

**Department of Veterans Affairs
Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers
Final Regulation**

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC)?

The Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) provides qualifying Family Caregivers of eligible Veterans certain benefits, such as training, respite care, counseling, technical support, certain beneficiary travel benefits, a monthly stipend payment, and access to health care (if qualified) through the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA).

2. What is the purpose of the final regulation? How can I access it?

The regulation will allow VA to standardize the PCAFC to focus on eligible Veterans with moderate and severe needs and make operational improvements which enhance the experience of PCAFC participants. The final regulation, published on July 31, becomes effective October 1, 2020. The final regulation can be found at [Federal Register](#).

3. When would caregivers of Veterans from all eras become eligible for the PCAFC?

Once the Secretary of VA has certified to Congress that VA's new caregiver information technology system is fully implemented, PCAFC will expand to eligible Veterans of earlier eras in two phases, beginning October 2020:

- a) The first phase, which will begin in October 2020, will expand PCAFC eligibility to include eligible Veterans who incurred or aggravated a serious injury in the line of duty in the active military, naval, or air service on or before May 7, 1975.
- b) The final phase of expansion will occur two years following the first date of expansion and will expand PCAFC eligibility to include eligible Veterans from all eras regardless of when an eligible Veteran's serious injury was incurred or aggravated in the line of duty in the active military, naval, or air service.

4. What are the major changes to the Veteran eligibility requirements for the PCAFC?

Under the final rule, a Veteran (to include a qualifying servicemember) must have a service-connected disability rating by VA of 70% or more to qualify for the program. This can be a single disability rating or a combined rating. This requirement is in the final rule's definition of "serious injury." Additionally, the Veteran must be "in need of personal care services." This means that the eligible Veteran requires in-person personal care services from another person, and without such personal care services, alternative in-person caregiving arrangements, including respite care or assistance of an alternative caregiver, would be required to support the eligible Veteran's safety. Under the final rule, the eligible Veteran's serious injury will no longer have to render the individual in need of personal care services. In addition, under the final rule, the Veteran must be in need of personal care services based on either:

- a) an inability to perform an activity of daily living (ADL) or;

- b) a need supervision, protection, or instruction.

5. How does VA define “serious injury” for purposes of PCAFC eligibility?

VA is broadening eligibility by expanding the definition of serious injury to include illnesses and diseases. Serious injury will be defined as any service-connected disability that (1) is rated at 70% or more by VA, or (2) is combined with any other service-connected disability or disabilities, and a combined rating of 70% or more is assigned by VA. Thus, the 70% rating can be a single disability rating or a combined rating. VA will also no longer require a connection between the need for personal care services and the qualifying serious injury.

6. How does VA define a Veteran’s “inability to perform an activity of daily living (ADL)” for purposes of PCAFC eligibility?

VA will define “inability to perform an activity of daily living (ADL),” as a Veteran or servicemember requiring personal care services each time he or she completes one or more of the following:

- a) Dressing or undressing oneself;
- b) Bathing;
- c) Grooming oneself in order to keep oneself clean and presentable;
- d) Adjusting any special prosthetic or orthopedic appliance that by reason of the particular disability, cannot be done without assistance (this does not include the adjustment of appliances that non-disabled persons would be unable to adjust without aid, such as supports, belts, lacing at the back, etc.);
- e) Toileting or attending to toileting;
- f) Feeding oneself due to loss of coordination of upper extremities, extreme weakness, inability to swallow, or the need for a non-oral means of nutrition; or
- g) Mobility (walking, going up stairs, transferring from bed to chair, etc.).

7. What does VA mean by requiring “personal care services each time [the individual] completes one or more [ADLs]”?

VA defines inability to perform an ADL as the Veteran or servicemember requiring personal care services each time he or she completes one or more of the qualifying ADLs. Needing help with an ADL only some of the time the ADL is completed would not constitute an “inability to perform an ADL.”

8. How does VA define “need for supervision, protection, or instruction” for purposes of PCAFC eligibility?

VA defines “need for supervision, protection, or instruction” as the individual having a functional impairment that directly impacts his or her ability to maintain his or her personal safety on a daily basis.

9. How does VA define “unable to self-sustain in the community” for purposes of the PCAFC stipend payment methodology?

VA will consider “unable to self-sustain in the community” to mean that an eligible Veteran:

- a) 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 activity of daily living, and is fully dependent on a caregiver to complete such ADLs; or
- b) has a need for supervision, protection, or instruction on a continuous basis.

10. What is the monthly stipend amount an eligible Veteran's Primary Family Caregiver will receive?

Stipend amounts will be based on the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) General Schedule (GS) Annual Rate for grade 4, step 1, based on the locality pay area in which the eligible Veteran resides. Because VA provides a monthly stipend, the annual rate will be divided by 12. The final rule refers to this amount as the "monthly stipend rate." Primary Family Caregivers will receive either 100% or 62.5% of the monthly stipend rate, depending on whether the eligible Veteran is unable to self-sustain in the community.

- a) Level 2: For an eligible Veteran who is determined to be **unable to self-sustain in the community**, the Primary Family Caregiver will receive 100% of the monthly stipend rate. For example, the GS rate at grade 4, step 1 in Dallas, Texas for 2020 is \$33,638 annually. Thus, the 2020 monthly stipend amount for a Primary Family Caregiver of an eligible Veteran in Dallas, Texas at this rate will be approximately \$2,803.17.
- b) Level 1: For an eligible Veteran who is **not** determined to be **unable to self-sustain in the community**, the Primary Family Caregiver will receive 62.5% of the monthly stipend rate. For example, the 2020 monthly stipend amount for a Primary Family Caregiver of an eligible Veteran in Dallas, Texas at this rate will be approximately \$1,751.98.

11. What additional services will be available under the PCAFC for caregivers of eligible Veterans?

Additional PCAFC benefits will include financial planning and legal services for Primary Family Caregivers. Please refer to response #1 for information about other benefits provided under the PCAFC.

12. As a Vietnam-era Veteran who currently has a caregiver that provides assistance, can I apply for the PCAFC for my caregiver?

Currently, only eligible Veterans who incurred or aggravated a serious injury in the line of duty on or after September 11, 2001 are eligible for the PCAFC. VA will begin expanding eligibility for PCAFC in October 2020. Please refer to response # 3.

13. How can I apply for the PCAFC?

Veterans and caregivers may apply for the PCAFC by visiting www.caregiver.va.gov to download VA Form 10-10CG. The completed form can be mailed to:

Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers
Health Eligibility Center
2957 Clairmont Road NE, Ste 200
Atlanta, GA 30329-1647

Veterans and caregivers may also apply in person with their local Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) Caregiver Support Coordinator. Veterans and caregivers can find their local Caregiver Support Coordinator by contacting the Caregiver Support Line at 1-855-260-3274 (Toll Free Monday – Friday 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.) or by utilizing the *Find Your Caregiver Support Coordinator* tool on www.caregiver.va.gov.

14. How do I get more information on eligibility?

Individuals interested in more information may contact their VAMC Caregiver Support Coordinator.