

Contra Costa County Veterans Service Office

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DEATH PENSION

Death pension is a benefit payable to eligible dependents of a deceased veteran who served during a wartime period. You may be eligible if:

- the deceased veteran was discharged from service under other than dishonorable conditions, **AND**
- the veteran served 90 days or more of active duty with at least 1 day during a period of war*, **AND**
- you are the surviving spouse or unmarried child of the deceased veteran, **AND**
- your countable income is below a yearly limit set by law.

**Anyone who enlists after September 7, 1980, generally must have served at least 24 months or the full period for which called or ordered to active duty.*

INCOME LIMITS EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 1, 2021		
<i>If you are a...</i>	<i>Your yearly/monthly income must be less than...</i>	
Surviving spouse with no dependent children	\$9,896	\$824
Surviving spouse with one dependent child	\$12,951	\$1,079
Housebound surviving spouse with no dependents	\$12,094	\$1007
Surviving spouse who needs aid and attendance with no dependents	\$15,816	\$1,318
Surviving child (no eligible parent)	\$2,523	\$210

Note: *Some income is not counted toward the yearly limit (for example, welfare benefits, some wages earned by dependent children, and Supplemental Security Income)*

The amount of pension payable is the difference between your countable income and the yearly income limit that describes your situation (see chart above). This difference is generally paid in 12 equal monthly payments rounded down to the nearest dollar.

NET WORTH

The disability pension program is a 'needs' based program. As a result the VA cannot pay this benefit if the applicant's net worth exceeds the limits established by law. Effective December 1, 2021 the net worth limit is \$138,439. Net worth is the sum of a claimant's or beneficiary's assets and annual income for VA purposes. Assets include cash on hand, checking, savings and investments. It does not include the value of your house or a reasonable area of land on which it sits or the personal things you use every day like your clothing, vehicle or furniture.

SPECIAL MONTHLY PENSION

You may be entitled to an additional amount of disability pension in the following circumstances:

Housebound

You may be entitled to the housebound benefit if your disabilities are of such a nature that you are unable to leave your home without assistance, or if you meet certain federal regulatory requirements.

Aid and Attendance

You may be entitled to aid and attendance if you are (1) in an approved skilled nursing facility, (2) blind or so nearly blind to have corrected visual acuity of 5/200 or less, or (3) if your disabilities are of such severity that you require the assistance of another person for self-care functions (e.g. preparing your meals, dressing, bathing, etc.) an additional amount of disability pension is payable.

Un-reimbursed Medical Expenses

Your countable family income (income for VA purposes) may be reduced by the amount of un-reimbursed medical expenses you incur that exceed 5% of the Maximum Annual Pension Rate.

If you apply for any of the above benefits you will need to provide the VA with information about your medical treatment, you and your family's income and net worth, and un-reimbursed medical expenses for the past 12 months.

Note: The amount of pension payable to a veteran or surviving spouse without dependents is limited to \$90 per month if that person is in a Medicaid/Medi-Cal approved nursing facility and is covered by Medicaid/Medi-Cal plan for service furnished by the nursing facility.

If you believe you may be entitled to any of the above benefits, or should you have questions or wish to apply, please contact our office. We can provide you with additional information and assist you in applying for the above benefits.