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Apply for VA Survivor Benefits



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

ChooseVA

This guide will help you identify VA Survivor benefits and services you may be eligible for after your Veteran loved one has passed. It provides information about the different survivor benefits and programs available, contact information, required forms, application process, and where to find assistance.

A checklist to help Veteran spouses and/or dependents apply for survivor benefits:

1

PREPARATION

- ☐ Learn about different **types of survivor benefits and services** you and/or family members may be eligible for (see back for list)
- ☐ Collect the documents necessary to apply for survivor benefits:
 - Veteran's Discharge paperwork (DD214 or other separation documents)
 - Veteran's death certificate (copy)
 - Proof of your relationship to Veteran (marriage certificate, birth certificates)

2

APPLICATION

- ☐ Apply by submitting all required documents, to include the applicable VA Form and the Veteran's death certificate, to the required servicing location (see back for more information) in one of these ways:
 - Mail to the appropriate VA office that serves your state.
You can find the VA mailing addresses at <https://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/maillingaddresses.asp> OR
 - Work with an accredited Veterans Service Organization (VSO).
You can find a VSO at www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/vso-search OR
 - Go directly to a VA Regional Benefit Office (RO) for assistance.
You can find your local RO at www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/offices.asp.
- For Life Insurance claims, call (800) 669-8477

3

NEXT STEPS

- ☐ Visit us online at www.eBenefits.va.gov to track the status of your claim
- ☐ Provide more information/documentation if requested by VA
- ☐ If approved, take steps to access your awarded benefits

WHERE CAN I FIND A VETERAN'S SEPARATION DOCUMENTS?

To find the separations documents of the Veteran, you can visit www.archives.gov or www.eBenefits.va.gov to request copy of the DD214 or other separation documents of your loved one.

Surviving family members should make duplicate copies of all documents and retain them for their personal files before mailing them to a processing center.

Survivors can also receive free, in-person help preparing the claim from a Veterans Service Organization (VSO). Find an accredited VSO online by visiting: www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/vso-search

Survivors can also receive free, in-person help applying for benefits at the local Regional Office (RO). Find your local RO by visiting: www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/offices.asp

Find additional information about Beneficiary Financial Counseling Service and Online Will Preparation: www.benefits.va.gov/insurance/bfcs.asp

Information a spouse or dependent(s) will need to know to file a claim and receive the survivor benefits they may be eligible for:

How would a spouse or dependent(s) know if they are eligible for VA survivor benefits?

Surviving family members can access detailed information to determine if they are eligible for survivor benefits that may be available by:

- Visiting www.va.gov/survivors or www.va.gov/family-member-benefits
- Contacting VBA directly at (800) 827-1000
- Contacting the Office of Survivors Assistance at (202) 461-1077

What benefits and services are available for surviving family members?

These are the benefits and services that may be available to eligible spouses and dependent family members:

BENEFITS

- ☐ Interment in a National Cemetery
- ☐ Memorialization and Legacy Programs (https://www.cem.va.gov/cem/docs/factsheets/Planning_Legacy_Booklet.pdf)
- ☐ Burial Benefits (VA Form 21P-530)
- ☐ Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (VA Form 21P-534EZ)
- ☐ Parents' Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (VA Form 21P-535)
- ☐ Survivor's Pension (VA Form 21P-534EZ)
- ☐ Dependent's Educational Assistance Program (VA Form 22-5490)
- ☐ Fry Education Scholarship
- ☐ Home Loan Guaranty
- ☐ Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA)

SERVICES

- ☐ Bereavement Counseling is available at Vet Centers and VA Medical Center Clergy Services (visit: <https://www.va.gov/find-locations/>) or call the White House VA Call Center (<https://www.va.gov/ve/whvahotline.asp>) at 1-855-948-2311. You can also call, text, or chat for help at the VA Crisis line (800) 273-8255.
- ☐ Educational and Vocational Counseling (VA Form 28-8832)
- ☐ Beneficiary Financial Counseling
- ☐ Financial Trust Services
- ☐ Online Will Preparation

Visit www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits for more information or **call** (800) 827-1000.

OTHER QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

As a surviving spouse am I eligible for healthcare?

The Department of Veterans Affairs offers Civilian Health and Medical Program of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA) healthcare coverage to family members who meet specific eligibility criteria. CHAMPVA is a comprehensive health care program managed by the Veterans Health Administration Office of Community Care (VHA OCC). The VA shares the cost of covered health care services and supplies with eligible beneficiaries similar to Medicaid and TriCare. For more information, **call** (844) 698-2311 or **visit** www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/dependents/champva/index.asp

What is the difference between DIC and SBP?

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) is an entitlement benefit paid to eligible survivors (spouse, unmarried child or possibly parent) of certain deceased Servicemembers and Veterans that meet specific criteria. DIC is managed by the Department of Veterans Affairs. To learn more about DIC, please **visit** www.benefits.va.gov/COMPENSATION/types-dependency_and_indemnity.asp

The Survivor Benefit Program (SBP) is a voluntary annuity program offered for purchase to Servicemembers as a retirement benefit for family members and is managed by the Department of Defense (DoD). Servicemembers who die on active duty and who have never contributed to SBP are automatically covered. Participation in this program is voluntary and not all Servicemembers opt to participate. To learn more about SBP, please **visit** www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary.html

Where can I find information about Burial Benefits?

Planning Your Legacy:
VA Survivors and Burial Benefits Kit (https://www.cem.va.gov/cem/docs/factsheets/Planning_Legacy_Booklet.pdf) and at https://www.cem.va.gov/cem/burial_benefits/index.asp