

**My spouse is leaving for deployment, what assistance is available to us?**

Coping When a Family Member Has Been Called to War  
[www.ncptsd.va.gov/war/familycoping.htm](http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/war/familycoping.htm)

Talking to Children About Going to War  
[www.ncptsd.va.gov/war/fs\\_children\\_war.html](http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/war/fs_children_war.html)

Preparing for Deployment  
[www.ncptsd.va.gov/war/brochure\\_deployment.pdf](http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/war/brochure_deployment.pdf)

Children and Deployment  
[www.ncptsd.va.gov/war/brochure\\_children.pdf](http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/war/brochure_children.pdf)

Ideas to Help Financial Matters During Deployment  
[www.ncptsd.va.gov/war/brochure\\_finances.pdf](http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/war/brochure_finances.pdf)

**Does VHA provide help to families dealing with “coming home” issues?**

Yes. VA does provide assistance, such as family therapy or instruction from VA professional staff that will assist and support in the care of the patient, to families of veterans who are receiving care at a VA facility as a part of the veteran’s care. These family members are known as “Collaterals”. For information on Readjustment counseling, contact the VHA Readjustment Counseling Service at (202) 273-9116.

**For additional information on this topic, please see the following websites:**

VA Home Page  
[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)

Returning Service Members  
[www.oefoif.va.gov](http://www.oefoif.va.gov)

Department of Defense  
[www.defenselink.mil](http://www.defenselink.mil)

Benefits for Texas Veterans  
[www.military.com/benefits/veteran-benefits/texas-state-veterans-benefits](http://www.military.com/benefits/veteran-benefits/texas-state-veterans-benefits)

VA Survivor Benefits  
[www.vba.va.gov/Survivors/](http://www.vba.va.gov/Survivors/)

**For direct legal services, contact your closest Legal Aid:**

Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas  
(800) 955-3959  
[www.lanwt.org](http://www.lanwt.org)

Lone Star Legal Aid  
(800) 354-1889  
[www.lonestarlegal.org](http://www.lonestarlegal.org)

Texas RioGrande Legal Aid  
(888) 988-9996  
[www.trla.org](http://www.trla.org)

FREE LEGAL SERVICES AVAILABLE  
FOR ELIGIBLE LOW-INCOME VETERANS

# Veterans’ Rights: Family Member Benefits

Information Needed When Applying for Services from Legal Aid:  
Current Household Income Information  
Social Security Number  
Documents related to your case (to the extent possible)



# Veterans' Rights: Family Member Benefits

## **I am the widow/surviving spouse of a veteran.**

### **Am I entitled to any benefits?**

VA offers benefits for survivors:

1. Dependency Indemnity Compensation (DIC) is generally payable to survivors of veterans who die from service-related causes.
2. If the veteran dies from a disease or disability that is not related to military service, death pension is payable to the survivors provided the veteran had qualifying military service and the survivor meets certain income requirements. An additional benefit may be payable for eligible survivors who are in need of aid and attendance for their personal maintenance, or who are permanently housebound.
3. Some surviving spouses may be also entitled to education and training benefits, VA medical care and home loan guaranty benefits.

You can find more detailed information on the web in the VA publication, Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents. The web address for the guide is [www1.va.gov/opa/vadocs/current\\_benefits.asp](http://www1.va.gov/opa/vadocs/current_benefits.asp).

You may also contact a benefits counselor via telephone at: (800) 827-1000.

### **What other tools are available for spouses and dependents of deceased veterans?**

The Veterans Benefits Administration has created a "survivors" Web site for spouses and dependents of military personnel who died on active duty and for the survivors and

dependents of veterans who died after leaving the military. The Web site is organized into two broad categories - death in service and death after service. It provides website visitors with information about a wide range of benefits for the surviving spouse, dependent children, and dependent parents of deceased veterans and active-duty personnel. The site also has information from and provides links to other federal agencies and organizations that offer benefits and services to survivors and dependents. The Web site can be reached by going to: [www.vba.va.gov/survivors/](http://www.vba.va.gov/survivors/).

### **What is CHAMPVA and how can I find out about it?**

The Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA), provides reimbursement for most medical expenses – inpatient, outpatient, mental health, prescription medication, skilled nursing care and durable medical equipment. VA's Health Administration Center (HAC) is responsible for handling all CHAMPVA issues. Please go to [www.va.gov/hac](http://www.va.gov/hac) and click on the appropriate links for beneficiaries, providers, non-VA care, forms, etc. to obtain the information that you need.

### **What health benefits are not covered by the VA for service members and their families?**

Abortions and abortion counseling; in vitro fertilization; drugs, biological, and medical devices not approved by the Food and Drug Administration unless the treating medical facility is conducting formal clinical trials under an Investigational Device Exemption (IDE) or an Investigational New Drug (IND) application, or the drugs, biologicals, or medical devices are prescribed under a compassionate use exemption; gender alterations; hospital and outpatient care for a veteran who is either a patient or inmate in an institu-

tion of another government agency if that agency has a duty to give the care or services; membership in spas and health clubs.

### **What is the Fisher House Program and can it help OIF/OEF families?**

Fisher Houses are temporary lodging facilities designed for the use of families of hospitalized active duty service members and veterans. They are constructed on military installations and VHA facility grounds by the Fisher House Foundation and then donated to DoD or the VA. There are VA Fisher Houses at Albany, Bay Pines, Cincinnati, Denver, Minneapolis West Palm Beach, and Houston. VHA Handbook 1140.1, VHA Fisher House Program, has more information on VA Fisher Houses, including criteria for utilization. Information about the Fisher House Foundation can be found at [www.fisherhouse.org](http://www.fisherhouse.org).

The Fisher House Foundation has asked that family members of hospitalized OIF/OEF active duty service members and veterans be given high priority for lodging at DoD and VA Fisher Houses. There is no cost to a family for staying at a VA Fisher House. Each VA Fisher House has a full-time manager, who arranges admissions and who is the point of contact for referrals. For questions about the VA Fisher House Program, contact the Director of Social Work Service in VA Central Office at (202) 273-8549.