



COMMON VA-RELATED SUBJECT MATTER



Adaptive Sports Program

<http://www.va.gov/adaptivesports>

Disabled Veterans of all ages and abilities report better health, new friendships, and a better quality of life when participating in adaptive sports. Disabled Veterans who are physically active simply have more fun! Veterans can learn more about sports opportunities available by reaching out to their VA clinical team or checking out our [website](#).

Agent Orange

Health Care

<http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/benefits/registry-exam.asp>

VA established the Agent Orange Registry to track the special health concerns of Veterans who may have been exposed to Agent Orange during their military service. This program includes a comprehensive medical examination, including exposure and medical histories, laboratory tests, and a physical exam.

Benefits

http://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/claims-postservice-agent_orange.asp

Veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange or other herbicides during military service may be eligible for a variety of VA benefits, including disability compensation for diseases associated with exposure. Their dependents and survivors also may be eligible for benefits. VA and federal law presume that certain diseases are a result of exposure to herbicides. This "presumptive policy" simplifies the process for receiving compensation for these diseases since VA foregoes the normal requirements of proving that an illness began during or was worsened by military service.

Burial Benefits

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

Burial benefits available to [eligible Veterans](#) include a gravesite in any of our 131 national cemeteries with available space, a Government headstone or marker, a burial flag, and a Presidential Memorial Certificate, at no cost to the family. Some Veterans may also be eligible for [Burial Allowances](#).

Burn Pits

<http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/burnpits/>

Burn pits have operated widely at military sites in Iraq and Afghanistan. At this time, research does not show evidence of long-term health problems. The Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry will help us learn more about potential health effects.



Claims Process

<http://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/process.asp>

There are eight distinct steps that most claims for disability compensation follow. These phases may vary in time depending on the complexity of the claim, the amount of evidence that must be gathered to support the claims, and the type of evidence. You are strongly encouraged to submit as much evidence as possible with your claim to help minimize processing time.

Claims Types

<http://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/types-claims.asp>

There are numerous types of claims that apply to disability compensation. They can be based on disabilities that existed when entering military service, but were made worse, disabilities that occurred during service, or disabilities that arose after you left military service. Additionally, there are claims that are filed for special circumstances.

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)

http://benefits.va.gov/COMPENSATION/types-dependency_and_indemnity.asp

- Tax-free benefit paid to Survivors for death during military service, post-service death related to service-connected disability, or death after extended period of 100-percent disability
- In FY 2014, VA paid \$6 billion in DIC benefits to 369,000 Survivors

Disability Benefits Questionnaires (DBQs)

www.benefits.VA.gov/compensation/dbq_disabilityexams.asp

DBQs are designed to capture all the needed medical information relevant to a specific condition for a disability claim at once and up front. Veterans can use 71 different DBQs with private physicians to more efficiently gather medical evidence in support of their claim.

Disability Compensation

<http://www.benefits.va.gov/COMPENSATION/types-disability.asp>

Disability compensation is a monthly tax-free benefit paid to Veterans who are at least 10% disabled because of injuries or diseases that were incurred in or aggravated during active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training. A disability can apply to physical conditions, such as a chronic knee condition, as well as a mental health conditions, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).



Doing Business with VA

<http://www.va.gov/oal/business/dbwva.asp>

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) operates a nationwide system of hospitals, clinics, Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISN), data processing centers, and National Cemeteries which require a broad spectrum of goods and services. We purchase these goods and services on a national, regional, and local level. So no matter how large or small your business is, VA is a potential customer. VA purchases a majority of its requirements for direct delivery through its local Acquisition and Materiel Management office. Businesses are encouraged to contact [each facility](#) for inclusion in its procurement process.

Education Benefits

<http://www.gibill.va.gov/>

- Over \$13.5 billion is provided annually to over one million Veterans and eligible family members
- VA is working with schools, community organizations, and other partners to ensure beneficiaries have all the information they need to best utilize their VA education benefits to graduate and find a good job. The President's Principles of Excellence offer guidelines that promote transparency and student success.
- VA launched new tools to help beneficiaries learn more about their vocational aptitudes and select an education institution.
 - The second edition of the '[Factors to Consider When Choosing a School](#)' offers guidance to future students when researching and choosing a school.
 - [CareerScope](#)® is a free new tool featured on benefits.va.gov/gibill that measures a student's aptitude and interests through a self-administered online test, identifying potential career paths.
 - The [GI Bill® Comparison Tool](#) displays median borrowing amounts, graduation rates, and loan default rates by school and indicates whether or not the school participates in the Yellow Ribbon Program or has agreed to adhere to the Principles of Excellence. The tool also allows Veterans, Servicemembers, their spouses, and dependents to estimate the amount of funding they may receive under the Post-9/11 GI Bill.
 - The [GI Bill® Feedback System](#) is a centralized online reporting system allowing Veterans, Servicemembers, and eligible dependents to report negative experiences with educational institutions. Complaints may be reviewed by State and Federal law enforcement agencies including the Department of Justice.



Electronic Claims Process

www.eBenefits.VA.gov

Instead of filling out and mailing paper forms to VA, Veterans can now use *eBenefits* to submit disability claims. A step-by-step online application—with pre-populated data fields similar to popular tax-preparation software—allows Veterans to upload digital images of records and evidence to support their claims. Over 93 percent of our disability claims inventory is now processed electronically.

Employment (Veterans Employment Center)

<https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/jobs>

On April 23, 2014, the Veterans Employment Center launched on eBenefits for:

- Veterans looking for new career opportunities in the private and public sectors,
- Servicemembers transitioning to the civilian workforce,
- Military and Veteran spouses and dependents looking for employment opportunities,
- GI Bill beneficiaries transitioning from training to the job market, and
- Public and private sector employers looking to connect with high-quality applicants.

This is the first interagency tool bringing a variety of career tools together in one place, rather than different agency websites.

Facilities Locator (and State and Local Resources)

http://www.va.gov/landing2_locations.htm

VA has many resources available for Veterans and family members. See our locations listings for nearest facilities.

Fiduciary Services

<http://www.benefits.va.gov/FIDUCIARY/>

In FY 2014, VA protected more than 172,800 beneficiaries, who due to injury, disease, or age, are unable to manage their financial affairs.

Fully Developed Claims (FDCs)

www.benefits.VA.gov/fdc

Disability compensation, pension, or survivor benefit claims that are submitted with all of the claim-specific information and evidence needed to substantiate the claim. At the time of application, claimants certify they have nothing further to give VA regarding the claim, thus eliminating the need for VA to undertake a lengthy search for any missing information or evidence.



Grants Management Services (GMS)

<http://www.va.gov/finance/policy/gms.asp>

The Department of Veterans Affairs, Grants Management Services was established in 2011 to address the need to create an overarching office which would provide for collaboration among the individual Grant Program Offices. GMS develops policies and provides guidance on grants management issues to grants and affected offices at all organizational levels within the Department. Responsibilities of GMS include, but are not limited to:

- Developing and updating grants policy chapters, which are included in Volume X of the Office of Financial Policy (OFF) Policy Volumes
- Providing guidance to Grant Program Offices regarding the implementation of new guidance and regulations
- Developing administrative tools and templates for individual program offices to leverage

(Veteran) Homelessness

<http://www.benefits.va.gov/PERSONA/veteran-homeless.asp>

Many Veterans face challenges throughout their lives that may lead them to lose their home, eventually becoming homeless. VA recognizes that every homeless Veteran's story is different, including their specific needs to help them get back into permanent and stable housing. There are many VA benefits that may support your specific needs, so it is important you know what benefits you may be eligible for.

Homeless Veterans (*Assistance for*)

<http://benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/factsheets/limitedincome/Homeless.pdf>

VA has many benefits and services to assist homeless Veterans. Disability benefits, education, healthcare, housing assistance, rehabilitation services, employment assistance, residential care, and compensated work therapy are among the many services VA offers to eligible Veterans.

Home loans

<http://www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/>

- VA-guaranteed loans have maintained the lowest foreclosure rate among all categories of mortgage loans for 25 or the last 26 quarters.
- 2.1 million home loans outstanding, totaling \$388 billion
- Since 2009, nearly 400,000 Veterans experiencing financial difficulties were assisted in staying in their homes
- Specially Adapted Housing grants are provided for severely disabled Veterans
- Direct loans are offered to Native American Veterans living on Federal Trust land



Interagency Collaboration and Integration

http://www.va.gov/op3/office_of_va_dod_collaboration_and_interagency_integration.asp

The Office of Interagency Collaboration (OICI) is responsible for facilitating the development of joint policies and programs between VA and the Executive branch of government. The Office provides oversight for the implementation of interagency programs and policies as they relate to activities of the Joint Executive Council (JEC), and coordinates VA-Interagency activities. To facilitate VA's relationship with other government agencies, the VA/DoD Collaboration office became the Office of Interagency Collaboration and Integration to reflect the office's responsibility to interface with other agencies and to assist the Department in producing better outcomes in health care and benefit service delivery for Veterans. OICI coordinates VA responses to external requirements, synchronizes VA's efforts in preparing for quarterly meetings between the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense, and provides a VA-wide perspective in all VA-Interagency collaboration activities and initiatives.

I CARE

<http://www.va.gov/icare/>

No organization can succeed without values to match its mission. Our mission, as the Department of Veterans Affairs, is to care for those “who shall have borne the battle” and for their families and survivors. Our core values focus our minds on our mission of caring and thereby guide our actions toward service to others. These values — Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, and Excellence — define our culture and strengthen our dedication to those we serve. They provide a baseline for the standards of behavior expected of all VA employees.

Life Insurance

<http://www.benefits.va.gov/insurance/>

- Four life insurance programs are currently available, with traumatic injury protection also available for certain severe in-service injuries and illness
- During FY 2014, 6.5 million clients were insured with a face value of \$1.3 trillion

Locate Nearest Veteran Health Administration (VHA) facility

<http://www.va.gov/directory/guide/division.asp?dnum=1>

Mental health and Suicide

<http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/index.asp>

VA offers a range of treatments and services to improve the mental health of Veterans. For Veterans with serious mental illness, VA offers care tailored to help with their specific problem and to promote recovery. Treatments and services for these disorders are provided in a variety of settings.



News Releases

- To join or be removed from VA's news release distribution list: http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/opalist_listserv.cfm
- For a listing of past VA national releases: <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/>

Pension

<http://www.benefits.va.gov/pension/>

- Tax-free benefit paid to eligible wartime Veterans with limited or no income who are age 65 or older or determined permanently and totally disabled, as well as to eligible spouses and children
- In FY 2014, \$5.2 billion in pension benefits were paid to 308,000 Veterans and 209,000 Survivors

(Veteran) Population

<http://www.va.gov/vetdata/>

The [National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics \(NCVAS\)](#) supports planning, analysis, and decision-making activities through the collection, validation, analysis, and dissemination of key statistics on Veteran population and VA programs.

Prioritization of Claims:

VA continues to prioritize specific categories of claims, including:

1. Claims of seriously wounded, ill, and injured Servicemembers separating through the Integrated Disability Evaluation System
2. Medal of Honor recipients
3. Former Prisoners of War
4. Homeless
5. Terminally ill
6. Those experiencing extreme financial hardship and
7. Fully Developed Claims

Research and Development

<http://www.research.va.gov/about/default.cfm>

The Office of Research and Development (ORD) aspires to discover knowledge, develop VA researchers and health care leaders, and create innovations that advance health care for our Veterans and the Nation.



Rural Veterans

<http://www.ruralhealth.va.gov/>

Through collaborations with other VA program offices, Federal partners, state partners, and rural communities, the VHA Office of Rural Health works to optimize the use of available and emerging technologies, establish new access points to care, and employ strategies to increase health care options for all rural Veterans.

Small & Disadvantaged Business Utilization

<http://www.va.gov/osdbu/verification/index.asp>

Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU), to include the Center for Verification and Evaluation (CVE), works to help Veteran-Owned and Small businesses contribute most effectively to the important mission of VA. Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (VSOB) interested in contracting with VA should visit the links for [Subcontracting](#) and [Forecast of Contracting Opportunities](#). For Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSB) and VOSBs, be sure to carefully review the information about the Vendor Information Pages (www.VetBiz.gov) database. In order to take advantage of procurement preferences provided to Veteran-Owned and controlled Small Businesses, the business must be Verified as an eligible firm and be registered in the VIP database. For questions regarding the VA VOSB Verification Program or for a business to check the status of their Verification, please call (202) 618-3765.

State By State Summary Sheets

<http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/factsheets.asp>

These summary sheets are updated each year to reflect VA's impact in each state for the previous fiscal year.

Status of a Pending Disability Claim

Veterans can use the eBenefits portal to check the status of a claim online if they are an eBenefits Premium (Level 2) account holder.

- To determine the status of a pending claim, the Veteran should login to eBenefits (<https://www.ebenefits.va.gov>) and select "My eBenefits." On the "Compensation" tab, select *Compensation & Pension Claims Status*. Veterans can also call 1-800-827-1000 and follow the recorded instructions, or contact VA online (<https://iris.custhelp.com>) and fill out the [Ask a Question form](#). If a Veteran is not an eBenefits account holder, the Veteran can visit the eBenefits registration page at <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov> for information on how to establish an account. Congressional offices can contact VA's Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs - Liaison Service on a constituent's behalf, and one of our liaisons can assist you.



Strategic Capital Investment Plan (SCIP)

<http://www.va.gov/oaem>

SCIP is an innovative Department-wide process designed to improve the delivery of services and benefits to Veterans, their families, and their survivors, with the safest and most secure infrastructure possible, by addressing VA's most critical needs first; investing wisely in VA's future and significantly improving the efficiency of VA's far-reaching and wide range of activities. VA uses the best infrastructure planning practices from both the private and public sectors to integrate all capital investment planning for major construction, minor construction, non-recurring maintenance and leasing. SCIP provides a comprehensive plan to improve the quality, access, and cost efficiency of the delivery of VA benefits and services through modern (i.e., newer and/or better conditioned) facilities that match the location and needs of current and future demand - locating VA facilities where our Nation's Veterans live.

Transition GPS (Goals, Plans, Success)

<http://www.benefits.va.gov/VOW/tap.asp>

- In FY 2014, VA provided over 48,000 benefits briefings, career technical training courses, and military life cycle and capstone events to support approximately 559,000 of our Nation's Servicemembers transitioning to work and home after the military. Servicemembers may choose to attend briefings and training more than once; this count does not represent unique Servicemembers.
- VA has deployed over 300 Benefits Advisors worldwide to support transitioning Servicemembers through Transition GPS activities. Benefits Advisors provide VA benefits briefings and career technical training, and also support Capstone events and requests for individualized assistance.

Tribal Government Relations

<http://www.va.gov/TRIBALGOVERNMENT/>

The Office of Tribal Government Relations (OTGR) supports Government-to-Government relationships between VA and Tribal Governments by assisting VA with implementing the VA Tribal Consultation Policy. OTGR also facilitates communications and outreach focused on strengthening VA's relationships with Tribal Governments. Specific programs include activities that facilitate increased access to health care and benefits, promoting utilization of education benefits, and communicating Federal contract opportunities and use of home loan programs such as the Native American Direct Loan program. These activities inform the agency's efforts to effectively reach and serve Veterans living in Indian Country.



Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment

<http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre/>

- In FY 2014, \$1.1 billion in VR&E benefits were paid to an estimated 93,363 participants
- VetSuccess on Campus (VSOC) program helps ease the transition of Servicemembers to Veteran-status in schools across the Nation

Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs)

<http://www.va.gov/vso>

VA maintains an online [Directory of Veterans Service Organizations for 2013-2014](#) (PDF). This is published as an informational service by the Office of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Inclusion of an organization in the directory does not constitute approval or endorsement by VA or the United States Government of the organization or its activities. Some VSOs are "chartered", which means they are federally chartered and/or recognized or approved by the VA Secretary for purposes of preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Inclusion of non-chartered organizations does not constitute or reflect VA recognition of said organization and its representatives for purposes of representation of VA claimants. Individuals seeking representation should only rely on information found in the [Office of General Counsel \(OGC\) Search for Accredited Attorneys, Claims Agents, or Veterans Service Organizations \(VSO\) Representatives](#).

Women Veterans

<http://www.womenshealth.va.gov/>

In 1988, the Women Veterans Health Program was created to streamline services for women Veterans in order to provide more cost-effective medical and psychosocial care. Women Veterans Health Care addresses the health care needs of women Veterans and works to ensure that timely, equitable, high-quality, comprehensive health care services are provided in a sensitive and safe environment at VA health facilities nationwide.



Workload and Performance Reports (VBA)

<http://www.vba.va.gov/reports/>

You can view the current inventory of claims, backlog, and other workload measures at both the national and regional office levels by visiting VBA's reports web site.

- The [*Monday Morning Workload Report \(MMWR\)*](#) provides workload indicators for VBA regional offices that are updated weekly. The home page for MMWR contains current and historical information, as well as definitions for data provided in the reports.
- The [*ASPIRE Dashboard*](#) provides monthly information on how VBA and regional offices are doing in relation to 2015 aspirational goals.

To find data for your regional office in ASPIRE:

- Find your state on the map, place your cursor within the state, and click
- This will open the Veterans Benefits Administration ASPIRE Benefits site; click "enter"
- You will see a split table; on the left table click on "compensation"
- This will expand the table
- Follow the table to the right until you locate the column of your regional office

