



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

Choose VA

# Getting Started with Caregiver Support Program

This guide will help caregivers of Veterans access support at VA that may include caregiver education and training, mental health counseling, peer mentor support, access to health care benefits, monetary stipend and respite care.

## Am I a “caregiver”?

Often, people do not identify themselves as caregivers. Most of us, at some point in our lives, will be in a caregiver role. Caregivers are daughters, wives, husbands, sons, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, partners and friends. Caregivers manage a wide range of responsibilities. **Here’s how you know if you are in a caregiver role.**

Do you:

- Make medical appointments or drive to the doctor and pharmacy to pick up prescriptions for a Veteran?
- Help a Veteran get dressed, take a shower, or take medicine?
- Help transfer a Veteran in and out of bed, or with physical therapy, injections, feeding tubes or other medical procedures at home?
- Talk with doctors, nurses, social workers, and others to understand what medical care or other benefits a Veteran might need?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, you are a caregiver and may be eligible for caregiver services at VA. The Caregiver Support Program (CSP) provides services and support to Veterans and caregivers through two programs, the **Program of General Caregiver Support Services (PGCSS)** and the **Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC)**.

## Who can help me determine which programs and services may be available to me and to the Veteran I care for?

Caregiver Support Program Teams include social workers, nurses, and psychologists with extensive knowledge of VA services and can help connect you to the resources you need. To find your CSP:

- **Call** the Caregiver Support Line at 855-260-3274.
- **Visit us online** at <https://www.caregiver.va.gov>
- **Find** a CSP in-person at a local VA Medical Center [https://www.caregiver.va.gov/support/New\\_CSC\\_Page.asp](https://www.caregiver.va.gov/support/New_CSC_Page.asp)

## Program of General Caregiver Support Services

PGCSS is available to caregivers who provide personal care services to covered Veterans who are enrolled in VA health care. Caregivers in PGCSS have access to education and training, including courses at local VA medical centers. In addition, caregivers can receive support for the Veteran through VA home and community based care. No formal application is required for PGCSS. Contact your local CSP for assistance with accessing PGCSS benefits.

## HOW DOES VA SUPPORT CAREGIVERS OF VETERANS?

*The following programs and services may be available to Veterans and caregivers depending on service availability in that area and Veteran eligibility:*

- VA Caregiver Support Line
- Peer Support Mentoring
- Monthly caregiver education groups by telephone
- Mental health services for caregivers
- Online workshop through Building Better Caregivers™
- In-home health care
- Help with daily tasks (like bathing, dressing) and rehab programs
- Comfort care and help with managing pain
- Adult day health care centers
- Telehealth
- Home care supplies and equipment
- Veteran clothing allowance
- Veteran home modification benefit

## WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION ABOUT FAMILY AND CAREGIVER HEALTH SERVICES?

Download the VA PCAFC  
Expansion Fact Sheet <https://www.caregiver.va.gov/>

Download the PGCSS Fact Sheet  
[https://www.caregiver.va.gov/docs/PGCSS\\_Fact\\_Sheet.pdf](https://www.caregiver.va.gov/docs/PGCSS_Fact_Sheet.pdf)

## Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers

The Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) is for eligible Veterans who have incurred or aggravated a serious injury (or illness) in the line of duty, from any service era. This program provides resources, education, support, a financial stipend, and health insurance (if eligible), beneficiary travel (if eligible), to caregivers of eligible Veterans.

### How do I apply for PCAFC?

- A Veteran who has a single or combined service-connected rating of 70% or more AND who is in need of in-person personal care services for a minimum of six (6) continuous months based on any one of the following: an inability to perform an activity of daily living; a need for supervision or protection based on symptoms or residuals of neurological or other impairment or injury; or a need for regular or extensive instruction or supervision without which the ability of the Veteran to function in daily life would be seriously impaired.
- A Veteran who sustained or aggravated a serious injury (including serious illness) in the line of duty from any service era.

Your CSP team can provide you with more information.

### PCAFC 10-STEP PROCESS

There is a 10-step application process for applying to PCAFC, which will result in an eligibility decision within 90 days of application receipt. For more information about applications, visit <https://www.va.gov/family-member-benefits/apply-for-caregiver-assistance-form-10-10cg/introduction>.

1. Application Submission – Veteran and caregiver applicant complete the application for PCAFC – VA Form 10-10CG. You may ask VA to help you fill out the form.
2. Application Intake – A member of the local CSP Team conducts the application intake with the Veteran and each caregiver applicant.  
Note: If the Veteran and at least one caregiver applicant meet the specific eligibility requirements, the following steps will occur:
3. Veteran Assessment – A member of the local CSP Team conducts a clinical assessment with the Veteran.
4. Veteran Functional Assessment – A CSP Clinical Assessor completes the functional assessment instrument with the Veteran.
5. Caregiver Assessment – A local CSP Team conducts a clinical assessment with each family caregiver applicant.
6. Initial Application Review – The CSP Centralized Eligibility and Appeals Team (CEAT) conducts a review of the application. Steps 7 through 10 are followed only when the CEAT determines the Veteran and family caregivers meet the eligibility requirements reviewed by the CEAT.
7. Caregiver Training – Each family caregiver applicant completes caregiver training.
8. Home-Care Assessment – The CSP Clinical Assessor conducts the Home-Care Assessment with the Veteran and each family caregiver applicant.
9. Final Application Review – The CSP CEAT determines initial eligibility. After caregiver training and the Home-Care Assessment are completed, the CSP CEAT determines final eligibility and the stipend level.
10. Notification – A member of the CSP Team will call the Veteran and Family Caregiver applicant(s) to notify them of the determination, generally within 90 days of the application being received by VA. A letter notifying the applicants of VA's determination will also be mailed.

## OTHER QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

### How do I apply for the PCAFC?

You and the Veteran will need to apply together and participate in the application process to determine if you're eligible for PCAFC. You'll both need to sign and date the application and answer all questions regarding your role.

#### To apply:

**Online** at <https://www.va.gov/family-member-benefits/apply-for-caregiver-assistance-form-10-10cg/introduction>

**By mail**, fill out a joint application for the PCAFC (VA Form 10-10CG). Download the instructions and application at <https://www.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/10-10CG.pdf>

**Call** the Caregiver Support Line at 855-260-3274

**In-Person**, bring your completed VA Form 10-10CG to your local VA medical center's CSC. To find the name of your local coordinator, you can visit: [https://www.caregiver.va.gov/support/New\\_CSC\\_Page.asp](https://www.caregiver.va.gov/support/New_CSC_Page.asp)

Note: Do not send medical records along with the application. VA will follow up after the application is received. If you need assistance with completing the application or would like to check the status of your 1010CG application, call 855-488-8440, option 3.

### More information and Fact Sheets

- Caregivers PCAFC **Eligibility** Under the New Final Rule, visit [https://www.caregiver.va.gov/pdfs/FactSheets/CSP\\_Eligibility\\_Criteria\\_Factsheet.pdf#](https://www.caregiver.va.gov/pdfs/FactSheets/CSP_Eligibility_Criteria_Factsheet.pdf#)
- Caregivers PCAFC **Application Process**, visit <https://www.caregiver.va.gov/pdfs/FactSheets/ApplicationProcessFactsheet.pdf#>
- Caregivers PCAFC **Monthly Stipend** Under the New Final Rule, visit <https://www.caregiver.va.gov/pdfs/FactSheets/Monthly-Caregiver-Stipend-Factsheet.pdf#>