

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 Veterans Services officer. Veterans Services 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 Services office help me even if I don't live in Pinellas County?**

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 services office.

- **How do I schedule an appointment with a Veterans Services officer?**

If you are a Pinellas County resident, contact your local Veterans Services office:

Clearwater

2189 Cleveland Street, Suite 263
Clearwater, Florida 33765
Phone: (727) 464-8460

St. Petersburg

501 First Avenue North, Suite 514
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701
Phone: (727) 582-7828

Largo

8751 Ulmerton Road
Largo, Florida 33771
Phone: (727) 524-4410 x7694

Tarpon Springs

301 South Disston Avenue
Tarpon Springs, Florida 34689
Phone: (727) 942-5457 x6142

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

Visit the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration [Request Your Military Service Records website](#) to request your records online, or come into the Pinellas County Veterans Services Office to fill out Standard Form-180.

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

You may bring in your DD214 to the nearest VA medical center to apply. Visit the [Bay Pines VA Healthcare System](#) website for location. 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. To apply online, visit the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs [How to Apply for Health Care Benefits website](#).

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

You may reach your local college education veterans services officer located on the campus of choice or visit the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs [How to Apply for Health Care Benefits website](#) to apply online.

- **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.

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- **Who can I contact for Housing Assistance?**

Please see the [Pinellas County Veterans & Military Resource Guide](#) for a full listing of housing resources, and or visit the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs [Homeless Veterans website](#).

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

Please contact your local Pinellas County Veterans Services office to discuss options to appeal or to request a reconsideration.

- **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 the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs [Veterans Benefits Administration website](#).

- **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 veterans services 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. 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.

Note: Due to recent changes with the VA Appeals process, please contact Pinellas County Veterans Services at (727) 464-8467 with questions related to pending Appeals.

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

Contact the **Columbia Fiduciary Hub** by mail or phone:
PO Box 9367
Columbia, South Carolina 29209-9998
(888) 407-0144 - Option 1 (which covers the state of Florida)

- **What are the benefits for Florida veterans?**

Visit the [Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs website](#) to view the Florida Veterans' Benefits Guide.