find out the **status** of your claim, **call** the:

- → National Cemetery Scheduling Office at 800-535-1117 (for burial in a VA national cemetery), daily, 8AM-7:30PM EST, or
- → Applicant Assistance Unit (for Government-furnished headstones, markers, and medallions) at 800-697-6947, M-F, 8AM-5PM EST.
- → Presidential Memorial Certificates at 202-632-7300, M-F, 8AM-4PM EST.

I WANT TO BE BURIED IN A STATE OR TRIBAL VETERANS CEMETERY

State and tribal Veterans cemeteries may have different requirements to apply for burial. Please contact the cemetery for eligibility and other information.

WHAT IS A PRESIDENTIAL MEMORIAL CERTIFICATE?

A Presidential Memorial Certificate is an engraved paper certificate signed by the current President, honoring the memory of the deceased Veteran.

WHERE DO I SEND THE FORMS?

Headstones, markers, medallions, and Presidential Memorial Certificates, please:

- **Fax** the form to: 800-455-7143 or
- **Mail** the form to:
  Memorial Products Service (41B)
  Department of Veterans Affairs
  5109 Russell Road
  Quantico, VA 22134-3903

BURIAL FLAGS

Visit your nearest VA Regional Office (RO), or a United States Post Office. Your funeral director may also assist.

Information to apply for burial and memorial benefits:

Am I eligible for burial in a VA national cemetery or a memorial benefit?

Veterans, service members, spouses and dependents may be eligible for burial in a VA national cemetery and a memorial product, if they meet one of the requirements listed below:

- A Veteran who did not receive a dishonorable discharge
- A service member who died while on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty for training
- The spouse or minor child of a Veteran, even if the Veteran died first
- The unmarried adult dependent child of a Veteran
- In some cases, National Guard or Reserve members

Note: Spouses and dependents are not eligible to receive a Presidential Memorial Certificate or burial flag, and are not eligible to receive a headstone, marker, or medallion if buried in a private cemetery.

FOR BURIAL AT A VA NATIONAL CEMETERY

Can I plan ahead for my burial in a VA national cemetery?

Yes, first and foremost, you should inform family members about your desires for your burial. VA has a program that can assist by confirming eligibility for burial in a national cemetery. Anyone can apply for the pre-need eligibility determination by completing a **VA Form 40-10007** and submitting it to the address on the form. This program is particularly helpful for those who are uncertain of their eligibility because they do not understand the eligibility requirements, are concerned that their type of service or their characterization of service (discharge type) would not meet the requirement or do not have access to their discharge documents. Veterans, spouses, Retirees, National Guard, and Reserve members are encouraged to apply. However, pre-need eligibility is not required.

What will a funeral director do?

A funeral director will assist the family by gathering and providing the documents needed by VA, calling the National Cemetery Scheduling Office to schedule the burial, acquiring a burial flag, requesting Military Funeral Honors from the Department of War, and serving as a liaison between the family and VA for burial matters.

Are Military Funeral Honors provided at a VA national cemetery?

The Department of War is responsible for providing Military Funeral Honors at VA national cemeteries. Funeral directors usually request Military Funeral Honors on behalf of Veterans' families.

Veterans Service Organizations may assist in the provision of Military Funeral Honors. VA national cemetery staff may also assist in coordinating Military Funeral Honors.

FOR BURIAL IN A PRIVATE CEMETERY

Can a government headstone or marker be provided if a private headstone or marker is already on the grave?

If the Veteran died on or after November 1, 1990, is buried in a private cemetery, and the gravesite is marked with a privately-purchased headstone or marker, the Veteran is eligible for a government-furnished headstone or marker for placement on the same gravesite.

OTHER QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

What does burial in a VA national cemetery include?

Eligible Veterans, Service members or family members receive certain burial benefits at no cost. These burial benefits include:

- A gravesite in any of our 155 national cemeteries with available space
- Opening and closing of the grave
- A grave liner
- A headstone or marker (no application needed)
- A Presidential Memorial Certificate (no application needed)
- Perpetual (ongoing) care of the gravesite

What if I don't have the discharge document(s)?

It is helpful if you are able to provide the discharge documents. This will reduce delays and ensure we have the most accurate military information for inscribing the headstone or marker. However, if you do not have the Veteran's discharge documents, **we will help** obtain the information needed to determine eligibility.

Where is my nearest VA national cemetery, and state and tribal Veterans' cemetery?

To locate your nearest cemetery, visit https://www.cem.va.gov/find-cemetery/.

Do I have to pay for a headstone, marker, or medallion?

No, you do not have to pay for the headstone, marker or medallion itself, but some private cemeteries charge a setting or installation fee. Please contact the cemetery for more information.

For forms or more information, **visit** https://www.cem.va.gov.