



# Idaho Division of **VETERANS SERVICES**

*Caring for  
America's  
Heroes*

## **The Office of Veterans Advocacy Bulletin June 2025**



**STATE OF IDAHO**  
**BRAD LITTLE, GOVERNOR**  
**VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMISSION**

JOSH CALLIHAN, CHAIRMAN  
ARTHUR L. GIMPEL  
JINNY CASH  
EUGENE BROWN  
DAVID "MAX" MAXWELL

**DIVISION OF VETERANS SERVICES**  
MARK TSCHAMPL, CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR  
**VETERANS SERVICES BUREAU CHIEF**

BILL HEYOB  
**VETERAN SERVICE OFFICERS**

EMBERLY BERTASSO  
ERIC BOBINSKI  
PAUL BURGIN  
TRACI COLTON  
FRANK FABBI  
ARICA FOX  
IRIS HIGGINS  
RODRIGO MADRIGAL VEGA  
KELLY MCCARTNEY  
NICK PERCY  
JIM PHILPOTT  
JT RAMONDETTA  
MATT RANSTROM  
JOE RIENER  
ROBERT SMITH  
SCOTT THORSNESS  
STACY WHITMORE

To be connected to a VA Suicide prevention and mental health professional, call the toll-free National Suicide Prevention Hotline, and indicate you are a veteran.

Call or Text **988** or **(800) 273-8255**

ALL EMPLOYMENT ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES ARE ADMINISTERED IN A NON-DISCRIMINATORY MANNER IN CONFORMANCE WITH FEDERAL AND STATE EEO AND CIVIL RIGHTS LAWS



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

From Bill's Desk.....	1-4
Launch of Self-Scheduling Feature for Informal Conferences .....	5
VA Makes it Easier for Veterans to Use Community Care.....	6
VA Announces \$52 million in Available Suicide Prevention Grant Funds.....	7
VA PACT Act Performance Dashboard.....	8-13
Airborne Hazards and Burn Pit Exposures .....	14-15
2025 VA Pension Rates....	16
2025 VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) Rates .....	17
2025 VA Survivor's Pension Rates.....	18
Don't Feed the Sharks .....	19
Veteran Resource Guide .....	20
2025 Veterans Legal Clinics.....	21
Happenings/Events.....	22-25
2025 Service Officer Training .....	26-29
Dates to Remember /DAV Contacts.....	30-31

*To receive the bulletin and other important information for Idaho Veterans via email, provide your location, and contact the Veterans Outreach & Community Support Team to join the Joining Forces Idaho distribution list for your area.*

**[JFIdaho@Veterans.Idaho.Gov](mailto:JFIdaho@Veterans.Idaho.Gov)**



## FROM BILL'S DESK

\*\*\*\*\*

Can you believe that we are already into the month of June? I could have sworn that we just watched THE Ohio State Buckeyes win the National Championship in College Football and this year is already half-way over! I hope everyone is enjoying the summer weather and as always, I want to thank the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, National Veterans Service for most of the updates that I am providing.

On the Personnel side of the house, Abel Silva from our Office in Caldwell has left for a new position at the Nampa Airport and we wish him the best of luck. We conducted interviews and selected Abel's replacement- Arica Fox, who is an Army Veteran with combat service in Iraq as a Military Policeman. Arica will be undergoing training with our Boise Staff before she relocates into the vacant position in Caldwell. We want to welcome her to our Team!

This was probably a premature statement in the last Bulletin but the Idaho Division of Veterans Services did in fact receive the waiver from the VA that is required to move forward and begin the new construction of the Boise Veterans Home. The project is now out for bid and construction is planned to begin in late summer/fall.

\*\*\*\*\*

Delays in Board of Veterans Appeals Decisions- Under the Appeals Modernization Act (AMA), a claimant may submit a Supplemental Claim (with new and relevant evidence), a request for a Higher Level of Review to the VA's Decision Review Operations Center (DROC) or appeal to the Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA). If a claimant does decide to appeal to the Board, they have three options,

- 1- Direct Lane Appeal- which means the claimant will not receive a hearing with a Board of Veterans Appeals Law Judge and cannot submit any new evidence or statement. The BVA Law Judge and their attorney will review the Veteran's file and determine whether the appeal can be granted.
- 2- Evidence Only Lane- which means that the claimant will not receive a BVA Hearing but they can submit additional evidence or statements for consideration by the BVA Judge and their team of attorneys.
- 3- Hearing Option- which means that the claimant will receive a hearing with the BVA Law Judge and can then submit additional evidence or statements during a 90-day window following the hearing. This is the slowest option and can take upwards of 3 ½ years to receive a hearing.

Under the AMA, if a claimant chose the Direct Lane Appeal, the Law states that a decision will be made within 365 days. Currently, it is taking much longer because the BVA was still working on Legacy Claims that were still pending when the AMA was signed into Law. In order to try to have Direct Lane Appeals decided in 365 days, the BVA Law Judges have been directed to only make decisions on the Direct Lane Appeals (unless there are specific circumstances for an appeal to be considered as Advanced on the Docket). While this is speeding up the Direct Lane Appeal Decision, the other types of appeal options are taking much longer for a decision, even if the hearing was already conducted.

\*\*\*\*\*

The VA Office of Administrative Review (OAR) has announced the launch of a self-scheduling feature for Informal Conferences in the Visitor Engagement Reporting Application (VERA) tool for Veterans and representatives. This new self-scheduling option allows stakeholders to select a convenient time for their informal conference, providing greater autonomy, control, and engagement in the process.

### Key Details About VERA Self-Scheduling:

- **Launch Date:** Self-scheduling will be available beginning **May 5, 2025.**
- **Availability:** Self-scheduling is dependent on workload distribution; thus, from the date a VA Form 20-0996, Decision Review Request: Higher-Level Review, is submitted the self-scheduling link notification (sent via email or text message) may take a couple of weeks before it is available.
- **Notifications:** In the initial deployment, both the Veteran and the representative will receive the self scheduling email. Coordination between representatives and their clients is encouraged.
- **Missed Notification:** If the self-scheduling email is not received or the link expires, the Decision Review Operations Centers will reach out by phone to schedule the informal conference.

I have continued to post this in just about every Bulletin, but it is worth repeating- **A Veteran's Monthly VA Benefit Award STOPS when the Veteran passes.** In order for the Surviving Spouse to receive a Survivor Benefit from the VA, they must have been married at least one year prior to the Veteran's passing AND the Surviving Spouse must qualify for one of the two programs.

- **Dependency Indemnity Compensation (DIC)**- based on a service connected or presumptive service-connected cause of death (even if the Veteran was only rated 0% disabling for the condition (like hypertension) or the Veteran had to be rated 100%/Individual Unemployable for at least 10 years prior to passing). **(Base Rate is \$1,653.07/month).**
- **Survivor Pension**- must meet requirements such as Veteran has Wartime Service, meet Net Worth Requirements and then meet Income and Medical Expense requirements based on which Maximum Annual Pension Rate they meet. **(Maximum is \$1,515.00/month)**

\*\*\*\*\*

On 8 January 2025, the Department of Veterans Affairs announced that it is making **acute and chronic leukemias, multiple myelomas, myelodysplastic syndromes, myelofibrosis, urinary bladder, ureter, and related genitourinary cancers presumptive for service-connection for:**

- Gulf War Veterans: Veterans who served in Somalia or the Southwest Asia theater of operations (which includes Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the neutral zone between Iraq and Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, the Gulf of Aden, the Gulf of Oman, the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Sea, the Red Sea, and the airspace above these locations) during the Persian Gulf War on or after August 2, 1990.
- Post-9/11 Veterans: Veterans who served in Afghanistan, Iraq, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, or Uzbekistan and the airspace above these locations during the Gulf War on or after September 11, 2001. This includes Veterans who served at the Karshi-Khanabad (K2) base in Uzbekistan after September 11, 2001.

**\*\* The presumptions for urinary bladder, ureter, and related genitourinary cancers went into effect on January 2, 2025, and the presumptions for acute and chronic leukemias, multiple myelomas, and myelodysplastic syndromes, myelofibrosis will be effective on January 10, 2025.**

\*\*\*\*\*

The Department of Veterans Affairs announced on May 19, 2025 that changes that will make it easier for VA-enrolled Veterans to access health care from non-VA providers at the department's expense.

Since 2019, the MISSION Act has enabled VA-enrolled Veterans to access health care from non-VA providers at the department's expense when it is in their best medical interest. These decisions have been made jointly by Veterans and their referring clinicians but were not considered final until they were reviewed by a second VA doctor. Effective immediately, VA will implement language in the [Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act](#) that removes this extra review step. The change will give eligible Veterans faster access to community care. "Under President Trump, VA is providing Veterans with more health care choices than ever before," aid **VA Secretary Doug Collins**. "Now, we're making it even easier for Veterans to get their health care when and where its most convenient for them. We are putting Veterans first at the department, and that means placing a premium on customer service and convenience. This important change will help us do just that."

### **Background**

Since 2019, the MISSION Act has given eligible Veterans the option of seeking community care outside VA when they meet any one of six conditions:

- When it is in the best medical interest of the Veteran.
- The care required is not available at a VA medical facility.
- The Veteran lives in a state or territory that does not have a full-service VA facility
- VA cannot meet wait time or distance standards:
  - VA cannot offer an appointment within 20 days for primary care, mental health or non-institutional extended care, or within 28 days for specialty care.
  - It takes more than a 30-minute drive to reach primary or mental health care, or a 60-minute drive for specialty care.

- VA service does not meet certain quality standards.
  - The Veteran meets the grandfathered distance and location provisions of the former Veterans Choice Program.
- The new, streamlined process for determining best medical interest will be backed by training for Veterans Health Administration employees to ensure compliance with the Elizabeth Dole Act.

\*\*\*\*\*

After **January 31, 2025**, all veterans will need to sign into VA websites and apps with a DS Logon, Login.gov or ID.me. The MyHealtheVet user ID and password will no longer be an option after January 31, 2025.

If you don't have a [Login.gov](https://login.gov) or [ID.me](https://id.me) account, you can find out how to create an account here:

[Prepare For VA's Secure Sign-In Changes | Veterans Affairs](#)

You may also scan this QR code with your phone camera.



\*\*\*\*\*

As we recently just celebrated Memorial Day, I am often asked what is required for a Veteran to be buried at Arlington National Cemetery. To Answer that question, this is from their official website...

Arlington National Cemetery's eligibility requirements for burial and inurnment are different from other national cemeteries that are maintained by the [Department of Veterans Affairs](#). Eligibility for in-ground burial at Arlington National Cemetery is the most stringent of all U.S. national cemeteries. However, most veterans who have at least one day of active service (other than for training) and an honorable discharge are eligible for above-ground inurnment. Eligibility is determined at the time of need.

Eligibility for interment at Arlington National Cemetery is verified at the time of need (time of death) and cannot be verified by the cemetery or accommodated before that time. Title 32 Code of Federal Regulations Part 553 (26 September 2016), Section 12, outlines which individuals who are eligible for interment (in-ground burial) at Arlington National Cemetery.

<u><b>Service Member with Honorable Discharge</b></u>	<u><b>Eligibility*</b></u>	
	<b>Inurnment in Columbarium Court or Niche Wall</b>	<b>In-Ground Burial (Casket or Cremated Remains)</b>
Dies on Title 10 federal active duty (other than for training)	Yes	Yes
Dies on active duty for training only under Title 10	Yes	No
Veteran – retired from active duty and entitled to receive retirement pay	Yes	Yes
Veteran – at least one day of active duty other than for training	Yes	No

Veteran – received Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross (Air Force or Navy), Distinguished Service Medal, Silver Star or Purple Heart	Yes	Yes
Any member of a Reserve component of the Armed Forces, and any member of the Army National Guard or the Air National Guard, whose death occurs under honorable conditions while on active duty for training or performing full-time service	Yes	No
Any former prisoner of war who, while a prisoner of war, served honorably in the active military, naval or air service; whose last period of service terminated honorably; and who died on or after Nov. 30, 1993	Yes	Yes

\*Reflects current eligibility criteria in accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 32, Part 553, Sections 12 and 13.

This year's Annual County and Post Veteran Service Officer Training will be held **August 27-29<sup>th</sup>** at The Riverside Hotel in Garden City/Boise. I am still working on the agenda, and I hope to have it completed in the near future. If you have questions, please contact Tiffany Barrett at (208) 780-1380 Ext. 1.

If anyone has any questions about anything that I have published in this (or previous) Bulletin, feel free to contact my office and we can explain the information in more detail.

Semper Fidelis

*Bill Heyob*

SgtMajor/USMC (Retired)  
VFW Department Service Officer (Idaho)  
Bureau Chief/State Veteran Service Officer  
Office of Veterans Advocacy  
Idaho Division of Veterans Services  
Boise VA Regional Office  
(208) 780-1380



## The VA Office of Administrative Review (OAR) announces the launch of a self-scheduling feature for Informal Conferences in the Visitor Engagement Reporting Application (VERA).

To self-schedule a VERA appointment at the Boise VA Regional Benefit Office, visit the VA VERA website. You can schedule either a virtual or in-person appointment. After selecting your appointment type, you'll need to choose your Regional Office, provide personal information, select the topic(s) for your visit, choose a date and time, and then review and confirm your appointment.

Here's a more detailed breakdown:

1. **Go to the VERA Website:** Visit the [Salesforce VA VERA website](#).
2. **Choose Appointment Type:** Select either "Virtual" or "In-Person".
3. **Select Your Regional Office:** If you chose "In-Person," enter your zip code and select the Boise Regional Office.
4. **Provide Personal Information:** You'll be prompted to enter your name, contact information, and other relevant details.
5. **Select Topic(s):** Choose the reason(s) for your visit.
6. **Choose Date and Time:** Select your preferred date and time slot.
7. **Review and Confirm:** Carefully review your appointment details and confirm your booking.
8. **Email Confirmation:** You will receive an email confirmation of your appointment.

What to Bring:

When you attend your appointment, remember to bring:

- A current, unexpired photo ID.
- Depending on the reason for your visit, you may need to bring other documents like your DD214, medical records, and information about your dependents.
- **Launch Date:** Self-scheduling will be available beginning **May 5, 2025**.
- **Availability:** Self-scheduling is dependent on workload distribution; thus, from the date a VA Form 20-0996, Decision Review Request: Higher-Level Review, is submitted the self-scheduling link notification (sent via email or text message) may take a couple of weeks before it is available.
- **Notifications:** In the initial deployment, both the Veteran and the representative will receive the self-scheduling email. Coordination between representatives and their clients is encouraged.
- **Missed Notification:** If the self-scheduling email is not received or the link expires, the Decision Review Operations Centers will reach out by phone to schedule the informal conference.



# VA makes it easier for Veterans to use community care

May 19, 2025

Access to non-VA care no longer requires secondary approval

**WASHINGTON** — The Department of Veterans Affairs today announced changes that will make it easier for VA-enrolled Veterans to access health care from non-VA providers at the department's expense.

Since 2019, the MISSION Act has enabled VA-enrolled Veterans to access health care from non-VA providers at the department's expense when it is in their best medical interest. These decisions have been made jointly by Veterans and their referring clinicians but were not considered final until they were reviewed by a second VA doctor.

Effective immediately, VA will implement language in the [Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act](#) that removes this extra review step. The change will give eligible Veterans faster access to community care.

"Under President Trump, VA is providing Veterans with more health care choices than ever before," said **VA Secretary Doug Collins**. "Now, we're making it even easier for Veterans to get their health care when and where its most convenient for them. We are putting Veterans first at the department, and that means placing a premium on customer service and convenience. This important change will help us do just that."

## Background

Since 2019, the MISSION Act has given eligible Veterans the option of seeking community care outside VA when they meet any one of six conditions:

- When it is in the best medical interest of the Veteran.
- The care required is not available at a VA medical facility.
- The Veteran lives in a state or territory that does not have a full-service VA facility
- VA cannot meet wait time or distance standards:
  - VA cannot offer an appointment within 20 days for primary care, mental health or non-institutional extended care, or within 28 days for specialty care.
  - It takes more than a 30-minute drive to reach primary or mental health care, or a 60-minute drive for specialty care.
- VA service does not meet certain quality standards.
- The Veteran meets the grandfathered distance and location provisions of the former Veterans Choice Program.

The new, streamlined process for determining best medical interest will be backed by training for Veterans Health Administration employees to ensure compliance with the Elizabeth Dole Act.

## VA announces \$52M in available suicide prevention grant funds

May 21, 2025

**WASHINGTON** — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs today announced the availability of [approximately \\$52.5 million in grants](#) for community-based organizations that provide suicide prevention or emergency clinical services to Veterans at risk of suicide.

Grant applications are due by 4:59 p.m. ET, July 18, and VA will choose awardees by Sept. 30. Organizations can apply for grants worth up to \$750,000 and may apply to renew awards from year to year throughout the length of the program. Info on how to apply is [available at the Federal Register](#).

The grants will be awarded through VA's [Staff Sgt. Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program](#), which was established as part of the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act of 2019. In alignment with VA's [National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide](#), which was developed during the first Trump Administration, Fox Grants foster a public-health approach to suicide prevention that blends community-based efforts with evidence-based clinical strategies.

"Reducing Veteran suicide starts with reaching Veterans when and how it's most convenient for them. One of the best ways to accomplish this mission is by working with community-based organizations," said **VA Secretary Doug Collins**. "We look forward to ensuring these funds are put to use helping Veterans in need across the nation."

Since its launch in 2022, the Fox grant program has awarded \$157.5 million to 95 organizations across 43 states, U.S. territories and tribal lands.

For more information on the grant program and application process, visit [MentalHealth.VA.gov/ssgfox-grants](https://MentalHealth.VA.gov/ssgfox-grants).

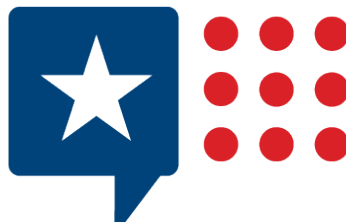
*If you are a Veteran in crisis or concerned about one, connect with our caring, qualified responders for confidential help. You don't have to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care.*

*Call 988 then press 1 or*

*Text 988 or*

*Start a confidential chat or get more resources at [VeteransCrisisLine.net](https://VeteransCrisisLine.net)*

# Veterans Crisis Line



**DIAL 988 then**  
**PRESS 1**



# VA PACT ACT

## PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD

MARCH 21, 2025

ISSUE FORTY-SEVEN  
Published Monthly on the Third Friday



In this VA PACT Act Performance Dashboard, we are demonstrating our commitment to transparency by sharing with all stakeholders—internal to VA and externally—key performance metrics and data we are using to assess our success in implementing the PACT Act.

If you, a Veteran, family member, or survivor would like more information about the PACT Act and your VA benefits, please **start here**:



**APPLY FOR  
PACT ACT**  
[VA.gov/PACT](https://va.gov/PACT)



**VA.GOV**  
[ask.va.gov](https://ask.va.gov)



**CALL**  
1-800-MyVA411  
24/7/365



**WALK-IN**  
[VA.gov/find-locations/](https://va.gov/find-locations/)



**VETERANS SERVICE  
ORGANIZATION**  
[VA.gov/disability/  
get-help-filing-claim](https://va.gov/disability/get-help-filing-claim)

Help spread the word—[download PACT Act Outreach Materials!](#)



### Highlight

On January 31, VA announced it will provide Veterans additional time to transition to a new online login system that lets them more quickly and securely access information about their VA health care and benefits. In July, VA announced a phase out of My HealtheVet and DS Logon sign-in options, in favor of two new options, Login.gov and ID.me, which will help the department offer stronger protections for Veterans, families and caregivers. VA will use this additional time to ensure as many Veterans and beneficiaries as possible make the switch before the old My HealtheVet username and password system is retired March 4. [Learn more here.](#)



### Making a Difference Through the PACT Act

In July 2023, Navy Veteran Robert Bourgoïn visited the Togus Regional Office (RO) to file his first original claim for VA benefits. With the guidance of the Public Contact Team, he began navigating the claims process, which can often feel daunting for Veterans filing for the first time. On October 31, 2024, Bourgoïn returned to the Togus RO to request a copy of a benefits letter and to seek assistance in understanding a recent notification letter regarding his rating decision. "The Togus staff has been the best. They helped me understand the application process, and I was very excited when I received my retroactive payment!" said Bourgoïn. Thanks to the PACT Act legislation, he was awarded a retroactive payment of over \$38,000. [Read more here.](#)

## VA IS EXPANDING CARE AND BENEFITS FOR VETERANS AND SURVIVORS



The PACT Act is perhaps the largest health care and benefits expansion in VA history. In this section, we are measuring the overall impact of the PACT Act in terms of its expansion of health care and benefits.

### Expanding Benefits



**1,589,908**  
Total PACT Act  
Claims Approved  
(08/10/2022–03/15/2025)



**2,140,452**  
Cumulative Total  
PACT Related  
Claims Completed  
(08/10/2022–03/15/2025)



**166.9**  
Average Days for PACT Act  
Related Claim Completion  
(03/15/2025)



**74.3%**

Approval Rate  
for PACT Act  
Related Claims  
(03/15/2025)



**37.2%**

PACT Act Related Claims  
Completed ≤ 125 days  
(03/15/2025)

### Expanding Care



**436,986**  
New Enrollees in the PACT  
Act Planning Population  
(08/10/2022–03/15/2025)



**Total New VHA Enrollees:** (through 03/15/2025)

03/16/2023–03/15/2024

**401,520**

03/16/2024–03/15/2025

**363,837 -37,683**

100,000 200,000 300,000 400,000 500,000



**92.2%**

VA Health Care 90-Day Trust Score  
(12/16/2024–03/16/2025)



**UPCOMING  
OUTREACH  
CALENDAR**

**March 27, 2025**

Veteran Town Hall  
(Mon County)  
Westover, WV  
[VIEW EVENT](#)

**March 27, 2025**

Enid PACT Act  
Resource Fair  
Enid, OK  
[VIEW EVENT](#)

**April 04, 2025**

Marengo County  
Veterans Town Hall  
Demopolis, AL  
[VIEW EVENT](#)

**April 10, 2025**

Veteran Town Hall  
(Tucker County)  
Parsons, WV  
[VIEW EVENT](#)



For more information on PACT Act events and other events, please visit <https://www.va.gov/outreach-and-events/events/>.





VA is committed to providing world class and timely health care, benefits and services to Veterans and Survivors. In this section, we measure VA's success in delivering outstanding and timely support and in earning the Veteran's and Survivor's trust.

## Care Experience



**6,141,362**

Total Toxic Exposure Screenings  
(09/06/2022–03/15/2025)



**2,838,693 (46.22%)**

Toxic Exposure Screenings where Veterans Endorsed at least 1 Potential Exposure



**597,910 (9.74%)**

Toxic Exposure Screenings where Veterans Endorsed more than 1 Potential Exposure



**2,240,783 (36.48%)**

Toxic Exposure Screenings where Veterans Endorsed exactly 1 Potential Exposure



**436,986**

New Enrollees in the PACT Act Planning Population  
(08/10/2022–03/15/2025)



**70%**

New Enrollees in Priority Groups 1, 2, or 3 (percentage based on the Planning Population)



**208,635**

Total New Enrollees under a PACT Act Enrollment Authority since 08/10/2022



**4,156,800**

Current Enrollees in the PACT Act Planning Population  
(as of 03/15/2025)

Priority Group (PG) Change Increases for All VHA Enrollees  
(10/01/2022–03/15/2025)



**376,194**

PG 4-8 to PG 1-3



**417,516**

PG 1-3



**161,787**

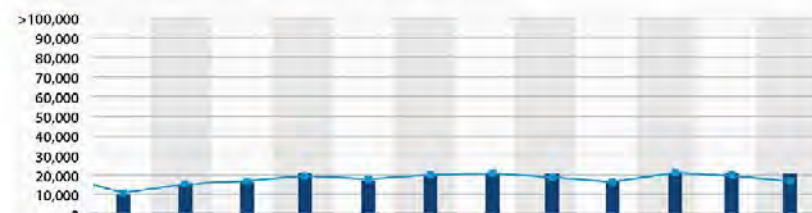
PG 7-8 to PG 6

(For more information on Priority Groups, [please click here.](#))

## Benefits Experience

### Claims Submitted and Completed—PACT Act-Related

■ PACT Act Related-Submitted ■ PACT Act Related-Completed



WEEKLY TOTALS	12/28 2024	01/04 2025	01/11 2025	01/18 2025	01/25 2025	02/01 2025	02/08 2025	02/15 2025	02/22 2025	03/01 2025	03/08 2025	03/15 2025
SUBMITTED	10,835	14,967	17,117	19,346	17,944	20,564	21,167	19,486	16,030	21,198	20,186	17,112
COMPLETED	9,985	14,494	16,482	20,771	16,875	20,105	20,436	20,384	16,588	20,824	21,169	20,159



**166.9**

Average Days For PACT Act Related Claim Completion  
(03/15/2025)



**37.2%**

PACT Act Related Rating Claims Completed ≤125 Days  
(03/15/2025)

**38.9%**  
PACT RELATED

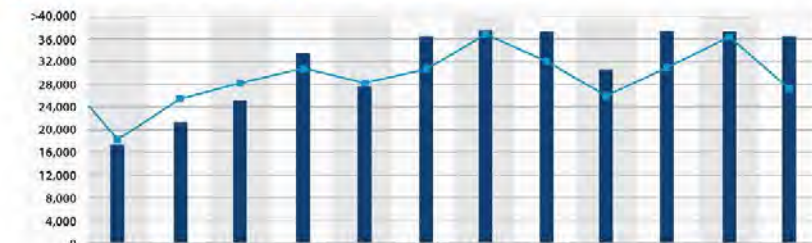


**61.1%**  
NON-PACT RELATED

Percentage of Claims Submitted PACT Related vs. Non-PACT Related  
(08/10/2022–03/15/2025)

### Claims Submitted and Completed—Non-PACT Act Related

■ Non-PACT Act Related-Submitted ■ Non-PACT Act Related-Completed



WEEKLY TOTALS	12/28 2024	01/04 2025	01/11 2025	01/18 2025	01/25 2025	02/01 2025	02/08 2025	02/15 2025	02/22 2025	03/01 2025	03/08 2025	03/15 2025
SUBMITTED	18,181	25,715	28,589	30,982	28,438	31,039	36,574	32,051	25,920	31,330	36,546	27,789
COMPLETED	17,125	21,341	24,776	33,590	27,682	36,194	37,571	37,233	30,476	37,856	37,112	36,198



**1,349,026**

Total Veterans/Survivors with Approved PACT Act Related Claims  
(08/10/2022–03/15/2025)

**1,335,006**

Total Veterans with Approved PACT Act Related Claims  
**14,074**  
Total Survivors with Approved PACT Act Related Claims



**1,676,250**

Total Veterans/Survivors with Completed PACT Act Related Claims  
(08/10/2022–03/15/2025)

**1,647,368**

Total Veterans with Completed PACT Act Related Claims  
**29,024**  
Total Survivors with Completed PACT Act Related Claims



**2,443,026**

Cumulative Total PACT Related Claims Submitted  
(08/10/2022–03/15/2025)

**2,408,013**

Total Veteran PACT Related Claims Submitted  
**35,013**  
Total Survivor PACT Related Claims Submitted



**2,140,452**

Cumulative Total PACT Related Claims Completed  
(08/10/2022–03/15/2025)

**2,110,230**

Total Veteran PACT Related Claims Completed  
**30,222**  
Total Survivor PACT Related Claims Completed



**3,838,447**

Cumulative Total Non-PACT Related Claims Submitted  
(08/10/2022–03/15/2025)

**3,820,566**

Cumulative Total Non-PACT Related Claims Completed  
(08/10/2022–03/15/2025)



**128.7**

Average Days For Non-PACT Related Claim Completion  
(03/15/2025)



**58.5%**

Non-PACT Act Related Rating Claims Completed ≤125 Days  
(03/15/2025)



## PACT Act Claims Submission Methods



**28.1%**  
PACT Act Claims  
Electronically Submitted  
(08/10/2022–03/15/2025)

**92.7%**  
Electronic Claims  
Submitted by Veterans

**7.3%**  
Electronic Claims Submitted  
by Power of Attorney

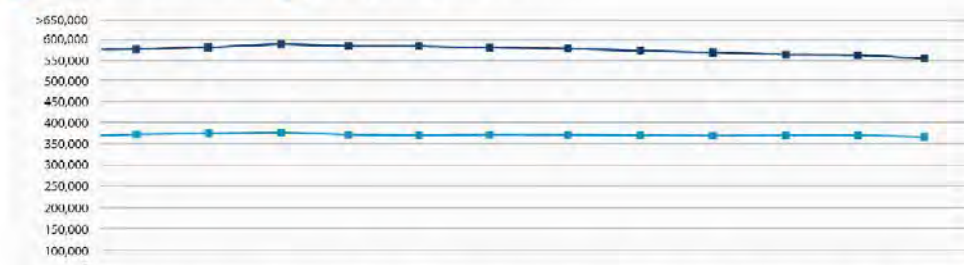


**71.9%**  
PACT Act Claims  
Submitted by Mail  
(08/10/2022–03/15/2025)

**85.1%**  
Mailed Claims Submitted with a  
Power of Attorney on File with VA

## Pending Claims—PACT Related and Non-PACT Related

Inventory Pending PACT Related Inventory Pending Non-PACT Related



**67,106**

Total Pending PACT  
Act Related Claims  
with Partial Decisions  
(as of 03/15/2025)

**44,408**

Total Pending Non-PACT  
Act Related Claims with  
Partial Decisions  
(as of 03/15/2025)



**368,735**  
Total Pending PACT  
Act Related Claims  
(as of 03/15/2025)



**115.6**  
Average Days Pending for  
PACT Act Related Claims  
(03/15/2025)

**246,979**  
Total PACT Act Related  
Claims Pending ≤125 Days  
(03/15/2025)



**553,992**  
Total Pending Non-PACT  
Act Related Claims  
(as of 03/15/2025)



**89.8**  
Average Days Pending for  
Non-PACT Act Related Claims  
(03/15/2025)

**430,480**  
Total Non-PACT Act Related  
Claims Pending ≤125 Days  
(03/15/2025)



## Top 5 Most Frequent Conditions on PACT Act Related Claims (As of 03/15/2025)

Condition	Number of Claims	Number of Issues	Percent Granted	Percent Denied
Hypertensive Vascular Disease	516,627	525,714	65%	35%
Allergic Rhinitis	367,648	373,189	77%	23%
Maxillary Sinusitis	181,650	183,117	51%	49%
Bronchial Asthma	171,330	174,609	45%	55%
Chronic Bronchitis	100,422	103,187	22%	78%



## Most Frequent Denial Reasons (As of 03/15/2025)

- 1 No Diagnosis
- 2 Not Incurred or Not Caused by Service
- 3 Not Established by Presumption

## Web and Phone Experience

### VA.gov/PACT Pageviews & 1-800-MyVA411 Calls that Access the PACT Act Main Menu (Press 8)



The PACT Act webpage has received to date:

**28,710,857**

Total Page Views  
(08/10/2022–03/15/2025)

**1,239,757**

Total Clicks on Call  
to Action to File a  
Disability Claim Online  
(08/10/2022–03/15/2025)

**277,394**

Total Clicks on Call  
to Action to Enroll  
in Health Care  
(08/10/2022–03/15/2025)



## VA Call Centers



**1,794,288**

Total MyVA411 Calls that Access the PACT Act Main Menu (Press 8)  
(10/20/2022–03/15/2025)

MAIN MENU



**375,198**

Calls that Access Option 1 to Learn More about PACT Act and Health Care  
(10/20/2022–03/15/2025)

OPTION 1



**308,623**

Calls that Access Option 2 to Learn More about PACT ACT Benefits  
(10/20/2022–03/15/2025)

OPTION 2



**398,337**

Calls that Access Option 3 to Learn More about the PACT Act Overall  
(10/20/2022–03/15/2025)

OPTION 3

## STEWARDSHIP

Issue 47—March 21, 2025



VA seeks to act as a wise steward of PACT Act resources. In this section, we measure VA's success in hiring and obligating resources funded through the PACT Act Toxic Exposures Fund, P.L. 117-68.

## PACT ACT Toxic Exposures Fund (TEF)

Allocation Plan as of December 31, 2024; Obligation and Execution Report for Data through December 31, 2024 (since enactment) (\$s in Thousands). Stewardship information will be included in every issue of the VA PACT Act Dashboard or when updated data is available.

VA ACCOUNT (Initial \$500 Million)	HIRING			FUNDS		
	FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT EMPLOYEES (FTE)	PERMANENT EMPLOYEES ONBOARDED	TERM EMPLOYEES ONBOARDED	FUNDS ALLOCATED	TOTAL OBLIGATIONS	PAID EXPENDITURES
VHA Medical Services	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$8,075,000	\$8,075,000	\$8,075,000
VHA Medical Support and Compliance	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$26,049,000	\$26,049,000	\$26,049,000
Medical and Prosthetic Research	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$650,000	\$650,000	\$621,000
Office of Information & Technology	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$123,053,000	\$123,013,000	\$119,772,000
VBA General Operating Expenses	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$302,018,000	\$302,042,000	\$274,364,000
Board of Veterans' Appeals	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
General Administration—Other	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Office of General Counsel	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$4,374,000	\$4,376,000	\$4,376,000
Human Resources and Administration/ Operations, Security, and Preparedness	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$11,550,000	\$8,793,000	\$8,758,000
Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$18,100,000	\$17,198,000	\$6,511,000
Office of Enterprise Integration	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$3,335,000	\$3,337,000	\$3,022,000
Office of the Secretary	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$224,000	\$224,000	\$224,000
PACT Act Program Management Office	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$2,572,000	\$4,609,000	\$3,958,000
<b>Total PACT Act Toxic Exposures Fund</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>\$500,000,000</b>	<b>\$498,367,000</b>	<b>\$455,731,000</b>

VA ACCOUNT (Initial \$5 Billion)	FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT EMPLOYEES (FTE)	PERMANENT EMPLOYEES ONBOARDED	TERM EMPLOYEES ONBOARDED	FUNDS ALLOCATED	TOTAL OBLIGATIONS	PAID EXPENDITURES
VHA Medical Services	4	N/A	N/A	\$3,822,377,000	\$3,817,869,000	\$3,817,869,000
VHA Medical Support and Compliance	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Medical and Prosthetic Research	11	N/A	N/A	\$1,830,000	\$1,624,000	\$1,620,000
Office of Information & Technology	139	2	35	\$656,000,000	\$571,525,000	\$509,474,000
VBA General Operating Expenses	6,724	N/A	N/A	\$482,362,000	\$481,518,000	\$479,092,000
Board of Veterans' Appeals	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$700,000	N/A	N/A
General Administration—Other	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Office of General Counsel	233	31	N/A	\$11,708,000	\$5,027,000	\$4,806,000
Human Resources and Administration/ Operations, Security, and Preparedness	62	N/A	N/A	\$11,270,000	\$607,000	\$607,000
Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$114,000	N/A	N/A
Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$692,000	N/A	N/A
Office of Enterprise Integration	N/A	N/A	2	\$2,510,000	\$1,622,000	\$1,205,000
Office of the Secretary	1	N/A	N/A	\$224,000	\$0	\$0
PACT Act Program Management Office	9	N/A	N/A	\$10,213,000	\$2,770,000	\$2,793,000
<b>Total PACT Act Toxic Exposures Fund</b>	<b>7,183</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>\$5,000,000,000</b>	<b>\$4,882,602,000</b>	<b>\$4,817,466,000</b>







## Page Two (continued)

### Metric/Term

Weekly Total: PACT Act Related Claims Submitted  
 Weekly Total: PACT Act Related Claims Completed  
 Cumulative Total: PACT Act Related Claims Submitted  
 Cumulative Total: PACT Act Related Claims Completed  
 Weekly Total: Non-PACT Act Related Claims Submitted  
 Weekly Total: Non-PACT Act Related Claims Completed  
 Average Days for PACT Act Claims Completion  
 PACT Act Related Rating Claims Pending <= 125 days  
 PACT Act Related Rating Claims Completed <= 125 days  
 Average Days Pending for Non-PACT Act Related Claims  
 Non-PACT Act Related Claims Pending <= 125 days  
 Non-PACT Act Related Claims Completed <= 125 days  
 Cumulative Total of Non-PACT Related Claims Submitted  
 Cumulative Total of Non-PACT Related Claims Completed  
 Total Veterans/Survivors with Completed PACT Act Claims  
 Total Veterans with Completed PACT Act Claims  
 Total Survivors with Completed PACT Act Claims

### Definition

This metric identifies the total number of VBA benefit claims with at least one PACT Act-related claimed issue received each week.  
 This metric identifies the number of VBA benefit claims with at least one PACT Act-related condition completed each week.  
 This statistic identifies the total number of VBA benefits claims with at least one PACT Act-related condition received since August 10, 2022.  
 This statistic identifies the total number of VBA claims with at least one PACT Act-related condition completed since August 10, 2022.  
 This number identifies the total VBA benefits claims received each week not related to PACT Act.  
 This number identifies the total VBA benefits claims completed each week not related to PACT Act.  
 This metric identifies the average number of days it takes VBA to process a PACT Act-related benefits claim.  
 This statistic identifies the current number of VBA benefit claims with one or more PACT Act-related conditions that have been pending for 125 days or less.  
 This statistic identifies the number of VBA benefit claims with one or more PACT Act-related conditions that have been completed in 125 days or less.  
 This metric identifies the average number of days it takes VBA to process a Non-PACT Act-related benefits claim.  
 This statistic identifies the current number of pending VBA benefit claims with one or more Non-PACT Act-related conditions less than 125 days old.  
 This statistic identifies the number of non-PACT VBA benefit claims that have been completed in 125 days or less.  
 This statistic identifies the cumulative total of VBA benefits claims received since August 10, 2022, which are not related to the PACT Act.  
 This statistic identifies the cumulative total of VBA benefits claims completed since August 10, 2022, which are not related to the PACT Act.  
 This metric identifies the unique number of Veterans and Survivors who have filed a PACT Act benefit claim which VBA processed to completion.  
 This metric identifies the unique number of Veterans who filed a PACT Act benefit claim which VBA processed to completion.  
 This metric identifies the unique number of Survivors who filed a PACT Act benefit claim which VBA processed to completion.

## Page Three

### Metric/Term

Electronic PACT Act Claims Submitted by Power of Attorney (percentage)  
 Electronic PACT Act Claims Submitted by Veterans (percentage)  
 PACT Act Claims Submitted Electronically (percentage)  
 PACT Act Claims Submitted through Mail (percentage)  
 Mailed Claims Submitted with a Power of Attorney on File with VA (percentage)  
 Pending Claims—PACT Related  
 Pending Claims—Non-PACT Related  
 Total Pending PACT Act Related Claims with Partial Decisions  
 Total Pending Non-PACT Act Related Claims with Partial Decisions  
 Top 5 Most Frequent Conditions on PACT Act Related Claims  
 Most Frequent Denial Reasons  
 Total Pending PACT Act Claims  
 Total Pending Non-PACT Act Claims  
 VA.gov/PACT Page Views  
 Total Clicks on Call to Action to File a Disability Claim Online  
 Total Clicks on Call to Action to Enroll in Health Care

### Definition

Total number of PACT disability claims submitted electronically by a Power of Attorney out of the total number of PACT disability claims submitted electronically.  
 Total number of PACT disability claims submitted electronically by a Veteran out of the total number of PACT disability claims submitted electronically.  
 Total number of PACT disability claims submitted electronically out of the total number of PACT disability claims submitted.  
 Total number of PACT disability claims submitted through mail out of the total number of PACT disability claims submitted.  
 Total number of PACT disability claims submitted through mail where the Veteran is represented by a Power of Attorney out of the total number of PACT disability claims submitted through mail.  
 This metric identifies the number of VBA claims with at least one PACT Act-related condition pending in the workload.  
 This metric identifies the number of VBA claims which do not have any conditions related to the PACT Act pending in the workload.  
 This metric identifies the number of currently pending PACT related disability benefit claims where a partial decision was rendered on the claim.  
 This metric identifies the number of currently pending non-PACT related disability benefit claims where a partial decision was rendered on the claim.  
 Top 5 most frequent conditions on PACT Act-related disability claims with breakdowns for the # of distinct claims associated with these claimed conditions, the total number of distinct issues claimed, the total number of issues granted, and the grant/denial rate.  
 To learn more about these health issues, please visit the Veterans Health Library: <https://www.veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov/> and the Veterans Health Encyclopedia: <https://www.veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov/encyclopedia/encyclopedia.cfm?page=26&postcode=456789>.  
 Top 3 reasons for denials on decisions on PACT disability claims: Not Incurred/Caused by Service; Claimed condition is denied because condition neither occurred in nor was caused by military service; No Diagnosis: Claimed condition is denied because the medical evidence of record fails to show that the disability has been clinically diagnosed; Not Established by Presumption: Claimed condition is denied because the evidence of record does not show that certain criteria were met for a grant of service connection on a presumptive basis.  
 This statistic identifies the current number of pending VBA benefit claims with one or more PACT Act-related conditions.  
 This statistic identifies the current number of pending VBA benefit claims without any PACT Act-related conditions.  
 This metric identifies the number of page views for the va.gov/PACT website.  
 This statistic identifies the number of times visitors to the VA.gov/PACT website clicked the "Apply for Benefits" link to file a disability compensation claim online.  
 This statistic identifies the number of times visitors to the VA.gov/PACT website clicked the "Apply for Health Care" link to apply for VA health care online.

## Page Four

### Metric/Term

MyVA411 Calls that Access the PACT Act Main Menu (Press 8)  
 Total MyVA411 Calls that Access the PACT Act Main Menu (Press 8)

### Definition

This statistic identifies the number of calls to 1-800-MyVA411 where callers selected the PACT Act Main Menu (Press 8).  
 This statistic identifies the total number of calls received to the automated MyVA411 line (option 8), which provides information about the PACT Act to callers.

## Stewardship

Reminder: Stewardship information will be included in every other issue of this dashboard publication (or when updated data is available).

### Metric/Term

Full-Time Equivalent Employee (FTE)

### Definition

Full-Time Equivalent refers to the total number of regular straight-time hours worked by employees divided by the number of compensable hours applicable to each fiscal year (regular method), or the total regular hours worked in a fiscal year (2,080 hours) divided by 26 biweekly pay periods (pay period method) (as per OMB A-11 Circular § 85.5(c)).  
 Account refers to a separate financial reporting unit used by the Federal Government to record budget authority, outlays and income for budgeting or management information purposes as well as for accounting purposes.  
 An employee who has been hired under an appointment that is not time delimited.  
 An employee for whom the agency has granted a term appointment (of employment) of more than 1 year but usually not more than 4 years.  
 Onboards (i.e., the number of personnel encumbering positions) are the number of employees (i.e., headcount) onboard when the data are reported. Note: "Onboards" differ from "FTE" which is a budgetary term based on compensable hours as opposed to headcount. Colloquially, "onboards" refers to newly hired employees who have started work with VA (their hiring is complete).  
 The amount of funding provided to each Administration or Staff Office.  
 Obligation means a binding agreement that will result in outlays, immediately or in the future.



## Airborne Hazards and Burn Pit Exposures

### *Did you serve or know someone who served in*

- Afghanistan, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Uzbekistan, Yemen or the airspace above any of these locations during the Persian Gulf War, from September 11, 2001, to the present, **OR**
- Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, The United Arab Emirates (UAE), or the air-space above any of these locations of operations from August 2, 1990, to the present, were exposed to:



- Smoke and fumes from open burn pits
- Sand, dust, and particulate matter
- General air pollution common in certain countries
- Fuel, aircraft exhaust, and other mechanical fumes
- Smoke from oil well fires

### *Diagnosed with one or more of these conditions*

- |                                                             |                                                            |                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| • Acute and Chronic Leukemias                               | • Chronic Sinusitis                                        | • Pleuritis                                          |
| • Multiple Myelomas                                         | • Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)             | • Pulmonary Fibrosis                                 |
| • Myelodysplastic syndromes                                 | • Constrictive Bronchiolitis or Obliterative Bronchiolitis | • Reproductive Cancer of any type                    |
| • Myelofibrosis                                             | • Emphysema                                                | • Sarcoidosis                                        |
| • Urinary Bladder, ureter and related genitourinary cancers | • Gastrointestinal Cancer                                  | • Squamous Cell Carcinoma of the trachea or larynx   |
| • Male Breast Cancer                                        | • Glioblastoma                                             | • Adenocarcinoma of the trachea                      |
| • Urethral Cancer                                           | • Granulomatous Disease                                    | • Salivary gland-type tumors of the trachea          |
| • Cancer of the Para-Urethral Glands                        | • Head Cancer of any type                                  | • Adenosquamous carcinoma of the lung                |
| • Asthma (that was diagnosed after service)                 | • Interstitial Lung Disease (ILD)                          | • Large cell carcinoma of the lung                   |
| • Brain Cancer                                              | • Kidney Cancer                                            | • Salivary gland-type tumors of the lung             |
| • Chronic Bronchitis                                        | • Lymphatic cancer of any type                             | • Sarcomatoid carcinoma of the lung                  |
| • Chronic Rhinitis                                          | • Lymphoma of any type                                     | • Typical and atypical carcinoid of the lung         |
|                                                             | • Melanoma                                                 | • Respiratory (breathing-related) cancer of any type |
|                                                             | • Neck Cancer                                              |                                                      |
|                                                             | • Pancreatic Cancer                                        |                                                      |

*If you are a veteran with an honorable discharge and served during the time mentioned above, and you are diagnosed with one of these conditions, you may be entitled to service-connected disability benefits from the VA.*





## Airborne Hazards and Burn Pit Exposures

### Surviving Spouse of a Veteran?

Or

**Know a Surviving Spouse of a Veteran  
Who Passed Away from One of the Conditions Above?**  
(or one of the above conditions was listed as contributing  
factor in the Veteran's death on the death certificate)

If you are the surviving spouse of a qualifying Veteran who passed away due to one of the conditions listed above, or due to complications from those primary conditions, you may be entitled to  
*Dependency and Indemnity Compensation* benefits based on the Veteran's death.

*Please Call Us Today to See if You May Qualify!*

Idaho Division of Veterans Services

Office of Veterans Advocacy

444 W. Fort Street, Room 140

Boise, ID 83702

(208) 780-1380



# VA Pension 2025 Rates



## Office of Veterans Advocacy



### **Income Limit** (Effective December 1, 2024)

VA Pension is a benefit paid to wartime veterans with limited income and who are permanently and totally disabled or age 65 or older.

You may be eligible if:

- You were discharged from the service under other than dishonorable conditions

**And**

- You served 90 days or more of active duty with at least one day during a wartime period (no requirement that service be in a combat zone)

**And**

- Your countable family income is below a yearly limit set by law

**And**

- You are permanently and totally disabled or you are age 65 or older

VA Pension pays at three different levels based on the veteran's care needs.

#### **Base rate**

Veteran	\$16,965/ \$1,414 mthly
Veteran & Spouse	\$22,216/ \$1,851 mthly

#### **Housebound rate**

Veteran	\$20,732/ \$1,727 mthly
Veteran & Spouse	\$25,982/ \$2,165 mthly
(2) Vets Married to Each Other	\$29,747/ \$2,478 mthly

#### **Aid & Attendance rate**

Veteran	\$28,300/ \$2,358 mthly
Veteran & Spouse	\$33,548/ \$2,795 mthly
(2) Vets Married to Each Other	\$44,886/ \$3,740 mthly

To qualify at the base rate the veteran can be completely independent, however, needs to be considered permanently and totally disabled.

VA considers a veteran housebound if they are independent at home but need assistance in getting out and about for physician visits, grocery shopping, etc.

VA evaluates a veteran for aid and attendance if they require help in bathing, dressing, toileting, etc. (assistance with at least two activities of daily living) or are legally blind or require to be on a secure unit/facility due to dementia. This evaluation is based on a medical determination completed by a physician.

VA pays you the difference between your countable family (veteran and spouse if married) income and the income rate/limit noted previously.

For example, if a single veteran qualified for the base rate of pension and had a monthly income of \$500 VA will pay approx. \$914 per month—enough to increase their income to the full \$1,414 per month.

Recurring monthly medical expenses can be used by the VA to decrease countable income, in efforts to increase the amount of the monthly VA benefit received.

### **Net worth Determinations**

Veteran (and spouse if married) must have less than \$159,240 in assets (savings, stocks, bonds, IRA's) to qualify. The VA has also implemented a 36-month (3 year) look back period to review asset transfers that reduce net worth and create pension entitlement.

The VA **will** count monies placed in a special or medical trust account as an asset and **will** include those amounts in overall assets when determining eligibility.

<https://www.va.gov/pension/veterans-pension-rates/>



# VA Dependency Indemnity Compensation (DIC)

## 2025 Rates



### Office of Veterans Advocacy

#### What is Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)?

DIC is a monthly benefit paid to eligible survivor's of:

- Servicemembers who died while on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training, OR
- Veterans whose death resulted from a service-connected injury or disease, OR
- Veterans whose death resulted from a non-service-connected injury or disease, and who were permanent and totally disabled from their service-connected disabilities for
  - at least 10 years immediately preceding their death, OR
  - since the veteran's release from active duty and for at least five years immediately preceding death, OR
  - at least one year immediately preceding death if the veteran was a former prisoner of war who died after Sept. 30, 1999.



#### WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

##### Surviving Spouse

- Was married to a military servicemember who died on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training, OR
- Married the veteran before January 1, 1957, OR
- Married the veteran within 15 years of discharge from the period of military service in which the disease or injury that caused the veteran's death began or was aggravated, OR
- Was married to the veteran for at least one year, OR
- Had a child with the veteran, AND
- Cohabited with the veteran continuously until the veteran's death or, if separated, was not at fault for the separation, AND
- Is not currently remarried\*

\*You may be eligible to continue receiving DIC benefits if you remarried on or after Dec. 16, 2003, and were at least 57 years of age.

##### Surviving Child

- Unmarried AND
- Under the age 18, or between the ages of 18-23 and attending school\*

\*Certain helpless adult children may be entitled to DIC if child was deemed disabled before the age of 18

##### Parents

- You may be eligible for DIC if you are the surviving parent of a military servicemember who died in the line of duty or a veteran whose death resulted from a service - connected injury or disease.

#### DIC Rates for Spouses (Effective December 2024)

If you're the surviving spouse of a veteran, your monthly payment rate is: **\$1,653.07**

If this description is true...	You may qualify for this benefit	Added monthly amount (in U.S. \$)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Veteran had a VA disability rating of totally disabling (including for individual unemployability) for at least the 8 full years leading up to their death, and</li> <li>• You were married to the Veteran for those same 8 years</li> </ul>	8-year provision	<b>351.02</b>
You have a disability and need help with regular daily activities (like eating, bathing, or dressing)	Aid and Attendance	<b>409.53</b>
You can't leave your house due to a disability	Housebound allowance	<b>191.85</b>
You have 1 or more children who are under 18	Transitional benefit, and DIC apportionment rate	*\$350.00 for the first 2 years after the Veteran's death *409.53 for each eligible child

#### DIC Rates for Children

If you're a surviving dependent child of a veteran, your monthly payment rate is: **\$697.96**

Child status	Monthly payment (in U.S. \$)
Child between 18 and 23 who's in a qualified school program	346.95
Helpless child over 18 (An adult child who became permanently unable to support themselves before age 18)	697.96

<https://www.va.gov/disability/dependency-indemnity-compensation/>  
<https://www.va.gov/disability/parent-dic-rates/>

<https://www.va.gov/family-and-caregiver-benefits/survivor-compensation/dependency-indemnity-compensation/survivor-rates/>

# VA Survivor's Pension 2025 Rates



## Office of Veterans Advocacy



VA Improved Death Pension is a benefit paid to eligible dependents of deceased \*wartime veterans with limited income.

You may be eligible if:

- If the deceased veteran was discharged from service under other than dishonorable conditions  
**And**
- He or she served 90 days or more of active duty with at least 1 day during a period of war\*\*  
**And**
- Your countable family income is below a yearly limit set by law

**\*Note:**

- **World War II** (December 7, 1941- December 31, 1946)
- **Korean conflict** (June 27, 1950 - January 31, 1955)
- **Vietnam era** (February 28, 1961 - May 7, 1975 for Veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam during that period; otherwise August 5, 1964 - May 7, 1975)
- **Gulf War** (August 2, 1990 -Present)

\*\* Anyone who enlists after September 7th, 1980, generally must have served at least 24 months or the full period for which called or ordered to active duty.

### **Income Limit** (Effective December 1, 2024)

If you are a...      Your yearly income must be less than...

Surviving Spouse with no dependent children	\$11,380/ \$948 mthly
Surviving spouse with one dependent child (Add \$2,743 to the limit for each additional child)	\$14,893/ \$1,241 mthly
Housebound surviving spouse with no dependents	\$13,908 /\$1,159 mthly
Housebound surviving spouse with one dependent	\$16,989 / \$1,415 mthly
Surviving spouse who needs aid and attendance with no dependents	\$18,187/ \$1,515 mthly
Surviving spouse who needs aid and attendance with one dependent	\$21,696 / \$1,808 mthly
Surviving child (no eligible parent)	\$2,902 / \$241 mthly

*Note: Some income is not counted toward the yearly limit (for example, welfare benefits, some wages earned by dependent children, and Supplemental Security Income)*

VA pays you the difference between your countable family (spouse and child) income and the income rate/limit noted previously. For example, if a single surviving spouse qualified for the base rate of pension and had a monthly income of \$500 VA will pay approx. \$448 per month—enough to increase their income to the full \$948 per month.

Recurring monthly medical expenses can be used by the VA to decrease countable income, in efforts to increase the amount of the monthly VA benefit received.

### **Net worth Determinations**

Surviving spouse also needs to have less than \$159,240 in assets (savings, stocks, bonds, IRA's) to qualify.

The VA has also implemented a 36-month (3 year) look back period to review asset transfers that reduce net worth and create pension entitlement.

The VA **will** count monies placed in a special or medical trust account as an asset and **will** include those amounts in overall assets when determining eligibility.

<https://www.va.gov/family-and-caregiver-benefits/survivor-compensation/survivors-pension/rates/>





# DON'T FEED THE SHARKS



[DontFeedTheSharks.org](http://DontFeedTheSharks.org)

## What is a "Claim Shark"?

- A Claim Shark is an individual or company that charges hefty fees to "assist" or "consult" veterans with filing their VA benefit claims – this practice is illegal!
- Claim Sharks are not VA accredited, meaning they aren't required to adhere to the well-established professional and ethical standards of VA accreditation, so their advice can often be misleading or even fraudulent.
- Like a "Loan Shark," once you're in, you can't get out, and may be subject to new and hidden fees whenever you get a new rating, no matter who does the work.

## Some of their predatory practices are:

- Promising or guaranteeing an increased disability rating or percentage increase.
- Advertising expedited VA claims decisions.
- Requesting login credentials to access a veteran's personal information through secure VA websites like eBenefits or VA.gov.
- Using confusing tactics or ambiguous language to mislead claimants or coerce them into signing a contract.
- Telling veterans to forego VA exams and offering health consultations within their own network of doctors.

## Who are the Claim Sharks?

- |                      |                         |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| ✦ Trajector Medical  | ✦ Patriot Angels        |
| ✦ Vet Benefits Guide | ✦ Veteran Care Services |
| ✦ Veterans Guardian  | ✦ VetComm               |
| ✦ VA Claims Insider  | ✦ VA Claims Academy     |
| ✦ Telemedica         | ✦ Vet Assist            |

## Veterans can protect themselves by:

- Always working with VA accredited representatives.
- Attending all exams ordered by VA.
- Not signing contracts.
- Not agreeing to fees or payments from future benefits.
- Not agreeing to pay for medical consultations or opinions.
- Not providing access to Protected Health Information or Personal Identifiable Information.

## Who is NOT a Claim Shark?

- VA accredited veterans service organization representatives, like the VFW
- VA accredited claims agents
- VA accredited attorneys
- Attorneys assisting with Camp LeJeune lawsuits who do not charge excessive fees





# VETERAN RESOURCE GUIDE

QUICKLY FIND VETERAN RESOURCES NEAR YOU

Benefits

Education

Social

Work

Legal

Housing

& more



## Where Idaho Veterans Can:

- Find trusted organizations in your area
- Search anonymously from anywhere
- Customize search options to find all local available resources



[www.idahoveteransguide.org](http://www.idahoveteransguide.org)

FAIRY GODMOTHER



### MITZI CHELDELIN

Director

IDVS Veterans Outreach  
& Community Support

208-957-3633 (cell)  
mitzi.cheldelin@veterans.idaho.gov  
www.veterans.idaho.gov  
351 N Collins Rd. Boise ID 83702

"CARING FOR AMERICA'S HEREOS"

ARMY VETERAN



### MARISA MCCARTER

Community Resource Coordinator

IDVS Veterans Outreach  
& Community Support

208-870-1373 (cell)  
marisa.mccarter@veterans.idaho.gov  
www.veterans.idaho.gov  
351 N Collins Rd. Boise ID 83702

"CARING FOR AMERICA'S HEREOS"

ARMY VETERAN



### JASON LEGLER

Community Resource Specialist

IDVS Veterans Outreach  
& Community Support

208-985-6632 (cell)  
jason.legler@veterans.idaho.gov  
www.veterans.idaho.gov  
1182 S. Clearwater Loop, Post Falls ID 83854

"CARING FOR AMERICA'S HEREOS"



**VA**

Boise VA  
Medical Center



# 2025 VETERANS LEGAL CLINICS



FREE TO ATTEND  
FOR VETS & SPOUSES

Legal  
Clinics are  
held from 2PM  
to 4PM in Bldg. 54 at the  
Boise VA Medical Center 500 W.  
Fort St. Boise, ID 83702.

*Assistance with Estate Planning & Wills are not  
included at these Legal Clinics.*

Please contact the Veterans Justice Outreach  
team at (208) 422-1064 to register.

*Space is limited.  
You must register to attend!*

**JAN 16**

**FEB 20**

**MAR 20**

**APR 17**

**MAY 15**

**JUN 19**

**JUL 17**

**AUG 21**

**SEP 18**

**OCT 16**

**NOV 20**

**DEC 18**





**VA**

Boise VA  
Medical Center

# VETERAN APPRECIATION FAIR

**FREE**

**June 27, 2025  
11am - 1pm**

**Boise VA Medical Center  
500 W. Fort St. Boise, ID 83702**

**Event is free to attend and family friendly. There will be representatives of veterans organizations, dunk tank, live music, lawn games, BBQ food, prizes, and MORE!**

**To have a booth call Tammy at (208) 422-1175 or [tammy.lanning2@va.gov](mailto:tammy.lanning2@va.gov)**

# The USS IDAHO Photo Contest:

## IDAHO, UNDERSEA AND UNDERWAY

The future USS IDAHO, a new Virginia-class submarine joining the fleet in early 2026, needs your photographic talents to decorate the interior of the vessel! For the first time in over 100 years, a naval warship will have the honor of bearing Idaho's name. With your contributions, the interior of the vessel will reflect the beauty, culture, and spirit of Idaho to all who come aboard in the next 35 years.



**LEARN MORE AND SUBMIT YOUR PHOTOS BY VISITING**  
[ussidahocommittee.org/photo-contest](http://ussidahocommittee.org/photo-contest)



For the first time in many years, a large group of Honor Flight participants will be traveling together from Boise to Washington D.C. to visit the memorials dedicated to their service. The group will include 20 local Vietnam Veterans and their escort companions. They will depart Boise on Sunday, June 15, at 6:45 a.m. and return on Tuesday, June 17, at 5:20 p.m.

**We invite individuals to participate in the Send-Off or Welcome Home Celebration, please gather at the Boise Air Terminal with American flags at the following times:**

- **Sunday, June 15 – 4:45 a.m.:** Travelers will arrive for check-in and need to pass through security by 5:45 a.m.
- **Tuesday, June 17 – 5:00 p.m.:** Travelers are scheduled to arrive at 5:20 p.m. We invite patriots to welcome them home as they pass through the terminal doors into the waiting area.

If your group or organization wishes to organize a flag line or other welcoming activity, please contact Mitzi Cheldelin at [mitzi.cheldelin@veterans.idaho.gov](mailto:mitzi.cheldelin@veterans.idaho.gov) during the week of June 9 to coordinate your plans.



# TOUR OF HONOR IDAHO HORSESHOE BEND RIVER RIDE



**SUNDAY,  
AUGUST 3, 2025**



**9:00 AM-6:00 PM**



**HIGH DESERT HARLEY DAVIDSON  
(2310 E CINEMA DR, MERIDIAN, ID)  
TO HSB WOODS VETERANS  
MEMORIAL PARK  
(382 HIGHWAY 55, HORSESHOE  
BEND, IDAHO)**

## Schedule of Events

**9:00 AM**

Donuts & Coffee at  
High Desert  
Harley Davidson



**10:30 AM**

Kickstands up.  
Combat Vets led ride to  
HSB Vet Park



**IN-ROUTE  
OPTION**

Cold beverages at  
veteran owned Triangle  
Inn Restaurant Hwy 52  
in Sweet, Idaho



**1:00 PM**

Warhawk Air Museum  
P40 Flyover  
[warhawkairmuseum.org](http://warhawkairmuseum.org)



**ACTIVITIES**

- Live music
- Shade tents
- Veteran owned food trucks
- Adult refreshments
- Payette River cool-off activities
- Secure motorcycle parking



**VETERANS RIVER  
FLOAT OPTION**

River raft float for veterans from HSB  
Vet Park to HSB Flight Park with  
Cascade Raft.  
VIP pickup & return.



**ACCOMMODATIONS**

Overnight discounted stays at  
Ole RV Glamping Park  
28 Harris Creek Rd, HSB, ID  
[olervpark.com](http://olervpark.com)  
(208)-999-7653



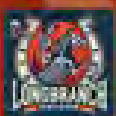
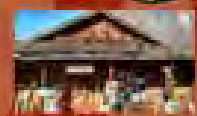
**Brought to you by Mustang Towing**

We're here to help all your roadside needs.  
Quick access to industry experts in roadside  
solutions. Serving Boise, Gem, Valley, Custer  
Counties. Enclosed trailer to transfer road  
bikes. 22 Hanson Drive, Horseshoe Bend, ID  
(208)-318-8030

Volunteer non-profit organization to  
network & promote the interests of the  
businesses, organizations and individuals of  
the community. We strive to bring  
improvements that benefit our river  
mountain community.



Locally owned businesses to visit in Horseshoe Bend:





# 2025

## Annual County and Post Veteran

## Service Officer Training

**August 27th -29th**

**Riverside Hotel - Boise, ID**

### Topics covered in past trainings:

- Current Information and updates from the Veterans Affairs and Veterans Health Administration
- New information regarding benefits for veterans, surviving spouses, and their family members
- Classes on how to correctly fill out and file claims for Compensation, and Pension
- Presentations and information regarding VA debts, Appeals, COMPACT Act, PACT Act, Suicide Prevention, Rating Tables, to include so much more!

This is an Outstanding 3-day Training full of great information on Everything VA!

*Brought to you by the Idaho Division of Veterans Services*

*Office of Veterans Advocacy*

If you would like to be included in the Invitation Distribution List, please email

Tiffany Barrett at

[tiffany.barrett@veterans.idaho.gov](mailto:tiffany.barrett@veterans.idaho.gov). Invitations will go out by June 2025!!





State of Idaho  
**DIVISION OF VETERANS SERVICES**  
*"Caring for America's Heroes"*



**BRAD LITTLE**  
Governor

**MARK TSCHAMPL**  
Chief Administrator

Bill Heyob  
Bureau Chief  
Office of Veterans Advocacy  
444 W. Fort St. Room 140  
Boise, ID 83702-4531  
(208) 780-1380  
Fax (208) 780-1381

June 5, 2025

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: All County/Post Service Officers and Supporters of Veterans

FROM: Bill Heyob  
Veterans Services Bureau Chief

SUBJECT: Annual Service Officer Training Conference

This year's Service Officer Training Conference will be held on **August 27, 28, and 29, 2025**. While the tentative agenda is not complete at this point, the training is looking to be as good as years past. Joint opening ceremonies and all classes will be held at the Riverside Hotel at 2900 Chinden Boulevard in Boise. Registration and coffee begin at 7:30am on the 27<sup>th</sup>. There is ample parking, and all our training will be held in the same facility.

We have negotiated a room rate at the hotel of \$191 per night for a single or double room. As there are only certain number of rooms blocked for the school, you should call as soon as possible to make your reservation. Any reservations called in after August 1<sup>st</sup> will be accepted based upon availability. Call **(208) 343-1871** and tell them you're with the **Veterans Service Training**. There are also a limited number of rooms available close to the training room. So, if you have limitations preventing you from walking any kind of distance from your room to the training, just ask for a room near the meeting space.

To aid in your training, it is recommended you purchase a copy of the Veterans Laws, Rules, and Regulations of the United States Code of Federal Regulations to bring to the conference to use as a reference. The latest version can be purchased online by visiting <https://bookstore.gpo.gov/catalog/cfr-title-38-pensions-bonuses-veterans-relief> or if you are unable to purchase the CFR, here are a couple links to the online version [eCFR :: 38 CFR Part 3 -- Adjudication](#) and [eCFR :: 38 CFR Part 4 -- Schedule for Rating Disabilities](#). This resource will greatly enhance your ability to assist your veterans throughout the year.

Please note that to be eligible for per diem and mileage reimbursement, you must be a designated Post Service Officer for a recognized service organization such as The American Legion, AMVETS, Catholic War Veterans of the United States, Disabled American Veterans, Fleet Reserve Association, Marine Corps League, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Veterans of Foreign Wars, or Vietnam Veterans of America. Also, the Division cannot reimburse participants for lodging expenses. Idaho Department of Labor personnel are not eligible for per diem or mileage reimbursement unless they attend as designated Post Service Officers

In order to keep the training fiscally viable, we are no longer serving breakfast any of the three mornings of the training, so those entitled to per diem will be paid for breakfast. To help us better plan the conference, please return

the attached registration form to Tiffany Barrett at [tiffany.barrett@veterans.idaho.gov](mailto:tiffany.barrett@veterans.idaho.gov) to let us know if you are able to attend this most worthwhile training.

Semper Fidelis

*Bill Heyob*

BH/tb



State of Idaho  
DIVISION OF VETERANS SERVICES  
"Caring for America's Heroes"



**BRAD LITTLE**  
Governor

**MARK TSCHAMPL**  
Chief Administrator

Bill Heyob Bureau Chief  
Office of Veterans Advocacy 444 W. Fort St.  
Room 140  
Boise, ID 83702-4531  
(208) 780-1380  
Fax (208) 780-1381

**2025 IDVS Service Officer Training Registration Form**

**August 27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup>**

The Riverside Hotel 2900 Chinden Blvd, Boise, ID 83714

Room Rate \$191.00

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

County/Post: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization/Company \_\_\_\_\_

.....

Please mark what days you plan on attending the training. Registration begins at 7:30am each morning.

**(8:00am- 4:30pm) Wednesday, August 27<sup>th</sup>** YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

**(8:00am-4:30pm) Thursday, August 28<sup>th</sup>** YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

**(8:00am-12:00pm) Friday, August 29<sup>th</sup>** YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form **no later than July 1<sup>st</sup>**, to Tiffany Barrett at [tiffany.barrett@veterans.idaho.gov](mailto:tiffany.barrett@veterans.idaho.gov), by fax (208) 780-1381 or by mail at:

444 W. Fort Street, Room 140  
Boise, ID 83702

Please let me know if you have any questions. (208) 780-1380 ext.

**GO GREEN AND GET THE BULLETIN VIA EMAIL**



In our continual effort to reduce costs and lessen our “ecological footprint,” the Office of Veterans Advocacy is again asking for your help. In order to reduce printing and mailing costs, as well as the amount of paper used, we are asking you to volunteer to receive the bulletin via email.

The bulletin will arrive in your in-box every quarter as a PDF document, which will allow to you forward or print and disseminate as many copies as you like.

If you can help us with our goal of reducing costs and the saving paper, please email Tiffany Barrett at [tiffany.barrett@veterans.idaho.gov](mailto:tiffany.barrett@veterans.idaho.gov). Thanks for your help with this most worthwhile endeavor! And don’t forget you can always view and print the Bulletin by visiting our website at [www.veterans.idaho.gov](http://www.veterans.idaho.gov).

**DATES TO REMEMBER**

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

**American Legion**

State..... July 10-13, 2025, Post Falls, ID

National..... August 22-28, 2025, Tampa Bay, FL

**AMVETS**

National..... August 19-23, 2025, Greensboro, NC

**Disabled American Veterans**

National..... August 9-12, 2025, Las Vegas, NV

**Marine Corps League**

National..... August 10-16, 2025, Grapevine, TX

**Military Order of the Purple Heart**

National..... July 14-18, 2025, Sparks, NV

**Veterans of Foreign Wars**

State..... June 4-8, 2025, Lewiston, ID

National..... August 9-13, 2025, Columbus, OH

**Vietnam Veterans of America**

National..... August 5-9, 2025, New Orleans, LA

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

**DAV VAN CONTACTS TO AND FROM VA MEDICAL CENTERS**

**BOISE & SURROUNDING AREA TO BOISE VAMC**

All appointments for rides must be made 72 hours in advance.

**For the schedule or an appointment, call Tami McMurtry or Phil Johnson at (208) 422-1177.**

**LEWISTON & SURROUNDING AREA TO SPOKANE VAMC**

*All appointments for rides must be made 72 hours in advance.*

For the schedule or an appointment, call the DAV Transportation Office at the Spokane VA Medical Center (800) 325-7940.

**LIBBY & SURROUNDING AREA TO SPOKANE VAMC**

*All appointments for rides must be made 72 hours in advance.*

For the schedule or an appointment, Call the DAV Transportation Office at the Spokane VA Medical Center (800) 325-7940.

**COEUR D'ALENE & SURROUNDING AREA TO SPOKANE VAMC**

*All appointments for rides must be made 72 hours in advance.*

For the schedule or an appointment, Call the DAV Transportation Office at the Spokane VA Medical Center (800) 325-7940.

## SANDPOINT & SURROUNDING AREA TO SPOKANE VAMC

*All appointments for rides must be made 72 hours in advance.*

For the schedule or an appointment, call the DAV Transportation Office at the Spokane VA Medical Center (800) 325-7940.

## LEWISTON TO WALLA WALLA VAMC

**Thursdays:** Walla Walla VA Medical Center Van. 8:00 a.m. departure from the CBOC at 1630 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Building 2. Arrives at Walla Walla at 10:00 a.m. Departs Walla Walla at 1:30 p.m. Arrives Lewiston at 3:30 p.m. **If your appointment runs past the departure time of 1:30, there is no alternative for returning to Lewiston.**

## POCATELLO, IDAHO FALLS, & SURROUNDING ARE TO SALT LAKE CITY VAMC

*All appointments for rides should be made 72 hours in advance.*

For the schedule or an appointment, call the VTS/DAV Transportation Office at (800) 613-4012 ext. 2003 or 1027.

