

VA Modernized Decision Review System SOC/SSOC Opt-In Fact Sheet

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) continues to look for ways to put Veterans in control of how they receive services and interact with VA. On August 23, 2017, the President signed into law the *Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017* (Appeals Modernization Act), creating a modernized review system for claims and appeals. The modernized appeals system took effect on February 19, 2019 and provides streamlined choices for seeking review of your VA claim decision.

The new law allows appellants with a legacy appeal an opportunity to withdraw from the legacy appeals process and enter the modernized appeals system. Upon receipt of a Statement of the Case (SOC) or Supplemental Statement of the Case (SSOC), you may elect to continue your appeal by seeking review under one of the new review options.

You are receiving this fact sheet because you are eligible to opt-in to the modernized appeals system based on the SOC/SSOC you received.

What Is the Modernized Appeals System?

The modernized appeals system gives claimants the opportunity to participate in the new **Supplemental Claim** and **Higher-Level Review** Lanes, or choose to file an **appeal directly to the Board of Veterans' Appeals**.

As a modernized appeals system participant, you will benefit from:

- A new, more efficient review process
- Potentially faster decisions and early resolution of disagreements
- Multiple review options
- The same potential effective date for your benefits regardless of the review option that you choose

Which Appeals are Eligible for the Modernized Appeals System?

You may opt-in to the modernized appeals system for any appeal currently in the legacy appeals process for which you have received a SOC/SSOC dated on or after February 19, 2019.

Which Review Option Is Right for You?

See the enclosed document entitled **VA Form 20-0998, "Your Rights To Seek Further Review Of Our Decision"** regarding your options under the modernized appeals system. You can also find information on how to participate and the benefits of participating by visiting <http://va.gov/decision-reviews/>.

What It Means to Opt-In

If you choose to opt-in to the modernized appeals system, VA will process your claim under the review option(s) selected. We will no longer process your appeal in the legacy process and you will not be able to request additional review of VA's decision under the legacy appeals process. You will have access to all the review options and benefits of the modernized appeals system.

Choosing one review option now does not prevent you from submitting another supplemental claim or choosing another review option after receiving a decision based on the chosen review option.

How You Can Opt-In

You can choose to have your appeal reviewed under one of the modernized appeals system options by completing the appropriate form for the review option you choose to participate in, as there is a separate

form for each option. These forms can be found online at www.va.gov/vaforms/. If you choose to participate in the modernized appeals system, you must **submit your completed application form(s) within 60 days from the date of your SOC/SSOC or within the one year appeal period, whichever is later.**

Send the appropriate form to the address listed in your SOC/SSOC or to the appropriate address on the “Where to Send Correspondence” if provided. Please ensure the **SOC/SSOC Opt-in box** on the appropriate form(s) is checked. This block indicates that you are submitting your appeal as an opt-in from the legacy appeals process.

If you choose not to participate in the modernized appeals system, you do not need to take any action. Your appeal(s) will remain in the legacy appeals process.