

# 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 the different VA 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:

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### 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)

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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 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/ mailingaddresses.asp> OR
  - Work with an accredited Veterans Service Organization (VSO). You can find a VSO at <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/vso-search> OR
  - Go directly to your VA Regional Office (RO) for assistance. You can find your local RO 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/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** <https://www.va.gov/records/get-military-service-records> 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 VSO. Find an accredited VSO **online** by visiting: <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/vso-search>.

Survivors can also receive free, in-person help applying for benefits at a VA RO.

## 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 <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](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)
- Survivor's 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

- 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 855-948-2311. You can also **call, text, or chat** for help at the Veterans Crisis Line at 800-273-8255.
- 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 Civilian Health and Medical Program of Veterans Affairs (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** myVA411 at 800-698-2411 or **visit** <https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/dependents/champva>.

### 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 Service members and Veterans that meet specific criteria. DIC is managed by VA. To learn more about DIC, please **visit** <https://www.va.gov/disability/dependency-indemnity-compensation>.

The Survivor Benefit Program (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, please **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.cem.va.gov/cem/docs/factsheets/Planning\\_Legacy\\_Booklet.pdf](https://www.cem.va.gov/cem/docs/factsheets/Planning_Legacy_Booklet.pdf) and at [https://www.cem.va.gov/cem/burial\\_benefits/index.asp](https://www.cem.va.gov/cem/burial_benefits/index.asp)