

Ancillary Benefits

Ancillary Benefits: Additional benefits that are beyond standard medical care and disability compensation. These benefits are dependent on a veteran's eligibility for compensation or a survivor's eligibility to dependency indemnity compensation.

Automobile Allowance: The VA provides an Automobile Allowance for veterans with certain service-connected disabilities that affect their mobility. This benefit assists eligible veterans in purchasing an automobile or adaptive equipment to accommodate their disability. Veterans may receive a grant every ten years for the purchase of a specially adapted vehicle or for modifying an existing vehicle.

Eligibility Requirements : At least one of these must be true for you:

- **You have loss, or permanent loss of use, of one or both feet, or**
- **You have loss, or permanent loss of use, of one or both hands, or**
- **You have permanent decreased vision in both eyes: 20/200 vision or less in your better eye with glasses, or greater than 20/200 vision but with a visual field defect that has reduced your peripheral vision to 20 degrees or less in your better eye, or**
- **You have a severe burn injury, or**
- **You have amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), or**
- **You have ankylosis in one or both knees or hips (this qualifies you only for an adaptive-equipment grant)**

Special Home Adaptations: Veterans with service-connected disabilities that limit their mobility within their homes may qualify for Special Home Adaptations. This benefit helps eligible veterans make necessary modifications to their residences, such as installing ramps, widening doorways, or making other changes to improve accessibility and accommodate their disabilities.

Eligibility Requirements : Both of these must be true:

- **You or a family member own or will own the home, and**
- **You have a qualifying service-connected disability**

Qualifying service-connected disabilities include:

- **The loss or loss of use of both hands**
- **Certain severe burns**
- **Certain respiratory or breathing injuries**

Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) Grant: The Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) Grant is available to veterans with severe service-connected disabilities to assist in building, buying, or adapting homes to suit their needs. The grant amount is intended to cover the cost of necessary modifications or construction, providing veterans with a specially adapted home.

Eligibility Requirements : Both of these must be true:

- **You own or will own the home, and**
- **You have a qualifying service-connected disability**

Qualifying service-connected disabilities include:

- **The loss, or loss of use, of more than one limb**
- **The loss, or loss of use, of a lower leg along with the residuals (lasting effects) of an organic (natural) disease or injury**
- **Blindness in both eyes (with 20/200 visual acuity or less)**
- **Certain severe burns**
- **The loss, or loss of use, of one lower extremity (foot or leg) after September 11, 2001, which makes it so you can't balance or walk without the help of braces, crutches, canes, or a wheelchair**

Home Improvements and Structural Alterations (HISA): The Home Improvements and Structural Alterations (HISA) program provides grants to veterans with service-connected disabilities for home improvements that are necessary for their continued treatment or for disability access to the home. This includes modifications such as bathroom renovations, wheelchair ramps, and other adaptations to improve the safety and accessibility of the home.

Eligibility Requirements : Lifetime benefit for Veterans and Servicemembers.

\$6,800 will be approved to:

- **Address a service-connected disability**
- **Address a compensable disability treated “as if” is a service-connected disability and for which the Veteran entitled to medical services under 38 USC 1710(a)(2)(c) (e.g., disability acquired through treatment or vocational rehabilitation provided by VA)**
- **Address a non-service- connected disability, if the beneficiary has a service-connected disability rated at least 50 percent disability (no combining or combination of disability percentages is allowed).**

Clothing Allowance: Veterans with service-connected disabilities that require the use of prosthetic or orthopedic devices, or certain skin conditions due to prescribed medications, may be eligible for a VA Clothing Allowance. This annual benefit provides financial assistance to help offset the costs of clothing and maintenance of specialized clothing.

Eligibility Requirements : One of these must be true:

- **Your prosthetic or orthopedic device damages your clothes, or**
- **Your skin medicine causes damage to your outer clothing (like your pants or shirt) that can't be repaired**

Home Loan Guaranty: VA offers a home loan guarantee program to assist eligible veterans, service members, and certain surviving spouses in obtaining home financing. The VA home loan program aims to make homeownership more accessible by providing favorable terms and conditions for qualified individuals, most notably a guarantee for lenders by VA.

Eligibility Requirements : If you've served for at least 90 continuous days (all at once, without a break in service), you meet the minimum active-duty service requirement.

For National Guard members

You meet the minimum active-duty service requirement if you served for:

- **At least 90 days of non-training active-duty Title 10 service, or**
- **At least 90 days of active-duty service including at least 30 consecutive days (your DD214 must show 32 USC sections 316, 502, 503, 504, or 505 activation), or**
- **6 creditable years in the National Guard, and you continue to serve, or**
- **6 creditable years in the National Guard and you were discharged honorably or placed on the retired list**

For Reserve members

You meet the minimum length of service requirement if you served for:

- **At least 90 days of non-training active-duty service, or**
- **6 creditable years in the Selected Reserve, and you continue to serve, or**
- **6 creditable years in the Selected Reserve and you were discharged honorably or placed on the retired list**

Important items to consider:

- The SAH maximum grant can be no more than 50 percent of the cost of a specially adapted house. The current maximum rate can be found at <https://www.va.gov/housing-assistance/disability-housing-grants/>
- More information on the automobile allowance and adaptive equipment can be found at: <https://www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/special-claims/automobile-allowance-adaptive-equipment/>
- Honorably discharged veterans may shop the online exchange:
<https://www.shopmyexchange.com/account/register>
- VA Home Loan Guarantee funding fees may be waived if the veteran has a compensable rating.
- VA Home Loans webpage can be found at <https://www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/>

Service Dogs

The VA recognizes the potential benefits of service dogs for veterans with disabilities, including those with physical disabilities or mental health conditions. Service dogs can provide assistance, support, and companionship to veterans, enhancing their overall well-being. The process of obtaining and utilizing a service dog through the VA involves several steps:

Eligibility: Veterans with service connected disabilities may be eligible for a service dog provided by the VA. The disability can be physical, mental, or a combination of both.

Types of Service Dogs: The VA supports the use of various types of service dogs, including guide dogs, mobility dogs, and psychiatric service dogs. Psychiatric service dogs can assist veterans with conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Training and Certification: Service dogs must be trained to perform specific tasks related to the veteran's disability. The dog and veteran must have successfully completed a training program offered by an organization accredited by Assistance Dogs International or the International Guide Dog Federation, or both (for dogs that perform both service and guide dog assistance).

Application Process:

- **Clinical Evaluation:** Veterans can start the process of obtaining a service dog by discussing the option with their VA healthcare provider. A clinical evaluation is conducted to determine if a service dog would be beneficial for the veteran's specific needs.
- **Referral to VA Prosthetics and Sensory Aids Service (PSAS):** If the healthcare provider determines that a service dog would be beneficial, they will make a referral to the VA Prosthetics and Sensory Aids Service (PSAS). PSAS coordinates the provision of service dogs and related services.
- **Application to Prosthetics and Sensory Aids Service:** Veterans will need to submit an application to the PSAS, which includes information about their disability, living situation, and the tasks they need assistance with. The application process can vary by VA medical center.
- **Assessment and Matching:** Once the application is received, PSAS works to assess the veteran's needs and match them with a suitable service dog. The matching process considers the veteran's disability, lifestyle, and the tasks the service dog is trained to perform.

Training and Placement: If a suitable match is found, the service dog and veteran undergo training together. The training may take place at a specialized facility or through a program recognized by the VA. Once trained, the service dog is placed with the veteran.

Follow-Up and Support: The VA provides ongoing support and follow-up to ensure the success of the service dog placement. This may include periodic check-ins, additional training if needed, and assistance with any issues that arise.

Responsibilities of the Veteran: Veterans receiving a service dog should be prepared to take on the responsibilities of caring for and working with the dog. This includes daily care, ongoing training reinforcement, and ensuring the dog's well-being.

Important Note: It is important for veterans to work closely with their VA healthcare providers and the Prosthetics and Sensory Aids Service to navigate the application process and ensure that the service dog meets their specific needs.

For More Information: <https://www.prosthetics.va.gov/ServiceAndGuideDogs.asp>