

# How to apply for VA health care

Find out how to apply for VA health care benefits as a Veteran or service member.

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

- [Find out if you're eligible for VA health care benefits](#)
- Gather the information listed below 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)
- 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 us about your income and expenses when you apply. But if you're not eligible based on other factors, we'll need this information to decide on your application.

### Eligibility for VA health care

Find out if you can get VA health care as a Veteran.

### 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.

**Is there anything that will make me more likely to get these benefits?**

Yes. You may qualify for enhanced eligibility status if you meet at least one of these requirements. Enhanced eligibility means that we'll place you in a higher priority group. This makes you more likely to get benefits.

**At least one of these must be true:**

- You receive financial compensation (payments) from VA for a service-connected disability
- You were discharged for a disability resulting from something that happened to you in the line of duty
- You were discharged for a disability that got worse in the line of duty
- You're a combat Veteran discharged or released on or after September 11, 2001  
[Learn more about eligibility for transitioning active-duty service members and returning combat Veterans](#)
- You get a VA pension
- You're a former prisoner of war (POW)
- You have received a Purple Heart
- You have received a Medal of Honor
- You get (or qualify for) Medicaid benefits
- You served in Southwest Asia during the Gulf War between August 2, 1990, and November 11, 1998
- You served at least 30 days at Camp Lejeune between August 1, 1953, and December 31, 1987

**Or, you must have served in any of these locations during the Vietnam War era:**

- Any U.S. or Royal Thai military base in Thailand from January 9, 1962, through June 30, 1976
- Laos from December 1, 1965, through September 30, 1969
- Cambodia at Mimot or Krek, Kampong Cham Province from April 16, 1969, through April 30, 1969
- Guam or American Samoa or in the territorial waters off Guam or American Samoa from January 9, 1962, through July 31, 1980

- Johnston Atoll or on a ship that called at Johnston Atoll from January 1, 1972, through September 30, 1977
- Republic of Vietnam from January 9, 1962 through May 7, 1975

**If none of these descriptions apply to you,** you may still qualify for care based on your income. Learn more about how the amount of money your family makes can affect whether you qualify for VA benefits.

[Learn more about income limits](#)