**Live page**:<https://www.va.gov/pension/how-to-apply/>

**[Meta description]:** Find out how to apply for a VA pension online, by mail, in person, or with the help of a trained professional. If you're not ready to apply now, learn how to submit an intent to file form (VA Form 21-0966) to set the effective date of your claim (the day you can start getting benefits).

**How to apply for a VA pension as a Veteran**

Find out how to apply for tax-free VA pension benefits as a Veteran.

**How do I prepare before starting my application?**

* [Find out if you’re eligible for VA pension benefits](https://www.va.gov/pension/eligibility)
* Gather the information listed that you’ll need to fill out your pension application.

**You’ll need this information**

* Your Social Security number
* Your VA file number if you have one
* Your military history
* Your marital history (and if you’re married, your spouse’s marital history)
* Your work history
* Information about your dependents

You’ll also need this financial information:

* Your household’s gross monthly income
* The value of your household’s assets
* Your unreimbursed medical expenses

**If you’re under age 65,** you’ll need to submit a copy of your medical records.

**If we need more information about your household’s medical needs or finances, or your dependents,** we may also ask you to complete and submit additional forms. We’ll provide links to download these forms when you apply for pension benefits.

**Note:** In 1973, a fire at the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in St. Louis destroyed records held for Veterans who were discharged from the Army and Air Force during certain periods of time. If your records were destroyed in this fire, you can get help reconstructing them.

[Find out how to reconstruct your records](https://www.va.gov/records/get-military-service-records/reconstruct-records)

[Learn 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)

**How do I apply?**

You can apply in any of these 5 ways.

**Option 1: Apply online**

**We updated our online pension form**

**If you started applying online before November 8, 2023,** we have some new questions for you to answer. And we changed some questions, so you may need to provide certain information again.

You can apply online right now.

[**Apply for Veterans Pension benefits**](https://www.va.gov/pension/apply-for-veteran-pension-form-21p-527ez/) (in English)

### ****Option 2: Upload your PDF form online****

First, fill out an Application for Pension (VA Form 21P-527EZ).

[Get VA Form 21P-527EZ to download](https://www.va.gov/find-forms/about-form-21p-527ez) (in English)

Then upload a copy of your completed form using the QuickSubmit tool through AccessVA. If it’s your first time signing in to this tool, you’ll need to register first. After you’ve registered, you can upload your application and documents online.

[Upload your form through AccessVA](https://eauth.va.gov/accessva/?cspSelectFor=quicksubmit) (in English)

### ****Option 3: Mail your form****

First, fill out an Application for Pension (VA Form 21P-527EZ).

[Get VA Form 21P-527EZ to download](https://www.va.gov/find-forms/about-form-21p-527ez) (in English)

Then mail your completed form to the pension management center (PMC):

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

### ****Option 4: Submit your form in person****

First, fill out an Application for Pension (VA Form 21P-527EZ).

[Get VA Form 21P-527EZ to download](https://www.va.gov/find-forms/about-form-21p-527ez)

Then bring your completed form to a VA regional office near you.

[Find your nearest VA regional office](https://www.va.gov/find-locations/?facilityType=benefits)

### ****Option 5: Apply with the help of a trained professional****

You can work with an accredited attorney, claims agent, or Veterans Service Organization (VSO) representative to get help applying for VA pension benefits.

[Get help filling out an application](https://www.va.gov/disability/get-help-filing-claim)

## Should I submit an intent to file form?

An intent to file sets a potential start date (or effective date) for your benefits. If you notify us of your intent to file and we approve your claim, you may be able to get retroactive payments. Retroactive payments are payments for the time between when we processed your intent to file and when we approved your claim.  
  
**If you sign in with an identity-verified account and apply for pension benefits online,** then you don’t need to notify us of your intent to file. This is because we’ll automatically set the effective date for your benefits when you start filling out the form online.

[Learn about verifying your identity on VA.gov](https://www.va.gov/resources/verifying-your-identity-on-vagov)  
  
**If you sign in with an account that isn’t verified or if you plan to apply for pension benefits using a PDF form,** you may want to submit an intent to file form first.

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

## How long does it take VA to make a decision?

It depends. We process claims in the order we receive them, unless a claim requires priority processing.

## Other pension benefits

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

### [Aid and Attendance benefits and Housebound allowance](https://www.va.gov/pension/aid-attendance-housebound) (in English)

If you need help with daily activities or you’re housebound, find out how to apply for extra VA pension benefits.