

# DISABILITY BENEFITS

## FOR WOMEN WHO HAVE SERVED IN THE MILITARY

### Am I Eligible?

#### IF

You have a medical condition or disability CAUSED or AGGRAVATED by your service in the military, including:

- Physical injuries
- Physical and mental diseases
- Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), including PTSD from sexual trauma

#### AND

Your discharge from the military was under other than dishonorable conditions

### YOU MAY QUALIFY FOR MONTHLY FINANCIAL DISABILITY COMPENSATION FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA)

### What Do I Get?

Monthly financial compensation. In deciding how much you may get, the VA will consider:

- o Your **disability rating**, determined by the VA based on the severity of your disability and its impairment of your earning capacity, from 10-100%; **AND**
- o How many **dependents** you have.

The amount you receive will range from \$123 per month for 10% disabled, to \$2,673 for 100% disabled, and will increase depending on your number of dependents. This income is not taxable.

### What Do I Need to Do?

1. Get a copy of your **DD 214 Military Discharge Paperwork**
  - o This may have been given to you at discharge, or
  - o You can always request a copy, free of charge, from the National Personnel Records Center, at <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/>
2. Make copies of **medical records** and documents concerning dependents, including **marriage** and **birth certificates**
3. Complete **VA Form 21-526**, which must be mailed to your nearest VA office.
  - o The form can be found at: <http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-526-ARE.pdf>
  - o Alternately, you may apply online by visiting <http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp>
  - o On this form **you must prove** to the VA that your harm or injury was **connected to or caused by your military service**. The VA refers to this as "service connection." To show service connection, you must provide the dates, places, and extent of the harm, along with copies of any related medical records.
  - o There are some situations where your harm will be **presumed** to be service connected, which means the VA assumes your harm was connected to your military service and you will not have to provide as much documentation. Common examples of situations where harm is presumed to be service connected include:
    - Service in the Persian Gulf, followed by development of Chronic Fatigue, Fibromyalgia, or Irritable Bowel Syndrome, or by some combination of: fatigue, rashes, headache, muscle pain, joint pain, upper or lower respiratory problems, sleep disturbances, gastrointestinal or cardiovascular problems, abnormal weight loss, or menstrual disorders
    - Physical injuries sustained while in combat, or PTSD resulting from combat experiences. However, because of current laws barring women from combat, the VA will frequently not apply this presumption to women, regardless of your injuries or actual combat experience. If you were injured in combat, you must include as much information as you can, include corroborating statements from your commanding officer, if possible.
  - o Once submitted, the VA will **evaluate** your claim and, if approved, will assign your disability rating and begin issuing monthly checks, or directly deposit the funds into your bank account if you choose to provide that information. This process generally takes **six months**.
4. If your claim is **denied**, you have one year to **appeal** the VA's decision in writing.

#### Regional Office    Medical Centers

#### Veteran Centers

Los Angeles Regional Office 11000 Wilshire Bl. Los Angeles, CA 90024 800-827-1000	Greater LA Healthcare System 11301 Wilshire Bl. Los Angeles, CA 90025 800-852-4852	Long Beach Healthcare System 5901 E. 7 <sup>th</sup> Street Long Beach, CA 90822 888-769-8387	East Los Angeles 5400 E. Olympic Bl., #140 Commerce, CA 90022 323-728-9966	West Los Angeles 5730 Uplander Way, Suite 100 Culver City, CA 90230 310-641-0326	Los Angeles 1045 W. Redondo Beach Bl. #150 Gardena, CA 90247 310-767-1221	Sepulveda 9737 Haskell Ave. Los Angeles, CA 91343 818-892-9227
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