

## **VA Health Care Overview as of 1 December 2025**

### **Eligibility for VA Health Care**

All Veterans who meet basic service and discharge requirements and who were exposed to toxins and other hazards while serving our country—at home or abroad—are now eligible for VA health care. This includes all Veterans who served in the Vietnam War, Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan, or any other combat zone after 9/11.

### **Am I eligible for VA health care benefits?**

You may be eligible for VA health care benefits if you served in the active military, naval, or air service and didn't receive a dishonorable discharge.

### **If you enlisted after September 7, 1980, or entered active duty after October 16, 1981**

You must have served 24 continuous months or the full period for which you were called to active duty, unless any of the descriptions below are true for you.

### **This minimum duty requirement may not apply if any of these are true:**

- You were discharged for a disability that was caused—or made worse—by your active-duty service, **or**
- You were discharged for a hardship or “early out,” **or**
- You served prior to September 7, 1980

### **If you're a current or former member of the Reserves or National Guard**

You must have been called to active duty by a federal order and completed the full period for which you were called or ordered to active duty. If you had or have active-duty status for training purposes only, you don't qualify for VA health care.

### **If you served in certain locations and time periods during the Vietnam War era**

You're eligible for VA health care. Keep reading to learn more.

### **If you meet the basic service and discharge requirements and were exposed to toxins or other hazards while serving our country—at home or abroad**

You're eligible for VA health care. This includes all Veterans who served in the Vietnam War, Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan, or any other combat zone after 9/11.

## **VA Health Care Overview as of 1 December 2025**

### **What are VA priority groups and how do they affect me?**

VA health care assigns 1 of 8 priority groups. Your priority group may affect how much (if anything) you'll have to pay toward the cost of your care.

#### **Priority groups are based on:**

- Your military service history, **and**
- Your disability rating, **and**
- Your income level, **and**
- Whether or not you qualify for Medicaid, **and**
- Other benefits you may be receiving (like VA pension benefits)

The VA assigns Veterans with service-connected disabilities the highest priority. The VA assigns the lowest priority to Veterans who earn a higher income and who don't have any service-connected disabilities qualifying them for disability compensation (monthly payments).

#### **Priority Group 1 – VA may assign you to priority group 1 if any of these descriptions are true:**

- Service-connected disability rated as 50% or more disabling, **or**
- Service-connected disability VA concluded Veteran unable to work (also called unemployable), **or**
- You received the Medal of Honor (MOH)

#### **Priority Group 2 - VA may assign priority group 2 if service-connected disability rated as 30% or 40% disabling.**

#### **Priority Group 3 – VA may assign priority group 3 if any of these descriptions are true:**

- You're a former prisoner of war (POW), **or**
- You received the Purple Heart medal, **or**
- You were discharged for a disability that was caused by—or got worse because of—your active-duty service, **or**
- You have a service-connected disability that we've rated as 10% or 20% disabling, **or**
- You were awarded special eligibility classification under Title 38, U.S.C § 1151, "benefits for individuals disabled by treatment or vocational rehabilitation"

#### **Priority Group 4 – VA may assign priority group 4 if either of these descriptions is true:**

- You're receiving VA aid and attendance or housebound benefits, **or**
- You have received a VA determination of being catastrophically disabled

#### **Priority Group 5 - VA may assign priority group 5 if any of these descriptions are true:**

- You don't have a service-connected disability, or you have a non-compensable service-connected disability that we've rated as 0% disabling, **and** you have an annual income level that's below our adjusted income limits (based on your resident zip code), **or**
- You're receiving VA pension benefits, **or**
- You're eligible for Medicaid programs

## **VA Health Care Overview as of 1 December 2025**

**Priority Group 6 – VA may assign based on disability rating or general service history if any of these descriptions are true:**

- You have a compensable service-connected disability that we've rated as 0% disabling, **or**
- You participated in Project 112/SHAD, **or**
- You served in World War II between December 7, 1941, and December 31, 1946, **or**
- You served in the Persian Gulf War between August 2, 1990, and November 11, 1998, **or**
- You served on active duty at Camp Lejeune for at least 30 days between August 1, 1953, and December 31, 1987

**The VA may also assign you to priority group 6 if all of these descriptions are true for you:**

- You served in a theater of combat operations after November 11, 1998, **and**
- You were discharged from active duty on or after October 1, 2013, **and**
- You meet the minimum active-duty service requirement

**Note:** You'll have 10 years of enhanced eligibility from the date of your discharge or release. At the end of this 10-year period the VA will assign based on the highest priority group you qualify for.

### **Assignment based on exposure to toxins or other hazards**

The VA may assign you to priority group 6 if you were exposed to toxins or other hazards during military service at home or abroad in any of the ways listed here.

**If you participated in a toxic exposure risk activity (TERA) while serving on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training.**

**if you were assigned to a duty station (including airspace above) in certain locations during specific periods:**

- On or after August 2, 1990, in Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, or the United Arab Emirates, **or**
- On or after September 11, 2001, in Afghanistan, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Uzbekistan, or any other country that we determine is relevant

**The VA may assign you to priority group 6 if you were deployed in support of any of these operations:**

- Operation Enduring Freedom, **or**
- Operation Freedom's Sentinel, **or**
- Operation Iraqi Freedom, **or**
- Operation New Dawn, **or**
- Operation Inherent Resolve, **or**
- Resolute Support Mission

## **VA Health Care Overview as of 1 December 2025**

**The VA may assign you to group 6 if you were exposed to ionizing radiation in any of these ways:**

- During atmospheric testing, **or**
- During the occupation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, **or**
- While conducting cleanup of Enewetak Atoll between January 1, 1977, and December 31, 1980, **or**
- While participating in onsite response efforts in Palomares, Spain, between January 17, 1966, and March 31, 1967, **or**
- While participating in onsite response efforts on Thule Air Force Base, Greenland between January 21, 1968, and September 25, 1968

**If you were exposed to Agent Orange and served in any of these locations and time periods:**

- The Republic of Vietnam between January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975, **or**
- Thailand at any United States or Royal Thai base between January 9, 1962, and June 30, 1976, **or**
- Laos between December 1, 1965, and September 30, 1969, **or**
- Cambodia at Mimot or Krek, Kampong Cham Province between April 16, 1969, and April 30, 1969, **or**
- Guam or American Samoa or in the territorial waters off of Guam or American Samoa between January 9, 1962, and July 31, 1980, **or**
- Johnston Atoll or on a ship that called at Johnston Atoll between January 1, 1972, and September 30, 1977

**Priority Group 7 – VA may assign you to priority group 7 if both of these descriptions are true for you:**

- Your gross household income is below the geographically adjusted income limits (GMT) for where you live, **and**
- You agree to pay copays

**Priority Group 8 – VA may assign you to priority group 8 if both of these descriptions are true for you:**

- Your gross household income is above VA income limits and geographically adjusted income limits for where you live, **and**
- You agree to pay copays

Note - If you're assigned to priority group 8, your eligibility for VA health care benefits will depend on which subpriority group you are placed in.

## VA Health Care Overview as of 1 December 2025

### How to apply for VA health care

#### How do I prepare before I start my application?

- Find out if you're eligible for VA health care benefits – visit [www.va.gov/health-care](https://www.va.gov/health-care)
- Gather the information that you'll need to fill out an Application for Health Benefits (VA Form 10-10EZ)

#### You'll need this information:

- Social Security numbers for you, your spouse, and your qualified dependents.
- Your military discharge papers (DD214 or other separation documents), military service history information, and details about exposure to any toxins or other hazards.
- Insurance card information for all insurance companies that cover you, including any coverage provided through a spouse or significant other. This includes Medicare, private insurance, or insurance from your employer.
- Gross household income from the previous calendar year for you, your spouse, and your dependents. This includes income from a job and any other sources. Gross household income is your income before taxes and any other deductions.
- Your deductible expenses for the past year. These include certain health care and education costs.

**Note:** You don't have to tell the VA about your income and expenses when you apply. But if you're not eligible based on other factors, they will need this information to decide on your application.

### You can also apply in any of these 5 ways

#### Option 1: Apply by phone

Call the VA toll-free hotline at [877-222-8387](tel:877-222-8387) to get help with your application. Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. ET.

#### Option 2: Apply on VA.GOV

There are two options. The first has you log into your VA.GOV account and the second allows you to start the process without logging in.

#### Option 3: Apply by mail

Fill out an Application for Health Benefits (VA Form 10-10EZ).

[Get VA Form 10-10EZ to download](#)

You or someone acting as your power of attorney must sign and date the form. And:

- **If you're using a power of attorney**, you'll need to submit a copy of the Power of Attorney form along with your application.
- **If you sign with an "X,"** 2 people you know must witness your signature. They'll also need to sign and print their names on the form.

Send your completed application here:

## VA Health Care Overview as of 1 December 2025

Health Eligibility Center  
PO Box 5207  
Janesville, WI 53547-5207

### Option 4: Apply in person

Fill out an Application for Health Benefits (VA Form 10-10EZ).

[Get VA Form 10-10EZ to download](#)

You or someone acting as your power of attorney must sign and date the form. And:

- **If you're using a power of attorney**, you'll need to submit a copy of the Power of Attorney form along with your application.
- **If you sign with an "X,"** 2 people you know must witness your signature. They'll also need to sign and print their names on the form.

Go to your nearest VA medical center or clinic. Bring a signed Application for Health Benefits (VA Form 10-10EZ) with you.

[Find a VA medical center or clinic near you](#)

Or get help through your state's Department of Veterans Affairs.

[Find your state's Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

### Option 5: Apply with the help of a trained professional

You can work with an accredited attorney, claims agent, or Veterans Service Organization (VSO) representative to get help applying for health care benefits.