

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

HELLO.

Welcome to VA. Let's get started.

WHAT'S INSIDE?

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Get additional details on accessing key VA benefits and services



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 online at <https://www.va.gov>**

GET HELP FOR
YOURSELF OR A
FRIEND IMMEDIATELY

Call the **Veterans Crisis Line** at **800-273-8255** and **press 1**, or refer *Your emergency resources (p15)* to find additional resources and access immediate care.



Health Care

- Basic and Specialty Care
- Mental Health Care
- Long-Term Care
- Crisis Support



Finances

- Monthly Disability Payments
- Life Insurance
- Burial Allowances



Housing

- Home Loans
- Refinancing Options
- Specially Adapted Housing Assistance



Employment

- Skills Training & 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

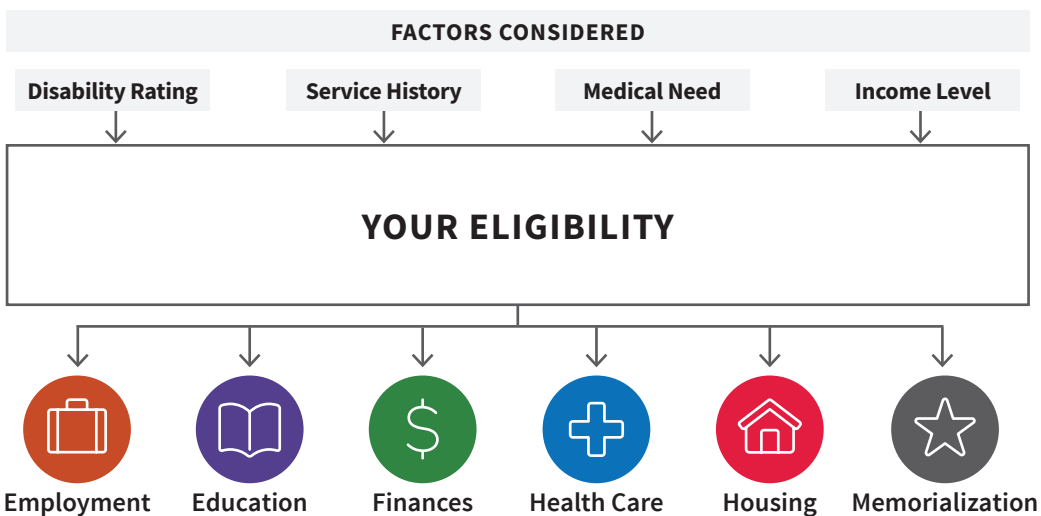
Access to VA benefits and services depends on your eligibility. Eligibility is determined using different factors depending on the benefit. While a lot of information is used to determine your eligibility for benefits, **one critical factor may be your disability rating.**

What is eligibility?

VA uses “eligibility” to describe **the benefits and services a Veteran can access.** Each benefit you are trying to access may require a different set of eligibility 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 need, and income level.**



Understand your Disability Rating

Your disability rating is one of several factors that affects 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%.** A 0% rating 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
- Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E)
- Enrollment in VA health care
- 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://benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/derivative_sc.asp

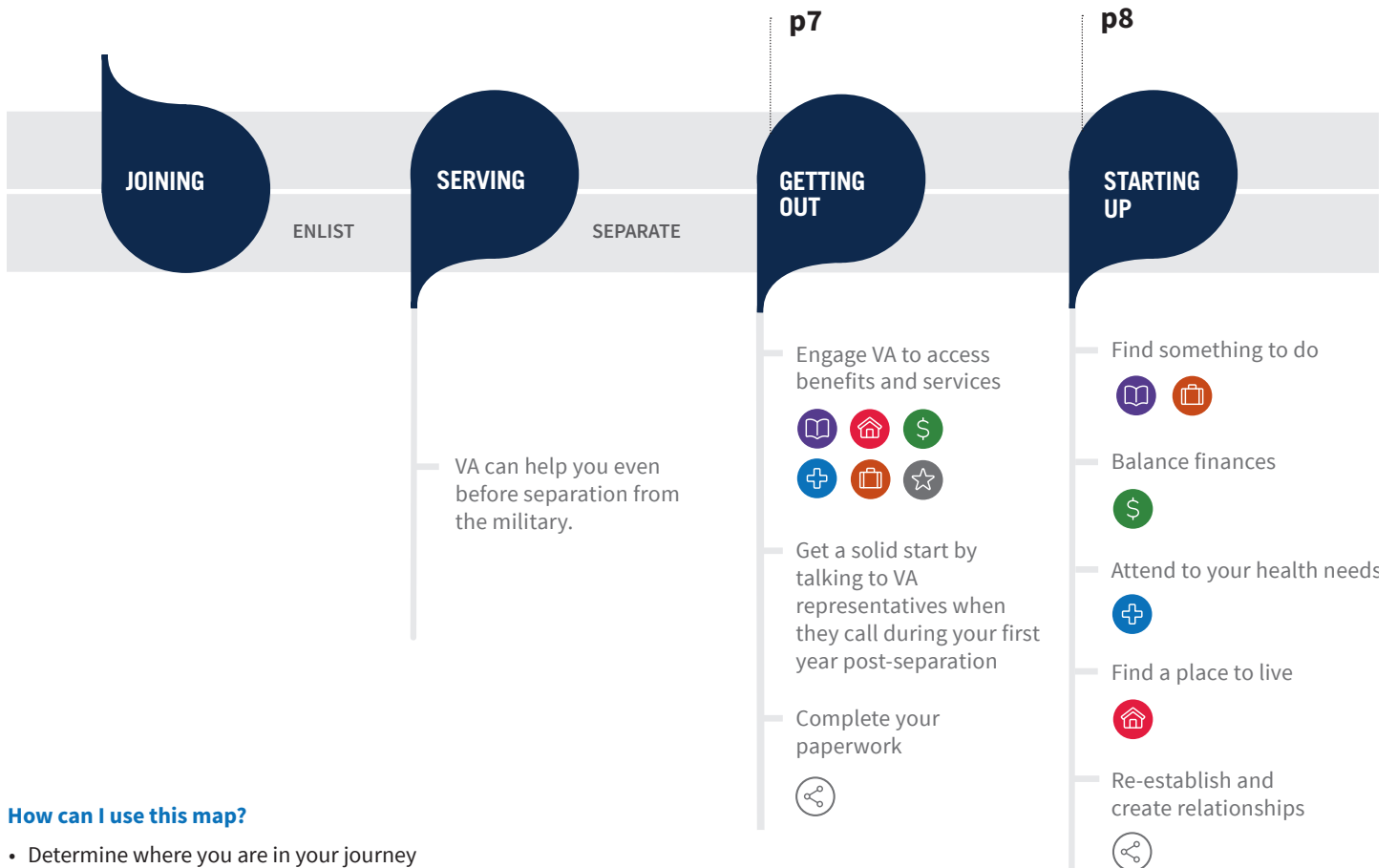
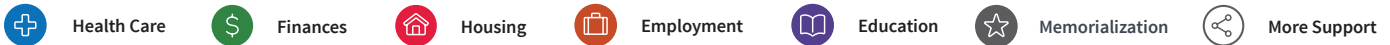
WHERE CAN YOU GET IN-PERSON HELP?

You can receive help preparing your claim from a Veterans Service Organization (VSO). To find a VSO, visit <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/vso-search> 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 ways.** Use this map to explore how VA can support you both now and in the future.

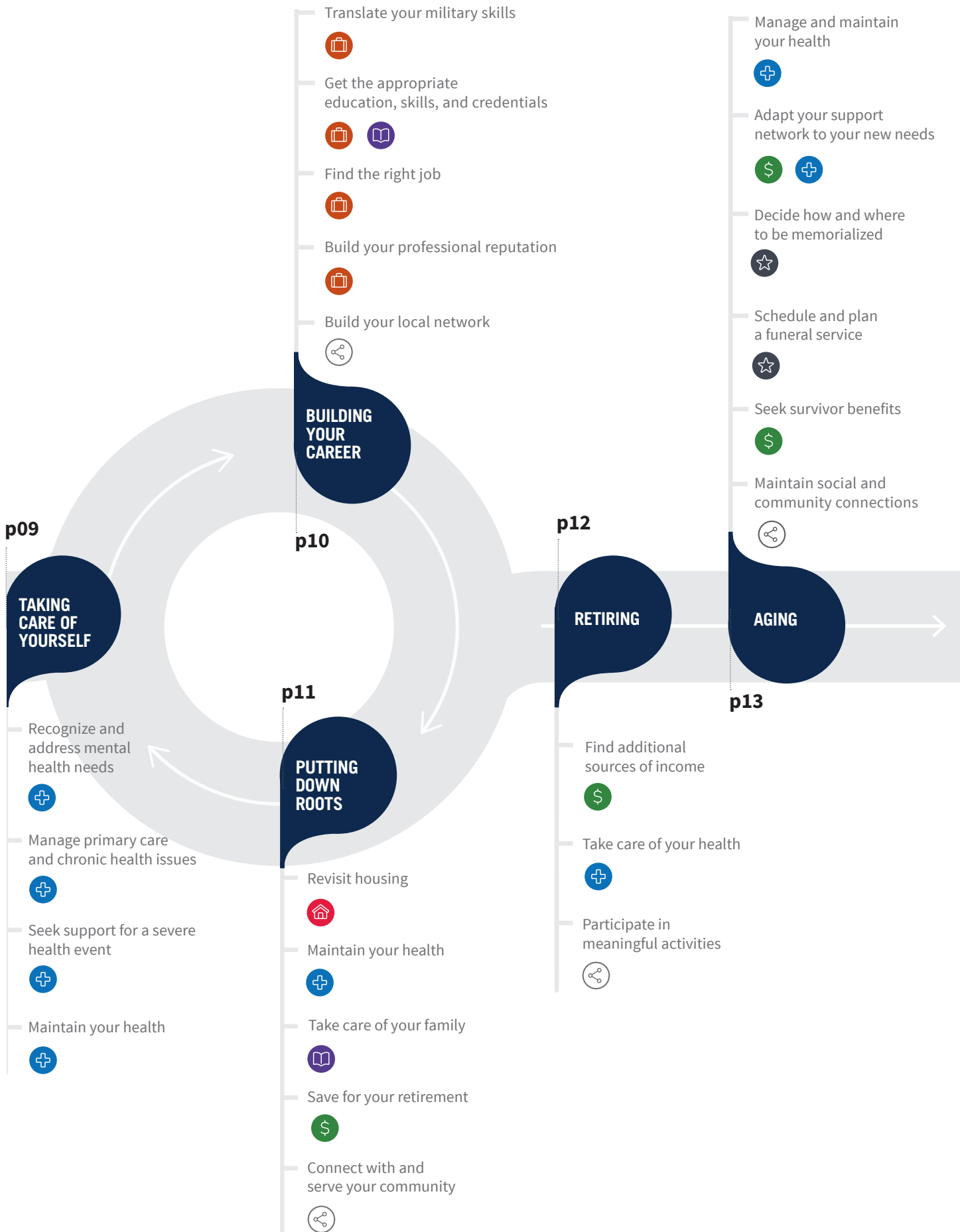
WHAT DO YOU NEED?



How can I use this map?





- Determine where you are in your journey
- Review the benefits information for where you are in your journey
- Read ahead to discover how VA may be able to support you in the future

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








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	<i>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.</i>	Find out more: https://benefits.va.gov/benefits/solid-start.asp	Ask us a question VA411: 800-698-2411	Locate facilities: https://www.va.gov/find-locations
	 Continue your education	GI Bill <i>Helps pay for education for Veterans or their dependents</i>	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 <i>Receive personalized, professional planning and guidance to help you choose how to use your education benefits to support your career goals</i>	https://www.va.gov/careers-employment/education-and-career-counseling	VA Benefits Line: 800-827-1000	Your VA Regional Office
	 Become a homeowner	<i>VA can help you obtain a VA-guaranteed loan</i>	https://www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans	Regional Loan Center: 877-827-3702	Your VA Regional Loan Center
	 Apply for a disability rating	Disability Compensation <i>Compensation paid to Veterans for a disability related to service</i>	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 <i>Life insurance for Veterans and their families. Some benefits are time sensitive from date of separation.</i>	https://www.benefits.va.gov/insurance	Life Insurance Line: 800-669-8477	Your VA Regional Office
	 Apply for supplemental income	Veterans Pension <i>Supplemental income available to low-income wartime Veterans</i>	https://www.va.gov/pension	VA Benefits Line: 800-827-1000	Your VA Regional Office
	 Apply for enrollment in VA health care	VA Health Care <i>Inpatient and outpatient health services at VA Medical Centers, clinics, and potentially in the community</i>	https://www.va.gov/health-care	Health Care Line: 877-222-8387 (press 1)	Your local VA Medical Center
	 Prepare to find a job	Careers and Employment <i>Veterans with service connected disabilities receive individualized support for their education, training or credentialing needs for employment</i>	https://www.va.gov/careers-employment	VA Benefits Line: 800-827-1000	Your VA Regional Office for Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E)
Complete your paperwork	 Request your service records and discharge papers	<i>Request military records such as your DD214</i>	https://www.va.gov	National Personnel Records Center: 314-801-0800	

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 out more: https://www.va.gov	Ask us a question VA411: 800-698-2411	Locate facilities: https://www.va.gov/find-locations
Find something to do	 Continue your education	GI Bill <i>Helps pay for education for Veterans or their dependents</i>	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 <i>Receive personalized, professional planning and guidance to help you choose how to use your education benefits to support your career goals</i>	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 <i>Veterans with service connected disabilities receive individualized support for their education, training or credentialing needs for employment</i>	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 <i>Compensation paid to Veterans for a disability related to service</i>	https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim	VA Benefits Line: 800-827-1000	Your VA Regional Office
Attend to your health needs	 Apply for enrollment in VA health care	VA Health Care <i>Inpatient and outpatient health services at VA Medical Centers, clinics, and potentially in the community</i>	https://www.va.gov/health-care	Health Care Line: 877-222-8387 (press 0)	Your local VA Medical Center
	 Seek help for mental health needs	Mental Health Care <i>Inpatient and outpatient mental health services</i>	https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/MENTALHEALTH/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 <i>Home loan benefits for Veterans</i>	https://www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans	Regional Loan Center: 877-827-3702	Your VA Regional Loan Center
	 Housing to accommodate your disability	Specially Adapted Housing Assistance <i>Financial help for certain Veterans to acquire or adapt a home made necessary by certain service-connected disabilities</i>	https://www.va.gov/housing-assistance/#get-veterans-housing-assistance-grants	Regional Loan Center: 877-827-3702	Your VA Regional Loan Center
Re-establish and create relationships	 Meet Veterans and people who can help	Veterans Service Organizations (VSO) <i>Variety of services and community opportunities for Veterans and their loved ones</i>	Find a VSO near you at: https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/vso-search		

WHAT DO YOU NEED?








-  Health Care
-  Finances
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-  More Support

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
			Find out more: https://www.va.gov	Ask us a question VA411: 800-698-2411	Locate facilities: https://www.va.gov/find-locations
Recognize and address mental health needs	 Address mental health needs	Mental Health Care <i>Inpatient and outpatient mental health services</i>	https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/MENTALHEALTH/get-help/index.asp	Health Care Line: 877-222-8387 (press 0)	Your local VA Medical Center or Vet Center
	 Use counseling services	Vet Center <i>Counseling, outreach, and referral services to eligible active duty service members, Veterans and their families</i>	https://www.vetcenter.va.gov	Vet Center Line: 877-927-8387	Your local Vet Center
Manage primary care and chronic health issues	 Get regular medical care	VA Health Care <i>Inpatient and outpatient health services at VA Medical Centers, clinics, and potentially in the community</i>	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	MISSION Act/Community Care <i>Covered access to non-VA health care</i>	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 <i>For urgent health events (example: like colds, sore throat, ankle sprain)</i>	https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/veterans/Urgent_Care.asp	Urgent Care Program: 833-4VETNOW (833) 483-8669	Your local VA Medical Center with an Urgent Care
	 Get help in an emergency	Emergency Care <i>Emergency medical care at your local VA Medical Center with an Emergency Department (example: like chest pain or stroke symptoms)</i>	https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/veterans/Emergency_Care.asp	Health Care Line: 877-222-8387 (press 0)	Your local VA Medical Center
Maintain your health	 Get regular check-ups	Preventive Care <i>Services such as vaccinations and health screenings</i>	https://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/access/preventative_care_services.asp	Health Care Line: 877-222-8387 (press 0)	Your local VA Medical Center
	 Get women-specific care	Women Veterans Health Care <i>Women-specific health care</i>	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 <i>Online tool to make health decisions and manage care</i>	https://www.myhealth.va.gov	My HealtheVet Help Desk: 877-327-0022	Your local VA Medical Center

WHAT DO YOU NEED?








-  Health Care
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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
			Find out more: https://www.va.gov	Ask us a question VA411: 800-698-2411	Locate facilities: https://www.va.gov/find-locations
Translate your military skills	 Put your military skills to use	Careers and Employment <i>Receive personalized, professional planning and guidance to help you choose how to use your education benefits to support your career goals</i>	https://www.va.gov/careers-employment		
Get the appropriate education, skills, and credentials	 Continue your education	GI Bill <i>Helps pay for education for Veterans or their dependents</i>	https://www.va.gov/education/about-gi-bill-benefits	Education Center: 888-442-4551 From Overseas: 001-918-781-5678	
	 Obtain Educational and Career Counseling	Personalized Career Planning and Guidance <i>Receive personalized, professional planning and guidance to help you choose how to use your education benefits to support your career goals</i>	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) <i>Veterans with service connected disabilities receive individualized support for their education, training or credentialing needs for employment</i>	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 <i>Personalized career planning, guidance, and hiring events</i>	https://www.va.gov/careers-employment		
	 Consider working for the federal government	Veterans' Preference <i>Gives Veterans an advantage in the application process for federal government jobs</i>	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) <i>Helps Veteran-owned small businesses compete for federal contracts set aside for VOSBs</i>	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) <i>Variety of services and community opportunities for Veterans and their loved ones</i>	Find a VSO near you at: https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/vso-search		

WHAT DO YOU NEED?







-  Health Care
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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
			Find out more: https://www.va.gov	Ask us a question VA411: 800-698-2411	Locate facilities: https://www.va.gov/find-locations
Revisit housing	 Become a homeowner	VA Home Loans <i>Home loan benefits for Veterans</i>	https://www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans	Regional Loan Center: 877-827-3702	Your VA Regional Loan Center
	 Refinance existing home loans	VA Refinance Loans <i>Refinance loan benefits can allow for refinancing of existing home loans</i>	https://www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans	Regional Loan Center: 877-827-3702	Your VA Regional Loan Center
Maintain your health	 Address mental health needs	Mental Health Care <i>Inpatient and outpatient mental health services</i>	https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/MENTALHEALTH/get-help/index.asp	Health Care Line: 877-222-8387 (press 0)	Your local VA Medical Center or Vet Center
	 Improve your well-being	Social Work <i>Helps with housing, income, social, and emotional needs</i>	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 <i>Helps pay for education for Veterans or their dependents</i>	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 <i>Receive personalized, professional planning and guidance to help you choose how to use your education benefits to support your career goals</i>	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 <i>Supplemental income available to low-income wartime Veterans</i>	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 <i>Variety of services and community opportunities for Veterans and their loved ones</i>	Find a VSO near you at: https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/vso-search		

WHAT DO YOU NEED?







-  Health Care
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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
			Find out more: https://www.va.gov	Ask us a question VA411: 800-698-2411	Locate facilities: https://www.va.gov/find-locations
Receive income for disabilities	 Apply for a disability rating	Disability Compensation <i>Compensation paid to Veterans for a disability related to service</i>	https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim	VA Benefits Line: 800-827-1000	Your VA Regional Office
Take care of your health	 Get regular medical care	VA Health Care <i>Inpatient and outpatient health services at VA Medical Centers, clinics, and potentially in the community</i>	https://www.va.gov/health-care	Health Care Line: 877-222-8387 (press 0)	Your local VA Medical Center
	 Address hearing needs	Audiology <i>Care for hearing aids and/or other hearing assistive devices for Veterans</i>	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 <i>Rehabilitation services for blind and low-vision Veterans</i>	https://www.va.gov/optometry or https://www.prosthetics.va.gov/features/Blinded-Veterans.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 <i>Variety of services and community opportunities for Veterans and their loved ones</i>	Find a VSO near you at: https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/vso-search		

WHAT DO YOU NEED?








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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
			Find out more: https://www.va.gov	Ask us a question VA411: 800-698-2411	Locate facilities: https://www.va.gov/find-locations
Update your life insurance benefits	 Make sure you have updated your beneficiaries	VA Life Insurance <i>Offers financial security for Veterans, servicemembers, and their spouses and dependent children</i>	https://www.va.gov/life-insurance	Support for SGLI or VGLI: 800-419-1473	Your VA Regional Office
Manage and maintain your health	 Get regular medical care	VA Health Care <i>Inpatient and outpatient health services at VA Medical Centers, clinics, and potentially in the community</i>	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 <i>Nursing care, hospice, and adult day health care</i>	https://www.va.gov/geriatrics	Health Care Line: 877-222-8387 (press 0)	Your local VA Medical Center
Adapt support network to your new needs	 Seek in-home support	Skilled Home Health Care <i>In-home care by a professional</i>	https://www.va.gov/GERIATRICS/pages/Skilled_Home_Health_Care.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 Benefits <i>Payments for Veterans who are housebound or require the aid of another person in daily life</i>	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 <i>Schedule and plan funeral and burial arrangements</i>	https://www.cem.va.gov https://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-10007.pdf	VA Benefits Line: 800-827-1000 Scheduling: 800-535-1117	Your VA Regional Office
Finance your burial	 Get financial assistance for burial services	Burial Allowance <i>Financial assistance for funeral and burial services</i>	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 Benefits <i>Various benefits available to the survivors of a deceased Veteran</i>	https://www.va.gov/opa/persona/dependent_survivor.asp	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 Organization (VSO) <i>Variety of services and community opportunities for Veterans and their loved ones</i>	Find a VSO near you at: https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/vso-search		

WHAT DO YOU NEED?

-  Health Care
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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** VA411 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 benefits

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 for Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) Disability Extension)
(2 years from date of rating 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)
- **Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment**
(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.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/vso-search> for more information

WHAT ARE DISCHARGE PAPERS?

Your discharge papers—also known as your **DD214 member-4**—are the most important documents to keep. They are necessary to get access to VA benefits. Request yours at <https://www.va.gov>

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
Veteran’s Crisis Line	https://www.veteranscrisisline.net <i>(click “chat”)</i>	800-273-8255 (press 1) text 838255 <i>24 hours a day / 7 days a week</i>
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org <i>(click “Chat With Lifeline”)</i>	800-273-8255 <i>24 hours a day / 7 days a week</i>
Military Sexual Trauma Support <i>(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.)</i>	Find a Medical Center or Vet Center https://www.va.gov/find-locations	<i>Call your local Medical Center or Vet Center.</i> <i>At Medical Centers, ask to speak to the MST coordinator.</i>
National Call Center for Homeless Vets	https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help/chat/homeless-veterans-chat <i>(click “Start your confidential chat”)</i>	877-424-3838 <i>24 hours a day / 7 days a week</i>
Women Veterans Call Center	https://www.womenshealth.va.gov <i>(click “Chat with the Women Veterans Call Center”)</i>	855-VA-WOMEN 855-829-6636 <i>M-F, 8 AM–10 PM EST Sat, 8 AM–6:30 PM EST</i>
VA Caregiver Support Line	https://www.caregiver.va.gov	855-260-3274 <i>M-F, 8 AM–8 PM EST</i>

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 VA 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	VA411: 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 WELCOME KIT FEEDBACK	VAWelcomeKit@va.gov

VA



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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.



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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)

WHERE CAN I FIND MY DISCHARGE PAPERS?

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

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 the Health Eligibility Center (2957 Clairmont Road, Suite 200, Atlanta, GA 30329)

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.

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

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.

4

NEXT STEPS

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

- Review priority group assignment** and personalized benefits 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 Identificaton Card (VHIC)**

WHAT IS A VHIC?

A **VHIC** is a photo ID that gives you access to VA Health Care facilities. When you're enrolled in VA Health Care, you can get a VHIC by making an appointment with your local VA Medical Center to get your picture taken for your VHIC.

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 be first 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 under your 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 may cover.

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 **can 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. check-ups)
- Outpatient care (e.g. mental health care and substance abuse counseling)
- Inpatient care (e.g. surgery)
- Medications and supplies



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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.

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** 1-800-273-8255, press 1
- **Text** a message to 838255
- **Online** <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net>, click “chat”

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 from VA or VA may be able to connect you with mental health resources in your community.

- **Online** <http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/gethelp.asp>

Am I eligible for VA mental health care?

Most former Servicemembers 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 Servicemembers 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.

I separated from uniformed service many years ago.

- All former Servicemembers 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 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.**

- 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., 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. (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 free individual and group counseling for Veterans and their families, if the Veteran served in a combat zone or area of hostility, or served as part of a mortuary affairs or drone crew. 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 Servicemembers 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 be first 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 provide 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 Servicemembers, Veterans (up to one year after separation), and their immediate family members.

→ **Call** 800-342-9647

→ **Online** <https://www.militaryonesource.mil>
click to chat 

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 a.m.–8 p.m. (EST)

→ **Online** https://www.caregiver.va.gov/help_landing.asp

→ **Find** a Caregiver Support Coordinator in person at a VA Medical Center

Understanding Community Care



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This guide will help you understand the process for receiving care from a community provider. Veterans can expect better access to and greater choice in their health care, whether at VA or through a community provider.

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 from a VA medical service that VA determines is not providing care that complies with 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 travel time to receive primary care, mental health, and non-institutional extended care services (including adult home day care)
- 60 minutes travel time to receive specialty care services

What are the wait time access standards?

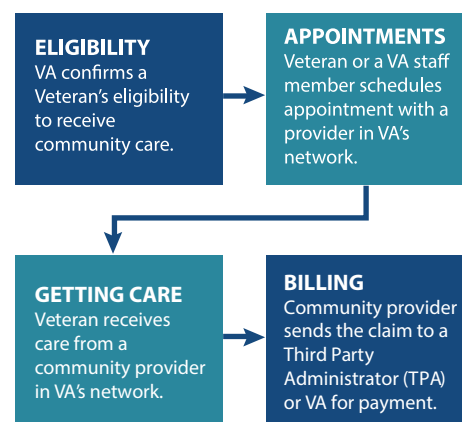
You may be eligible if the wait time for an appointment at a VA medical facility that provides the service you need exceeds:

- 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 your 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 or fewer days supply 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 with community care as they do if you receive care 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 to eligible Veterans. 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 the care, or if you need 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, if you are eligible for community care, you still have the choice to receive care at a VA medical facility.

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. The urgent care benefit provides eligible Veterans with greater choices and access to timely, high-quality care.



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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 healthcare 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 benefit. 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** VA411 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 <https://www.va.gov/find-locations>. For telephone assistance finding locations, please **call** 877-881-7618 (8 a.m. – 8 p.m. ET).

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. 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First three (3) visits: \$0• Fourth and > visits: \$30
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If related to combat experience, *special authority or exposure:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ First three (3) visits: \$0▪ Fourth and > visits: \$30• If not related to combat experience, special authority or exposure:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ \$30 per visit
7 – 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$30 per visit
1 – 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$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 that is not part of the VA network, or directly at a VA pharmacy. Opiates will be limited to seven days or less, consistent with the pharmacy location's state law.

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. These will be billed separately to you, by VA, as a part of VA's normal billing process.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

What services are covered?

Find a list of services at:

https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/veterans/Urgent_Care

How do I find an in-network pharmacy?

Visit Va's facility locator at <https://www.va.gov/find-locations> to locate.

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.



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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

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 Veterans Affairs (VA) healthcare have access to PGCSS. Caregivers who enroll in PGCSS have access to education and training, including courses at local VA medical centers (VAMCs). 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 CSC 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 benefit

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

Visit us online at https://www.caregiver.va.gov/pdfs/MissionAct/CSP_Expansion_Factsheet_092720_Approved_Final.pdf

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 will 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 9/11/2001.

Your CSC can provide you with more information.

PCAFC TEN 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/pdfs/MissionAct/ApplicationProcessFactsheet_Chapter2_Launch_Approved_Final_100820.pdf

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 caregiver 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
10. Notification – Within 90 days of the application being received by the 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-member-benefits/apply-for-caregiver-assistance-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.

More information and Fact Sheets

- For more information on the Caregivers **PCAFC expansion**, visit https://www.caregiver.va.gov/pdfs/MissionAct/CSP_Expansion_Factsheet_092720_Approved_Final.pdf
- Caregivers PCAFC **Eligibility** Under the New Final Rule, visit https://www.caregiver.va.gov/pdfs/MissionAct/EligibilityCriteriaFactsheet_Chapter2_Launch_Approved_Final_100120.pdf
- Caregivers PCAFC **Application Process**, visit https://www.caregiver.va.gov/pdfs/MissionAct/ApplicationProcessFactsheet_Chapter2_Launch_Approved_Final_100820.pdf
- Caregivers PCAFC Changes for **Current Participants**, visit https://www.caregiver.va.gov/pdfs/MissionAct/LegacyReassessmentFactsheet_Chapter3_Legacy_Approved_Final_10012020.pdf
- Caregivers PCAFC **Monthly Stipend** Under the New Final Rule, visit https://www.caregiver.va.gov/pdfs/MissionAct/CSP_Stipend_Factsheet_092720_Approved_Final.pdf

Getting Started with Women Veterans Health Services



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

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.

Choose **VA**

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 844-222-8387 (press 1); M-F, 8am-8pm EST
 - Visit us **in person** at a VA Medical Center
 - Print out and **mail** the completed form to the Health Eligibility Center (2957 Clairmont Road, Suite 200, Atlanta, GA 30329)

3

REVIEW AND DECISION

- Call** 844-222-8387 (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 benefits 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 Identificaton Card (VHIC)**

WHERE CAN I FIND MY DISCHARGE PAPERS?

Visit [eBenefits.va.gov](https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/homepage) (<https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/homepage>) 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 what type of VA Health Care services you can access and how much you will need to pay for those services.

WHAT IS A VHIC?

*A **VHIC** is a photo ID that gives you access to VA Health Care facilities. When you're enrolled in VA Health Care, you can get a VHIC by making an appointment with your local VA Medical Center to get your picture taken for your VHIC.*

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 mammogram, Pap and colonoscopy
 - ✓ 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:**
<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. The 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:**
1-855-VA-WOMEN (1-855-829-6636)
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 call as often as you like. The Call Center is available Monday through Friday 8 a.m. - 10 p.m. ET, and on Saturdays from 8 a.m. - 6:30 p.m. ET. Call, chat or text available.
- **Veterans Crisis line** at 1-800-273-8255 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.



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Choose VA

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 separate from VA organizational sites to ensure confidential counseling and reduce barriers to care.

What are Vet Centers?

There are 300 Vet Centers and 83 Mobile Vet Centers (MVCs) 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 TBI, depression, etc.

Who is eligible to receive services at Vet Centers?

Any Veteran or active duty Service member, to include members of Reserve components, are 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 the 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 have accessed care at a Vet Center prior to January 2, 2013
- Family members of Veterans and service members, to include 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 Healthcare or have a service connected disability.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO BE SEEN?

Anyone who walks into 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 any 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. Assessment and referral for sexual trauma counseling is available at all Vet Centers. Onsite counseling is available at Vet Centers across the country.

Will Vet Centers share my information with VA or the Department of Defense (DoD)?

Confidentiality is very important. Vet Centers are safe places to discuss feelings or emotions that may arise after transitioning out of the military, experiences endured while serving in combat, or from sexual assault or trauma that occurred while serving. Vet Center records are not linked to any mental or behavioral health records and will not be shared with VA Medical Centers or the DoD without a signed release of information from the Veteran or Service member.

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 1-877-WAR-VETS (1-877-927-8387).

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 Veterans ages 65+



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Choose VA

This guide will help you access services that may be of interest to Veterans ages 65 and older 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.

What types of benefits and services are available for Veterans ages 65 and older 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 Veterans 65 and older such as Aid and Attendance and Housebound Allowance.

Disability Pension is payable to Veterans of 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 requires 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 VA 411 or 800-698-2411. You can also go online at:

Disability Pension Eligibility

<https://www.va.gov/pension/eligibility>

Aid and Attendance or Housebound Benefits

https://benefits.va.gov/pension/aid_attendance_housebound.asp

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 healthcare 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:

- *Planning Your Legacy: VA Survivors and Burial Benefits Kit:*
http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/docs/factsheets/Planning_Legacy_Booklet.pdf
- *Burial Benefits:*
http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/burial_benefits/index.asp

VA Health Care for Veterans 65 and Older

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> OR
- Work with an accredited Veteran Service Officer or agent. You can find a VSO at <http://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/vso-search> OR
- **Write** to the Pension Management Center (PMC) that serves your state. You can find your PMC at <https://www.benefits.va.gov/PENSION/resources-contact.asp> OR
- **Call** 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/vaforms/form_detail.asp?FormNo=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 8:00 AM– 8:00 PM EST
- **Visit** us online at www.caregiver.va.gov
- Find a Caregiver Support Coordinator **in person** at a VA Medical Center

Apply for a Disability Rating



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Choose VA

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 on-going health care.

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 reports** 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 filed*
- *How many injuries/disabilities you claimed*
- *How long it takes for VA to gather supporting evidence*
- *How many claims were in line when yours 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 you have a disease, injury, or condition that resulted from service or was made worse during your military service.**

Common conditions include:

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

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

Who can file a disability claim?

- Veterans
- Servicemembers 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/Servicemembers

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 who are familiar with the process of filing a claim. Many accredited representatives work for Veterans Service Organizations (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.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/VSO-search>
- 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>

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 a standard claim

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 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>

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 new 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 new 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 your claim through one of the new decision review lanes, your effective date remains protected.

Option 1: A Supplemental Claim

You are adding or identifying 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. 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**, complete

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/get-help-with-review-request>

Contact your local VA office for assistance with appointing a representative or **visit** <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/manage/representative>

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

Apply for VA Survivor Benefits



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Choose VA

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.

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

1

PREPARATION

- Learn about different **types of survivor benefits and services** you and/or family members may be eligible for (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 Veteran (marriage certificate, birth certificates)

2

APPLICATION

- Apply by submitting all required documents, to include 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/maillingaddresses.asp> OR
 - Work with an accredited Veterans Service Organization (VSO). You can find a VSO at <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/vso-search> 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 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/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 separations documents of the Veteran, you can **visit** <https://www.va.gov/records/get-military-service-records> to request 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 Veterans Service Organization (VSO). Find an accredited VSO **online** by visiting: <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/vso-search>.

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 by:

- Visiting <https://www.va.gov/survivors> or <https://www.va.gov/family-member-benefits>
- Contacting VBA directly at 800-827-1000
- Contacting the Office of Survivors Assistance at 202-461-1077

What benefits and services are available for 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.cem.va.gov/cem/docs/factsheets/Planning_Legacy_Booklet.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 Vet Centers and VA Medical Center Clergy Services (**visit:** <https://www.va.gov/find-locations>) or **call** the White House VA Call Center (<https://www.va.gov/ve/whvahotline.asp>) at 855-948-2311. You can also **call, text, or chat** for help at the VA Crisis line 800-273-8255.
- Educational and Personalized Career Planning and Guidance (VA Form 28-8832)
- Beneficiary Financial Counseling

Visit <https://www.va.gov/family-member-benefits> for more information or **call** 800-827-1000.

OTHER QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

As a surviving spouse am I eligible for healthcare?

The Department of Veterans Affairs offers Civilian Health and Medical Program of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA) healthcare coverage to family members who meet specific eligibility criteria. CHAMPVA is a comprehensive health care program managed by the Veterans Health Administration Office of Community Care (VHA OCC). The VA shares the cost of covered health care services and supplies with eligible beneficiaries similar to Medicaid and TriCare. For more information, **call** 800-698-2411 or **visit** <https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/dependents/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 possibly parent) of certain deceased Servicemembers and Veterans that meet specific criteria. DIC is managed by the Department of Veterans Affairs. 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 Servicemembers as a retirement benefit for family members and is managed by the Department of Defense (DoD). Servicemembers who die on active duty and who have never contributed to SBP are automatically covered. Participation in this program is voluntary and not all Servicemembers opt to participate. To learn more about SBP, please **visit** <https://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary>

Where can I find information about Burial Benefits?

Planning Your Legacy: A Survivors and Burial Benefits Kit https://www.cem.va.gov/cem/docs/factsheets/Planning_Legacy_Booklet.pdf and at https://www.cem.va.gov/cem/burial_benefits/index.asp

Apply for Education Benefits



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Choose VA

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.

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)

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>

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 from the Guard or the Reserves

WHERE CAN I FIND MY DISCHARGE PAPERS?

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

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 benefit, **call** the Education Call Center 888-442-4551

Information you'll need 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; stipend 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—Selected Reserve	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.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab> to learn more

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

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

- **Visit** <https://www.va.gov/education/survivor-dependent-benefits> to learn more

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



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Choose **VA**

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.

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 products
- 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 ET, or
 - Applicant Assistance Unit (for Government-furnished headstones, markers, and medallions) at 800-697-6947, M-F, 8am-5pm ET.
 - Presidential Memorial Certificates at 202-632-7300, M-F, 8am-4pm ET.

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 a burial eligibility determination.

WHAT IS A PRESIDENTIAL MEMORIAL CERTIFICATE?

A Presidential Memorial Certificate is an engraved paper certificate signed by the current president.

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 benefit office, or a United States Post Office. Your funeral director may also assist.

Information you'll need to know to apply for burial and memorial products:

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

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, or
- The spouse or minor child of a Veteran, even if the Veteran died first, or
- 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, you can plan ahead to make the process of applying for a burial in a VA national cemetery easier for your family members in the event of your death. To do this, you will need to apply for pre-need eligibility determination by completing a **VA Form 40-10007**, Application for Pre-need Determination of Eligibility for Burial in a VA National Cemetery and submitting it to the address on the form. 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 Defense 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 Defense is responsible for providing Military Funeral Honors at VA national cemeteries. "Honoring Those Who Served," calls for funeral directors to 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 to coordinate 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?

Veterans, Service members or family members eligible for burial in a VA national cemetery receive certain burial benefits at no cost.

These burial benefits include:

- A gravesite in any of our 141 national cemeteries with available space,
- Opening and closing of the grave,
- A burial liner,
- A headstone or marker (no application needed),
- A Presidential Memorial Certificate (no application needed) and
- 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 document(s). 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 document(s), **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 VA national cemetery, visit: <http://www.cem.va.gov/cems/listcem/asp>.

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. VA does not pay this fee. Please contact the cemetery for more information.

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

You may also contact us via Facebook or Twitter at:

<https://www.facebook.com/NationalCemeteries>

<https://twitter.com/VANatCemeteries>