



HELPFUL VA TERMS AND STATS



The following are some common VA terms that we hope will be helpful to you in your interactions with your constituents and VA.

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION (VHA) - One of three administrations within VA, the Veterans Health Administration is home to the United States' largest integrated health care system consisting of medical centers, community-based outpatient clinics, community living centers, Vet Centers and Domiciliaries.

Healthcare System (HCS) - In many areas of the country, several medical centers and clinics may work together to offer services to area Veterans as a HCS in an effort to provide more efficient care. By sharing services between medical centers, Healthcare Systems allow VHA to provide Veterans easier access to advanced medical care closer to their homes.

Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) - VHA utilizes CBOCs across the country. These clinics provide the most common outpatient services, including health and wellness visits, without the need for visiting a larger medical center. VHA continues to expand the network of CBOCs to include more rural locations, working to put access to care closer to home.

Community Living Centers (CLC) - These skilled nursing facilities, often referred to as nursing homes, care for Veterans with chronic stable conditions such as dementia, those requiring rehabilitation, or those who need comfort and care at the end of life.

Domiciliary - These facilities provide a variety of care to Veterans who suffer from a wide range of medical, psychiatric, vocational, educational, or social problems and illnesses in a safe, secure homelike environment.

Vet Center - Vet Centers provide readjustment counseling and outreach services to all Veterans who served in any combat zone. Services are also available for family members dealing with military related issues. VHA operates Vet Centers in all fifty states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands.

Veterans Integrated Services Network (VISN) - The U.S. is divided into 21 VISNs – regional systems of care working together to better meet local health care needs and provides greater access to care.

Patient Advocates - Available at every medical center, Patient Advocates are highly trained professionals who can help resolve a patient's concerns about any aspect of their health care experience, particularly those concerns that cannot be resolved at the point of care. Patient Advocates listen to any questions, problems, or special needs our Veterans have and refer their concerns to the appropriate Medical Center staff for resolution.



VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION (VBA) - One of three administrations within VA, VBA provides benefits and services to Servicemembers, Veterans, and their families in recognition of their service to the Nation. Within VBA, there are three Deputy Under Secretaries led by the Under Secretary for Benefits. Their organizations provide oversight for Disability Assistance, Economic Opportunity, and Field Operations.

Regional Offices (RO) - There are 56 ROs including offices in Puerto Rico and the Philippines.

VBA program offices:

Compensation Service - Oversees the delivery of disability compensation, a tax-free monetary benefit paid to Veterans with disabilities that are the result of a disease or injury incurred or aggravated during active military service.

Pension and Fiduciary Service - Provides program oversight that helps wartime Veterans, their families, and survivors with financial challenges by providing supplemental income through Veterans Pension, Death Pension, and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation. Protects the benefits paid to our most vulnerable beneficiaries who, because of disease, injury, or infirmities of advanced age, are unable to manage their VA benefits.

Insurance Service - Maintains life insurance programs that give financial security and peace of mind to Servicemembers, Veterans, and their families.

Benefits Assistance Service - Facilitates client services, outreach, and web communications, and ensures quality and training for VBA employees who engage Servicemembers, Veterans, and their families through client services such as the National Call Center.

Loan Guaranty Service - Provides oversight of the VA Guaranteed Home Loan Program that guarantees home loans in varying amounts. Ensures Veterans' rights are protected when purchasing a home under this program. Oversees administration of specially adapted housing grants for certain severely disabled Servicemembers and Veterans so they can adapt or acquire suitable housing.

Education Service - Oversees the administration of VA's education programs that provide education and training benefits to eligible Active Duty, National Guard, and Reserve Servicemembers, Veterans, and dependents.

Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR&E) Service - Assists Servicemembers and Veterans with service-connected disabilities to prepare for, obtain, and maintain suitable employment; start their own business; or receive independent-living services. Oversees their education and provides career counseling to help guide career paths and ensure the most effective use of VA benefits.



Helpful VA Terms and Stats (cont.):

Monday Morning Workload Report - Provides workload indicators reported by VBA regional offices and updated weekly. The home page for MMWR contains current and historical information as well as definitions for data provided in the reports (<http://www.benefits.va.gov/reports/>).

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 (<http://www.benefits.va.gov/reports/>):

- 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.

Disability Compensation - A tax-free monetary benefit paid to Veterans with disabilities that are the result of a disease or injury incurred or aggravated during active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty for training. A disability can apply to both physical and mental health conditions. The benefit amount is graduated according to the degree of the Veteran's disability on a scale from 10 percent to 100 percent (in increments of 10 percent). Compensation may also be paid for disabilities that are considered related or secondary to disabilities occurring in service and for disabilities presumed to be related to circumstances of military service, even though they may arise after service. Generally, the degrees of disability specified are also designed to compensate for considerable loss of working time from exacerbations or illnesses.

Appeal - Any Veteran or beneficiary who receives a decision on a VA claim has the right to appeal that decision. The VA appeals process is unique from other standard appeals processes across federal and judicial systems. It has multiple steps, and a Veteran, survivor, or other appellant can submit new evidence or make new arguments at any time during the appeal process. As a result, an appeal does not simply progress from start to end, but may involve many cycles of additional development and adjudication as it evolves.

eBenefits - A joint VA-DoD client services portal with over 55 self-service options that allow users to file benefit claims online in an easy-to-use, prompt-based system. Veterans can also upload supporting claims information that feeds into VA's paperless claims processing system; check the status of claims or appeals; review their VA payment history; and obtain military documents, among other actions. (www.eBenefits.VA.gov)

Fully Developed Claims (FDCs) - Disability compensation, pension, or survivor benefit claims that are submitted with all of the claim-specific information and evidence needed to substantiate a disability. At the time of applications, 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. (www.benefits.VA.gov/fdc)



Helpful VA Terms and Stats (cont.):

Disability Benefits Questionnaires (DBQs) - 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. (www.benefits.VA.gov/compensation/dbq_disabilityexams.asp)

NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION (NCA) - One of three administrations within VA, NCA honors Veterans and their eligible family members with final resting places in national shrines and with lasting tributes that commemorate military service and sacrifice to our Nation.

National Cemeteries - Include cemeteries operated and maintained by VA and the Departments of Defense and Interior. VA maintains 131 national cemeteries in 40 states (and Puerto Rico) that honor Veterans and their eligible family members with final resting places in national shrines and with lasting tributes that commemorate military service. *Non-VA National Cemeteries:* The U.S. Department of the Interior operates 14 national cemeteries and the American Battle Monuments Commission operates 25 overseas military cemeteries.

Burial in a VA National Cemetery - Anyone may request burial in a VA national cemetery with available space for deceased Veterans and Servicemembers, spouses, and dependents who meet VA eligibility requirements. VA provides at no expense to families the opening/closing of the grave, perpetual care of the gravesite, and memorialization benefits.

Memorialization - VA furnishes upon request and at no charge to the applicant, a Government-furnished upright headstone or flat marker for the unmarked grave of any deceased eligible Veteran or Servicemember in any cemetery. Applicants may request a bronze medallion in lieu of a Government headstone or marker to mark a privately-marked gravesite of deceased eligible Veterans interred in private cemeteries. Eligible spouses and dependents of Veterans or Servicemembers are only eligible for memorialization if they are interred in a VA national cemetery, VA-funded State or Tribal Veterans' cemetery, or military post/base cemetery. Placement of a Government-furnished headstone, marker, or medallion is the applicant's responsibility and any setting fees are at private expense.

Outer Burial Receptacle Allowance - VA furnishes outer burial receptacles (or graveliners) for new graves in VA national cemeteries. Families that use privately-purchased outer burial receptacles rather than the Government-furnished graveliner may receive a monetary allowance.

Casket/Urn Reimbursement Allowance - Applicants may request VA reimbursement for the cost of a casket or urn purchased for interment in a VA national cemetery of a burial eligible Veteran who has no known next of kin and insufficient resources for burial.

Presidential Memorial Certificate - Anyone may request an engraved paper certificate, signed by the current President, to honor the memory of honorably discharged deceased Veterans.



Helpful VA Terms and Stats (cont.):

VA-Funded Veterans' Cemeteries - Administered by NCA's Veterans Cemetery Grants Program, VA funds veterans cemeteries in states, territories, and tribes using federal grant funds administered by NCA's Veterans Cemetery Grants Program. Eligibility is for burial in a VA-funded veterans' cemetery is similar to VA national cemetery burial, but may include residency requirements. VA-funded veterans' cemeteries are operated solely by the state, tribal organization, or territory and they are responsible for responding to inquiries and providing information about their programs. Please contact the specific cemetery for information.

Burial Benefits - Benefit available to eligible Veterans that includes a gravesite in any of our national cemeteries with available space, opening and closing of the grave, perpetual care, 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. Cremated remains are buried or inurned in national cemeteries in the same manner and with the same honors as casketed remains.

OTHER HELPFUL VA TERMS:

The Board of Veterans' Appeals (also known as "BVA" or "the Board") - Part of the VA, located in Washington, D.C. Members of the Board review benefit claims determinations made by local VA offices and issue decision on appeals. These Law Judges and attorneys experienced in veterans law and in reviewing benefit claims, are the only ones who can issue Board decisions. Staff attorneys, also trained in Veterans law, review the facts of each appeal and assist the Board members. {38 U.S.C. §§ 7103, 7104}

United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims - A national court of record, established under Article I of the Constitution of the United States. The Court has exclusive jurisdiction to provide judicial review of final decisions by the Board of Veterans' Appeals, an entity within the Department of Veterans Affairs. The Court provides veterans an impartial judicial forum for review of administrative decisions by the Board of Veterans' Appeals that are adverse to the Veteran-appellant's claim of entitlement to benefits for service-connected disabilities, survivor benefits and other benefits such as education payments and waiver of indebtedness. In furtherance of its mission, the Court also seeks to help ensure that all Veterans have equal access to the Court and to promote public trust and confidence in the Court. The Court's principal office is in Washington, D.C., but the Court is authorized to sit anywhere in the United States and does so a limited number of times each year. A Veterans must have a final decision from the Board of Veterans' Appeals - not the Regional Office - before they can appeal to this Court.

Veteran Service Organizations (VSO) - Private non-profit groups that advocate on behalf of Veterans. 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

VA Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (OCLA) - The focal point for Department management and coordination of all matters involving the Congress. Assistance to Members of Congress and their staff is available through offices located at the Department of Veterans Affairs Central Office and on Capitol Hill.



HELPFUL VA STATISTICS

(As of 12/23/2014)

3,950,000	Veterans Receiving VA Disability Compensation <i>(as of 9/30/2014)</i>
32%	VA Employees - Veterans <i>(FY 2013)</i>
8,920,000	Veterans Enrolled in VA Health Care System <i>(end of FY 2013)</i>
21,999,000	Projected U.S. Veterans Population
2,020,000	Projected U.S. Female Veteran Population

DAILY AVERAGE OF VA BENEFITS

(Based on FY2014 Department-wide Statistics)

1,100	Medical Surgeries
1,025	Veterans Crisis Line Calls
\$388 million	in VA Housing Loans Guaranteed
\$34.1 million	in Educational Assistance Benefits
\$2.9 million	in Vocational Rehabilitation Benefits
\$176.4 million	in Disability Compensation and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation
\$14.4 million	in Pensions for Low Income Beneficiaries
475	Interments in National Cemeteries
3,300,000	Gravesites Maintained as National Shrines

For the latest updated information please go to VA's National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics: <http://www.va.gov/vetdata/index.asp>

Additional questions? Please go directly to the Frequently Asked Questions section: http://www.va.gov/vetdata/Frequently_Asked_Questions.asp

