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VETERAN MILITARY BENEFITS 2023

The Federal Benefits Available to You

Active-duty servicemembers, veterans and their families may be entitled to a number of valuable federal government benefits relating to healthcare, education, retirement and home ownership.

As a veteran or servicemember, you may have access to other benefits not covered in this guide. You can work with Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) accredited representatives—including Veterans Service Organization (VSO) representatives, attorneys and agents—who can help you identify and apply for eligible VA benefits specific to your situation and location.

VA-accredited VSOs and their representatives	Free of charge
VA-accredited attorneys and agents	May charge a fee

The VA maintains a database of accredited representatives [online](#).

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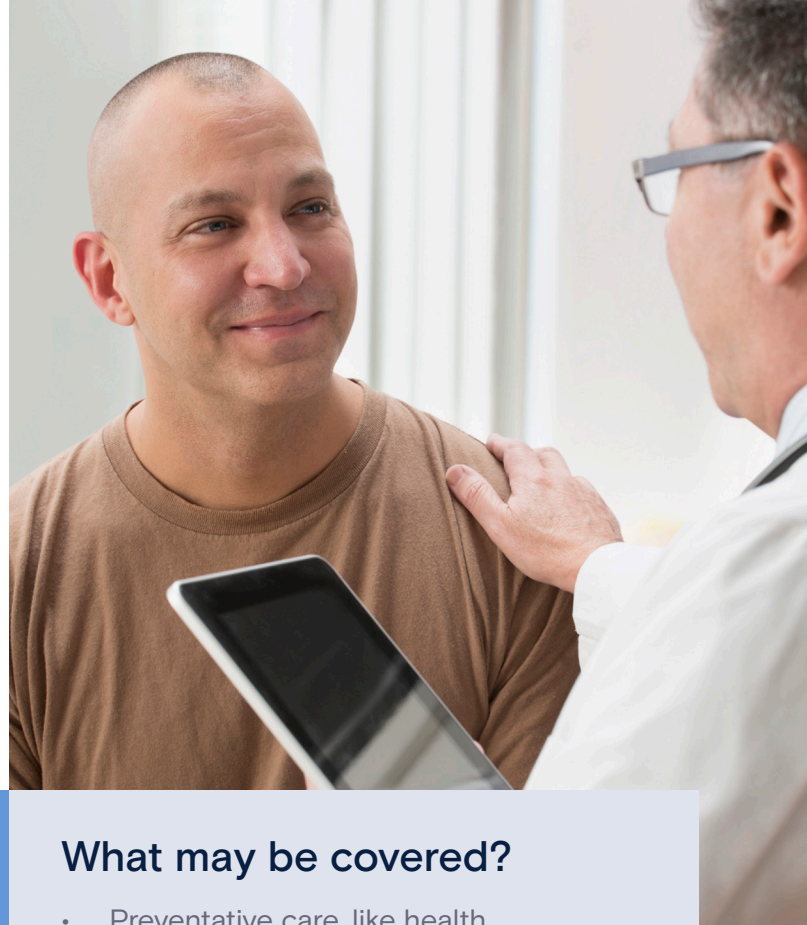


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Healthcare Benefits

VA Healthcare

Through the VA, you may have access to a nationwide network of VA-specific hospitals and clinics, as well as other in-network facilities. Find participating locations [here](#).



Who is eligible?

- Served in the active military for 24 continuous months
- Served the full period for which they were called to active duty (other than training purposes)
- Were discharged for a service-connected disability
- Were discharged for a hardship
- Usually limited to individuals separated under any condition other than dishonorable

What may be covered?

- Preventative care, like health examinations and immunizations
- Many in- and out-patient medical procedures
- Urgent and emergency care at select VA facilities and contracted private facilities
- Vision
- Mental health care
- Prescription drugs
- Assisted living and home health care
- Dental care (to a limited group)

Keep in mind:

VA health coverage can differ from traditional health plans in a number of important ways. We'll explore these considerations in the next section.

What you need to know about VA healthcare

Eligibility for VA healthcare doesn't guarantee enrollment.

Eligible veterans are assigned to one of eight priority groups based on a number of factors, including disability rating, military service history and income. Servicemembers and veterans receive a disability rating by filing a claim for disability benefits with the VA. Learn more about the claims process and file a claim [online here](#).

Veterans assigned to the lowest priority group have been denied enrollment in the past due to VA funding and resource limitations.

VA Priority Groups

Priority Group 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Service-connected disability rated as 50% disabling or higher• Service-connected disability and deemed unable to work• Medal of Honor recipient
Priority Group 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Service-connected disability rated as 30% or 40% disabling
Priority Group 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Former prisoner of war• Purple Heart recipient• Discharged for a disability that was caused or made worse by active-duty military service• Service-connected disability rated as 10% or 20% disabling• Awarded special eligibility classification under Title 38, U.S.C. § 1151
Priority Group 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Receiving VA aid and attendance or housebound benefits
Priority Group 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual income below location-based limits• Receiving VA pension benefits• Eligible for Medicaid programs
Priority Group 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compensable service-connected disability rated as 0% disabling• Exposed to ionizing radiation during atmospheric testing or during the occupation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki• Participant in Project 112/SHAD• Served in the Republic of Vietnam between January 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975• Served in the Persian Gulf War between August 2, 1990 and November 11, 1998• Served on active duty at Camp Lejeune for at least 30 days between August 1, 1953 and December 31, 1987• Current and new enrollees who served in a combat theater after November 11, 1998 and were discharged less than five years ago
Priority Group 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gross household income below location-based limits
Priority Group 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gross household income above location-based limits and agreed-to co-pays

Check your [eligibility](#) and [enroll](#) in VA healthcare online, or at your local VA office.

What you need to know about VA healthcare



Veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 50%

Free medical care



Veterans with lower-rated, service-connected disabilities

- Can receive free care related to the disability
- May have a co-pay for unrelated medical services



All other veterans

- May be responsible for a co-pay (income-based exceptions may apply)
- Co-pays vary based on service provided and priority group

You will need separate health insurance for your family.

- VA healthcare only covers the veteran
- If your spouse is employed, they may be able to get health insurance through their employer
- Your family may also be eligible for TRICARE, which we'll cover in the next section

Not all veterans who receive VA health benefits are eligible to receive dental care through the VA.

Eligibility for dental care depends on your priority group. If you aren't eligible for dental coverage through the VA, you may have to enroll in separate insurance through your employer, another government program or the Health Insurance Marketplace.

There are rules about health savings accounts (HSAs) if you're receiving benefits from the VA.

If you're covered by a high-deductible health plan (HDHP), but receive only preventative care or care related to a service-connected disability at the VA, you can still contribute to an HSA. If you've received any other medical benefits from the VA at any time during the previous three months—even if you're covered by a separate HDHP for that period—you cannot make HSA contributions in the current month.

For more on HSAs in general, check out [All About Health Savings Accounts \(HSAs\)](#).

TRICARE

TRICARE is a healthcare program for servicemembers, retirees and their families. It is comparable to medical insurance received through an employer or purchased on the healthcare marketplace.



Who is eligible?

- Active-duty servicemembers and their families
- National Guard and Reserve members and their families
- Retired servicemembers and their families
- Surviving family members of a servicemember
- Select other individuals

What may be covered?

- Routine and emergency medical care
- Many medical procedures
- Routine dental care and procedures
- Vision
- Mental health care
- Prescription drugs
- Other special needs, like home health care and hospice care

Different TRICARE plans are available based on military status and other factors.

For example, retirees may be eligible for [TRICARE For Life](#), but only if they're enrolled in Medicare Part B. Costs and coverage can vary by plan.

TRICARE resources:

- A tool for [finding a TRICARE plan](#)
- A way to [compare different TRICARE plans](#)
- Answers to [frequently asked questions](#)
- Enrollment information and [online enrollment](#)

Keep in mind:

If you're enrolled in TRICARE, you can't contribute to an HSA based on the months you're covered.

Other Healthcare Programs

Federal Employee Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP)

Who is eligible?

- Veterans and their families

What may be covered?

- Dental care
- Vision care

Check your eligibility and enroll [online](#).

Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program (FLTCIP)

Who is eligible?

- Active servicemembers
- Retired servicemembers

What may be covered?

- Care in a nursing home, assisted living facility, hospice facility or adult day care center
- Up to 500 days of care provided by certain friends and family

Check your eligibility and enroll [online](#).

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management suspended new applications to this program on December 19, 2022. Watch for updates on their [website](#).

The Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA)

Who is eligible?

- Spouse and dependent children of a veteran who is permanently and totally disabled from a service-connected disability
- Surviving spouse and dependent children of a veteran who died during active military service or from a service-connected disability

What may be covered?

- Certain medical expenses, where individuals don't qualify for TRICARE

Check your eligibility and enroll [online](#).

Education Benefits

The VA administers a number of programs which provide education benefits to servicemembers, veterans and—in certain situations—their families.

Eligible individuals can use these benefits to pay for some or all enrollment costs in various programs, including:

- Tuition for an undergraduate or graduate degree
- Licensing and certifications
- Apprenticeships
- Housing allowance*
- Stipend for books and supplies*

Servicemembers and veterans often qualify for multiple programs—but the programs themselves tend to be mutually exclusive. If you qualify for multiple programs, be sure you understand the benefits of each before applying. Generally, once you've chosen a program, you cannot receive benefits under another program.



*Provided by certain programs

Education Benefits

Here's a high-level overview of the different programs. We explore each of these in more detail in the following sections.

Compare current benefit rates of each [GI Bill program](#).

	Eligibility	Benefits
Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33)	Veterans who served on active duty after September 10, 2001 and meet certain service requirements (see Post-9/11 GI Bill section)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuition and fees • Housing allowance • Up to \$1k per school year for books and supplies • One-time \$500 payment to assist with moving from a rural area to attend school
Montgomery GI Bill-Active Duty (Chapter 30)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active servicemembers • Honorably discharged veterans who meet certain qualifications 	Up to 36 months of financial assistance for the cost of enrollment in an approved program
Montgomery GI Bill-Select Reserve (Chapter 1606)	Generally available to members of the National Guard and Reserves who meet certain qualifications	Up to \$407/month for up to 36 months to cover the cost of enrollment in an approved program
Veterans' Education Assistance Program	Veterans who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entered service between January 1, 1977 and June 30, 1985 • Served in any branch other than the Air Force* 	Up to 36 months of financial assistance for the cost of enrollment in an approved program
Survivors' and Dependents' Education Assistance Program	A child or spouse of a veteran or servicemember who meets certain qualifications	Generally 36 months of financial assistance for the cost of enrollment in an approved program
Fry Scholarships	Qualifying spouses and children	Similar to Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits for up to 36 months
Yellow Ribbon Program	Servicemembers, veterans and family members who qualify for 100% of the Post-9/11 GI Bill or the Fry Scholarship	Financial assistance in paying for some or all of enrollment costs at out-of-state, private and graduate schools

*Some Air Force veterans may qualify if they meet certain qualifications

Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33)

How to receive benefits

If you're eligible for this benefit, you can apply [online](#).

Eligibility

Servicemembers and veterans who served on active duty after September 10, 2001 are eligible for this benefit if they:

- Served at least 90 days on active duty (doesn't have to be continuous)
- Received a Purple Heart on or after September 11, 2001 and were honorably discharged after any amount of service
- Served for at least 30 continuous days after September 11, 2001 and were honorably discharged with a service-connected disability

What's covered

The Post-9/11 GI Bill offers more comprehensive education benefits than the Montgomery GI Bill (see next section). Eligible servicemembers and veterans can generally receive up to 36 months of financial assistance under the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits



Tuition & fees



Books & supplies up to \$1k/school year



Housing allowance



\$500 to assist with moving from a rural area (one-time payment)

Determination of coverage amount

The dollar amount of benefits available will depend on your eligibility percentage, which is based on length of active service.

Servicemembers or veterans are entitled to 100% of the Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit rates if they have either:

- 36 months of active-duty service
- At least 30 days of continuous active-duty service (with discharge due to a service-connected disability or receipt of a Purple Heart)

Keep in mind:

If you don't meet either of these conditions, you can still qualify for a reduced percentage of the benefit.

Expiration of benefits

For eligible servicemembers and veterans whose service ended on or after January 1, 2013: Benefits from this program never expire.

For eligible servicemembers and veterans whose service ended before January 1, 2013: You have 15 years after your last separation from active service to use these benefits.

Transferring benefits

An active servicemember may be able to transfer Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to their spouse or dependent children. Typically, the servicemember must complete at least six years of service and agree to add four additional years of service.

Keep in mind: Conditions vary.

For spouses:

- Can begin using the benefits right away
- Benefits available up to 15 years after the servicemember separates from active duty

For children:

- Can only use the benefits once the servicemember has finished at least 10 years of service
- Can't use any benefits after turning 26

Transfer requests must go through [milConnect](#), rather than the VA. Once the request is approved, family members can apply for benefits through the VA.

Montgomery GI Bill–Active Duty (Chapter 30) (MGIB–AD)

How to receive benefits

- Check if your education program is approved for MGIB–AD benefits. Contact your school or use the [GI Bill Comparison Tool](#).
- **Keep in mind:** Schools can request new approval for programs.
- [Apply for benefits](#)
- Have your school or program confirm your enrollment.

Eligibility

- Active servicemembers
- Honorably discharged veterans who:
 - Served some minimum period of active duty (as little as two years, depending on a veteran's time and terms of service)
 - Have a high school diploma, GED, or 12 hours of college credits
 - Paid \$1,200 via a pay reduction or lump-sum payment—for anyone who entered active duty after December 31, 1976 (or January 1, 1978, under a delayed enlistment contracted before January 1, 1977)

Servicemembers who chose to use their Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit instead of unused Montgomery GI Bill–Active Duty (MGIB–AD) benefits may be eligible for a refund of some or all of this \$1,200. Amounts paid to the \$600 Buy-Up program are not refundable.

The VA will automatically include any refund in the last Post-9/11 GI Bill monthly housing allowance payment received by the servicemember or veteran.

What's covered

- Only covers the cost of enrollment in an approved program
- Generally up to 36 months of financial assistance

Determination of coverage amount

Eligible servicemembers and veterans are assigned to one of four categories, primarily based on when they served. The amount of money received under the MGIB–AD will depend on your assigned category, as well as:

- Length of service
- Type of education or training program
- Qualification for a college fund or kicker
- How much you paid to the \$600 Buy-Up program

Expiration of benefits

An eligible veteran usually has 10 years from the end of their service to use MGIB–AD benefits.

Transferring benefits

These benefits cannot be transferred to a family member.

Montgomery GI Bill–Select Reserve (Chapter 1606) (MGIB–SR)

How to receive benefits

- Get a Notice of Basic Eligibility (DD Form 2384–1) from your unit.
- Check if your education program is approved for MGIB–SR benefits. Contact your school or use the [GI Bill Comparison Tool](#).
- **Keep in mind:** Schools can request new approval for programs.
- [Apply for benefits](#)
- Have your school or program confirm your enrollment.

Eligibility

Members of the National Guard and Reserves who:

- Have completed initial active duty for training (IADT)
- Have a high school diploma or GED before finishing IADT
- Are in good standing while serving in an active Selected Reserve unit
- Have either a six-year service obligation in the Selected Reserve or are officers in the Selected Reserve and have agreed to serve six years in addition to their initial service obligations

What's covered

- Only covers the cost of enrollment in an approved program
- Up to \$407 per month for 36 months

Expiration of benefits

Eligibility ends on the day a servicemember leaves the Selected Reserve. However, this can be extended for mobilizations and other limited circumstances.

Transferring benefits

These benefits cannot be transferred to a family member.

Veterans' Education Assistance Program (VEAP)

How to receive benefits

- Check if your education program is approved for VEAP benefits. Contact the Education Call Center at 888-442-4551.
- Apply for benefits
 - If you haven't started training yet: [Submit an application online](#)
 - **Note:** If you're on active duty now, you'll need approval from your Education Services Officer, and verification of service from your Commanding Officer.
 - **Note:** If you're not on active duty right now, send copy 4 (member copy) of your DD 214, Certificate of Release, or Discharge from Active Duty.
 - If you've already started training: Give your VA Form 22-1990 application and member copy of your DD 214 to your school. Have them complete [VA Form 22-1990](#), Enrollment Certification and send all forms to the VA.
- Have your school or program confirm your enrollment.

Eligibility

Veterans who have done all of the following:

- Entered service between January 1, 1977 and June 30, 1985
- Served in any branch other than the Air Force*
- Opened and put any amount of money into your VEAP account before April 1, 1987
- Put \$25–\$2,700 into your VEAP account on your own
- Finished your first period of service and didn't receive a dishonorable discharge

*Certain Air Force veterans may be eligible, if they also meet all of these qualifications:

- Entered service between December 1, 1980 and September 30, 1981
- Enlisted in one of these Air Force specialties: 20723, 20731, 20830, 46130, 46230A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, J, or Z, 46430, or 81130
- Enlisted in one of these locations: Beckley, WV; Buffalo, NY; Dallas, TX; Fargo, ND; Houston, TX; Jackson, MS; Louisville, KY; Memphis, TN; Omaha, NB; Philadelphia, PA; Seattle, WA; Sioux Falls, SD; or Syracuse, NY

What's covered

- Only covers the cost of enrollment in an approved program
- Up to 36 months of financial assistance

Determination of coverage amount

The funds available are based on the veteran's contributions—for every \$1 contributed, \$2 of benefits are received.

Expiration of benefits

A veteran has 10 years from their release from active duty to use VEAP benefits. Any unused contributions will be refunded at the end of that time.

Transferring benefits

These benefits cannot be transferred to a family member.

Survivors' and Dependents' Education Assistance Program

How to receive benefits

- Contact the school to see if your education program is approved for VA education benefits
- [Apply for benefits](#)
- Work with your school or training program to confirm enrollment

Eligibility

A child or spouse of a servicemember or veteran is generally eligible for these benefits if the veteran or servicemember:

- Is permanently and totally disabled due to a service-connected disability
- Died while on active duty or as a result of a service-connected disability
- Is missing in action or was captured in the line of duty
- Was forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty
- Is hospitalized or receiving treatment for a service-connected permanent and total disability and is likely to be discharged for that disability

What's covered

Generally, you can receive up to 36 months of financial assistance for the cost of enrollment in an approved program.

Keep in mind: If you began using this program prior to August 1, 2018 you can receive up to 45 months of benefits.

Determination of coverage amount

Current benefit rates are available [here](#).

Expiration of benefits

For an eligible child:

You can typically receive benefits between age 18–26.

For an eligible spouse:

You can receive benefits within 10 years of your spouse's death (20 years if they died on active duty), or 20 years after they are rated as permanently and totally disabled.

Transferring benefits

Not applicable

VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (VA DIC)

A surviving spouse or child of a servicemember or veteran who died in the line of duty or from a service-related disability may also be eligible for this tax-free monetary benefit. A surviving spouse can receive both VA DIC payments and DEA Program or Fry Scholarship (see next section) benefits at the same time. Children cannot receive VA DIC payments while receiving either of these education benefits.

Fry Scholarships

How to receive benefits

- Contact the school to see if your education program is approved for VA education benefits.
- [Apply for benefits](#)

Eligibility

A child or spouse of a servicemember or veteran is generally eligible for a Fry Scholarship if:

- The veteran or servicemember died in the line of duty on or after September 11, 2001
- The veteran or servicemember died from a service-connected disability on or after September 11, 2001

What's covered

Fry Scholarships provide similar benefits to those offered under the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

Fry Scholarship benefits



Tuition & fees



Books & supplies up to \$1k/school year



Housing allowance



\$500 to assist with moving from a rural area (one-time payment)

Expiration of benefits

For spouses:

If you remarry, you are no longer eligible for these benefits.

For children:

- If you turned 18 or graduated from high school before January 1, 2013—You can receive a Fry Scholarship until you're 33 years old
- If you turn(ed) 18 or graduate(d) from high school after January 1, 2013—You can receive a Fry Scholarship at any age over 18 or after you graduate from high school (whichever comes first)
- You can receive a Fry Scholarship at any time, no matter how old you are, if your parent was a member of the Selected Reserve and died from a service-connected disability while not on active duty
- If your parent died in the line of duty before August 1, 2011—You may qualify for both the Fry Scholarship and the Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance program. Keep in mind: You can only use one of these programs at a time

Determination of coverage amount

You can get up to 36 months of benefits. Current rates for the Fry Scholarship are listed [here](#).

Transferring benefits

Not applicable

Yellow Ribbon Program

How to receive benefits

- Apply for the Post-9/11 GI Bill or Fry Scholarship.
- Confirm whether [your school participates in the Yellow Ribbon Program](#)
- Turn in your Certificate of Eligibility to your school's certifying official, financial aid, military liaison or other appropriate office.
- Wait for a decision from your school.

Eligibility

Only those servicemembers, veterans and family members who qualify for 100% of the Post-9/11 GI Bill or the Fry Scholarship are eligible for the Yellow Ribbon Program.

What's covered

The Yellow Ribbon Program was created to provide eligible servicemembers, veterans and their families the money they need to pay for some or all of enrollment costs at out-of-state, private and graduate schools—which may not be covered by the Post-9/11 GI Bill and Fry Scholarships.

Expiration of benefits

To remain enrolled in the Yellow Ribbon Program you must:

- Make acceptable progress toward completing your program (according to your school)
- Stay enrolled in the school without a break
- Have money left in your Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits

Determination of coverage amount

Enrollment in this program is on a first-come, first-served basis. Your school decides the amount of coverage based on what you owe on tuition and fees after scholarships, grants, other VA educational benefits, etc. are subtracted.

Some schools may base coverage on student status (undergraduate, graduate, doctoral) and type of school (college or professional).

Transferring benefits

Not applicable

VA Home Loans

VA home loans are mortgages provided by traditional mortgage providers, like private banks and credit unions, which are partially guaranteed by the VA.

A servicemember or veteran must receive a Certificate of Eligibility in order to receive a VA home loan. You can [apply online](#).

In order to guarantee the loan, the VA will use its own network of appraisers to determine the value of the home. Keep in mind: There's an appeal process if you feel your appraisal is too low.

Aside from the appraisal, the mortgage process is similar to buying a home with a traditional mortgage. You'll have to work with a lender—like a bank, credit union or mortgage company—to obtain the loan.



Eligibility

Minimum service requirement*

Did not receive a dishonorable discharge

Certain surviving spouses

Benefits

No required downpayment

No need for Private Mortgage Insurance (PMI)†

Lower interest rates

Lower closing costs

Limitations

Only available on a property you intend to use as your primary residence (including a multi-family home)

Generally limited to one VA home loan at a time

* The minimum service requirement depends on whether you are currently a servicemember (active, reserve, or National Guard) or a veteran.
- Current servicemembers: At least 90 continuous days
- Veterans: Minimums vary based on dates of service, and are provided by the [VA](#)

† Closing cost may vary depending on your personal circumstances.

Benefits Protections

The federal government has enacted laws aimed at protecting public and private sector workers who are called to military service. If you find yourself in this position:

- You will receive the seniority and rights (e.g., vesting of benefits) you would have received if you'd been continuously employed
- You have the right to continue health coverage for yourself and your dependents during your military service, or the right to reinstate coverage when you return to your job
- You have the choice to make up all or part of the contributions and elective deferrals you missed during your qualifying military absence. These make-up contributions and deferrals will not count toward the current year's limits and can be made over a period of up to three times the duration of military service (not exceeding five years)
- When you return, your employer must fund all pension benefits and make all other contributions you would have received without your military-related absence
- If you can't return to employment due to death or a disability that occurred during the qualifying military service, you or your survivors are entitled to receive disability and death benefits which are normally only available to current employees—including accelerated vesting in the retirement plan and additional life insurance benefits



Retirement Benefits

The military provides several government programs to assist eligible servicemembers and veterans with saving for retirement. These benefits can be received in addition to Social Security benefits and those provided under retirement plans sponsored by a civilian employer.

Social Security benefits

If you're a veteran who served on active duty between 1957 and 2001, your Social Security earnings records may have been credited with additional earnings on top of your active-duty basic pay. This may increase your Social Security benefits.

If you're a veteran, the Social Security Administration will automatically attempt to verify your military service when you apply for benefits, but may request a DD 214 or other proof of service before processing your application if it is unable to verify your service.



Military Retirement System

The military has multiple retirement systems that provide pension payments to eligible veterans. The two currently available to most servicemembers are the High-36 Retirement System (also known as the High-3) and the newer Blended Retirement System (BRS). Payments received under either of these plans are taxable.

	High-36 Retirement System	Blended Retirement System (BRS)
Available to	Servicemembers and veterans who joined the military: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before January 1, 2006 • Between January 1, 2006 and December 31, 2017, and did not enroll in the BRS 	Servicemembers and veterans who joined the military: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On or after January 1, 2018 • Between January 1, 2006 and December 31, 2017, and enrolled in the BRS by December 31, 2018
Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 20 years of service • Age 60 (Guard and Reserve only) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 20 years of service • Age 60 (Guard and Reserve only)
Monthly Annuity Payment for Life	=2.5% times years served times average of the highest 36 months of basic pay	=2% times years served times average of the highest 36 months of basic pay
Lump Sum Payment	Not available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can elect to receive a lump sum equal to 25% or 50% of the discounted present value of future annuity payments • Monthly annuity payments are reduced to 75% or 50% of full value until reaching full Social Security retirement age • Electing to choose a lump sum payment could offset disability compensation, depending upon a veteran's disability rating

Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)

The Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) is a government-sponsored retirement plan that operates much like an employer-sponsored 401(k).

Contributions

Active duty servicemembers and members of the Ready Reserve can elect to contribute a percentage of their basic pay, incentive pay, special pay and bonus pay to a TSP account via payroll deductions. A servicemember can elect to make these contributions to either a traditional or Roth account, if eligible.

	Contributions	Earnings	Withdrawals
Traditional	Made pre-tax	Taxes deferred	Generally taxable
Roth	Made after tax	Grow tax free	Qualified are tax free

For servicemembers in the BRS:

The government also contributes 1% of your basic pay—regardless of your contributions, subject to a two-year vesting period—to your TSP. The government will also match the first 5% of your contributions after two years of service—100% on the first 3% of contributions and 50% on the next 2%. All government contributions are made to a traditional account.

The government doesn't make either of these contributions to the TSPs of servicemembers in the Legacy Retirement System.

Contribution limits

- Annual contributions to a TSP account are capped at the same limits as employer-sponsored 401(k) plans
- A servicemember with another job can contribute to both a TSP and the 401(k) or qualified plan offered by their other employer. The servicemember cannot, however, contribute more than the annual contribution limits to both accounts combined.

Investments*

The TSP offers ten life-cycle funds with different target dates, as well as five individual bond and equity funds:

[Read more about TSP investment vehicle options.](#)

It is permitted to invest up to 25% of a TSP account in mutual funds, which you can select through the TSP mutual fund window.

* Investing involves risk, including loss of principal.

Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)

Withdrawals and distributions

A veteran must start taking required minimum distributions (RMDs) from their TSP account when they reach the “applicable RMD age.” Their applicable RMD age will depend on their date of birth:

- Age 70 ½ if born on or before 6/30/1949
- Age 72 if born between 7/1/1949–12/31/1950
- Age 73 if born between 1/1/1951–12/31/1959
- Age 75 if born on or after 1/1/1960

Keep in mind: The amount you’re required to take as a distribution from your TSP account is a standalone amount. You can’t combine distributions you take from other qualified plans with TSP distributions to meet the TSP minimum.

You may choose to receive distributions from your TSP account sooner, including in-service withdrawals. However, if you take withdrawals or distributions before turning 59 ½, they may be subject to a 10% penalty. Spousal consent may be required in certain situations.

Loans

A servicemember or veteran can borrow up to \$50,000 from their TSP account. These loans can be used to purchase or build a primary residence, as well as for more general purposes. The term of the loan will depend on the use of the loan and the interest rates will depend on the interest rate in effect when the loan is processed.

Transferring your funds

Transferring into a TSP account

You can elect to transfer balances from traditional IRAs and qualified plans into your existing TSP account.

Transferring out of a TSP account

It is possible to transfer or rollover funds from your TSP to another account, especially if you end your military service. This may provide a larger selection of investment alternatives than the TSP, but plan fees may also be higher than [those charged by the TSP](#).

You can transfer your balance to an IRA or eligible qualified plan via direct or indirect rollover.

In a direct rollover,

a check is made out to the new custodian of the receiving plan, which may be sent directly to the new custodian or to you. If it’s sent to you, you’ll need to get the check to the new custodian.

There is no tax withholding on a direct rollover, which makes it the generally preferred method.

In an indirect rollover,

the check is made out to you and is subject to a 20% tax withholding. To avoid owing any taxes, you must deposit the full amount of the distribution, including the 20% tax withholding, into an IRA or qualified plan within 60 days.

Any amount not transferred within the 60 days may be subject to income tax, as well as an additional 10% penalty if you’re under age 59 ½. While you can recover the 20% tax withholding when you file your tax return for the year of the rollover, you will be out of pocket for this amount until that time.

Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)

Separation from service

You can no longer contribute to a TSP once you separate from service. You can, however, continue to maintain and manage your TSP account following a separation—as long as the account has a vested balance of at least \$200. You can also choose to transfer or rollover a TSP account balance to an IRA or certain plans with your civilian employer, as described on previous pages.

Beneficiary designation

You can choose a specific beneficiary for your TSP—if you don't file a beneficiary designation, default rules for account recipients kick in, beginning with a spouse.

These rules may not align with your estate plan, so be sure to file a beneficiary designation and consider updates as life changes (e.g., with the birth or adoption of a child, a marriage, a divorce, etc.).

Enrollment

Servicemembers in the Legacy Retirement System can enroll in the TSP by making a contribution election using their service's electronic payroll system (e.g., myPay), or by completing Form TSP-U-1. Servicemembers in the BRS are automatically enrolled in the TSP after completing 60 days of service.

Keep in mind:

A servicemember can save even more toward retirement by contributing to a traditional or Roth IRA each year. You can contribute up to \$6,500 (or \$7,500 if you're 50 or older) in 2023. Although you can't generally contribute more than your earned income to an IRA each year, you can count tax-free combat pay as part of your earned income.



Veterans and Survivors Pension

How to Apply	Apply online
Benefit	Tax-free monetary benefit for eligible wartime veterans with little to no income
Eligibility	<p>Veterans generally must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be 65+ or have a total and permanent disability• Have served a minimum period of active duty service <p>See more information about eligibility</p>
Survivor's Benefit	The un-remarried spouse and children (under certain ages) of an eligible veteran are also eligible for this program
Additional Benefit	<p>Eligible veterans and survivors who either require aid and attendance or are housebound may be eligible for additional monetary benefits.</p> <p>See more information about additional benefits</p>



Life and Disability Insurance

The VA provides several life and disability insurance programs which are primarily available to servicemembers and their families. However, veterans also have limited opportunities to maintain at least some of this coverage following separation.

Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI)

- Low-cost life insurance that provides a death benefit of up to \$400k to active-duty servicemembers and members of the Guard or Reserve
- Eligible servicemembers are automatically enrolled for maximum coverage
- Can select a smaller death benefit or refuse coverage altogether through SGLI Online Enrollment System on [milConnect](#)
- The death benefit will be paid to designated beneficiaries
- Following separation, most servicemembers receive 120 days of free coverage. During this period, a servicemember can convert SGLI coverage to a commercial insurance policy
- Servicemembers who are totally disabled at separation can elect to extend SGLI coverage for up to two years at no cost

Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance Traumatic Injury Protection (TSGLI)

- TSGLI provides short-term disability coverage to a current servicemember
- Generally charged a flat fee of \$1 per month
- TSGLI coverage is automatic for any servicemember covered by SGLI

Family Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (FSGLI)

- Provides a death benefit of up to \$100k for the spouse of a current servicemember
- Provides a death benefit of up to \$10k for dependent children
- Dependent children are automatically covered at no cost
- Spouses are covered automatically if they aren't members of the military, but the servicemember must pay a premium for spousal coverage
- A spouse who is covered under FSGLI has 120 days from the servicemember's separation, death or termination of SGLI/FSGLI coverage to convert the FSGLI coverage to a commercial policy



Life and Disability Insurance

Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI)

- Allows a veteran to convert SGLI coverage to renewable term coverage following separation from service
- A veteran can receive the same amount of coverage they had under SGLI at time of separation or some smaller amount of coverage
- Coverage is available as long as premium (which increases with age) is paid
- Can be converted to a commercial life insurance policy at any time
- Veterans have only one year and 120 days from separation to convert SGLI coverage to VGLI. [You can apply online](#)

Service-Disabled Veterans' Insurance (S-DVI)

- Provides up to \$10k of life insurance to disabled veterans
- Totally disabled veterans are covered at no cost—with option to purchase up to \$30k of additional coverage
- Generally available within two years of a new service-connected disability

Veterans' Mortgage Life Insurance (VMLI)

- Provides a death benefit that can pay off some or all of a mortgage upon the death of a severely disabled veteran
- The death benefit is generally equal to the outstanding balance of the mortgage, but cannot exceed \$200k

Veterans Affairs Life Insurance (VALife)

- Provides veterans with service-connected disabilities a guarantee of whole life coverage up to \$40k



Disability Benefits and Programs

Disability compensation

The VA makes monthly payments to veterans who became ill or were injured during service, as well as veterans whose service made an existing condition worse. Veterans can qualify for disability compensation for both physical and mental health conditions related to their military service.

Disability Compensation is tax free. The amount paid depends on your disability rating and family situation.

Disabled veterans can file a claim for disability compensation [online](#).



Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E)

VR&E is a VA program that helps veterans with service-connected disabilities:

- Find a job
- Retrain for a new career
- Start a business
- Live as independently as possible

Benefits

Up to 48 months of services



Vocational counseling



Job-search assistance



Evaluations to help identify potential careers

Other support



Short- and long-term training



Purchase of required supplies and equipment



On-the-job training

Dependents

Dependents of a veteran with a service-connected disability may also be eligible for VR&E benefits. Generally, if a dependent is eligible for VA educational benefits, they are also eligible for VR&E.

Eligible veterans and family members can apply [online](#).

If you've already used GI Bill benefits prior to enrolling in VR&E, your VR&E entitlement will be reduced by the amount of time you were covered under the GI Bill. However, using VR&E benefits will not reduce your GI Bill entitlement.

Burial Benefits

The VA provides a number of benefits related to the funeral and burial of a servicemember or veteran.

The VA:

- Can help plan and pay for the burial or memorial service of a servicemember, veteran and certain family members in a national cemetery
- Provides a burial allowance to reimburse the family of a servicemember or veteran for the costs of their funeral, burial and related transportation expenses
- Will provide a U.S. flag to the family of a servicemember or veteran—at no cost—to drape on the casket or place with the urn of the servicemember or veteran
- May be able provide a headstone, grave marker or medallion at no cost



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