Veterans Affairs Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers

Eligibility Criteria Fact Sheet

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) offers enhanced clinical support for caregivers of eligible Veterans who are seriously injured. These changes are based on the new "Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) Improvements and Amendments Under the VA MISSION Act of 2018" Final Rule, RIN 2900-AQ48, effective October 1, 2020.

These changes include:

- Expanding eligibility for the PCAFC
- Offering legal and financial services for designated Primary Family Caregivers of eligible Veterans in 2021
- Making other changes affecting program eligibility and VA's evaluation of PCAFC applications

Who qualifies: Veterans who incurred or aggravated a serious injury (including a serious illness) in the line of duty in the active military, naval, or air service on or after September 11, 2001, ***or*** on or before before May 7, 1975.

Veteran Eligibility Requirements:

The Veteran must have a serious injury, which is a single or combined service-connected disability rating of 70% or more, and meet the following eligibility requirements to participate in the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers:

1. The individual is either:
   - A Veteran; or
   - A member of the Armed Forces undergoing a medical discharge from the Armed Forces.
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***
   - Effective on the date specified in a future Federal Register document, on or before May 7, 1975; ***or***
   - Effective two years after the date specified in a future Federal Register document, after May 7, 1975 and before September 11, 2001.
3. The individual is in need of in-person personal care services for a minimum of six (6) 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.
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 or will do so if VA designates a Family Caregiver.
7. The individual receives ongoing care from a Primary Care Team or will do so if VA designates a Family Caregiver.

How to Contact a Caregiver Support Coordinator:

Veterans and caregivers can find their local Caregiver Support Coordinator by...

- Calling the Caregiver Support Line *Expanded Hours* **1-855-260-3274** (Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. ET; Saturday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET) Toll free
- Using the Caregiver Support Coordinator locator at *www.caregiver.va.gov/support/New_CSC_Page.asp*

Online application is available at https://www.va.gov/family-member-benefits/comprehensive-assistance-for-family-caregivers

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Family Caregiver Eligibility Requirements

For you to be eligible to be a Family Caregiver you must:

1. Be at least 18 years of age.
2. 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 do so if designated as a Family Caregiver.
3. Be initially assessed by VA as being able to complete caregiver education and training.
4. Complete caregiver training and demonstrate the ability to carry out the specific personal care services, core competencies, and additional care requirements.

In addition, there must be no determination by VA of abuse or neglect of the eligible Veteran by the caregiver.

Stipend Levels:

As an eligible Primary Family Caregiver, you may qualify to receive a monthly stipend, which is paid at one of two levels. Here are the details:

1. If a Veteran meets all seven eligibility requirements (listed above), then VA must determine whether the Veteran is "unable to self-sustain in the community."
2. **Level One:** If VA determines that a Veteran is ***not*** "unable to self-sustain in the community," the designated Primary Family Caregiver will receive the lower-level stipend payment.
3. **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 activity of daily living in this section, and is fully dependent on a caregiver to complete such ADLs;

  or
- Has a need for supervision, protection, or instruction on a continuous basis.

Inability to Perform an Activity of Daily Living (ADL)

The "inability to perform an ADL" means the Veteran or service member requires personal care services ***each time*** he or she completes one or more of the ADLs listed below:

- Dressing or undressing oneself
- Bathing
- Grooming oneself in order to keep oneself clean and presentable
- 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 nondisabled persons would be unable to adjust without aid, such as supports, belts, lacing at the back, etc.)
- Toileting or attending to toileting
- 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
- Mobility (walking, going up stairs, transferring from bed to chair, etc.)

Requiring assistance with an ADL only some of the time does not meet the definition of an "inability to perform an ADL."

A 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 their ability to maintain his or her personal safety on a daily basis

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