





Understanding VA's Veterans Transportation Program

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Administrative Items



- Today's webinar will be recorded and available for viewing on PVA.org.
- Closed Captioning is available. Click the CC button in the meeting controls bar at the bottom of your screen to turn it on.
- If you have a question, please type it into the Q&A box.



Agenda



- Overview of VA's Veterans Transportation Program
- NSO Q&A Session
- Pending Legislation Update
- Questions



VA's Veterans Transportation Program



- Beneficiary Travel
- Veterans Transportation Service
- Highly Rural Transportation Grants



Beneficiary Travel Program



- VA's Beneficiary Travel program reimburses eligible veterans for costs incurred while traveling to and from VA health care facilities. The current mileage rate is 41.5 cents per mile.
- Beneficiary Travel may also provide pre-approved transportation solutions and arrange special mode transportation at VA's request. Veterans may also be eligible for common carrier transportation (such as bus, taxi, airline, or train) under certain conditions.



What are the eligibility requirements?



The following individuals are eligible for Beneficiary Travel when traveling to a VA health care facility for examination, treatment, or care:

- A veteran or other person whose travel is in connection with treatment or care for a service-connected disability.
- A veteran with a service-connected disability rated at 30 percent or more.
- A veteran receiving a VA pension.
- A veteran not traveling by air and whose annual income does not exceed the VA maximum annual pension rate.
- A veteran or other person whose travel to or from a VA or contracted facility and travel is medically required to be performed by a special mode of travel.
- A veteran whose travel to a VA or contracted facility for a schedule compensation and pension examination.



Can I use beneficiary travel to access a rehabilitation program?



A veteran with vision impairment, a veteran with a spinal cord injury or disorder, or a veteran with double or multiple amputations whose travel is in connection with care provided through a special disabilities rehabilitation program of the VA (including programs provided by spinal cord injury centers, blind rehabilitation centers, and prosthetics rehabilitation centers) is eligible for beneficiary travel if such care is provided—

- On an in-patient basis; or
- During a period in which VA provides the veteran with temporary lodging at a VA facility to make such care more accessible to the veteran.



When must a claim be filed for beneficiary travel?



- To apply for beneficiary travel, a veteran must file a claim for each appointment.
- The claim must be submitted within 30 days of the appointment.
- If a veteran become eligible for travel reimbursement after their appointment, they must submit their claim within 30 days of when they become eligible.



How do you file a claim for beneficiary travel?



- A claim can be filed online or by completing VA Form 10-3542, Veteran/Beneficiary Claim for Reimbursement of Travel Expenses.
 - To file a claim online, access VA's AccessVA website, <https://eauth.va.gov/accessva>.
 - To file a paper form, complete VA Form 10-3542, and submit the form to the VA health care facility where you receive your care. The form is available here: <https://www.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/vha-10-3542-fill.pdf>.



Veterans Transportation Service



- VA's Veterans Transportation Service (VTS) provides safe and reliable transportation to veterans who require assistance traveling to and from VA health care facilities and authorized non-VA health care appointments.
- VTS allows local VA facilities to hire drivers and purchase vehicles to transport veterans to their appointments.
- VTS also has established a network of transportation options for veterans through joint efforts with VA's Office of Rural Health and organizations, such as veterans service organizations; community transportation providers; federal, state and local government transportation agencies; non-profits, and Veterans Transportation Community Living Initiative grantees.



Who is eligible for VTS?



- Veterans who are eligible for VA health care benefits and have a VA-authorized appointment are eligible for transportation through the VTS program based on the availability and guidelines in place at their local facility.
- Participating VA medical centers offer VTS to assist veterans in accessing transportation to VA medical facilities or authorized non-VA appointments to receive the care.



How can I find my local VTS?



- To determine if your VA Medical Center offers VTS, contact your local mobility coordinator or VTS coordinator.
- In the resource slide at the end of this presentation, you can also find a link that provides a list of VTS locations.



Highly Rural Transportation Grants



- There are approximately 108,095 highly rural veterans enrolled in the VA health care system.
- 30.5 percent of highly rural veterans served in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.
- 2.1 million veterans who use VA for health care are living in rural or highly rural areas.



Highly Rural Transportation Grants



- The Highly Rural Transportation Grants (HRTG) program provides grant funding to veterans service organizations and State Veterans Service Agencies to provide transportation services in counties with fewer than seven people per square mile.
- There is no cost for veterans to use the transportation provided by an HRTG recipient.
- To locate a grant recipient in your area, go to the resource slide at the end of the presentation, click on the link for HRTG recipients and proceed to “Is an HRTG grantee located near me?”.



A Conversation About VA's Veterans Transportation Program



Legislation to Improve Access to Transportation for Veterans



The Rural Veterans Travel Enhancement Act of 2021 (H.R. 4961/S. 2627) would:

- Make the Veterans Transportation Service program permanent.
- Make VA's authority permanent to provide grants to veterans service organizations and State Veteran Service Agencies for assisting highly rural veterans' travel for health care.
- Direct the Government Accountability Office to conduct a report on any fraud, waste and abuse of VA's Beneficiary Travel program and the effectiveness of the program's current mileage reimbursement and deductible amounts in encouraging veterans to access care.



Rural Veterans Travel Enhancement Act Continued



- Establish a pilot program where low-income veterans who are eligible for the Beneficiary Travel program can receive reimbursement 48 hours in advance of their confirmed medical appointments.
- Establish a pilot program that reimburses veterans and eligible beneficiaries for travel to appointments at Vet Centers for mental health care and counseling.
- Establish a pilot program to expand public transportation to facilities that serve veterans.



Resources



- Veterans Transportation Program –
<https://www.va.gov/HEALTHBENEFITS/vtp/index.asp>
- Veterans Transportation Program Resources –
<https://www.va.gov/HEALTHBENEFITS/vtp/resources.asp>
- Veterans Transportation Service Locations –
<https://www.va.gov/HEALTHBENEFITS/vtp/map.asp>
- Instructions on how to access VA's Beneficiary Travel Self Service System –
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7INUiyQT4gM&list=PL3AQ_JVoBEyzJnt68Eq_mPBdyZfkvq0Wu
- Highly Rural Transportation Grants recipients —
https://www.va.gov/HEALTHBENEFITS/vtp/highly_rural_transportation_grants.asp and information pamphlet —
https://www.va.gov/HEALTHBENEFITS/resources/publications/IB10-762_VA_HRTG_pamphlet.pdf



Questions?