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If Veterans don't help Veterans, who will?

Note:

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Evidence Requirements

You must submit all relevant evidence in your possession and/or provide information sufficient to enable VA to obtain all relevant evidence not in your possession. This includes the following as part of your application:

- Discharge or separation papers (DD214 or equivalent)
- Service Treatment Records if they are in your possession
- Medical evidence (doctor & hospital reports)

Fully Developed Claim

VA established the [Fully Developed Claim Program](#) to expeditiously process claims certified by the claimant or his/her representative as meeting the Fully Developed Claim criteria. In order for you to participate in the Fully Developed Claim Program, **you** must obtain the relevant service treatment and personnel records and provide them to VA.

If VA decides your claim before one year from the date it is received, you will still have the remainder of the one-year period to submit additional information or evidence necessary to support your claim. For this program, VA will only obtain service treatment records and Federal treatment records when you identify them. More information about this program is available on the [Fully Developed Claims page](#).

Standard Claim

As a standard claim, VA is responsible for getting relevant records from any Federal agency that you adequately identify and authorize VA to obtain.

VA will make every reasonable effort to obtain relevant records not held by a Federal agency that you adequately identify and authorize VA to obtain. These may include privately held evidence and information you tell us about (such as records from a private doctor or hospital) and/or records from State or local governments or current or former employers.

VA will provide a medical examination for you, or get a medical opinion, if determined it is necessary to make a claims decision.

Veterans Claims Assistance Act (VCAA)

In November 2000, Congress passed the Veterans Claims Assistance Act (VCAA) to define what VA's responsibilities are in assisting claimants in obtaining evidence to support a claim and also to define the responsibilities of the claimant.

VCAA responsibilities are as follows:

VA's Responsibilities include:

- Obtaining relevant records from any Federal agency. This may include records from the military, VA Medical Centers (including private facilities where VA authorized treatment), or the Social Security Administration.
- Providing a medical examination, or obtaining a medical opinion, if determined it is necessary to decide the claim.

A Claimant's Responsibilities include:

- Obtaining relevant records not held by a Federal agency. This may include records from State or local governments, private doctors and hospitals, or current or former employers. VA may assist in obtaining these records.
- Providing enough information to VA so that records may be requested.

Example

A Veteran has filed a claim for disability compensation and, on the application, indicated treatment from a private doctor and an award of Social Security disability. In this case, VA would be responsible in obtaining the Social Security records and would assist in obtaining the private physician records, but ultimate responsibility in obtaining the private records would be with the Veteran.