[note: The live version of this page for context is at: https://www.va.gov/disability/dependency-indemnity-compensation/. We’re in the process of updating the content on the live page to match the document in this Word doc exactly. The Word doc is the content source of truth for translation.] Word count is 1,585.

# [H1] About VA DIC for spouses, dependents, and parents

[Meta description] Find out how to apply for VA Dependent and Indemnity Compensation (VA DIC). These VA benefits for spouses, children, and parents of Veterans and service members who died in the line of duty or from a service-related injury or illness give a tax-free monthly payment to eligible survivors.

[Introduction] If you’re the surviving spouse, child, or parent of a service member who died in the line of duty, or the survivor of a Veteran who died from a service-related injury or illness, you may be able to get a tax-free monetary benefit called VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (VA DIC). Find out if you can get VA benefits or compensation.

## [Alert] Information for survivors with PACT Act-related claims

If you think you’re eligible for VA DIC under the PACT Act, you can submit a new application.

If we denied your claim in the past and we think you may be eligible now, we’ll try to contact you. We may be able to reevaluate your claim. But you don’t need to wait for us to contact you before you reapply.   
  
[Learn more about what the PACT Act means for you as a survivor](https://www.va.gov/resources/the-pact-act-and-your-va-benefits-esp/#informacin-para-los-sobrevivie)

## [H2] Am I eligible for VA DIC as a surviving spouse or dependent?

[Accordion 1] **As a surviving spouse**

### [H3] Eligibility

You may be eligible for VA benefits or compensation if you meet these requirements.

**One of these must be true:**

* You lived with the Veteran or service member without a break until their death, **or**
* If you’re separated, you weren’t at fault for the separation

**And one of these must be true:**

* You married the Veteran or service member within 15 years of their discharge from the period of military service during which the qualifying illness or injury started or got worse, **or**
* You were married to the Veteran or service member for at least 1 year, **or**
* You had a child with the Veteran or service member

**Note:** If you remarried, you can receive or continue to receive compensation if one of these describes you:

* You remarried on or after December 16, 2003, and you were 57 years of age or older at the time you remarried, **or**
* You remarried on or after January 5, 2021, and you were 55 years of age or older at the time you remarried

### [H3] Evidence

You’ll need to provide evidence with your claim showing that one of these descriptions is true for the Veteran or service member. Evidence may include documents like military service records, doctor’s reports, and medical test results.

**Provide evidence showing that one of these is true:**

* The service member died while on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive-duty training, **or**
* The Veteran died from a service-connected illness or injury, **or**
* The Veteran didn’t die from a service-connected illness or injury, but was eligible to receive VA compensation for a service-connected disability rated as totally disabling for a certain period of time

**If the Veteran’s eligibility was due to a rating of totally disabling, they must have had this rating for one of these periods of time:**

* For at least 10 years before their death, **or**
* Since their release from active duty and for at least 5 years immediately before their death, **or**
* For at least 1 year before their death if they were a former prisoner of war who died after September 30, 1999

**Note:** “Totally disabling” means the Veteran’s injuries made it impossible for them to work.

[Learn more about the evidence you’ll need to support your claim](https://www.va.gov/resources/evidence-to-support-va-pension-dic-or-accrued-benefits-claims) (in English)

[Accordion 2] **As a surviving child**

### [H3] Eligibility

You may be eligible for VA benefits or compensation if you meet these requirements.

**All of these must be true:**

* You aren’t married, **and**
* You aren’t included on the surviving spouse’s compensation, **and**
* You’re under the age of 18 (or under the age of 23 if attending school)

**Note:** If you were adopted out of the Veteran’s or service member’s family, but meet all other eligibility criteria, you still qualify for compensation.

### [H3] Evidence

You’ll need to provide evidence with your claim showing that one of these descriptions is true for the Veteran or service member. Evidence may include documents like military service records, doctor’s reports, and medical test results.

**Provide evidence showing that one of these is true:**

* The service member died while on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive-duty training, **or**
* The Veteran died from a service-connected illness or injury, **or**
* The Veteran didn’t die from a service-connected illness or injury, but was eligible to receive VA compensation for a service-connected disability that was rated as totally disabling for a certain period of time

**If the Veteran’s eligibility was due to a service-connected disability rated as totally disabling, they must have had this rating for one of these periods of time:**

* For at least 10 years before their death, **or**
* Since their release from active duty and for at least 5 years immediately before their death, **or**
* For at least 1 year before their death if they were a former prisoner of war who died after September 30, 1999

**Note:** “Totally disabling” means the Veteran’s injuries make it impossible for them to work.

[Learn more about the evidence you’ll need to support your claim](https://www.va.gov/resources/evidence-to-support-va-pension-dic-or-accrued-benefits-claims) (in English)

[Accordion 3] **As a surviving parent**

### [H3] Eligibility

You may be eligible for VA benefits or compensation if you meet these requirements.

**Both of these must be true:**

* You’re the biological, adoptive, or foster parent of the Veteran or service member, **and**
* Your income is below a certain amount  
  [Check the parents DIC rate table](https://www.va.gov/disability/parent-dic-rates) (in English)

**Note:** We define a foster parent as someone who served in the role of a parent to the Veteran or service member before their last entry into active service.

### [H3] Evidence

You’ll need to provide evidence with your claim showing that one of these descriptions is true for the Veteran or service member. Evidence may include documents like military service records, doctor’s reports, and medical test results.

**Provide evidence showing that one of these is true:**

* The service member died from an injury or illness while on active duty or in the line of duty while on active duty for training, **or**
* The service member died from an injury or certain illnesses in the line of duty while on inactive training, **or**
* The Veteran died from a service-connected illness or injury

[Learn more about the evidence you’ll need to support your claim](https://www.va.gov/resources/evidence-to-support-va-pension-dic-or-accrued-benefits-claims) (in English)

## [H2] What kind of benefits can I get?

If you qualify, you can get tax-free monetary benefits. The amount you receive depends on the type of survivor you are.

[DIC benefit rates for surviving spouses and children](https://www.va.gov/disability/survivor-dic-rates) (in English)

[DIC benefits for surviving parents](https://www.va.gov/disability/parent-dic-rates) (in English)

## H2: How do I apply for compensation?

First you’ll need to fill out an application for benefits. The application you fill out will depend on your survivor status.

**If you’re the surviving spouse or child of a service member who died while on active duty,** your military casualty assistance officer will help you to complete an Application for DIC, Death Pension, and/or Accrued Benefits by a Surviving Spouse or Child (VA Form 21P-534a). The officer will help you mail the form to the correct VA regional office.

[Get VA Form 21P-534a to download](https://www.va.gov/find-forms/about-form-21p-534a) (in English)

**If you’re the surviving spouse or child of a Veteran,** fill out an Application for DIC, Death Pension, and/or Accrued Benefits (VA Form 21P-534EZ).

[Get VA Form 21P-534EZ to download](https://www.va.gov/find-forms/about-form-21p-534ez) (in English)

**If you’re a surviving parent,** fill out an Application for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation by Parent(s) (VA Form 21P-535).

[Get VA Form 21P-535 to download](https://www.va.gov/find-forms/about-form-21p-535) (in English)

### [H3] You can apply for this benefit in any of these ways:

* Work with an accredited representative.  
  [Get help filing your claim](https://www.va.gov/disability/get-help-filing-claim/) (in English)
* Use the QuickSubmit tool through AccessVA to upload your form online.  
  [Go to AccessVA to use QuickSubmit](https://eauth.va.gov/accessva/?cspSelectFor=quicksubmit) (in English)
* Mail your form to this address:

Department of Veterans Affairs  
Pension Intake Center  
PO Box 5365  
Janesville, WI 53547-5365

* Go to a VA regional office and get help from a VA employee.  
  [Find a VA regional office near you](https://www.va.gov/find-locations/?facilityType=benefits) (in English)

## [H2] Should I submit an intent to file form?

You may want to submit an intent to file form before you apply for DIC benefits. This can give you the time you need to gather your evidence while avoiding a later potential start date (also called an effective date). When you notify us of your intent to file, you may be able to get retroactive payments (payments that start at a point in the past).

[Find out how to submit an intent to file form](https://www.va.gov/resources/your-intent-to-file-a-va-claim) (in English)

## H3: More helpful information

### [VA Survivors Pension benefit rates](https://www.va.gov/pension/survivors-pension-rates) (in English)

Find out if you’re eligible and how to apply for VA pension benefits as a surviving spouse or child of a deceased Veteran with wartime service.

### [The PACT Act and your VA benefits](https://www.va.gov/resources/the-pact-act-and-your-va-benefits-esp)

The PACT Act expands VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits and other toxic substances. Learn what this means for you or your loved ones.