

Apply for VA Survivor Benefits



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Choose VA

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 available VA survivor benefits and programs, contacts, required forms, the application process, and where to find assistance.

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

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PREPARATION

- Learn about different **types of survivor benefits and services** you and your family members may be eligible for (see next page for list)
- Collect the documents that may be helpful to apply for survivor benefits:
 - Discharge papers (DD214 member-4 or equivalent)
 - Veteran's death certificate (copy)
 - Proof of your relationship to Veteran (marriage certificate, birth certificates)

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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 next page 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>
 - Work with an accredited representative (Veterans Service Organization (VSO) representative, attorney, or claims agent). You can find an accredited representative at: <https://www.va.gov/ogc/apps/accreditation>
 - Go directly to your VA Regional Office for assistance. You can find your local regional office at <https://www.va.gov/find-locations>
 - For VA Life Insurance claims, **call** 800-669-8477

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NEXT STEPS

- Visit us **online** at <https://www.va.gov/claim-or-appeal-status> to track the status of your claim
- Provide more information and 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 Veteran separation documents or other separation documents of your loved one, **visit** <https://www.va.gov/records/get-military-service-records>.

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

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

How would a spouse or dependents 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 <https://www.va.gov/survivors> or <https://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)
- Financial Burial Benefits (VA Form 21P-530)
- Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (VA Form 21P-534EZ)
- Parents' Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (VA Form 21P-535)
- VA Survivors Pension (VA Form 21P-534EZ)
- Dependent's Educational Assistance Program (VA Form 22-5490)
- Fry Education Scholarship
- VA Home Loan Benefits
- Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA)

SERVICES

- VA Bereavement Counseling is available at Vet Centers and VA Medical Center Clergy Services. Visit www.va.gov/find-locations to find the center nearest to you. You can also contact bereavement counseling services by calling 202-461-6530 or by emailing vetercenter.bereavement@va.gov. You can also **call, text, or chat** for help at the Veterans Crisis Line at 988 and press 1, text 838255, or chat at <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help-now/chat>.
- Educational and Personalized Career Planning and Guidance (VA Form 28-8832)
- Beneficiary Financial Counseling Service. Beneficiaries can receive services for two years from date of payment at no charge.

Visit <https://www.va.gov/family-member-benefits> for more information or **call** 800-827-1000.

OTHER QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

As a surviving spouse am I eligible for health care?

VA offers CHAMPVA health care coverage to family members who meet specific eligibility criteria. CHAMPVA is a comprehensive health care program through which VA shares the cost of covered health care services and supplies with eligible beneficiaries in a similar manner to Medicaid and TRICARE. For more information, **call** 800-myVA411 (800-698-2411) or **visit** <https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/dependents/champva>.

What is the difference between Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) and the Survivor Benefit Program (SBP)?

DIC is an entitlement benefit paid to eligible survivors (spouse, unmarried child or possibly parent) of certain deceased Service members and Veterans that meet specific criteria. DIC is managed by VA. To learn more about DIC, **visit** <https://www.va.gov/disability/dependency-indemnity-compensation>.

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

Where can I find information about Burial Benefits?

Planning Your Legacy: A Survivors and Burial Benefits Kit <https://www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/docs/VASurvivorsKit.pdf> and at https://www.cem.va.gov/burial_benefits/index.asp