

VAU.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

News Release

Office of Public Affairs
Media RelationsWashington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.govFOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Dec. 29, 2022

VA will begin processing PACT Act benefits claims for all Veterans and survivors on Jan. 1

WASHINGTON — On Jan. 1, 2023, the Department of Veterans Affairs will begin processing PACT Act benefit claims for all Veterans and their survivors.

The PACT Act is the most significant expansion of Veteran benefits and care in more than three decades, empowering VA to help millions of toxic exposed Veterans and their survivors. Since President Biden signed the PACT Act into law Aug. 10, more than 213,000 PACT Act-related claims for benefits have been submitted. Additionally, more than 959,000 Veterans have received VA's new [toxic exposure screenings](#), with nearly 39% reporting a concern of exposure.

"The PACT Act is the least we can do for the countless men and women... who suffered toxic exposure while serving their country," said **President Biden** during the PACT Act bill signing ceremony. "It means access to life insurance, home loan insurance, tuition benefits, and help with healthcare. It means new facilities, improved care, more research, and increased hiring and retention of healthcare workers treating Veterans."

From the moment the PACT Act was signed into law, VA's priority has been getting Veterans the benefits they deserve as quickly as possible. VA sped up the timeline for many Veterans to get their PACT Act benefits by several years by deciding not to phase in PACT Act benefits through 2026, as written into the legislation, and instead make all new PACT Act presumptions of exposure and service connection applicable Aug. 10. January 1 is the earliest date that VA will have both the authorities and capabilities necessary to fully process all PACT Act claims.

"We at VA are ready to process these claims and deliver PACT Act-related care and benefits to toxic exposed Veterans and their survivors," said **VA Secretary Denis McDonough**. "To all Veterans and survivors: don't wait, apply now – we will get you the care and benefits you deserve."

"Right now, VA is delivering more benefits, more quickly, to more Veterans than ever before – and we are ready to deliver PACT Act benefits to all Veterans starting January 1," said **Josh Jacobs, senior advisor for policy, who is currently performing the delegable duties of the Under Secretary for Benefits**.

To prepare for the influx of PACT Act claims, the Veterans Benefits Administration has been aggressively hiring and training [Veterans service representatives](#), [rating Veterans service representatives](#) and [legal administrative specialists](#) around the nation. Over the past two years, VA has hired more than 2700 individuals to help process Veteran claims. As a result of these efforts, VA is processing Veteran benefits claims at the fastest rate in VA history: in 2022, VA completed more than [1.7 million VA disability and pension claims](#) for Veterans, an all-time VA record that broke the previous year's record by 12%.

While VA did not have the capabilities to begin fully processing PACT Act claims for all Veterans until Jan. 1, 2023, VA was [able to expedite processing for terminally ill Veterans beginning Dec. 12](#). VA continues to prioritize processing claims for terminally ill Veterans, [Veterans with toxic exposure-related cancers](#), Veterans experiencing homelessness, Veterans older than 85 years old, Veterans experiencing financial hardship, and Medal of Honor and Purple Heart recipients. In most cases, if a Veteran files a claim within the first year after the President signed the bill, the effective date for benefits will be Aug. 10, 2022.

VA is currently executing the [largest Veteran outreach campaign in its history](#) to inform Veterans, their families and survivors about the PACT Act and encourage them to apply for the health care and benefits they have earned. As a part of that effort, VA hosted a [PACT Act Week of Action](#) between Dec. 10 and Dec. 17, during which the Department hosted more than [120 events](#) across all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

For more information about PACT Act and how to file a claim, visit va.gov/PACT. If Veterans, their families, caregivers, or survivors have questions about PACT Act and wish to speak with someone to help, they may call 1-800-MyVA411 at any time.

###