

"Aid and Attendance" is an underutilized special monthly pension benefit offered by the Veterans Administration for veterans and surviving spouses who require in-home care or live in nursing homes.

To qualify, a veteran (includes the surviving spouse) must have served at least 90 days of active military service, one day of which is during a period of war, and must be discharged under conditions other than dishonorable. The veteran's benefit is \$18,234 annually (paid monthly) and increases to \$21,615 if a veteran has one dependent. The surviving spouse alone is \$11,715 annually.

For more information, call 1-800-827-1000, visit <http://www.va.gov> (type "Aid and Attendance" in the search block), or contact your local VA office. You can also apply on-line.

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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:

- 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,
- 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,
- The veteran is a patient in a nursing home due to mental or physical incapacity, OR,
- 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:

- 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,
- The veteran has a single permanent disability evaluated as 100-percent disabling AND, another disability, or disabilities, evaluated as 60 percent or more disabling.

A veteran cannot receive both Aid and Attendance and Housebound benefits at the same time.

How to Apply for Aid and Attendance and Housebound:

You may apply for Aid and Attendance or Housebound benefits by writing to the VA regional office having jurisdiction of the claim. That would be the office where you filed a claim for pension benefits. If the regional office of jurisdiction is not known, you may file the request with any VA regional office.

You should include copies of any evidence, preferably a report from an attending physician validating the need for Aid and Attendance or Housebound type care.

The report should be in sufficient detail to determine whether there is disease or injury producing physical or mental impairment, loss of coordination, or conditions affecting the ability to dress and undress, to feed oneself, to attend to sanitary needs, and to keep oneself ordinarily clean and presentable.

In addition, it is necessary to determine whether the claimant is confined to the home or immediate premises.

Whether the claim is for Aid and Attendance or Housebound, the report should indicate how well the individual gets around, where the individual goes, and what he or she is able to do during a typical day.