



SURVIVORS PENSION BENEFITS (FORMERLY DEATH PENSION)

WHAT IS SURVIVORS PENSION?

Survivors pension is a needs-based benefit paid to surviving spouses and children of wartime Veterans, who meet certain age, disability, and marriage requirements.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

You may be eligible 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
- you are the unmarried surviving spouse (or previously married and the marriage was terminated prior to November 1, 1990); OR
- you are the unmarried child of the deceased Veteran who is under 18, who became permanently helpless before 18, or is between 18 and 23 and pursuing a course of instruction at an approved educational institution, AND
- your countable income is below the amount listed in the chart below, AND
- you meet the net worth limitations.

*If the deceased Veteran entered active duty after September 7, 1980, he or she must have served at least 24 months of active duty service. If the total length of service is less than 24 months, the Veteran must have completed their entire tour of active duty.

MAXIMUM ANNUAL PENSION RATE (MAPR) (EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 1, 2012)

If you are a...	Your yearly income must be less than...
Surviving spouse with no dependent children	\$8,359
Surviving spouse with one dependent child	\$10,942
(Add \$2,129 to the limit for EACH additional child)	
Housebound surviving spouse with no dependents	\$10,217

Disabilities determined by VA to be related to your military service can lead to monthly non-taxable compensation, enrollment in the VA health care system, a 10-point hiring preference for federal employment and other important benefits. Ask your VA representative or Veterans Service Organization representative about Disability Compensation, Pension, Health Care, Caregiver Program, Career Services, Educational Assistance, Home Loan Guaranty, Insurance and/or Dependents and Survivors' Benefits.



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



Housebound surviving spouse with one dependent	\$12,796
Surviving spouse who needs aid and attendance with no dependents	\$13,362
Surviving spouse who needs aid and attendance with one dependent	\$15,940
Surviving child (no eligible parent)	\$2,129

HOW MUCH DOES VA PAY?

VA calculates annual pension by first determining for your particular circumstances the Maximum Annual Pension Rate (MAPR), an amount set by Congress. For example, if you are a surviving spouse with no dependent children, the MAPR is \$8,359. Next VA determines your countable income. VA determines countable income by subtracting from your total annual income the amount of those exclusions provided by law. VA then subtracts from the MAPR your countable income; the difference is your yearly pension entitlement. VA divides this amount by 12 and rounds down to the nearest dollar, this is the approximate amount of your monthly pension payment.

VA deducts certain expenses paid by you, e.g., unreimbursed medical expenses, from your annual household income, which will decrease your countable income and increase your monthly pension payment. A complete list of these exclusions is provided in section 3.272 of title 38, Code of Federal Regulations. These regulations are available at the Government Printing Office website, <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2011-title38-vol1/pdf/CFR-2011-title38-vol1-sec3-272.pdf>.

HOW CAN YOU APPLY?

You may apply for survivors pension by filling out VA Form 21-534, Application for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, Death Pension and Accrued Benefits by a Surviving Spouse or Child, and mailing it to the VA regional office having jurisdiction over your claim. If you do not know which regional office has jurisdiction over your claim, you may submit your request to the VA regional office closest to your current residence. A directory of VA regional offices is available at http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/division_flash.asp?dnum=3. We ask that you provide a copy of the Veteran's death certificate with your claim.