

VA Dependent and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)

What is DIC?

If you're the surviving spouse, child, or parent of a service member who died in the line of duty, or the survivor of a Veteran who died from a service-related injury or illness, you may be able to get a tax-free monetary benefit called VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation

Eligibility

As a Surviving Spouse

You may be eligible for VA benefits or compensation for surviving spouses if you meet the requirements listed below. You'll also need to provide evidence with your claim showing that one of the descriptions below is true for the Veteran or service member. Evidence may include documents like military service records, doctor's reports, and medical test results.

One of these must be true. You:

- Married the Veteran or service member before January 1, 1957, **or**
- Married the Veteran or service member within 15 years of their discharge from the period of military service during which the qualifying illness or injury started or got worse, **or**
- Were married to the Veteran or service member for at least 1 year, **or**
- Had a child with the Veteran or service member, aren't currently remarried, and either lived with the Veteran or service member without a break until their death or, if separated, weren't at fault for the separation

Note: If you remarried on or after December 16, 2003, and you were 57 years of age or older at the time you remarried, you can still continue to receive compensation.

You'll also need to provide evidence showing that one of these descriptions is true for the Veteran or service member:

- The service member died while on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive-duty training, **or**
- The Veteran died from a service-connected illness or injury, **or**
- The Veteran didn't die from a service-connected illness or injury, but was eligible to receive VA compensation for a service-connected disability rated as totally disabling for a certain period of time

If the Veteran's eligibility was due to a rating of totally disabling, they must have had this rating:

- For at least 10 years before their death, **or**
- Since their release from active duty and for at least 5 years immediately before their death, **or**
- For at least 1 year before their death if they were a former prisoner of war who died after September 30, 1999

Note: “Totally disabling” means the Veteran’s injuries made it impossible for them to work.

As a Surviving Child

You may be able to get compensation as a surviving child if you meet the requirements listed below. You’ll also need to provide evidence with your claim showing that one of the descriptions below is true for the Veteran or service member. Evidence may include documents like military service records, doctor’s reports, and medical test results.

All of these must be true. You:

- Aren’t married, **and**
- Aren’t included on the surviving spouse’s compensation, **and**
- Are under the age of 18 (or under the age of 23 if attending school)

Note: If you were adopted out of the Veteran’s or service member’s family, but meet all other eligibility criteria, you still qualify for compensation.

You’ll also need to provide evidence that one of these descriptions is true for the Veteran or service member:

- The service member died while on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive-duty training, or
- The Veteran died from a service-connected illness or injury, or
- The Veteran didn’t die from a service-connected illness or injury, but was eligible to receive VA compensation for a service-connected disability that was rated as totally disabling for a certain period of time

If the Veteran’s eligibility was due to a service-connected disability rated as totally disabling, they must have had this rating:

- For at least 10 years before their death, or
- Since their release from active duty and for at least 5 years immediately before their death, or
- For at least 1 year before their death if they were a former prisoner of war who died after September 30, 1999

Note: “Totally disabling” means the Veteran’s injuries make it impossible for them to work.

As a Surviving Parent

You may be able to get compensation as a surviving parent if both of the descriptions below are true for you. You’ll also need to provide evidence with your claim showing that one of the descriptions below is true for the Veteran or service member. Evidence may include documents like military service records, doctor’s reports, and medical test results.

Both of these must be true:

- You're the biological, adoptive, or foster parent of the Veteran or service member, and
- Your income is below a certain amount
- View the parents DIC rate table

Note: We define a foster parent as someone who served in the role of a parent to the Veteran or service member before their last entry into active service.

You'll also need to provide evidence that one of these descriptions is true for the Veteran or service member:

- The service member died from an injury or illness while on active duty or in the line of duty while on active duty for training, or
- The service member died from an injury or certain illnesses in the line of duty while on inactive training, or
- The Veteran died from a service-connected illness or injury

How do I apply for Compensation?

First you'll need to fill out an application for benefits. The application you fill out will depend on your survivor status.

If you're the surviving spouse or child of a service member who died while on active duty, your military casualty assistance officer will help you to complete an Application for DIC, Death Pension, and/or Accrued Benefits by a Surviving Spouse or Child (VA Form 21P-534a). The officer will help you mail the form to the correct VA regional office.

[Download VA Form 21P-534a \(PDF\)](#)

If you're the surviving spouse or child of a Veteran, fill out an Application for DIC, Death Pension, and/or Accrued Benefits (VA Form 21P-534EZ).

[Download VA Form 21P-534EZ \(PDF\)](#)

If you're a surviving parent, fill out an Application for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation by Parent(s) (VA Form 21P-535).

[Download VA Form 21P-535 \(PDF\)](#)

The information provided on this sheet is for general information only regarding VA Dependent and Indemnity Compensation. For further information, please contact your local [Veteran Service Office](#).

Thank you.