

About VA

We are the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, "**VA**" for short. We offer a wide range of benefits for our Nation's veterans, servicemembers, and their families.

What VA Offers

VA benefits and services are in these major categories:

- Compensation**
- Pension**
- Health Care**
- Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment**
- Education & Training**
- Home Loans**
- Life Insurance**
- Dependents & Survivors**
- Burial**

Who Is Eligible

You may be eligible for VA benefits if you are:

- a veteran
- a veteran's dependent
- a surviving spouse, child or parent of a deceased veteran
- an active duty military servicemember
- a member of the Reserve or National Guard

Compensation

VA can pay you monthly compensation if you are at least 10% disabled as a result of your military service.

Pension

You can receive a monthly pension if you are a wartime veteran with limited income, and you are permanently and totally disabled **or** at least 65 years old.

Time Limits: There is no time limit to apply for Compensation and Pension benefits.

Health Care

VA provides a number of health care services.

- Hospital, outpatient medical, dental, pharmacy and prosthetic services
- Domiciliary, nursing home, and community-based residential care
- Sexual trauma counseling
- Specialized health care for women veterans
- Health and rehabilitation programs for homeless veterans
- Readjustment counseling
- Alcohol and drug dependency treatment
- Medical evaluation for disorders associated with military service in the Gulf War, or exposure to Agent Orange, radiation, and other environmental hazards

Combat Veterans - VA will provide combat veterans free medical care for any illness possibly associated with service during a period of hostility for two years from the veteran's release from active duty.

Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment

VA can help veterans with service-connected disabilities prepare for, find and keep suitable employment. For veterans with serious service-connected disabilities, VA also offers services to improve their ability to live as independently as possible. Some of the services VA provides are:

- Job Search:** Assistance in finding and maintaining suitable employment.
- Vocational Evaluation:** An evaluation of abilities, skills, interests, and needs.
- Career Exploration:** Vocational counseling and planning.
- Vocational Training:** If needed, training such as on-the-job and non-paid work experience.
- Education Training:** If needed, education training to accomplish the rehabilitation goal.
- Rehabilitation Service:** Supportive rehabilitation and counseling services.

Time Limits: You generally have 12 years from the date VA informs you in writing that you have at least a 10% rating for a service-connected disability.

Education & Training

VA pays benefits to eligible veterans, reservists, and active duty servicemembers while they are in an approved education or training program. Based on the type of military service, benefit programs are:

- Active Duty Service:** Persons who first entered active duty after June 30, 1985, are generally eligible under the Montgomery GI Bill (Chapter 30). Those who entered active duty for the first time after December 31, 1976, and before July 1, 1985, are generally eligible under the Veterans Educational Assistance Program (VEAP).
- Reserve/Guard Service:** Benefits are available to Reserve and National Guard members under [a] the Montgomery GI Bill (Chapter 1606) who signed a six-year commitment with a reserve unit after June 30, 1985, and remain actively drilling and in good standing with their unit, and [b] the Reserve Educational Assistance Program (Chapter 1607) who were activated under Federal authority for a contingency operation and served 90 continuous days or more after September 11, 2001.

Time Limits: Generally, *veterans* have 10 years from the date they were last released from active duty to use their education and training benefits, and *Reserve and National Guard members* have 14 years from the date they became eligible for the program unless they leave the Selected Reserves before completing their obligation.

Home Loans

VA offers a number of home loan services to eligible veterans, some military personnel, and certain surviving spouses.

- Guaranteed Loans:** VA can guarantee part of a loan from a private lender to help you buy a home, a manufactured home, a lot for a manufactured home, or certain types of condominiums. VA also guarantees loans for building, repairing, and improving homes.

- Refinancing Loans:** If you have a VA mortgage, VA can help you refinance your loan at a lower interest rate. You may also refinance a non-VA loan.
- Special Grants:** Certain disabled veterans and military personnel can receive grants to adapt or acquire housing suitable for their needs.

Time Limits: There is no time limit for a VA home loan.

Life Insurance

Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) is low-cost term life insurance for servicemembers and reservists. Coverage of up to \$400,000 begins when you enter the service. Generally, it expires 120 days after you leave the service.

Traumatic SGLI is automatically included in SGLI and provides for payment up to \$100,000 for servicemembers who lose limbs or incur other serious injuries.

Veterans Group Life Insurance (VGLI) is renewable term life insurance for veterans who want to convert their SGLI up to an amount not to exceed the coverage you had when you separated from service. You must apply within one year from separation from service.

Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance, also called "**RH**" Insurance, is for service-connected veterans. Coverage is \$10,000. You may be eligible for a \$20,000 supplemental policy if you are totally disabled. You must apply for RH within two years of being rated service connected by VA.

Dependents & Survivors

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) is payable to certain survivors of:

- Servicemembers who died on active duty
- Veterans who died from service-related disabilities
- Certain veterans who were being paid 100% VA disability compensation at time of death.