

Family & Survivor Benefits

A practical starting point for spouses, dependents, survivors, and caregivers to identify and apply for the right VA benefit.

START BY IDENTIFYING THE SITUATION

There is no single “family benefit” application. The correct benefit and form depend on whether you are a surviving spouse/child/parent, a caregiver, or a dependent using transferred benefits.

If the Veteran has died

1 | Check Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)

DIC is a tax-free monthly benefit for eligible surviving spouses, children, or parents when VA requirements are met.

[CHECK DIC ELIGIBILITY →](#)

2 | Check Survivors Pension

Survivors Pension is needs-based and has different eligibility rules from DIC.

[CHECK SURVIVORS PENSION →](#)

3 | If a survivor benefit may apply, protect the potential effective date

If you need time to gather records before filing certain DIC or Survivors Pension claims, an Intent to File may help protect a potential effective date.

[VA FORM 21-0966 - INTENT TO FILE →](#)

4 | Gather the basic records

- Veteran’s DD214 or other separation records.
- Death certificate.
- Marriage, birth, adoption, or dependency records as applicable.
- Medical or other evidence relevant to the benefit being claimed.
- Income/net-worth information when applying for needs-based Survivors Pension.

5 | Apply for the survivor benefit

[VA FORM 21P-534EZ - DIC / SURVIVORS PENSION / ACCRUED BENEFITS →](#)

If you are caring for a Veteran

VA caregiver programs may provide training, support, services, and—when program requirements are met—additional benefits.

[EXPLORE VA CAREGIVER SUPPORT →](#)

If you are using transferred education benefits

[APPLY WITH VA FORM 22-1990e →](#)

Need local help? [Find your State Veterans Agency →](#)