

Qualifying for Service-Connected and Non-service-Connected Veteran Benefits

For those that serve their country, the Department of Veteran Affairs provides a wide range of disability benefits. But not all VA benefits are created equal-- the benefits you receive for your disability claim will vary from person to person. The VA uses eight "priority groups" to determine which benefits you will receive, with "1" being the highest priority and "8" the lowest (as of 2003, no new veterans are enrolled into group 8). The level of priority you are given will depend entirely on your disability (and whether it is service- or non-service-connected), your situation financially, and the level or intensity of your disability.

Since whether or not a disability is service-connected or non-service-connected can have a great effect on the benefits you will receive, its important to have a good understanding of the specific requirements for each of these two types of benefits.

The Requirements for Non-service-Connected Benefits

Veterans who suffer from complete and permanent disability are eligible for non-service-connected benefits. Qualifying for non-service-connected benefits can also be dependant on a few other issues:

â€¢ Income- Eligibility is based on a veteran having both a limited income and a net worth that does not provide sufficient maintenance. To get more information on income eligibility requirements, please see 38 U.S.C.S. Â§1521-22.

â€¢ Service - To reach eligibility for a non-service-connected pension, a veteran must have one day or more of active duty in a "period of war", with at least 90 days total active duty. For those enrolled in the military after 1980, however, the requirement is simply a full period of active duty. Specifically, an individual who enlisted for the first time on or after September 8, 1980, is required to complete a minimum period of service, either twenty-four months of continuous active duty or the full period for which the veteran was called to active duty. Additionally, the veteran must have active service that includes a total of ninety days during one or more periods of war; ninety or more consecutive days, one day of which is during a period of war; or at least one day of wartime service that results in a discharge for service-connected disability.

â€¢ Discharge- To be eligible for benefits from the Department of Veteran Affairs, your discharge from the military needs to have been under non-dishonorable circumstances.

The Requirements for Service Connected Benefits

Eligibility for service-connected benefits, differently from non-service-connected benefits, is not dependant on a veteran having done wartime service or meeting a net worth or income level. Instead, you need to be able to prove the source and current status of your disability with:

â€¢ Evidence of current disability- As service-connected disability benefits are only available to those with current disabilities, the first things applicants must do is provide a current diagnosis of their disability using up-to-date medical records.

â€¢ Evidence of the occurrence of disability or injury- Veterans applying for service-connected benefits must next provide evidence that their current disability was either incurred during or worsened by military service. Veterans should keep in mind, though, that the VA uses the term "in-service" broadly, also including injuries that occurred during leave.

â€¢ Evidence of connection between past injury and current disability- This requires that applicants give evidence of a connection between the injury incurred in service and the current disability. More Reading [Social security attorney florida ...](#)

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