



# Veterans Benefits



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## Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

### Who Can Help Me Fill Out the Forms?

- Any non-accredited individual may assist with completing the forms; however, this individual is allowed to assist **ONLY** one person. A VA accredited organization, such as your local State Veterans Office, VFW, or American Legion, etc. may help you, as well as an accredited Attorney or VA accredited Agent. **NO-ONE** may charge you for helping you prepare or present the VA application forms, but you should be sure that the person understands VA.

### What are the Advantages of Having an Attorney Assist Me?

- An attorney may assist you with much more than just the VA application, such as making sure that all of your assets are in order to help prevent a denial of your claim and with other paperwork that might be needed to help prove your claim. An attorney must be accredited through the VA and as such, can represent you before the VA if your claim is denied or if the award is incorrect.

### Must I Already be Living in a Care Facility Before I Apply?

- No, it is not necessary to be living in a care facility in order to apply for VA benefits; however, if you are in need of personal assistance, a protective environment, and your doctor confirms your need to live in the facility, the **entire cost** of the facility may be accepted to offset income in helping to qualify you for benefits, but you must be a current resident to submit these expenses as a deduction off income. (Note - Independent Living requires a third party caregiver)

### How Long Does it Take to Find Out if I am Eligible?

- An accredited attorney should be able to give you an idea of your eligibility within an hour; however, in order to be absolutely certain that you qualify for benefits, the attorney would need to review all of your financial, personal, military, and medical records and this could take more time.

### How Long Does It Take for Me to Get My First Check?

- Once an application is turned into the VA, it can take anywhere from one to five months on average to get your check once you are approved for benefits. If you have dementia or other memory loss issues, the VA may insist on meeting you and your representative before sending you a check, so your award may be delayed a few to several additional months.

### Does the Money Come to Me or Straight to the Care Facility?

- All award benefits are paid to the claimant and not to any facility or company.

### Can I Have It Deposited Directly Into My Bank Account?

- Yes, the VA actually prefers to have all checks directly deposited into a bank account. If you have memory loss issues, the VA will insist on a direct deposit.

### Is It Retroactive Back to When I First Applied or Does It Start the Month/Day I Get Approved?

- Benefits are retroactive from the first day of the next month after the VA receives any notification that you intend to file. An accredited attorney may be able to help you preserve this Informal Award Date. In order for the benefits to be retroactive, you must live through the entire month after the VA receives your application.

**Note:** Above rules/regulations are subject to change at any time.

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