



COUNTY OF LEHIGH
Department of Administration
Office of Veterans Affairs

Summary of VA Pension Benefits – 2023

VA helps Veterans with wartime service and their families cope with financial challenges by providing supplemental income through Veterans Pension and Survivors Pension benefits.

ELIGIBILITY FOR VA PENSION BENEFITS

Requirements	Service Requirements	Age / Disability	Income and Net Worth
Veteran	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discharged from service under other than dishonorable conditions • Served 90 days or more of active duty with at least one day during a wartime period¹ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age 65 or older, OR • Permanently and totally disabled (not due to own personal misconduct), OR • Patient in a nursing home receiving skilled nursing care, OR • Receiving Social Security disability benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Countable family income is below the amount set by Congress • Unreimbursed medical expenses may reduce countable income • Net worth is not excessive
Un-remarried Surviving Spouse	Veteran must have met all Service Requirements listed above	N/A	

¹Veterans who entered active duty after September 7, 1980 must also serve at least 24 months of active duty service. If the total length of service is less than 24 months, the Veteran must have completed his or her entire tour of active duty.

AID AND ATTENDANCE AND HOUSEBOUND

Veterans or surviving spouses who are eligible for VA pension and are housebound or require the aid and attendance of another person may be eligible for an additional monetary payment.

Aid and Attendance (A&A). An increased monthly pension amount paid if you meet one of the following conditions:

- You require help in performing daily functions, which may include bathing, eating, or dressing
- You are bedridden
- You are a patient in a nursing home
- Your eyesight is limited to a corrected 5/200 visual acuity or less in both eyes; or concentric
- Contraction of the visual field to 5 degrees or less

Housebound. An increased monthly pension amount paid if you are substantially confined to your immediate premises because of a permanent disability.

*Lehigh County Government Center
 17 South Seventh Street,
 Allentown, Pennsylvania 18101-2401
 Phone: 610-782-3295
 Fax: 610-820-2026*

INCOME AND NET WORTH LIMITATIONS

If eligible, your pension benefit is the difference between your “countable” income and the annual pension limit set by Congress. VA generally pays this difference in 12 equal monthly payments.

Countable income. Includes income from most sources as well as from any eligible dependents. It generally includes earnings, disability and retirement payments, interest and dividend payments from annuities, and net income from farming or a business. Some expenses, such as unreimbursed medical expenses, may reduce your countable income.

Net worth. Includes assets such as bank accounts, stocks, bonds, mutual funds, annuities, and any property other than your residence and a reasonable lot area. You should report all of your net worth. VA will determine whether your assets are of a sufficiently large amount that you could live off of them for a reasonable period of time.

Yearly Income. Your yearly family income must be less than the amount set by Congress to qualify for the Veterans or Survivors’ Pension benefit.

Entitlement to a VA Pension or VA Pension with Aid & Attendance is determined by financial need based on combined income and assets which for 2023 may not exceed **\$150,538** after deducting qualifying, non-reimbursed medical expenses such as health care premiums and the cost of nursing home care, qualified senior living/personal care, or in-home care services.

After deducting qualifying unreimbursed medical expenses, Countable Income cannot exceed...		
	Pension Only	With Aid & Attendance
Veteran Only	\$16,037	\$26,752
Un-Remarried Surviving Spouse	\$10,757	\$17,192
Veteran & Spouse	\$21,001	\$31,714

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What qualifies as a wartime period?

Under current law, VA recognizes the following war periods:

- World War I (April 6, 1917—November 11, 1918)
- World War II (December 7, 1941—December 31, 1946)
- Korean conflict (June 27, 1950—January 31, 1955)
- Vietnam era (November 1, 1955—May 7, 1975 for Veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam during that period; otherwise August 5, 1964—May 7, 1975)
- Gulf War (August 2, 1990—through a future date to be set by law or Presidential Proclamation)

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If I am already receiving monthly payments for a service-connected disability, can I also receive a VA pension?

You cannot receive a VA non-service-connected pension and service-connected disability compensation at the same time. However, if you apply for a pension benefit and are awarded payments, VA will pay you whichever benefit is greater.

Can I reapply for pension benefits if I do not initially qualify?

Yes, you may reapply at any time if your countable income is below the yearly limit (which may occur after deducting unreimbursed medical expenses from the 12 month period after VA received your claim), or if you were denied because you were not rated as permanently and totally disabled but your disabilities have become worse.

I believe that I'm eligible for the VA Pension program. What's my next step?

Contact us (or your county's VA office) at 610-782-3295 to discuss details. During that phone call, we will review the requirements with you and also discuss other details of the program. If it appears that you qualify, we will provide you with a checklist of items needed to apply such as proof of military service, financial information, etc. and also several forms which need to be completed prior to scheduling an in-person meeting to complete the application process.

Is there any cost to me or my family for assistance in applying for VA benefits?

There is never a charge for this service or any other service provided by your county veterans affairs office. As a matter of fact, in almost all cases, it is illegal to charge a fee to assist someone to apply for veteran's benefits. Every county veterans office is staffed with VA-accredited Veteran Service Officers (VSOs) who are trained and experienced to provide assistance.