

Veterans Aid and Attendance Benefits

The Veterans Administration offers Aid and Attendance (A&A) as part of an "Improved Pension" Benefit. This can provide up to \$1,732 per month to a veteran, \$1,113 per month to a surviving spouse, or \$2,054 per month to a couple. If the benefit is approved, retroactive payments from the application date forward will be sent to the recipient.

General Eligibility

- Applicant must be a wartime veteran with 90 days of active duty, one day beginning or ending during a period of war. A surviving spouse of a wartime veteran may also apply (marriage must have ended due to death of veteran). The individual applying must qualify both medically and financially.
- If a veteran is independent but has a spouse who meets A&A requirements, the veteran is eligible for up to \$1,360 per month. If the spouse's medical expenses completely deplete their combined monthly income, the veteran can file as a veteran with a sick spouse.

Medical Eligibility

- The wartime veteran or surviving spouse must need the assistance of another person to perform daily tasks, such as eating, dressing, undressing, taking care of the needs of nature, taking on or off of prosthetics, etc. Being blind or in a nursing home for mental or physical incapacity, or residing in an assisted living facility also qualifies.
- Applicants *do not* have to require assistance with all of these. There simply needs to be adequate medical evidence that they cannot function completely on their own.

Financial Eligibility

- On average, the applicant must have less than \$80,000 in assets, *excluding* their home and vehicles.

How to Apply

- Applicants must prove eligibility by completing the proper Veterans Application for Pension or Compensation (Form 21-534 surviving spouse) (Form 21-526 Veteran).
- This application requires a copy of DD-214 or separation papers, medical evaluation from a physician, current medical issues, net worth limitations, and net income, along with out-of-pocket medical expenses.

About the DD-214

- A DD-214 is issued to military members upon separation from active service. DD-214s were issued to separated service members beginning in the 1950s. The term "DD-214" is often used generically to mean "separation papers" or "discharge papers," no matter what form number was used to document active duty military service.
- If the VA has a copy of a DD-214, it is usually because the veteran attached a copy, or sometimes, the original, to his or her application for disability or education benefits.
- If you've lost your original DD-214 or a copy but you are receiving, or applied for in the past, disability or education benefits from the VA, they may have a copy on file. At the very least, if you are currently receiving benefits, or did in the past, they should be able to provide a Statement of Service, which can be used instead of a DD-214.
- To request a copy of a DD-214 visit vetrec.archives.gov
- Before January 1, 1950, several similar forms were used by the military services upon discharge, including the WD AGO 53, WD AGO 55, WD AGO 53-55, NAVPERS 553, NAVMC 78PD, and the NAVCG 553 as discharge papers. All of these are acceptable to the VA for making application.

More Resources

AnA information

veteranaid.org

CALMA

(Assists with applications)

calma4u.org/veterans_benefits.html

Ronald Doty

(Fee for service attorney; \$900 per application)

eldercounsel.com/profile/30616

(951) 658-1100

ron@redoty.com



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