



## U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Benefits Administration

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### **VA Modernized Review System: SOC/SSOC Opt-In Fact Sheet**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) continues to look for ways to put Veterans in control of how they receive services and interact with VA. The *Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017* (Appeals Modernization Act) created a modernized review system for claims and appeals. The modernized system provides streamlined choices for seeking review of your VA claim decision.

The Appeals Modernization Act allows appellants with an appeal under the old system, referred to as a “legacy appeal,” an opportunity to withdraw from the legacy system and enter the modernized system. Upon receipt of a Statement of the Case (SOC) or Supplemental Statement of the Case (SSOC), you may elect to continue your appeal by seeking review under one of the new decision review options.

You are receiving this fact sheet because you are eligible to opt-in to the modernized system based on the SOC/SSOC you received. **You have 60 days from the date of your SOC/SSOC or within the one-year appeal period, whichever is later, to opt-in to the modernized system.** *Opt-ins will not be accepted if received after the Board of Veterans’ Appeals (Board) has issued a decision on your legacy appeal.*

#### **What is the Modernized Review System?**

The modernized review system gives claimants the opportunity to participate in the new **Supplemental Claim** and **Higher-Level Review** options or choose to file an **appeal directly to the Board**.

As a modernized system participant, you will benefit from:

- A new, more efficient review process
- Potentially faster decisions and early resolution of disagreements
- Multiple decision review options
- The same potential effective date for your benefits regardless of the decision review option you choose

#### **Which Appeals are Eligible for the Modernized Review System?**

You may opt-in to the modernized system for any appeal currently in the legacy system for which you have received an SOC/SSOC dated on or after February 19, 2019.

## **Which Review Option is Right for You?**

The enclosed document titled **VA Form 20-0998, “Your Right to Seek Review of Our Decision”** provides your options under the modernized system. You can also find information on how to participate and the benefits of participating by visiting [www.va.gov/decision-reviews/](http://www.va.gov/decision-reviews/).

## **What it Means to Opt-In**

If you choose to opt-in to the modernized system, VA will process your claim under the decision review option(s) selected. We will no longer process your appeal in the legacy system and you will not be able to request additional review of VA’s decision under the legacy appeals process. You will have access to all the decision review options and benefits of the modernized system.

Choosing one decision review option now does not prevent you from submitting another supplemental claim or choosing another decision review option after receiving a decision based on the chosen option.

## **How You Can Opt-In**

You can choose to have your appeal reviewed in the modernized system by completing the appropriate form for the decision review option you choose. Submission of a decision review form for an issue or issues currently within the legacy system will be seen as your request to participate in the modernized system for the listed issue(s). The issue(s) will automatically be withdrawn from the legacy process. The three decision review forms can be found online at [www.va.gov/find-forms](http://www.va.gov/find-forms).

If you choose to participate in the modernized system, you must **submit your completed form(s) within 60 days from the date of your SOC/SSOC or within the one-year appeal period, whichever is later.** Send the appropriate form to the address listed in your SOC/SSOC or to the appropriate address on the “Where to Send Correspondence”, if provided.

If you received this fact sheet as part of an SSOC, please note the 30-day timeframe to respond to the SSOC **does not apply** to the timeframe noted above for filing an opt-in if you choose to participate in the modernized system.

If you choose not to participate in the modernized system, you do not need to take any action. Your appeal will remain in the legacy system.