



**Paralyzed Veterans
of America**

What PVA Members Should Know About Changes to the VA Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers

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Webinar Process

- If you have any questions during this presentation, please click on the Q&A control on your screen and post your question. All questions will be answered at the end of the presentation.
- The webinar is being recorded.



Paralyzed Veterans of America



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Agenda/Overview

- Overview of VA's Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) & Who is Eligible
- Family Caregiver Eligibility Requirements
- How to Apply for Caregiver Benefits
- Stipend Levels
- VA PCAFC Legacy Applicants and Legacy Participants
- VA PCAFC Revocation and Discharge
- VA PCAFC Appeals Process
- Help for PVA Members

Caregiver Program Overview

- VA's PCAFC was implemented in 2011 to provide benefits to caregivers of post-9/11 disabled veterans with serious injuries.
- The program recently expanded to include veterans of other eras in two phases.
- Phase one: effective October 1, 2020, VA began accepting joint applications from veteran and caregivers discharged on or before May 7, 1975.
- Phase two: VA is scheduled to begin it on October 1, 2022, and will include veterans discharged after May 7, 1975.

Caregiver Program Benefits

- Training for the family caregiver to provide personal care services to the eligible veteran;
- Respite care which includes 24-hour per day care for up to 30 days per year. There can be more if clinically appropriate and it is requested by the primary caregiver;
- Counseling, such as mental health services;
- Technical support consisting of information and assistance to address the routine, emergency, and specialized caregiving needs of the family caregiver in providing personal care services to the eligible veteran; and
- Beneficiary travel benefits.

Who Is Eligible?

Any veteran who has a serious injury, which is a single or combined service-connected disability rating of 70 percent or more, and meets the following eligibility requirements:

1. The individual is either:

- A veteran; or
- A member of the Armed Forces undergoing a medical discharge from the Armed Forces.

Eligibility Continued

2. The individual has a serious injury (including serious illness) incurred or aggravated in the line of duty in the active military, naval, or air service:

- On or after September 11, 2001; or
- On or before May 7, 1975.

3. The individual needs in-person personal care services for a minimum of six continuous months based on any one of the following:

- An inability to perform an activity of daily living; or
- A need for supervision, protection, or instruction.

Eligibility Continued

4. It is in the best interest of the individual to participate in the program.
5. Personal care services that would be provided by the family caregiver will not be simultaneously and regularly provided by or through another individual or entity.
6. The individual receives care at home.
7. The individual receives ongoing care from a Primary Care Team.

Who Can Serve as a Family Caregiver?

To be eligible to serve as a family caregiver, an individual must be at least 18 years of age and be either:

- The eligible veteran's spouse, son, daughter, parent, stepfamily member, or extended family member; or
- Someone who lives with the eligible veteran full-time or will if designated as a family caregiver.

The individual must also be:

- Initially assessed by VA as being able to complete caregiver education and training; and
- Complete caregiver training and demonstrate the ability to carry out the specific personal care services, core competencies, and additional care requirements.

How to Apply For PCAFC

Veterans and caregivers may apply for PCAFC in three ways:

- **Online:** Fill out your application (VA Form 10-10CG) at: <https://www.va.gov/family-member-benefits/apply-for-caregiver-assistance-form-10-10cg/introduction>.
- **By Mail:** Visit www.caregiver.va.gov to download VA Form 10-10CG.
 - Mail the completed form and any supporting documents to:
Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers
Health Eligibility Center
2957 Clairmont Road NE, Suite 200
Atlanta, GA 30329-1647
- **In Person:** Fill out your form and bring it to the Caregiver Support Coordinator at your local VA Medical Center.

Stipend Levels

There has been a change in stipend levels. Under the old rule, there were three levels. Under the new rule, there are only two.

Level One: If VA determines that a veteran can self-sustain in the community, the designated Primary Family Caregiver will receive the lower-level stipend payment.

Level Two: If VA determines the veteran is “unable to self-sustain in the community,” the designated Primary Family Caregiver will receive the higher-level stipend payment.

Unable to Self-Sustain in the Community

“Unable to self-sustain in the community” means that an eligible veteran either:

- Requires personal care services each time he or she completes three or more of the seven activities of daily living (ADL) listed in the definition of an inability to perform an ADL, and is fully dependent on a caregiver to complete such ADLs; **or**
- Has a need for supervision, protection, or instruction on a continuous basis.

Need for Supervision, Protection, or Instruction

A "need for supervision, protection, or instruction" means the veteran or service member has a functional impairment that directly impacts his or her ability to maintain his or her personal safety on a daily basis

Who is a Legacy Applicant?

- Any veteran or service member who submits a joint application for the PCAFC that is received by VA before October 1, 2020, and for whom a family caregiver(s) is approved and designated on or after October 1, 2020, is considered a legacy applicant.
- A veteran or service member will continue to be a legacy applicant so long as his or her Primary Family Caregiver continues to be approved and designated as such by VA.

How are Legacy Participants Impacted?

- If a veteran and caregiver submit a new joint application to VA after October 1, 2020, and VA approves the application and designation of the same or a new Primary Family Caregiver, the veteran would no longer be considered a legacy participant.
- If a legacy participant meets the new eligibility requirements and the reassessment results in a higher stipend amount, then the increase will take effect immediately with retroactive payment to October 1, 2020. If it results in a lower stipend amount, then the current stipend amount will continue through the duration of the transitional period.

Revocation and Discharge

There are several reasons why an eligible veteran and/or family caregiver(s) may be discharged or revoked from the program.

Family caregivers may be discharged from the PCAFC when:

- 1) VA determines the veteran no longer meets the requirements because his or her condition improves.
- 2) The veteran, or family caregiver dies or is institutionalized.
- 3) The family caregiver, eligible veteran or eligible veteran's surrogate requests removal.
- 4) VA revokes the veteran for non-compliance.

60 Day Advanced Notice

- In the case of revocation for non-compliance, the withdrawal will not take effect until at least 60 days from the date VA provides notice of the determination, known as a 60-day advanced notice.
- This allows the veteran and family caregiver an opportunity to take whatever steps are necessary to comply.

60 Day Advanced Notice

- When such corrective actions are taken within the 60-day advanced notice period, the decision to revoke is reversed by the Local Caregiver Support Program Staff.
- Family caregivers who are revoked due to non-compliance are not entitled to extended benefits.

Revocation for Non-Compliance

- Upon the determination to revoke a family caregiver's designation due to non-compliance, the Local Caregiver Support Program Staff will let the veteran and each family caregiver know of the decision verbally and in writing.
- This verbal and written notification must address the non-compliance issues that resulted in revocation and how to become compliant, as well as information on how to appeal the determination.

Revocation for Non-Compliance Continued

- A veteran and family caregiver(s) can submit an appeal during the 60-day notice period, and they are not required to wait until the effective date of revocation prior to filing an appeal.
- The Local Caregiver Support Program Staff will coordinate with the veteran, the veteran's treatment team, and the family caregiver(s) to facilitate appropriate care for the veteran, as needed.

VA PCAFC Appeals

- If a veteran and caregiver who file a joint application for the PCAFC are determined to be not eligible, or a legacy applicant or participant upon reassessment is determined to be no longer eligible, the veteran and caregiver can submit a clinical appeal.
- The clinical appeal should be submitted to the Patient Advocate at the treating VA medical facility or the Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Patient Advocate Coordinator at the VISN level.

VA PCAFC Appeal Levels

There are two appeal levels.

First Level Appeal: Will be processed by the local Patient Advocate and submitted to the VISN Centralized Eligibility Team. The final decision will be communicated to the person(s) who submitted the appeal within 45 business days of the appeal being received by the Patient Advocate.

- If the person(s) who filed the original appeal disagrees with the first level appeal decision, they can appeal the decision to the VISN Chief Medical Officer which is referred to as a second level appeal.

VA PCAFC Appeals

Second Level: This is the final level of the clinical appeals process and will be communicated to the person(s) who submitted the appeal within 45 business days of the appeal being received.

Note: There are no further appeal options beyond a second level appeal.

Who Should PVA Members Contact if They Need Assistance?

- PVA's National Service Officers (NSOs) can assist veterans and caregivers with the submission of VA Form 10-10CG.
- The NSO should be familiar with the name of the local VA Caregiver Support Coordinator, and he or she can email, or possibly hand-carry, the form to the coordinator.

What Can an NSO do to Help?

- Explain eligibility criteria for the Caregiver Program;
- Submit your VA Form 10-10CG to the local VA Medical Center coordinator;
- Follow up on the pending application; and
- File an appeal, if necessary

Locating a PVA NSO

Your local NSO can be found by:

- Visiting pva.org, clicking on “Find Support”, then clicking on “Find a National Service Officer;”
- Calling PVA’s National Headquarters at 1-800-424-8200;
or
- Emailing info@pva.org



QUESTIONS?

Resources

- Caregiver Expansion Fact Sheet –
https://www.caregiver.va.gov/pdfs/MissionAct/CSP_Expansion_Factsheet_092720_Approved_Final.pdf.
- VA Caregiver Expansion Booklet –
https://www.caregiver.va.gov/pdfs/MissionAct/CSP_PCAFC_Booklet_102120_Approved_Final.pdf#.
- Caregiver Application Fact Sheet –
https://www.caregiver.va.gov/pdfs/MissionAct/ApplicationProcessFactsheet_Chapter2_Launch_Approved_Final_100820.pdf#.
- Caregiver Eligibility Fact Sheet –
https://www.caregiver.va.gov/pdfs/MissionAct/EligibilityCriteriaFactsheet_Chapter2_Launch_Approved_Final_100120.pdf#.
- Caregiver Resources –
https://www.caregiver.va.gov/publications_resources_topic.asp.