



Survivors Pension Benefit

What is Survivors Pension?

Survivors Pension, which was 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
- He or she 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:
 - The unmarried surviving spouse (or you were previously married and the marriage ended before Nov. 1, 1990).
 - 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, he or she 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.

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, sections 3.261, 3.272 and 3.262 of Title 38, located at <http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=60a4d32d8dc1ba66fef8e80bb5903c04&node=pt38.1.3&rgn=div5>.

How can you apply for Survivors Pension?

You can apply in any of these ways:

With the help of a trained professional

You can work with a trained professional called an accredited representative to get help applying for VA survivors pension benefits.

Get help filing your claim at <https://www.va.gov/disability/get-help-filing-claim/>

Online

Use the direct upload tool through AccessVA to upload your form online.

Go to AccessVA to use direct upload at <https://eauth.va.gov/accessva/>.

By mail

Fill out an Application for DIC, Death Pension, and/or Accrued Benefits (VA Form 21-534EZ).

Download VA Form 21-534EZ (PDF) at <https://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21P-534EZ-ARE.pdf>.

Mail your completed application to this address:

Department of Veterans Affairs
Pension Intake Center
PO Box 5365
Janesville, WI 53547-5365

In person

Bring your application to a VA regional office near you.

Find a VA regional office near you at <https://www.va.gov/find-locations/?facilityType=benefits>.

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