

Getting Started with Caregiver Support Program



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Choose VA

This guide will help caregivers of Veterans access support at VA that may include caregiver education and training, mental health counseling, peer mentor support, access to health care benefits, monetary stipend and respite care.

Am I a “caregiver”?

Often people do not identify themselves as a “caregiver.” Most of us, at some point in our lives, will be in a caregiver role. Caregivers are daughters, wives, husbands, sons, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, partners and friends. Caregivers manage a wide range of responsibilities. **Here’s how you know if you are in a caregiver role.**

Do you:

- Make medical appointments or drive to the doctor and pharmacy to pick up prescriptions for a Veteran?
- Help a Veteran get dressed, take a shower, or take medicine?
- Help transfer a Veteran in and out of bed, or with physical therapy, injections, feeding tubes or other medical procedures at home?
- Talk with doctors, nurses, social workers, and others to understand what medical care or other benefits a Veteran might need?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, you are a caregiver and may be eligible for caregiver services at VA. The Caregiver Support Program (CSP) provides services and support to Veterans and caregivers through two programs, the **Program of General Caregiver Support Services (PGCSS)** and the **Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC)**.

Who can help me determine which programs and services may be available to me and to the Veteran I care for?

Caregiver Support Coordinators (CSCs) are social workers, nurses and psychologists with extensive knowledge of VA services and can help connect you with the resources you need.

To find your CSC:

- **Call** the Caregiver Support Line at 855-260-3274.
- **Visit us online** at <https://www.caregiver.va.gov>
- **Find** a CSC in-person at a local VA Medical Center https://www.caregiver.va.gov/support/New_CSC_Page.asp

Program of General Caregiver Support Services

All caregivers who provide personal care services to Veterans enrolled in VA health care have access to PGCSS. Caregivers who enroll in PGCSS have access to education and training, including courses at local VA medical centers. In addition, caregivers can participate in support services and take advantage of VA home and community based care. No formal application is required to enroll in PGCSS. Contact your local CSC for assistance with PGCSS enrollment.

HOW DOES VA SUPPORT CAREGIVERS OF VETERANS?

The following programs and services may be available to Veterans and caregivers according to availability of service in that area and Veteran eligibility:

- VA Caregiver Support Line
- Peer Support Mentoring
- Monthly caregiver education groups by telephone
- Mental health services for caregivers
- Online workshop through Building Better Caregivers™
- In-home health care
- Help with daily tasks (like bathing, dressing) and rehab programs
- Comfort care and help with managing pain
- Adult day health care centers
- Telehealth
- Home care supplies and equipment
- Veteran clothing allowance
- Home modification benefit

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION ABOUT FAMILY AND CAREGIVER HEALTH SERVICES?

Visit us online at https://www.caregiver.va.gov/pdfs/MissionAct/CSP_Expansion_Factsheet_092720_Approved_Final.pdf

Visit us online at https://www.caregiver.va.gov/docs/PGCSS_Fact_Sheet.pdf

Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers

The Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) is a program of enhanced clinical support for caregivers of eligible Veterans who are seriously injured. These changes are based on the new "Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) Improvements and Amendments Under the VA MISSION Act of 2018" Final Rule, RIN 2900-Aq48 effective October 2020. These changes will include Veterans who incurred or aggravated a serious injury in the line of duty in active military, naval, or air service on or after September 11, 2001, or on or before May 7, 1975.

How do I apply for PCAFC?

- A Veteran who has a single or combined service-connected rating of 70% or more AND who is in need of in-person personal care services for a minimum of six (6) continuous months based on either an inability to perform an activity of daily living (ADL) each time the activity is performed, or a need for supervision, protection, or instruction, which means a functional impairment that directly impacts his/her ability to maintain his or her personal safety, on a daily basis, or
- A Veteran who sustained or aggravated a serious injury (now includes serious illness) in the line of duty on or before May 7, 1975 or on or after September 11, 2001.

Your CSC can provide you with more information.

PCAFC 10-STEP PROCESS

Due to the recent expansion of the PCAFC, the application process has changed. Effective October 1, 2020, there is a 10-step process that will result in an eligibility decision within 90 days of application receipt. For more information about applications, visit https://www.caregiver.va.gov/pdfs/MissionAct/ApplicationProcessFactsheet_Chapter2_Launch_Approved_Final_100820.pdf.

1. Application Submission – Veteran and caregiver complete the application for PCAFC – VA Form 10-10CG. You may ask VA to help you fill out the form.
2. Application Intake - A member of the local CSP Team conducts the application intake with the Veteran and each caregiver applicant.
Note: If the Veteran and at least one caregiver applicant meet the specific eligibility requirements, the following steps will occur:
3. Veteran Assessment - A member of the Local CSP Team conducts a clinical assessment with the Veteran.
4. Veteran Functional Assessment - A CSP Clinical Assessor completes the Functional Assessment instrument with the Veteran.
5. Caregiver Assessment – A local CSP Team conducts a clinical assessment with each Family Caregiver applicant.
6. Initial Application Review - The CSP Centralized Eligibility and Appeals Team (CEAT) conducts a review of the application. Steps 7 through 10 are followed only when the CEAT determines the Veteran and Family Caregivers will continue with the application process.
7. Caregiver Training – Each Family Caregiver applicant completes caregiver training.
8. Home-Care Assessment - The CSP Clinical Assessor conducts the Home-Care Assessment with the Veteran and each Family Caregiver applicant.
9. Final Application Review - The CSP CEAT
10. Notification – Within 90 days of the application being received by the VA, a member of the CSP Team will call the Veteran and Family Caregiver applicant(s) to notify them of the determination. An official letter will also be mailed.

OTHER QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

How do I apply for the PCAFC?

You and the Veteran will need to apply together and participate in an Application process to determine if you're eligible for the PCAFC. You'll both need to sign and date the application and answer all questions for your role.

To apply:

Online at <https://www.va.gov/family-member-benefits/apply-for-caregiver-assistance-form-10-10cg/introduction>

By mail, fill out a joint Application for the PCAFC (VA Form 10-10CG). Download the instructions and application at <https://www.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/10-10CG.pdf>

Call the Caregiver Support Line at 855-260-3274

In-Person, bring your completed VA Form 10-10CG to your local VA medical center's CSC. To find the name of your local coordinator, you can visit: https://www.caregiver.va.gov/support/New_CSC_Page.asp

Note: Do not send medical records along with the application. VA will follow up after the application is received. If you need assistance with completing the application or would like to check the status of your 1010CG application please call 855-488-8440, option 3.

More information and Fact Sheets

- For more information on the Caregivers PCAFC expansion, visit https://www.caregiver.va.gov/pdfs/MissionAct/ExpansionFactsheet_Chapter2_Launch_Approved_Final_100120.pdf#
- Caregivers PCAFC Eligibility Under the New Final Rule, visit https://www.caregiver.va.gov/pdfs/MissionAct/EligibilityCriteriaFactsheet_Chapter2_Launch_Approved_Final_100120.pdf#
- Caregivers PCAFC Application Process, visit https://www.caregiver.va.gov/pdfs/MissionAct/ApplicationProcessFactsheet_Chapter2_Launch_Approved_Final_100820.pdf#
- Caregivers PCAFC Changes for Current Participants, visit https://www.caregiver.va.gov/pdfs/MissionAct/LegacyReassessmentFactsheet_Chapter3_Legacy_ApprovedFinal_10012020.pdf#
- Caregivers PCAFC Monthly Stipend Under the New Final Rule, visit https://www.caregiver.va.gov/pdfs/MissionAct/StipendFactsheet_Chapter2_Launch_Approved_Final_100120.pdf#