Survivors Pension Benefit

What is Survivors Pension?

Survivors Pension, formerly referred to as Death Pension, is a tax-free benefit payable to a low-income, un-remarried surviving spouse or unmarried child(ren) of a deceased Veteran with wartime service.

Who is eligible?

You may be eligible if:

• The deceased Veteran was discharged under other than dishonorable conditions, AND
• The deceased Veteran served 90 days or more of active duty, with at least one day during a time of war*, AND
• Your countable income for VA purposes is below the amount listed in the Survivors Pension Rate Table, AND
• Your net worth meets the limits set for the Community Spouse Resource Allowance (CSRA) established by Congress for Medicaid, AND
• You are one of the following:
    o The unmarried surviving spouse (or you were previously married, and the marriage ended before Nov. 1, 1990).
    o The unmarried child of the deceased Veteran who is under 18, became permanently disabled before 18, or is between 18 and 23 years old and enrolled in an approved educational institution.

* If the deceased Veteran entered active duty after Sept. 7, 1980, the Veteran must have served at least 24 months of active-duty service. If the length of service is less than 24 months, the Veteran must have completed their entire tour of active duty.

To learn more about Survivors Pension, visit at www.va.gov/pension/survivors-pension/.

See the Survivors Pension Rate Table at https://www.va.gov/pension/survivors-pension-rates/ for the current net worth limit and maximum annual pension rate.

How much does VA pay?

VA takes the following steps to determine your monthly pension payment:

1. VA determines the Maximum Annual Pension Rate (MAPR) for your situation. This amount is set by Congress.

2. Next, VA determines your countable income. This is done by subtracting exclusions provided by law from your total annual income. Only medical expenses above the 5% deductible (determined by your MAPR) are considered.

3. VA then subtracts your countable income from the MAPR. This difference is your yearly pension entitlement.

4. VA divides this amount by 12 and rounds to the nearest dollar. This is the approximate amount of your monthly pension payment.

> VA deducts certain expenses you pay, such as unreimbursed medical expenses, from your annual household income. This will decrease your countable income and increase your monthly pension payment. Find a complete list of eligible expenses in the Code of Federal Regulations, at eCFR :: 38 CFR 3.278 -- Deductible medical expenses.

How can you apply for Survivors Pension?

You can apply in any of these ways:

Documents may be submitted by mail, in person at a VA regional office or electronically. However, VA recommends submitting correspondence electronically as this is the fastest method of receipt.

VA provides several tools to assist in electronic submission. To learn more about how to submit documents and claims electronically, visit www.va.gov/disability/upload-supporting-evidence. You can also go directly to access.va.gov to digitally upload any correspondence using Direct Upload.

By visiting www.va.gov you can also check your claim status and learn about other VA benefits. If you need assistance, you can find a local, accredited representative at https://www.benefits.va.gov/vso/

Bring your application to a VA regional office near you. Find a VA regional office near you at Find VA Locations | Veterans Affairs

If you prefer to mail your correspondence, please use the related mailing address below:

Department of Veterans Affairs
Pension Intake Center
P.O. Box 5365
Janesville, WI 53547-5365

For information on VA Pension, visit the web pages listed above or call 1-800-827-1000.

Updated May 2022