#### Department of Veterans Affairs M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii

**Veterans Benefits Administration June 8, 2015**

**Washington, DC 20420**

#### Transmittal Sheet

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| Changes Included in This Revision | The table below describes the changes included in this revision of Veterans Benefits Manual M21-1, Part III, “General Claims Process,” Subpart iii, “General Development and Dependency Issues.”***Notes***: * The term regional office (RO) also includes pension management center (PMC), where appropriate.
* Minor editorial changes have also been made to
* update incorrect or obsolete hyperlink references
* reorganize the alphabetical designations assigned to individual blocks to account for deleted or combined blocks
* replace “factual dependency” with “financial dependency”
* update obsolete terminology, where appropriate
* update section and topic titles to more accurately reflect their content
* clarify block labels and/or block text, and
* bring the documents into conformance with M21-1 standards.
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| Reason(s) for the Change | Citation |
| To move information about whom the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) may recognize as a Veteran’s dependent, which was previously found in M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, Chapter 5, Section A, Topic 1, Block b (III.iii.5.A.1.b), to a more logical location. | M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, Chapter 5, Section A, Topic 1, Block a (III.iii.5.A.1.a) |
| * To relocate information about VA benefits payable to or for a parent from III.iii.5.A.1.d.
* To remove reference to Parents’ Death Compensation, as there are no parents currently receiving this benefit.
 | III.iii.5.A.1.e |
| * To remove an example that incorrectly implied documentary evidence is required to establish the existence of a relationship between a Veteran and his/her spouse or child.
* To state that information of record regarding a beneficiary’s marital status or the status of his/her dependents is valid for up to eight years from the date VA receives it.
 | III.iii.5.A.1.f |
| To state that any necessary development action to determine the number of dependents a claimant has and/or to obtain additional evidence or information to establish the existence of a relationship between the claimant and his/her dependent(s) should be undertaken upon receipt of a pre-discharge claim. | III.iii.5.A.1.h |
| * To remove information that could lead readers to overdevelop claims for additional benefits for a dependent.
* To emphasize that regional offices (ROs) may process most claims for additional benefits for dependents *without* review of the claims folder.
 | III.iii.5.A.2.b |
| To delete the *additional* examples of questions of fact, as the block already contains one example that is clear and adequate. | III.iii.5.A.3.a |
| To add instructions for submitting a request for a legal opinion to Regional Counsel when an RO is processing the corresponding claim in a paperless environment. | III.iii.5.A.3.e |
| * To delete instructions to contact a claimant by telephone, e-mail, or fax for the purpose of obtaining information that a claimant failed to enter on a prescribed form.
* To add the following as forms a claimant may use to initiate the process of adding a dependent to his/her award:
* *VA Form 21P-509, Statement of Dependency of Parent(s)*, and
* *VA Form 21-0538, Status of Dependents Questionnaire*.
 | III.iii.5.A.4.a |
| To add a block that discusses how to handle forms that are incomplete. | III.iii.5.A.4.b |
| To move information about contacting a claimant by telephone from III.iii.5.A.4.a to its own, separate block. | III.iii.5.A.4.c |
| To move the “Important” note at the bottom of III.iii.5.A.4.a to a more logical location. | III.iii.5.A.4.d |
| To create a new block that discusses the acceptability of *VA Form 21-686c, Declaration of Dependents*, from a VA-recognized representative. | III.iii.5.A.4.g |
| To relocate V.i.3.E, which discusses the requirement for claimants and beneficiaries to provide VA with their Social Security number (SSN) and the SSNs of their dependents, to a more logical location in M21-1. | III.iii.5.A.5 |
| To state that SSNs are important because they allow VA to independently verify a claimant’s income using Federal tax information (FTI). | III.iii.5.A.5.b |
| To differentiate between the guidelines for requesting SSNs when VA is already paying benefits to or for an individual who has no SSN and the guidelines for requesting an SSN when a beneficiary or claimant fails to provide an SSN on an application for benefits. | III.iii.5.A.5.d |
| To add a new topic that discusses the action to take upon discovering, through review of a Veteran’s medical records, that the Veteran has a spouse or child that has not been added to the Veteran’s award. | III.iii.5.A.6 |
| To delete (old) III.iii.5.A.2.a, as the information in this block is discussed elsewhere in this section. Furthermore, the instructions in this block could lead readers to overdevelop claims for additional benefits for a dependent. | --- |
| To delete (old) III.iii.5.A.4.d, as the information contained therein is either obsolete or discussed elsewhere in Topic 4. | --- |

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| Rescissions | None |

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| Authority | By Direction of the Under Secretary for Benefits |

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| Signature | Thomas J. Murphy, DirectorCompensation Service |

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