



Veterans Benefits



Compliments of: Larry Robert, M.Div.

Phone: 404-843-6500

VITAS Healthcare

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

Must I Already be Living in a Care Facility Before I Apply?

- No, it is not necessary to be living in a care facility in order to apply for VA benefits; however, if you are in need of personal assistance, a protective environment, and your doctor confirms your need to live in the facility, the **entire cost** of the facility may be accepted to offset income in helping to qualify you for benefits, but you must be a current resident to submit these expenses as a deduction off income. (Note - Independent Living requires a third party caregiver).

Who Can Help Me Fill Out the Forms?

- Any private individual may assist with completing the forms; however, this individual is allowed to assist **ONLY** one person. A VA accredited organization, such as your local State Veterans Office, VFW, or American Legion, etc. may help you, as well as an accredited Attorney or accredited VA Agent. **NO ONE** may charge you for helping you prepare or present the VA application forms. Facilities are no longer allowed to pay **ANYONE** or charge for assistance with VA claims.

Does My Home Count as an Asset?

- No, your primary home is exempt from counting as an asset towards VA benefits until it is sold. In addition, jointly owned assets may be split, under certain circumstances, with only a portion counting as an asset. However, it is highly suggested that you never transfer **ANY** assets or add a name to your accounts without consulting with an elder law VA accredited attorney who is knowledgeable of the Medicaid system in your state.

How Long Does It Take for Me to Get My First Check?

- Once an application is turned into the VA, it can take anywhere from one to five months on average to get your check once you are approved for benefits. If you have dementia or other memory loss issues, the VA will insist on meeting you and the person who will manage your money before sending you a check, so your claim may take on average six to twelve months to settle.

Does the Money Come to Me or Straight to the Care Facility?

- All benefits are paid to the claimant and not to any facility or company.

Can I Have It Deposited Directly Into My Bank Account?

- Yes, the VA actually prefers to have all checks directly deposited into a bank account. If you have memory loss issues, the VA will insist on a direct deposit.

Is It Retroactive Back to When I First Applied or Does It Start the Month/Day I Get Approved?

- Benefits are retroactive from the first day of the next month after the VA receives any notification that you intend to file. An accredited individual or VSO may be able to help you preserve this Informal Award Date. In order for the benefits to be retroactive, you must live through the entire month after the VA receives your application.

Note: Above rules/regulations are subject to change at any time.

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General Qualifications for Non-Service Connected Pension Plus Aid and Attendance

Veteran, Widowed Spouse, and Dependent or Disabled Child (Any May be a Claimant)

- Veterans Must Typically Have Served Ninety Days Active Duty with One Day During Wartime (Those Who Enlisted After September 7, 1980 Have Additional Time Requirements)
- Veteran Cannot Have Had a Dishonorable Discharge
- Claimant's Physician Must Declare Him/Her as in Need of Personal Assistance from Another Individual AND/OR in Need of a "Protective Environment" Which May Include Services Offered by a Care Facility
- Claimant Should have Limited Household Assets; Excluding Primary Home, Car, and Personal Belongings. If Assets are Jointly Owned by Other than Dependent, Only the Claimant's Share is Generally Countable. In the Case of a Married Veteran, Both His/Her Assets are Countable. **The VA Now Considers the Claimant's Life Expectancy in Determining How Much a Claimant can Have. In the Case of Assets Over \$50k, It May be Best to Consult an Elder Law Attorney. One Should Never Transfer Assets or Add a Name to an Account without the Proper Legal/Professional Advice.**
- Claimant's Household Out-of-Pocket Annual Medical Expenses Must Exceed or Come Close to His/Her Total Annual Household Gross Income (Total Annual Cost of a Care Facility May be Considered a Medical Expense if the Doctor States the Need) (Note: Independent Living Requires a Third Party Caregiver).

Surviving Spouse Must have been Married to the Veteran for at Least One Year OR have had a Child by the Veteran if Married Less than One Year and Never Remarried (with Possibly One Exception).
Surviving Spouse Must Typically have been Living with the Veteran at the Time of the Veteran's Death; However, There are Some Exceptions.

2018 Maximum Pension Rates for Pension Plus Aid and Attendance

Single Veteran	\$1,830.00 Per Month or \$21,962.00 Per Year
Married Veteran	\$2,169.00 Per Month or \$26,036.00 Per Year
Surviving Spouse	\$1,176.00 Per Month or \$14,113.00 Per Year

Veteran Married to Veteran (Both A & A) \$2,903.00 Per Month or \$34,837.00 Per Year

Once Awarded Aid and Attendance or Housebound Status, a Veteran May Obtain Free Medications, Medical Equipment, Incontinence Supplies, Glasses, and Hearing Aids from the VA Hospital/Clinic via Home Delivery. A Separate Application Must be Made Through the VA Health Care System on Form 10-10EZ.

* Note: Each VA Claim is Unique and the Above Criteria is Generic in Nature and May Not be Applicable to Each Claimant. There are Never Any Guarantees that Any Claim or Specific Benefit Amount will be Awarded and Regulations are subject to change at any Time.

**Base Pension With or Without Housebound May Be Awarded Instead of Pension Plus A&A