



Supplemental
income for
wartime
Veterans

Summary of VA Pension Benefits



VA helps Veterans with wartime service and their families cope with financial challenges by providing supplemental income through Veterans Pension and Survivors Pension benefits.

ELIGIBILITY FOR VA PENSION BENEFITS

Requirements	Service Requirements	Age / Disability	Income and Net Worth
Veterans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discharged from service under other than dishonorable conditions Served 90 days or more of active duty with at least one day during a period of war¹ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age 65 or older, OR Permanently and totally disabled (not due to own personal misconduct), OR Patient in a nursing home receiving skilled nursing care, OR Receiving Social Security disability benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Countable family income is below the amount set by Congress Unreimbursed medical expenses may reduce countable income Net worth is not excessive
Un-remarried Surviving Spouses	Spouse must have met all Veteran Service Requirements listed above	N/A	
Unmarried Children	Parent must have met all Veteran Service Requirements	<p>Must be under 18 years of age, or under age 23 if attending a VA-approved school</p> <p><i>Children who are permanently incapable of self-support due to a disability before age 18 may also be eligible</i></p>	

INCOME AND NET WORTH LIMITATIONS

If eligible, your pension benefit is the difference between your “countable” income and the annual pension limit set by Congress. VA generally pays this difference in 12 equal monthly payments.

Countable income. Includes income from most sources as well as from any eligible dependents. It generally includes earnings, disability and retirement payments, interest and dividend payments from annuities, and net income from farming or a business. Some expenses, such as unreimbursed medical expenses, may reduce your countable income.

Net worth. Includes assets such as bank accounts, stocks, bonds, mutual funds, annuities, and any property other than your residence and a reasonable lot area. You should report all of your net worth. VA will determine whether your assets are of a sufficiently large amount that you could live off of them for a reasonable period of time.

¹ Veterans who entered active duty after September 7, 1980 must also serve at least 24 months of active duty service. If the total length of service is less than 24 months, the Veteran must have completed his or her entire tour of active duty.

Yearly Income

Your yearly family income must be less than the amount set by Congress to qualify for the Veterans or Survivors’ Pension benefit. You can view the current income limits, sample pension calculations, and determine your estimated benefit amount at www.vba.va.gov.

Access Your VA Benefits

Go to eBenefits at www.ebenefits.va.gov, your one-stop shop to learn about and apply for your benefits.





HOW TO APPLY

To apply for pension benefits, fill out and submit the following forms:

- » **Veterans Pension:** Veteran's Application for Compensation and/or Pension (VA Form 21-526)
- » **Survivors Pension:** Application for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, Death Pension, and Accrued Benefits by Surviving Spouse or Child (VA Form 21-534)

You can access these forms by:

- » Applying online via www.ebenefits.va.gov, your one-stop shop to apply for and learn about your benefits, if you're a Veteran
- » Downloading either form at www.va.gov/forms
- » Calling VA toll free at 1-800-827-1000 to have a claim form mailed to you
- » Visiting your local VA regional office. For the VA regional office nearest you, call VA toll free at 1-800-827-1000

AID AND ATTENDANCE AND HOUSEBOUND

Veterans or surviving spouses who are eligible for VA pension and are housebound or require the aid and attendance of another person may be eligible for an additional monetary payment.

Aid and Attendance (A&A). An increased monthly pension amount paid if you meet one of the following conditions:

- » You require help in performing daily functions, which may include bathing, eating, or dressing
- » You are bedridden
- » You are a patient in a nursing home
- » Your eyesight is limited to a corrected 5/200 visual acuity or less in both eyes; or concentric contraction of the visual field to 5 degrees or less

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

To apply for increased pension based on A&A or Housebound, write to your local VA regional office and provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's report, that validates the need for an increased benefit. If your income exceeds the threshold for basic pension, you may still qualify for pension if you are eligible for either the A&A or Housebound.

Because Aid and Attendance and Housebound allowances increase the pension amount, people who are not eligible for a basic pension due to excessive income may be eligible for pension at these increased rates. You may not receive both A&A and Housebound at the same time.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What qualifies as a wartime period?

Under current law, VA recognizes the following war periods:

- » World War I (April 6, 1917—November 11, 1918)
- » World War II (December 7, 1941—December 31, 1946)
- » Korean conflict (June 27, 1950—January 31, 1955)
- » Vietnam era (February 28, 1961—May 7, 1975 for Veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam during that period; otherwise August 5, 1964—May 7, 1975)
- » Gulf War (August 2, 1990—through a future date to be set by law or Presidential Proclamation)

If I am already receiving monthly payments for a service-connected disability, can I also receive a VA pension?

You cannot receive a VA non-service connected pension and service-connected disability compensation at the same time. However, if you apply for a pension benefit and are awarded payments, VA will pay you whichever benefit is greater.

Can I reapply for pension benefits if I do not initially qualify?

Yes, you may reapply at any time if your countable income is below the yearly limit (which may occur after deducting unreimbursed medical expenses from the 12 month period after VA received your claim), or if you were denied because you were not rated as permanently and totally disabled but your disabilities have become worse.

Additional VA Benefits

Disabilities determined by VA to be related to your military service can lead to monthly non-taxable compensation, enrollment in the VA health care system, a 10-point hiring preference for federal employment, and other important benefits. Ask your VA representative or Veterans Service Organization (VSO) representative about Disability Compensation, Pension, Health Care, Caregiver Program, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Services, Educational Assistance, Home Loan Guaranty, Insurance, and/or Dependents' and Survivors' Benefits. You can search for a VSO representative online at www.ebenefits.va.gov.



For More Information

For more information about VA pension benefits, including eligibility and the application process, please:

- » Find links to VA benefits information and apply at www.ebenefits.va.gov
- » Visit us at www.va.gov/benefits
- » Use IRIS, VA's tool to find information and ask questions online at <https://iris.custhelp.com>
- » Call us at **1-800-827-1000**
- » Visit the nearest VA regional office. To find the VA regional office nearest you, go to our website or call VA toll free at **1-800-827-1000**



VA adopted five core values that define “who we are,” our culture, and how we care for Veterans, their families, and other beneficiaries. The values are Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, and Excellence (I-CARE).

Thank you for your service. Now let us serve you.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

VA PAM 21PF-12-1
September 2012

Veterans Benefits Administration
Washington, DC 20420

T 800-827-1000
www.va.gov/benefits