

Veterans

Programs that benefit Veterans



1735 S. Fort
Springfield, MO 65807
417-862-0762 · 800-497-0822
www.senioragemo.org
facebook.com/senioragemo.org

Veterans Benefits/Information

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The following section is not intended to provide comprehensive information on all aspects of veteran pensions, benefits, compensations, or other assistance available to veterans. For specific questions and/or additional information, contact your nearest VA Service Officer or VA Regional Office listed on page 7 in this section.

Improved Pension

Many Veterans Unaware of Improved Pension Benefits. Did you know that if you are a veteran who served at least 90 days, one day of which was during one or more of the eras listed on page 13, you are eligible for a VA pension?

- You do not have to have a service connected disability.
- You do not have to be a military retiree.
- You do not have to have been in combat.
- You do have to meet the income and net worth criteria.

Surviving spouse of a veteran may also be eligible for this pension. Marriage must have ended due to death of veteran.

Three Levels

There are three levels to the Improved Pension: Basic Pension, Housebound, or Aid and Attendance. When you have applied for the improved pension, and are found eligible, the VA will determine which level will most appropriately meet your current needs. You can receive this assistance in your home, in a nursing facility, or in an assisted living facility. The Improved Pension can provide up to \$1,881 per month to a veteran, \$1,209 per month to a surviving spouse, or \$2,230 per month to a couple (these figures are for 2019). The individual applying must qualify both medically and financially.

Basic Level

The basic pension does not require that you be physically disabled.

Financial Criteria: You must have countable income (see definition of countable income below) less than the pension amount to be eligible for all or a portion of the pension. The VA must determine that your net worth is such that it will probably not support you through the remainder of your life. The VA does not include primary residence or vehicles when determining net worth. Contact SeniorAge for income limits and assistance.

Definition of “Countable Income”

The amount of income a veteran or surviving spouse receives each year after deducting all unreimbursed, recurring health care expenses. Recurring health care expenses would include expenses such as assisted living costs, home health care, health insurance, Medicare premiums, on-going pharmacy costs, etc. If you have a dependent, their health care costs are deducted as well.

Housebound Level

A veteran or surviving spouse whose physical limitations require a certain level of regular assistance with their daily routine may be eligible to receive Housebound benefits.

Financial Criteria: You must have a “countable income” of less than the pension amount to be eligible for all or a portion of the pension. The VA must determine that your net worth is such that it will probably not support you through the remainder of your life. The VA does not include primary residence or vehicles when determining net worth.

Unlike basic pension, your doctor must confirm that your physical condition requires the assistance of others on a regular basis. Contact SeniorAge for income limits and assistance.

Aid and Attendance Level

Aid and Attendance is the highest level of Improved Pension available to any United States Military veteran (or his surviving spouse) who meets the service, financial, and physical criteria. If the VA determines you meet their criteria, you are eligible for the following:

- A single veteran may receive \$18,234 per year;
- A veteran with a dependent may receive \$21,615 per year;
- A surviving spouse may receive \$11,715 per year;
- A surviving spouse with a dependent may receive \$13,976 per year.

Medical Criteria: A veteran or surviving spouse who requires daily assistance may be eligible. The individual need not be bedridden, in assisted living, or under home health care. If a physician confirms that your physical limitations are such that you cannot live unattended, the VA may determine that Aid and Attendance is warranted.

Financial criteria: You must have countable income (see definition of countable income elsewhere in this section) of less than the pension amount to be eligible for all or a portion of the pension. The VA must determine that your net worth is such that it will probably not support you through the remainder of your life. The VA does not include primary residence or vehicles when determining net worth.

Unlike Basic or Household pensions, your doctor must confirm that your physical condition has deteriorated to the point where daily assistance from others is required.

To apply for the Improved Pension, you will need the following documents:

- Discharge/Separation Papers (DD-214)
- Copy of Marriage Certificate and all marital information (surviving spouses only)
- Copy of Death Certificate (surviving spouses only)
- Copy of current Social Security Award Letter (1099SSA, or what the SSA sends out at the beginning of the year stating what your monthly amount will be)
- Net worth information, including bank accounts, CDs, trusts, stocks, bonds, annuities, etc.

- Proof of all income from pensions, retirements, interest income from investments, annuities
- If you are a court-appointed guardian, a certified copy of that court order
- Proof of insurance premiums, medications, medical bills or any other medical expenses not reimbursed by insurance, Medicare or MO HealthNet
- Physician statement which includes current diagnosis, medical status, prognosis, name and address, ability to care for self, ability to travel unattended, etc.
- Bank statement for direct deposit of Improved Pension monthly payments (include voided check)
- Employment history (does not apply for those over 65)
- List of all doctors and hospitals visited in the last year

Gather the above required documentation prior to applying. If you do not need the Improved Pension now, but anticipate you might apply in the future, it is a good idea to gather these documents now. If one or both of your parents are veterans and you anticipate that they might require this assistance in the future, it is a good idea to help them gather this documentation, or to learn where this documentation is located.

Once you have the documents/ information compiled, you will need to obtain and complete VA Form 21-526 for a Veteran and the VA Form 21- 534 for surviving spouse. Keep a copy of your entire application as well as copies of any related correspondence. Respond promptly to any requests by the VA. When mailing important papers, mail "Registered Return Receipt." If applicant is over 70, you may include a cover letter requesting that the paperwork be expedited. Applications can take from 4 to 6 months or longer depending on the workload and efficiency of your VA Regional Office.

Where to Obtain Help in Applying for the Improved Pension:

Online help

American Veterans Institute is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization which sponsors VeteranAid.org, a website established for the purpose of educating veterans on their eligibility for the Improved Pension and to support and assist them with this application process. You will find a great deal of helpful information on this website which is easy to understand. You can also download the forms needed to apply for the Improved Pension from this website. You may also ask questions not currently answered on the website.

The Missouri Veteran's Commission
205 Jefferson St.
12th Floor Jefferson Bldg.
P.O. Drawer 147
Jefferson City, MO 65102
573-751-3779

The Missouri Veteran's Commission is a state organization that can help you apply for the Aid and Attendance Pension.

VA Regional Office
St. Louis Regional Office
400 S. 18th St.
St. Louis, MO 63103
Toll free: 1-800-827-1000
www2.va.gov/directory/guide/facility.asp?ID=249

You may apply at the VA regional Office serving your area. This is the regional office for the central region which includes the state of Missouri. Contact them for a local office near you.

Other VA-related organizations such as the VFW or the DAV can help you apply. There is no charge or fee associated with filing for the Improved Pension through these organizations.

Also on page 9 is a list of Veteran Service Officers (VSO) and their scheduled visits to your county or a county near you. VSOs can also help with this application process.

You may encounter a lack of awareness or misinformation about the Improved Pension. Do not be discouraged in obtaining the benefits which you need and are entitled to receive.

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)

Dependency Indemnity Compensation is generally payable to survivors of veterans who die from service-related causes. If the veteran dies from a disease or disability that is not related to military service, death pension is payable to the survivors provided the veteran had qualifying military service and the survivor meets certain income and other requirements.

Eligible survivors of the deceased veteran may be a spouse, parent(s) of the deceased veteran, co-habitants who meet certain qualifications, someone who had a child by a deceased veteran, or surviving children who meet certain requirements. Helpless adult children may also be eligible for an income-based benefit.

For more detailed information on eligibility for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation call **Toll free: 1-800-827-1000**, visit **www.va.gov**, or contact the Veteran's Commission Office or the service officer serving your region. See page 9 for VA Service Officers by county.

Obtaining Military Medals, Decorations, and Awards

Requests for the issuance or replacement of military service medals, decorations, and awards should be directed to the specific branch of the military in which the veteran served. Generally, there is no charge for medal or award replacements. The length of time to receive a response for your medals and awards varies depending upon the branch of service sending the medals.

For information you can call: **Toll free: 1-866-272-6272** (National Archives)

The eVetRecs website method is preferred for requesting medals and awards.

www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records

You can also contact the specific branch of service by mail:

Army and Air Force (including Army Air Corps and Army Air Forces)

National Personnel Records Center

9700 Page Ave.

St. Louis, MO 63132

Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard Navy Personnel Command

Liaison Office Room 5409

9700 Page Ave.

St. Louis, MO 63132

For an overview of the process:

www.archives.gov/veterans/replace-medals.html

Presidential Memorial Certificates

A Presidential Memorial Certificate is a gold-embossed paper certificate inscribed with the veteran's name and bearing the current President's signature. It honors the memory of honorably discharged deceased veterans.

The deceased veteran's next of kin and loved ones may request a Presidential Memorial Certificate in person at any VA Regional Office or by U.S. mail or toll-free fax. A copy of the deceased veteran's military discharge papers and a copy of the death certificate must be provided.

A request form is available at:

National Cemetery Administration

Presidential Memorial Certificates (41A1C)

5109 Russell Rd.

Quantico, VA 22134-3903

Toll free fax: 1-800-455-7143

www.cem.va.gov

Call **Toll free 1-800-342-9647** for information on counseling, money matters, deployment and spouse employment.

Transportation to VA Facilities

Disabled American Veterans may directly provide or help Veterans to find transportation to VA Facilities.

Barry-Lawrence VFW

Hwy. 60 West

Monett, MO 65708

417-489-1389

Bolivar Memorial DAV

1250 E. Wollard St.

Bolivar, MO 65613

417-326-6747

Buffalo
1100 N. Maple St.
Buffalo, MO 65622
417-345-4035

Orlan Smith Memorial
1708 E. St. Louis St.
Springfield, MO 65802
417-862-3910

Poplar Bluff
1500 N. Westwood Blvd., Bldg. 6
Poplar Bluff, MO 63901
573-778-4616

Tri-Lakes Chapter 55 DAV
909 E. Redwood St.
Springfield, MO 65807
No number available

West Plains DAV Armory
1315 Webster St.
West Plains, MO 65637
417-284-7042

OATS is making trips every Monday and Wednesday to visit family at the VA facility in Mt. Vernon. Pick up points are at Northview and South Side Senior Centers. Trip cost is \$4.00. Riders are to schedule their trip in advance.

Northview Senior Center
417-864-8606

South Side Senior Center
417-890-1313

VA Service Officers Can Help You

VA Service Officers are available at certain times in most southwest Missouri counties. Service Officers can help with a variety of Veteran's information, help you find a VFW near you, and may be able to assist with transportation to VA facilities. Specific days and times when a VA Service Officer is available in your county are listed below. Contact the office prior to visiting as it may be closed due to illness or inclement weather.

Greene County

1410 S. Kansas Expy., Room 115

Springfield, MO 65807

417-895-6532

Available most days

Howell County

3415 Division St.

West Plains, MO 65775

417-256-3452

Available 1st, 3rd, 4th, and 5th Tuesdays of the month, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.;

Wednesdays from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; and 1st, 2nd, 4th, and 5th Thursdays, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

City Chamber of Commerce

112 E. Main St.

Willow Springs, MO 65793

417-469-3944

Available 3rd Thursday of the month, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

VFW Hall

425 W. First St.

Mountain View, MO 65548

417-934-2667

Available 3rd Thursday of the month, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Lawrence County

MO Veterans Home

1600 S. Hickory St.

Mt. Vernon, MO 65712

417-466-7103

Available Mondays from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; 2nd, 4th and 5th Tuesdays of the month, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; Wednesdays, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; and Thursdays, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Oregon County

Courthouse Basement

Alton, MO 65606

417-778-7475

Available 2nd Tuesday of the month, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Fun and Friends Senior Center

100 Chestnut St.

Thayer, MO 65791

417-264-7354

Available 2nd Tuesday of the month from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Taney County

Branson VA Patient Clinic

5571 Gretna Rd.

Branson, MO 65616

417-243-2335

Available Monday thru Thursday, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Taney County Courthouse

132 David St.

Forsyth, MO 65653

417-546-7209

Available Wednesdays and Thursdays, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Texas County

Texas County Courthouse

210 N. Grand Ave.

Houston, MO 65483

417-967-3742

Available Thursdays, from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Wright County

Dora White Community Center
200 W. First St.
Mountain Grove, MO 65711

417-926-5867

Available 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month

If your county is not listed, contact

Missouri Veterans Commission
1410 S. Kansas Expy., Room 115
Springfield, MO 65807

417-895-6532

VA Contacts

Disabled Veterans Outreach

Missouri Career Center
1514 S. Glenstone Ave.
Springfield, MO 65804

417-887-4343

Assists disabled Veterans.

Missouri Veterans Commission
1410 S. Kansas Expy., Room 115
Springfield, MO 65807

417-895-6532

www.mvc.dps.mo.gov

Assists Veterans and families in the Ozarks Area.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Toll free: 1-800-827-1000

www.va.gov

Veterans Assistance Center at the
Myrl Billings Memorial Veterans Center
911 Boonville Ave.
Springfield, MO 65802
417-862-8387
www.oavac.org

The Veterans Assistance Center is a cooperative effort by the American Legion, AMVETS, Disabled American Veterans, the Greene County Commission, the MSU Veterans Club, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the Vietnam Veterans of America to bring assistance to the veterans of Southwest Missouri. The Center assists veterans with VA compensation and pension claims, VA home loans, GI Bill education benefits, vocational rehabilitation programs, military records retrieval, burial and memorial services, acquiring military decorations, and entrance into VA health services through VA clinics and hospitals.

VA Medical Facilities

Branson Outpatient Clinic
5571 Gretna Rd.
Branson, MO 65616
417-243-2300
Toll free: 1-866-951-8387

Fayetteville VA Medical Center
1100 N. College Ave.
Fayetteville, AR 72703
479-443-4301
Toll free: 1-800-691-8387

Gene Taylor Outpatient Clinic VA
1850 W. Republic Road
Springfield, MO 65807
417-891-4800

John J. Pershing
VA Medical Center
1500 N. Westwood Blvd.
Poplar Bluff, MO 63901
573-686-4151

Main Street Veterans Clinic
707 N. Main St.
Harrison, AR 72601
870-741-3592

West Plains VA Clinic
1211 Missouri Ave.
West Plains, MO 65775
417-257-2454

Wartime or Peacetime Service Classifications

Military service is classified as wartime or peacetime service. There are significant advantages specifically accruing only to veterans with wartime service. The following is a list of wartimes designated by Congress for pension purposes. To be considered by the VA to have served during wartime, a veteran need not have served in a combat zone, but simply during one of these designated periods. All other times are considered peacetime. Some veterans served part of their tour of duty during wartime and part during peacetime. Even if a majority of a veteran's service occurred during peacetime, the service member would still meet the wartime service requirement for eligibility for pension benefits if he or she served ninety consecutive days, at least one day of which occurred during a period designated as wartime. All of the listed dates are inclusive.

- Mexican Border War May 9, 1916, through April 5, 1917. The veteran must have served for one day or more in Mexico, on the borders thereof, or in the waters adjacent thereto.
- World War I April 6, 1917, through November 11, 1918, extended to April 1, 1920, for those who served in the Soviet Union. Service after November 11, 1918, through July 2, 1921, qualifies for benefit purposes if active duty was performed for any period during the basic World War I period.

- World War II December 7, 1941, through December 31, 1946, extended to July 25, 1947, where continuous with active duty on or before December 31, 1946.
- Korean Conflict: June 27, 1950, through January 31, 1955.
- Vietnam Era August 5, 1964, through May 7, 1975.
However, February 28, 1961, through May 7, 1975, for a veteran who served in the Republic of Vietnam during that period.
- Persian Gulf War August 2, 1990, through a date to be prescribed by Presidential proclamation or law. Congress has not enacted legislation that would make the periods covering the 1983-1984 Lebanon crisis or the invasions of Grenada and Panama wartime service.

