



Veterans Benefits

Instructor: Larry Roberts

2026 DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA

CONVENTION



THE SOLDIER'S CREED



I AM AN AMERICAN SOLDIER.

I AM A WARRIOR AND A MEMBER OF A TEAM. I SERVE THE
PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES, AND LIVE THE ARMY VALUES.

I WILL ALWAYS PLACE THE MISSION FIRST.

I WILL NEVER ACCEPT DEFEAT.

I WILL NEVER QUIT.

I WILL NEVER LEAVE A FALLEN COMRADE.

I AM DISCIPLINED, PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY TOUGH,
TRAINED AND PROFICIENT IN MY WARRIOR TASKS AND DRILLS.

I ALWAYS MAINTAIN MY ARMS, MY EQUIPMENT AND MYSELF.

I AM AN EXPERT AND I AM A PROFESSIONAL.

I STAND READY TO DEPLOY, ENGAGE, AND DESTROY THE
ENEMIES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN CLOSE COMBAT.

I AM A GUARDIAN OF FREEDOM AND THE AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE.

I AM AN AMERICAN SOLDIER.

Veterans Helping Veterans

If you were on active duty, the reserves, or the national guard and visited a doctor, hospital, health clinic or any other medical facility for any reason. This could mean thousands of dollars to you and your beneficiaries.



Veterans Helping Veterans

County Veterans Service Officers

Alachua: (352) 264-6740	Columbia: (386) 758-1013	Hamilton: (386) 792-1272	Lake: (352) 742-6585	Nassau: (904) 548-4670	Seminole: (407) 665-2371
Baker: (904) 259-2516	Desoto: (863) 993-4860	Hardee: (863) 773-9853	Lee: (239) 533-8381	Okaloosa: (850) 651-7258	ST- Johns: (904) 209-6160
Bay: (850) 248-8280	Dixie: (352) 498-1246	Hendry: (863) 675-5250	Leon: (850) 606-1940	Okeechobee: (863) 763-6441	ST- Lucie: (772) 337-5670
Bradford: (904) 966-6385	Duval: (904) 630-3680	Hernando: (352) 754-4033	Levy: (352) 486-5210	Orange: (407) 836-8990	Sumter: (352) 689-4450
Brevard: (321) 633-2012	Escambia: (850) 912-2055	Highlands: (863) 402-6623	Liberty: (850) 643-5960	Osceola: (407) 742-8455	Suwannee: (386) 364-3403
Broward: (954) 357-6622	Flagler: (386) 313-4014	Hillsborough: (813) 635-8316	Madison: (850) 973-3208	Pasco: (727) 834-3282	Taylor: (850) 838-3513
Calhoun: (850) 674-8305	Franklin: (850) 653-8096	Holmes: (850) 547-2897	Manatee: (941) 749-3030	Pinellas: (727) 464-8460	Union: (386) 496-4248
Charlotte: (941) 764-5579	Gadsden: (850) 875-8661	Indian River: (772) 226-1499	Marion: (352) 671-8422	Polk: (863) 534-5220	Volusia: (386) 740-5102
Citrus: (352) 527-5915	Gilchrist: (352) 463-3188	Jackson: (850) 718-0003	Martin: (772) 288-5448	Putnam; (386) 329-0327	Wakulla: (850) 926-1072
Clay: (904) 269-6326	Glades: (863) 946-0566	Jefferson: (850) 342-0176	Miami-Dade: (786) 469-4640	Santa Rosa: (850) 981-7110	Walton: (850) 892-8140
Collier: (239) 252-8387	Gulf: (850) 229-6125	Lafayette: (386) 294-5010	Miami-Dade: (786) 469-4640	Sarasota: (941) 861-2899	Washington: (850) 638-6140

Larry Roberts

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Why there's a need to help veterans...

- Multiple and extended deployments.
- 25% of the homeless are combat veterans.
- Suicide rate for active duty and veterans is 4x greater than that of civilians.
- 200 + Veterans become disabled every day.
- Over 2 million veterans live without insurance.
- **A Study released in 2022 found as many as 44 veterans die on average per day from suicide. Which is 2.4 times greater than the official estimate.**
- Pending claims=801,000
- Back Logged Claims=524,000

Basic Eligibility

- Any person who served in **Active Duty Military**, who was discharged or released under conditions **other than dishonorable**, may qualify for VA Health Care Benefits.



Enrollment

- For most veterans, entries into the VA health care system begins by applying for enrollment.
- To apply, complete VA Form 10-10EZ, application for health benefits, which may be obtained from any **VA health care facilities** or regional benefits office, online at:
<http://www.VA.gov/10-10ez.htm>
- Or call 1-877-222-vets (8387).
- Once enrolled, veterans can receive health care at VA health care facilities anywhere in the country.

Important Documents to Expedite VA Benefits

- In order to expedite delivery, Veterans seeking VA benefits for the first time you must submit a copy of your service discharge form (**DD-214, DD-215, or World War II Veterans discharge form**)
- The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) has provided the following website for veterans to gain access to their DD-214 online
<http://vetrecs.archives.gov/>
- You also need a copy of your military medical records if you need to order them you can at www.nationalarchivesandrecordsadministration.gov
- You also need veteran's marriage certificate, children's birth certificates or adoption papers to determine children's benefits.

Tip #1

Have a "Well-grounded claim" **with evidence of a medical condition** that either started while you were in the military, or a pre-existing condition that was aggravated by your stint in the military.

Keep all records in a folder by oldest to newest, highlight and tab any condition mentioned in the claim.

Tip #2

- Google / Web Search
- 38 CFR Book C, Schedule for Rating Disabilities.
- For your particular issue(s) relevant to what you are claiming.

Must be able to navigate a computer, have someone assist if needed.



Tip #3

Get a letter from your doctor stating that your present condition is,

**“MORE LIKELY THAN NOT, DIRECTLY
RELATED TO THE HEALTH ISSUE YOU HAD IN
THE MILITARY”.**



Tip #4

Get letters from your family and friends stating, ***“how it is to live around you with your present condition”***.

At the end of the letter make sure this statement is written. **“I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE INFORMATION I HAVE GIVEN IS TRUE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF”**.



Service-Connected Disability Compensation

- Disability Compensation is a monetary pay to veterans who are disabled by an injury, illness incurred or aggravated during active military service.
- These disabilities are considered to be service – connected.
- Disability compensation varies with degree of disability and the number of veteran's dependents and is paid monthly.
- Veterans with certain severe disabilities may be eligible for additional special monthly compensation.
- **Service-Connected Disability Compensation is Tax Free**

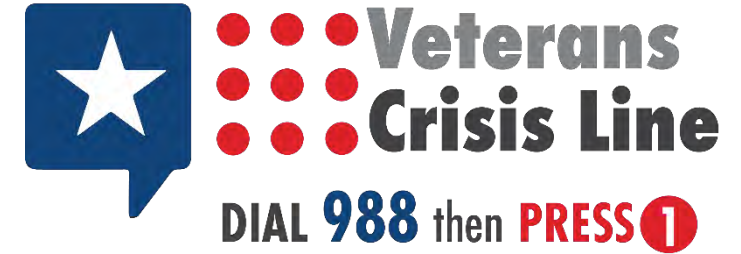
2026 VA Disability Compensation Rates

%	VETERAN	W/SPOUSE	VET + SPOUSE & CHILD	VETERAN W/ CHILD	ADDITIONAL CHILDREN UNDER 18	OVER 18/IN SCHOOL
10%	\$180.42	\$180.42	\$180.42	\$180.42	\$180.42	\$180.42
20%	\$356.66	\$356.66	\$356.66	\$356.66	\$356.66	\$356.66
30%	\$552.47	\$617.47	\$666.47	\$596.47	ADD \$32.00	ADD \$105.00
40%	\$795.84	\$883.30	\$947.57	\$853.79	ADD \$43.00	ADD \$140.00
50%	\$1,132.90	\$1,242.48	\$1,322.56	\$1,205.60	ADD \$54.00	ADD \$176.00
60%	\$1,435.02	\$1,566.73	\$1,662.61	\$1,522.47	ADD \$65.00	ADD \$211.00
70%	\$1,808.44	\$1,961.23	\$2,073.98	\$1,910.65	ADD \$75.87	ADD \$246.57
80%	\$2,102.14	\$2,277.06	\$2,405.61	\$2,219.10	ADD \$86.40	ADD \$281.34
90%	\$2,362.30	\$2,559.34	\$2,703.70	\$2,494.01	ADD \$97.99	ADD \$317.16
100%	\$3,938.58	\$4,158.16	\$4,318.98	\$4,085.43	ADD \$109.11	ADD \$352.45

Additional Allowances

* Veterans with ratings of at least 30% are eligible for additional allowances for dependents, including spouse, minor children, children between the ages of 18 and 23 who are attending school, children who are permanently incapable of self-support because of disability arising before age 18, and dependent parents. The additional amount depends on the disability rating. **For more detailed rates visit:**
<https://bit.ly/vacompensation>

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder



An average of 44 veteran suicides a day
Suicide Prevention Hotline 988 or 1-800-273-8255

In July 2010, the VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki, allowed for qualification benefits for diagnoses from civilian mental health professionals. Drastically cutting waiting time for veterans.

Symptoms for PTSD at 50% disability

- Memory loss for names of close relatives
- Occupational and social impairment with reduced reliability and productivity
- Difficulty in establishing and maintain effective and social relationships
- Anxiety
- Chronic sleep impairment
- Depressed mood
- Mild memory loss

If you have been diagnosed with PTSD it does not mean that you will lose your right to own a firearm.

Agent Orange Symptoms

- VA assumes that certain diseases can be related to a Veteran's qualifying military service. We call these **"presumptive diseases"**. VA has recognized certain cancers and other health problems as presumptive diseases associated with exposure to Agent Orange or other herbicides during military service. Veterans and their survivors may be eligible for benefits for these diseases.
- **AL Amyloidosis** A rare disease caused when an abnormal protein, amyloid, enters tissues or organs Chronic B-cell.
- **Leukemia's** A type of cancer which affects white blood cells.
- **Chloracne** (or similar acne form disease) a skin condition that occurs soon after exposure to chemicals and looks like common forms of acne seen in teenagers. Under VA's rating regulations, it must be at least 10 percent disabling within one year of exposure to herbicides.
- **Diabetes Mellitus Type 2 A** disease characterized by high blood sugar levels resulting from the body's inability to respond properly to the hormone insulin.
- **Hodgkin's disease** A malignant lymphoma (cancer) characterized by progressive enlargement of the lymph nodes, liver, and spleen, and by progressive anemia.
- **Ischemic Heart Disease** A disease characterized by a reduced supply of blood to the heart that leads to chest pain.

Agent Orange Symptoms

- **Multiple Myeloma** A cancer of plasma cells, a type of white blood cell in bone marrow.
- **Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma** A group of cancers that affect the lymph glands and other lymphatic tissue.
- **Parkinson's disease** A progressive disorder of the nervous system that affects muscle movement Peripheral Neuropathy, Early-Onset a nervous system condition that causes numbness, tingling, and motor weakness. Under VA's rating regulations, it must be at least 10 percent disabling within one year of herbicide exposure.
- **Porphyria Cutanea Tarda** A disorder characterized by liver dysfunction and by thinning and blistering of the skin in sun-exposed areas. Under VA's rating regulations, it must be at least 10 percent disabling within one year of exposure to herbicides.
- **Prostate Cancer** Of the prostate; one of the most common cancers among men Respiratory Cancers (includes lung cancer) Cancers of the lung, larynx, trachea, and bronchus Soft Tissue
- **Sarcomas** (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma, or mesothelioma) A group of different types of cancers in body tissues such as muscle, fat, blood and lymph vessels, and connective tissues

Department of VA add three new serious illnesses

- **Bladder Cancer**
- **Hypothyroidism**
- **Parkinson's** – Like Symptoms

<https://bit.ly/agentorangevets>

Herbicide Tests and Storage in the U.S.

Agent Orange and other herbicides used in Vietnam were tested or stored elsewhere, including many military bases in the United States. **Below is a list of Florida bases.**

- Orlando / Cocoa, 1944
- Near Lake George, 1944
- Army Grove Air Force's Tactical Center, 1944
- Marathon, 1944
- Bushnell Army Airfield, 1945
- Avon Air Force Base, 1951
- Eglin Air Force Base, 1952
- **Avon Park Air Force Base, 1954**
- Jacksonville, 1962
- Eglin AFB, C-52A, 1962-1970
- Apalachicola National Forest near Sopchoppy, 1967
- Eglin AFB, 1968

Death and Burial Benefits Essential Planning Guide

Eligibility: Veterans discharged from active duty, under conditions other than dishonorable and service members who died while on active duty. To verify eligibility for burial and memorial benefits, a copy of veterans' discharge document "**DD214**" that specifies the period(s) of active duty and character of discharge, along with the deceased's death certificate and proof of relationship to veteran (for eligible family members) are all that usually needed to determine eligibility.

- VA National Cemeteries
(147 National Cemeteries)
- Headstone and Markers
(VA Form 40-1330)
- Presidential Memorial Certificates
(VA Form 40-0247)
- Burial Flag
(VA Form 27-2008 or U.S.P.S. and Funeral Director)
- Reimbursement of Burial Expenses
(VA Form 21-530)
- Burial Allowance
(VA Form 21-530)
- Plot Allowance
(VA Form 21-530)
- Military Funeral Honors
(Active Military or Local Veteran Originations)

Florida Veterans' Benefits Guide (2026)

- www.FloridaVets.org
- www.FloridaVeteransFoundation.org
- (850) 488-4181 or 4182
- Education Benefits for Veterans and families
- G.I. Home Loan
- Property Tax Exemptions
- Burial Benefits
- “V” for Veteran Designation on Driver License
- 100% Disabled Veteran State ID card
- Driver License & State ID Fee Exemptions
- Disabled Veteran Motor Vehicle License Plate
- Florida State Park Discount Passes
- Hunting and Fishing
- Employment
- Reemployment Rights

Veterans' Preference

- **Since the time of the Civil War, veterans of the U.S. armed forces have been given some degree of preference in appointments to federal jobs.**
- To receive preference, a veteran must have been discharged or released from active duty in the U.S. armed forces under honorable conditions (with an honorable or general discharge). Preference is also provided for the spouse of a veteran with a permanent and total service-connected disability and widows and widowers of deceased veterans who died in service.
- **A veteran with 100% disability can still work, as long as they are not “unemployable”.**

Veteran Discounts and Deals

For discounts and/or free tickets visit these online websites:

- VetTix.com
- Military.com
- Govx.com
- Operation outdoor freedom
- Veteran holidays
- Rays Baseball
- Guide Fitter
- **Ask every where you go!**



Women Veterans

The Sunshine State is home of approximately **162,000 women veterans**. Many women veterans don't even know they are eligible for full range of federal, state and local benefits.



PACT ACT

The PACT Act is a new law that expands VA health care benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic substances.





Please leave feedback.



Department
of Florida



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FALL CONFERENCE

www.floridalegion.org