**https://www.va.gov/careers-employment/vocational-rehabilitation/eligibility/**

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**Eligibility for Veteran Readiness and Employment**

**Meta:** Review Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) eligibility requirements for Veterans and active-duty service members. If you have a service-connected disability that limits your ability, you may be eligible for employment support services.

Learn about eligibility requirements for Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E)—formerly called Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment. If you’re a service member or Veteran and have a disability that was caused—or made worse—by your active-duty service and that limits your ability to work or prevents you from working, you may be able to get employment support or services to help you live as independently as possible.

## If I’m a Veteran, am I eligible for Veteran Readiness and Employment?

You’re eligible to apply for VR&E benefits and services if you meet both of these requirements:

**All of these must be true:**

* You didn’t receive a dishonorable discharge, **and**
* You have a service-connected disability rating of at least 10% from VA

When we receive your VR&E application, we’ll schedule your initial evaluation with a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC). The VRC will determine if you’re entitled to receive VR&E benefits and services.

**If you were discharged from active duty before January 1, 2013,** your basic period of eligibility ends 12 years from one of these dates, whichever comes later:

* The date you received notice of your date of separation from active duty, **or**
* The date you received your first VA service-connected disability rating

The basic period of eligibility may be extended if a VRC finds that you have a serious employment handicap (SEH). Having an SEH means your service-connected disability significantly limits your ability to prepare for, obtain, and maintain suitable employment (a job that doesn’t make your disability worse; is stable; and matches your abilities, aptitudes, and interests).

**If you were discharged from active duty on or after January 1, 2013,** the 12-year basic period of eligibility doesn’t apply to you. There’s no time limit on your eligibility.

## If I’m still on active duty, am I eligible for Veteran Readiness and Employment?

You may be eligible for VR&E benefits and services if you’re a service member and you meet at least one of these requirements.

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

* You have a 20% or higher pre-discharge disability rating (memorandum rating) and will soon leave the military, **or**
* You’re waiting to be discharged because of a severe illness or injury that occurred while you were on active duty

[Learn more about accessing VR&E services through the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES)](https://www.va.gov/careers-employment/vocational-rehabilitation/ides) (in English)

**Note:** Severely injured active-duty service members can automatically receive VR&E benefits before VA issues a disability rating. This is according to Sec. 1631(b) of the National Defense Authorization Act (PL 110-181).

**Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD):** If you have an illness or injury that you believe was caused—or made worse—by your active-duty service, you can file a claim for disability benefits through the BDD program 180 to 90 days before you leave active duty. This may help speed up the claim decision process so you can get your benefits sooner.

[Learn more about BDD and what to do if you have less than 90 days left on active duty](https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/when-to-file/pre-discharge-claim) (in English)

[Go to our video about BDD (YouTube)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-m4T4rXNfAs) (in English)

## What should I do if I received an other than honorable, bad conduct, or dishonorable discharge?

If you’ve received one of these discharge statuses, you may not be eligible for VA benefits.

**There are 2 ways you can try to qualify:**

[Find out how to apply for a discharge upgrade](https://www.va.gov/discharge-upgrade-instructions/) (in English)

[Learn about the VA Character of Discharge review process](https://www.va.gov/discharge-upgrade-instructions/#other-options) (in English)

## How do I apply if I already have a VA disability rating?

You can apply online right now.

[**Apply for VR&E benefits**](https://www.va.gov/careers-employment/vocational-rehabilitation/apply-vre-form-28-1900/start) (in English)

[Learn more about how to apply](https://www.va.gov/careers-employment/vocational-rehabilitation/how-to-apply) (in English)

**Note:** You can apply if you’re a service member who hasn’t received a disability rating yet.

## What kind of VR&E services can I get?

**Depending on your needs and goals, services may include:**

* A complete evaluation to determine your abilities, skills, and interests for employment
* Professional or vocational counseling and rehabilitation planning for employment services
* Employment services such as job training, resume development, and other work-readiness support
* Help finding and keeping a job, including the use of special employer incentives and job accommodations
* On-the-job training (OJT), apprenticeships, and non-paid work experiences
* Post-secondary education and training at a college, vocational, technical, or business school  
  [Compare VA education benefits](https://www.va.gov/resources/compare-va-education-benefits) (in English)
* Supportive rehabilitation services including case management, counseling, and medical referrals
* Independent living services to help you live as independently as possible

## If I’m eligible for GI Bill benefits, can I get paid the Post-9/11 GI Bill subsistence rate for my VR&E program?

If you’re participating in a VR&E program, you can choose to get paid the GI Bill subsistence rate instead of the Chapter 31 subsistence allowance rate if you meet both of these requirements.

**Both of these must be true:**

* You have at least 1 day of entitlement remaining under the Post-9/11 GI Bill, **and**
* You’re within your GI Bill eligibility period

**Note:** In most cases, the GI Bill rate is higher.

You’ll need to officially choose the GI Bill subsistence rate. Your VRC can help you with this.

[Contact your VRC for more information](https://www.va.gov/find-locations/) (in English)

[Check the current Chapter 31 subsistence allowance rates](https://benefits.va.gov/VOCREHAB/subsistence_allowance_rates.asp?_ga=2.203704281.836500684.1545080344-1582256389.1508352376) (in English)

[Check the current Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit rates](https://www.va.gov/education/benefit-rates) (in English)

## Will VA deduct my VR&E benefits from my VA education entitlement?

If you use VR&E benefits, we won’t deduct entitlement from your other VA education benefits, like the Post-9/11 GI Bill or the Montgomery GI Bill.

If you’ve used benefits under any other VA education program and then you use VR&E benefits, we’ll have to deduct from your remaining VR&E entitlement the amount of time used under the other VA education program.

But if you already used other VA education benefits and we determine that you’re eligible for VR&E, we may retroactively approve your previous months of entitlement and return them to the other VA education program. This is called “retroactive induction.” Ask your VRC if you meet the eligibility criteria for a retroactive induction.

## Get more information

**We offer opportunities to get training and practical hands-on work experience at the same time through programs like:**

* **The VR&E Special Employer Incentives (SEI) program** for eligible Veterans who face challenges getting a job  
  [Download the SEI program fact sheet (PDF)](https://benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/factsheets/vocrehab/SpecialEmployerIncentive.pdf) (in English)
* **The VR&E Non-Paid Work Experience (NPWE) program** for eligible Veterans who have an established career goal and learn easily in a hands-on environment—or are having trouble getting a job due to lack of work experience  
  [Go to this video to learn more about the NPWE program (YouTube)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t2J3RPQOiuM) (in English)

**We also offer:**

* VRCs to help you transition from military to college life  
  [Learn about VetSuccess on Campus](https://www.va.gov/careers-employment/vetsuccess-on-campus/) (in English)
* Links to more resources outside VA that can help you in your job search  
  [Go to our list of external resources](https://www.va.gov/careers-employment/veteran-resources/) (in English)
* If you’re participating in a VR&E employment program and lost your housing because of a natural or other disaster, you may qualify for 2 more months of the Employment Adjustment Allowance.  
  [Contact your VRC for more information](https://www.va.gov/find-locations/) (in English)

## More information about VR&E benefits and services

### [Veteran Readiness and Employment services for service members and Veterans](https://www.va.gov/careers-employment/vocational-rehabilitation/programs) (in English)

Explore VR&E support-and-services tracks for help learning new skills, finding a new job, starting a business, getting educational counseling, or returning to your former job.

### [How to apply for Veteran Readiness and Employment](https://www.va.gov/careers-employment/vocational-rehabilitation/how-to-apply)

Find out how to apply for VR&E benefits and services as a service member or Veteran.

### [Dependent family members](https://www.va.gov/careers-employment/dependent-benefits) (in English)

If you’re the dependent family member of a service member or Veteran with a service-connected disability, find out if you may be eligible for certain counseling services, training, and education benefits.