

AMAC Foundation – 2020 Seminar Series

Today's Workshop: Federal Benefits for Veterans



AMAC Foundation – 2020 Seminar Series

Association of Mature American Citizens, Inc.

“Better for You, Better for America”

AMAC Foundation, Inc.

“Supporting and Educating America’s Seniors”



AMAC Foundation – 2020 Seminar Series

Today's Presenter:

G. Thomas Spencer, U.S. Army – Retired
Veterans' Liaison from VITAS Healthcare



References



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Additional References

- The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs website at www.va.gov
- For military records, www.archives.gov
- Veterans' services officers, Florida Department of Veterans Affairs

Basic Eligibility

For most benefits:

- Discharge from active military service
- Other than dishonorable conditions
- Full-time service, other than for training
- Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps or Coast Guard
- **Wartime service?**

Discharges

- **Honorable** – Administrative
- **General** – Administrative
- **Other Than Honorable (OTH)** - Most severe type of administrative
- **Dishonorable** – A punitive discharge, usually implies a court martial
- **Bad conduct** – A punitive discharge, usually implies a general court martial

Separation Papers

- **Nothing happens in the Veterans Administration without separation papers: “DD 214”.**
- **Application must be made by the veteran or next of kin**
- **Mail-in forms or on-line at www.archives.gov**
- **Assistance: VSO’s, Florida Dept of Veterans Affairs, County Veterans Assistance Commissions**

Some Important Documents

- **DD-214 military discharge (separation) papers (or equivalent for pre-Korean War)**
- **Veteran's marriage certificate**
- **Veteran's death certificate**

Service-Connected Disabilities

- **Paid to veterans who are disabled due to an injury or illness incurred or aggravated during active military service**
- **Varies with the degree of disability and the number of dependents**

Basic Monthly Rates

(Rates are slightly higher with dependents)

- 10%= \$127
- 20%= \$251
- 30%= \$389
- 40%= \$560
- 50%= \$797
- 60%= \$1,009
- 70%= \$1,272
- 80%= \$1,478
- 90%= \$1,661
- 100%=\$2,769

Nursing Home Care

3 programs

- **VA Community Living Centers (VA facilities)**
- **State Veterans Homes**
- **Community Nursing Home program**

Nursing Home care

Criteria

- **Medically stable (not acutely ill)**
- **Have sufficient functional deficits to require institutional nursing home care**
- **Determined by appropriate medical provider to need institutionized home care**

Nursing Home Care

Criteria

- **Enrolled veterans with service connected disabilities incl 60% or more**
- **Enrolled veterans in hospice**
- **Vesting – Depends on VA facility**

Home Health Aid Program

Criteria

- **Enrolled veterans**
- **Similar requirements to nursing home care**
- **No “double dipping” when on hospice**

Eligibility of Veterans for Pension

Veterans with low incomes who are either (1) rated permanently and totally disabled or (2) age 65 and older and:

- Had at least 90 days of active service
- One day of service must have been during a defined war period
- For Aid and Attendance – Must be eligible for pension plus housebound/bedridden due to disability, blind, or needs assistance for daily activities

Pension

- **Veteran w/o dependents -
\$12,648/yr (\$1,054/mo)**
- **Veteran with one dependent –
16,560/yr (\$1,380/mo)**

Aid and Attendance

- **For Veterans that qualify for a VA pension**
- **Must be housebound or bedridden, blind, or need assistance with daily activities such as bathing, eating, dressing, etc.**
- **Can be for care at home (incl nursing homes, etc)**

Veterans Needing Regular Aid and Attendance

- **Veteran with no dependents –
\$1758/mo**

- **Veteran with one dependent –
\$2085/mo**

Aid and Attendance Warning!

- **Moving or hiding assets to get qualified for A&A can hurt Medicaid eligibility!**
 - **Medicaid's new "5 year look-back"**
 - **Annual review**



Burial and Memorial Benefits

- **Veterans, spouses, and dependent children**
- **The veteran does not have to die before a spouse or dependent child**



Burial in VA National Cemeteries

- **At no cost to the family**
- **Includes**
 - **gravesite,**
 - **grave-liner,**
 - **opening and closing of the grave,**
 - **headstone or marker and perpetual care**
 - **Perpetual care as part of a national shrine**
- **For the veteran it also includes burial flag and military funeral honors**

Burial in Private Cemeteries

- **Headstone or marker**
- **Medallions in lieu of headstone or marker**
- **Military funeral honors**
- **Veteran only**

Reimbursement of Burial Expenses

- Up to \$2,000 If veteran's death is service connected
- \$700 burial/funeral allowance if hospitalized by the VA at time of death; (\$300 if receiving pension/compensation by VA)
- Under some conditions there is a \$700 plot allowance if not buried in a national cemetery:
 - Discharge due to a service connected condition
 - or was receiving pension/compensation by VA or Veteran died in a VA facility
- If death occurred under VA care, some or all costs of transporting the remains may be reimbursed

Aid and Attendance

- For surviving spouses who are eligible for DIC or VA death pension.
- Spouse must be housebound or bedridden, blind, or need assistance with daily activities such as bathing, eating, dressing, etc.
- \$1,130/mo maximum possible

Divorce and Remarriage

- **Divorce – Ends all eligibility**
- **Burial in national cemetery – Remarriage after veteran's death does not affect eligibility**
- **Health Care – Surviving spouses who qualify lose eligibility if they remarry; Requalify if remarriage ends.**
- **Death Pension – Surviving Spouses must not have remarried.**

Enrollment for VA Benefits

- Online – www.ebenefits.va.gov or mail-in forms
- But highly recommend going to a certified veterans benefits officer:
 - Florida Dept of Veterans Affairs
 - County VACs (Veterans Assistance Commissions)
 - VSOs (Veterans Service Organizations)

References

- Federal Benefits for Veterans (2018 Editions) Dependents and Survivors
- Military records, www.archives.gov
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs website at www.va.gov
- Veterans' services officers, Florida Department of Veterans Affairs
- Jeff Bumb, VSO, Deland FL

The background of the slide is a waving American flag. The top portion is a close-up of the flag's stars and stripes, while the bottom portion is a stylized, semi-transparent representation of the flag's colors and stripes.

**THANK YOU
VETERANS**

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