

Veterans Services – Frequently Asked Questions

- **Do you only help veterans?**

In addition to veterans, we also help survivors and dependents of veterans.

- **Am I eligible for VA benefits?**

The best way to determine whether you're eligible for veterans' benefits is to speak to a veteran's service officer. Veteran's service officers can explain eligibility requirements for various state and federal benefits. If you decide to apply they can help you through the entire claims process.

- **Can Pinellas County veterans' service officers help me even if I don't live in Pinellas County?**

The Pinellas County Veterans' Services Office is only able to assist veterans who are residents of Pinellas County. However almost every county in Florida has a veterans' service office. (list directory for Florida VSO)

- **How do I schedule an appointment with a veteran's service officer?**

If you are a Pinellas County resident, contact your local veterans service office.

- **How do I obtain my DD-214 discharge papers?**

Visit the National Archives and Records Administration website (<http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/get-service-records.html>) to request your records online, or come into the Pinellas County Veterans Service Office to fill out Standard Form-180.

- **How do I apply for VA Healthcare?**

You must bring in your DD214 to the nearest [VA medical center to apply](#). (add hyperlink to our local VA facilities) Please have your financial information available in order to complete the form. All benefits are based on the previous year's income and non-reimbursed medical expenses.

- **Who can I contact about VA education benefits?**

You can reach your local college education veteran's officer located on the campus of choice

- **How long does it take for the VA to make a decision about my claim?**

The time will vary from a few months to several years.

- **Who can I contact for housing assistance?**

The Bay Pines VA Medical Center provides housing services at the Bay Pines campus. Please call (727) 398-6661. Ext 4827.

- **How do I submit a claim for a Service Connected Disability Re-Evaluation?**

Beginning July 1, 2010 you may come into our office. Be sure to bring with you current medical evidence and we will submit all of the necessary VA paperwork.

You may request these records online at the National Archives and Records Administration web-site or you may contact the Seminole County Veterans Service Office at (407) 665-2370 to obtain a Standard Form 180 that will enable you to retrieve your records via the postal service.

- **What if I don't agree with the VA's decision?**

The Vet Reps can help you file an appeal.

- **Can I get back compensation payments?**

In general the effective date will be the date your claim was received by VA or the date entitlement arose, whichever is the later, however there are exceptions to this general rule. To review the regulations governing effective dates please visit: www.benefits.va.gov.

- **What is the difference between VA disability compensation and VA pension?**

VA compensation and a VA pension are not the same thing. The simplest explanation is that VA compensation is a benefit paid on the basis of the kind and severity of a disability that happened as a result of your active duty in military service. VA pension is a benefit paid on the basis of a disability that was not a result of active service in the military, or because of age. Pension is also based on income. There are other criteria that may apply to deciding eligibility for VA pension. That's why it is a good idea to contact a representative at VA regional office to discuss your situation, or go to a national, state, or local veteran's service organization for help.

- **Do I need to do anything if I have a claim or appeal pending with VA?**

No action is needed on your part until you receive correspondence from VA which will identify anything needed on your part. When processing your claim for benefits, VA will send a letter to you informing you if further information is needed and outlining the evidence needed to support your claim. Upon receipt of an appeal, VA will send a letter acknowledging the receipt of your appeal and asking if you would like to follow the traditional appellate process or have a DRO review your case.

- **How do I contact VA about a Fiduciary related matter?**

By Telephone: (888) 407-0144---Select appropriate Fiduciary Hub when prompted.

- **Columbia Fiduciary Hub (Option 1):** FL, GA, NC, SC
Columbia Fiduciary Hub, PO Box 9367, Columbia, SC 29209-9998
- **Indianapolis Fiduciary Hub (Option 2):** CT, DE, IN, MA, MD, ME, MI, NH, NJ, NY, OH, PA, RI
Indianapolis Fiduciary Hub, PO Box 441480, Indianapolis, IN 46244
- **Lincoln Fiduciary Hub (Option 3):** KS, ND, NE, OK, SD, TX
Lincoln Fiduciary Hub, PO Box 5444, Lincoln, NE 68505-5444
- **Louisville Fiduciary Hub (Option 4):** AL, KY, MS, PR, TN, VA, WV
Louisville Fiduciary Hub, PO Box 3487, Louisville, KY 40201
- **Milwaukee Fiduciary Hub (Option 5):** AR, IA, IL, LA, MN, MO, WI
Milwaukee Fiduciary Hub, PO Box 14975, Milwaukee, WI 53214-0975
- **Salt Lake City Fiduciary Hub (Option 6):** AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NM, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY
Salt Lake Fiduciary Hub, PO Box 58086, Salt Lake City, UT 84158