

The Veterans' Administration offers a Special Pension with Aid and Attendance (A&A) benefit that is largely unknown. This Special Pension (part of the VA Improved Pension program) allows for Veterans and surviving spouses who require the regular attendance of another person to assist in eating, bathing, dressing, undressing or taking care of the needs of nature to receive additional monetary benefits. It also includes individuals who are blind or a patient in a nursing home because of mental or physical incapacity. Assisted care in an assisted living facility also qualifies.

This most important benefit is overlooked by many families with Veterans or surviving spouses who need additional monies to help care for ailing parents or loved ones. This is a "pension benefit" and is not dependent upon service-related injuries for compensation. Most Veterans who are in need of assistance qualify for this pension. Aid and Attendance can help pay for care in the home, nursing home or assisted living facility. A Veteran is eligible for up to \$1,519 per month, while a surviving spouse is eligible for up to \$976 per month. A couple is eligible for up to \$1,801 per month*.

The Aid and Attendance Benefit is considered to be the third tier of a VA program called Improved Pension. The other two tiers are Basic and Housebound. Each tier has its own level of benefits and qualifications. While the objective of this site is to disseminate information about the Aid and Attendance Benefit, we urge you to read an important document prepared by the American Veterans Institute that clearly explains the Improved Pension program, its levels of benefits and the qualifications for each. If you or your loved one does not qualify for Aid and Attendance, you may want to check to see if you qualify for another level of the Pension.

ELIGIBILITY

Any War-Time Veteran with 90 days of active duty, 1 day beginning or ending during a period of War, is eligible to apply for the Aid & Attendance Special Pension. A surviving spouse (marriage must have ended due to death of veteran) of a War-Time Veteran may also apply. The individual applying must qualify both medically and financially. To see the periods of war that have been qualified by Congress, [Click Here](#).

To qualify medically, a War-Time Veteran or surviving spouse must need the assistance of another person to perform daily tasks, such as eating, dressing, undressing, taking care of the needs of nature, etc. Being blind or in a nursing home for mental or physical incapacity, or residing in an assisted living facility also qualifies.

To qualify financially, an applicant must have less than \$80,000 in assets, EXCLUDING their home and vehicles.

Who is eligible?

Generally, you may be eligible if:

- you were discharged from service under conditions other than dishonorable,
AND
- you served at least 90 days of active military service 1 day of which was during a war time period. **If you entered active duty after September 7, 1980, generally you must have served at least 24 months or the full period for which called or ordered to active duty** (There are exceptions to this rule),
AND
- your countable family income is below a yearly limit set by law (**The yearly limit on income is set by Congress**),
AND
- you are age 65 or older, **OR**, you are permanently and totally disabled, not due to your own willful misconduct.

As you can see, there are a number of criteria that may affect your eligibility to pension benefits. If you are unsure if you meet all criteria, we encourage you to go ahead and file an application, particularly if your countable income appears to be near the maximum. VA will determine if you are eligible and notify you. If you do not initially qualify, you may reapply if you have un-reimbursed medical expenses during the twelve month period after VA receives your claim that bring your countable income below the yearly income limit. (These are expense you have paid for medical services or products for which you will not be reimbursed by Medicare or private medical insurance.)

What are Aid and Attendance and Housebound benefits?

- **Aid and Attendance (A&A)** is a benefit paid in **addition** to monthly pension. This benefit may not be paid without eligibility to pension. A veteran may be eligible for A&A when:
 1. The veteran requires the aid of another person in order to perform personal functions required in everyday living, such as bathing, feeding, dressing,

attending to the wants of nature, adjusting prosthetic devices, or protecting himself/herself from the hazards of his/her daily environment, **OR**,

2. The veteran is bedridden, in that his/her disability or disabilities requires that he/she remain in bed apart from any prescribed course of convalescence or treatment, **OR**,
3. The veteran is a patient in a nursing home due to mental or physical incapacity, **OR**,
4. The veteran is blind, or so nearly blind as to have corrected visual acuity of 5/200 or less, in both eyes, or concentric contraction of the visual field to 5 degrees or less.

- **Housebound** is paid in addition to monthly pension. Like A&A, Housebound benefits may not be paid without eligibility to pension. A veteran may be eligible for Housebound benefits when:

1. The veteran has a single permanent disability evaluated as 100-percent disabling **AND**, due to such disability, he/she is permanently and substantially confined to his/her immediate premises, **OR**,
2. The veteran has a single permanent disability evaluated as 100-percent disabling **AND**, another disability, or disabilities, evaluated as 60 percent or more disabling.