



2021 NCHV ANNUAL CONFERENCE

CHARTING THE COURSE:
TOGETHER, APART

JUNE 21-25, 2021



NATIONAL COALITION
for **HOMELESS VETERANS**

Connecting Veterans to Benefits and Supports

Panelists:

Candace Edens
U.S. Department of Labor

Maureen Siedor
Swords to Plowshares

Lexie Holden
FRAC

Accessing Unemployment Compensation (UC) Benefits

Candace Edens, MA Org Dev/Pub
Administration

US Department of Labor

**2021 NCHV
ANNUAL
CONFERENCE**

The logo for the 2021 NCHV Annual Conference, featuring a stylized graphic of a building or structure with a red and white color scheme.

UC for Recently Separated Veterans

*UC for Ex-Servicemembers (UCX)

-
- **PURPOSE:** To provide unemployment compensation benefits for eligible Ex-servicemembers to help them meet basic needs while searching for employment.
 - **FUNDING:** The Department of Defense pays for UCX benefits on a reimbursable arrangement between Federal and state governments.
 - **PROCESS:**
 - UCX payments are made through state workforce agencies (SWAs). All 53 states have an agreement with the Secretary of Labor.
 - States administer the UCX program as agents of the Federal government. USDOL maintains oversight responsibility.



UC for Recently Separated Veterans

*UC for Ex-Servicemembers (UCX)-Eligibility

-
- **Must have been separated from the Military within the last 18 months.**
 - **Must file a claim with SWA.**
 - **Must have an “Honorable Character of Service”**
 - Discharge – in good standing; under honorable conditions with service (and if an officer, did not resign for the good of the service).
 - Character of service noted on DD-214. Ex-service member should have member copy of the DD214 available if requested by state.
 - UCX benefits are not payable when the discharge from military service is considered dishonorable.
 - **Must have completed a “First Full Term of Service”**
 - The Ex-servicemember must have performed active service and been discharged or released after completing the first full term of service to which the individual initially agreed to serve; or
 - Performed full-time active duty with one of the branches or performed active duty in a reserve component of the Armed Forces for a continuous period of 180 days or more.



UC for Recently Separated Veterans

*UC for Ex-Servicemembers (UCX)-Eligibility (cont.)

➤ Other Qualifying UCX Factors

- A claimant may also qualify for UCX benefits if discharged or released before completing the first full term of service for one of the four reasons (called the acceptable narrative reasons):
 - For the convenience of the government under an early release program; or,
 - Because of medical disqualification, pregnancy, parenthood or any service-incurred injury or disability; or,
 - Because of hardship; or,
 - Because of personality disorders or inaptitude, but only if the service was continuous for 365 days or more.
- Refer to [Unemployment Insurance Program Letter No. 30-20](#) for latest acceptable narrative reasons.



UC for Recently Separated Veterans

*UC for Ex-Servicemembers (UCX)-Monetary Entitlement

➤ UCX Monetary Entitlement

- The UCX weekly benefit amount (WBA) is computed in the same way as weekly benefits are computed under the state's regular unemployment insurance program.
- DOL issues a Training and Employment Notice with the Annual Remuneration Schedule for Ex-servicemembers' wages.
- Earnings for accrued leave, part-time income and/or a military pension may reduce the WBA as in the regular state UI program.
- UCX claimants can receive benefit payments up to a maximum of 26 weeks times the WBA in most states.

UC for Recently Separated Veterans

*UC for Ex-Servicemembers (UCX)-Determination Process

➤ UCX Determination Process

- A formal, written decision (called a *determination*) is sent to the Ex-servicemember regarding his/her UCX eligibility.
- Because states use information received directly from the military to establish (or deny establishment) of the UCX claim, it is considered final and conclusive. The Ex-servicemember may not appeal that determination.
- The claimant may contact the military directly to ask for a reconsideration of the information provided on the DD-214 form. Reconsiderations are usually provided on a DD-215 form.

UC for Recently Separated Veterans

*UC for Ex-Servicemembers (UCX)-Appeals

➤ UCX Appeals

- Ex-servicemembers may not appeal UCX eligibility determinations concerning monetary entitlement.
- If a claimant disagrees with information supplied from the military, he/she may request a reconsideration directly from the military (usually done via an ETA-843 form).
- If an amended DD-214, a DD-215, or other discharge/separation form is provided to the state, a UCX re-determination may be made.
- Ex-servicemembers may file appeals if their claims are fully or partially denied for other reasons.
 - Ability to work and availability for work
 - Subsequent separation(s) from other employment
 - Receipt of disqualifying remuneration (accrued leave, military pension, disability severance pay, earnings)
 - Refusal of suitable work

UC for Civilians

-
- **PURPOSE:** To provide unemployment compensation benefits for eligible covered workers to help them meet basic needs while searching for employment.
 - **FUNDING:** Employers pay benefits through taxes. The tax rate employers pay is based on their experience with unemployment.
 - **PROCESS:**
 - UC payments are made through SWA.
 - USDOL maintains oversight responsibility.

UC for Civilians

➤ ELIGIBILITY

- Based on state law;
- Have to have earned enough wages in the last 18 months to qualify for benefits (each state has different requirements for this);
- Weekly benefit amount is determined based on wages earned from all employers in the base period;
- Reason for separation determines initial non-monetary eligibility
 - Have to be unemployed without “fault”;
- Have to be able to work, available for work, and actively seeking work each week.

Combined UCX and UC Claims

➤ ELIGIBILITY

- Military wages are combined with civilian wages to determine final weekly benefit amount.
- Military wages may only be used if they meet the requirements for “Federal Service”
 - All wages are used if Federal Service, if not, then none of the wages are used.
- If Military was last employer (and the service is considered Federal Service), then the reason for separation from the Military determines initial non-monetary eligibility. If civilian employment was the last employment, then the separation from the civilian employment determines initial non-monetary eligibility.
 - Have to be unemployed without “fault”.
- Have to be able to work, available for work, and actively seeking work each week.

Resources

➤ Comparison of State Unemployment Laws 2020

- <https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/comparison/2020-2029/comparison2020.asp>

➤ Service Locator for UC benefits

- <https://www.careeronestop.org/LocalHelp/UnemploymentBenefits/unemployment-benefits.aspx>

➤ CareerOneStop resources for transitioning service members, veterans, and military spouses.

- <https://www.careeronestop.org/ResourcesFor/Veteran/veteran.aspx>

Helping Veterans Access VA Benefits

Mo Siedor
Legal Director

Swords to Plowshares
1060 Howard Street
San Francisco, CA 94103
www.stp-sf.org;
maureen.siedor@stp-sf.org



VETS HELPING VETS SINCE 1974

Accessing VA Benefits

Learning Objectives

- Swords to Plowshares Introduction
- VA Benefits Overview
- Basic Eligibility – Who is a “veteran” according to the VA?
- **Three VA Benefits:**
 - 1. VA Healthcare
 - 2. VA Service–Connected Disability Compensation
 - 3. Wartime Pension (aka Non-Service-Connected Pension)



Swords to Plowshares



**Permanent &
Supportive
Housing**



**Health &
Social
Services**



**Transitional
Housing**



**Employment &
Training**



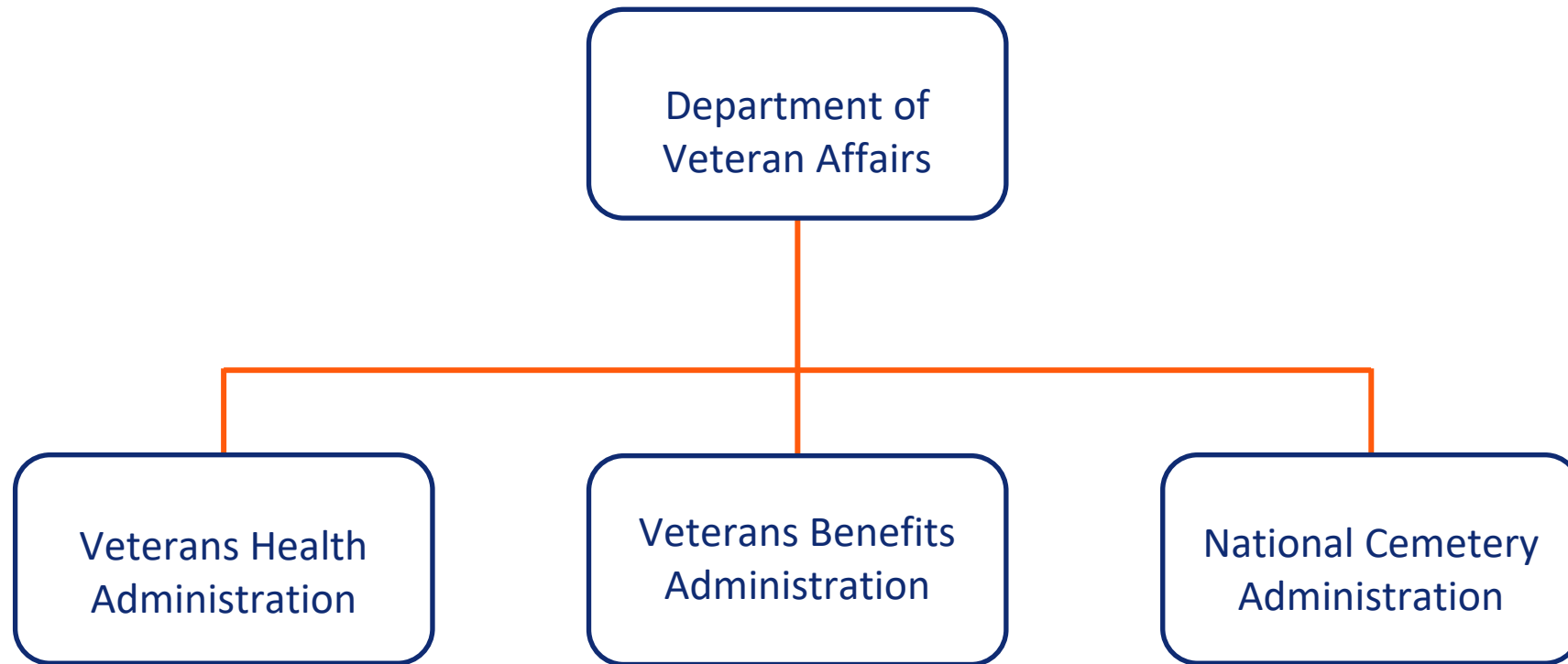
**Institute for
Veteran Policy**



Legal Services

About the VA

\$218.5 Billion Budget in 2020
Nearly 400,000 FT Employees



VA Benefits



Step #1. ELIGIBILITY

- Obtain “Veteran Status”



Step #2. ENTITLEMENT

- Criteria Met for the Specific Benefits
 - VA Healthcare (VHA)
 - Service-Connected Disability Compensation (VBA)
 - Non-Service-Connected Pension (VBA)

Step #1 Eligibility at the VA

Who has “veteran status” at the VA?

- “A person who served in the **active military, naval, or air service**, and who was discharged or released there from **under conditions other than dishonorable.**”

38 USC 101(2)

Basic Eligibility:

- 1. Federal, active military service
- 2. Not dishonorable service



1) Federal, Active Service

ACTIVE DUTY

- Army, Navy, USMC, USAF, Coast Guard, Space Force
- Always active, always federal

RESERVES

- Federal entity
- Active service whenever mobilized

NATIONAL GUARD

- State entity
- Federal, active service only when mobilized on “Title 10 orders” (i.e. by the President)



Discharge Characterizations

Honorable	Service member met the standards of acceptable conduct and performance.
General Under Honorable Conditions	Service record is satisfactory but not sufficiently meritorious to warrant a fully honorable discharge.
Uncharacterized	Typically applies to those who leave the military within first 180 days.
Other than Honorable	Service record shows some misconduct, but not with a court-martial conviction.
Bad Conduct	Requires conviction by court-martial.
Dishonorable	Requires conviction by General Court Martial. Comparable to a civilian felony-level offense.

2. “Not dishonorable service”

Honorable		Eligible
General		
Uncharacterized	Due to Entry Level Separation	
Uncharacterized	Due to Void Enlistment/Dropped from the Rolls	VA Character of Discharge Determination needed
Other than Honorable	Service record shows some misconduct, but not with a court-martial conviction.	
Bad Conduct	From conviction of a Special Court Martial (misdemeanor-level)	
Bad Conduct	From conviction of a General Court Martial (felony-level court)	Barred from VA benefits*
Dishonorable		

*unless insane at the time of the misconduct

Character of Discharge Determination

STATUTORY BARS:

38 USC 5303 & C.F.R 3.12(c)

- General Court Martial
- AWOL \geq 180 days, unless mitigated
- Conscientious objector
- Deserter

INSANITY EXCEPTION

38 C.F.R. 3.12(b)

VA OGC Prec. Op. 20-97

Lower standard than criminal insanity

REGULATORY BARS:

38 C.F.R. 3.12(d)

- In lieu of General Court Martial
- “Willful and persistent misconduct” unless misconduct was minor and service was otherwise “honest, faithful and meritorious”
- “Moral turpitude” usually involving felony conviction

“Bad Paper” Risk

Causes of Bad Paper...

Mental Health

PTSD diagnosis - 11x more likely

Retaliation

MST report - 35% more likely

Differences between branches

Marines 10x more likely than Airmen

Changing pattern between eras

Post-9/11 - 3x more likely than during Vietnam Era

...and the Consequences

Suicide

2x suicide rate

Suicidal Ideation

3x higher

Homelessness

7x homelessness rate

Incarceration

50% higher rate

Bad Paper Racial Disparities

Black service members are substantially more likely than white service members to face military justice or disciplinary action.

- In the **Air Force**, black airmen on average are 1.71 times (71%) more likely to face court-martial or Non-Judicial Punishment (NJP) than white airmen.
- In the **Marine Corps**, black Marines are, on average, 1.32 times (32%) more likely to receive a guilty finding at a court-martial or NJP proceeding than white Marines, with the size of the disparity becoming more significant the more serious the disciplinary action was.
- In the **Navy**, black sailors are on average 1.40 times (40%) more likely than white sailors to be referred to special or general court-martial.
- In the **Army**, black soldiers are on average 1.61 times (61%) more likely to face a special or general court-martial compared to white service members

Character of Discharge Determination

- Honorable or General Under Honorable – no issues
- VA's review does not happen automatically on discharge.
- Occurs when you file for a VA benefit.
- Can request hearing, provide evidence, and appeal.
- If successful once, that will establish their **“veteran status”** at VA and that applies for all VA benefits, except GI Bill.

VA Benefits



Step #1. ELIGIBILITY

- Who is a Veteran according to the VA?

Step #2. ENTITLEMENT

- Criteria Met for the Specific Benefits
 - * VA Healthcare (VHA)
 - * Service-Connected Disability Compensation (VBA)
 - * Non-Service-Connected Pension (VBA)



VHA Benefits Overview



Comprehensive
Health Care



Medication



Domiciliary &
Nursing Homes



HUD-VASH
Subsidized
Housing



Extended Care
& Geriatrics

VHA Benefits Eligibility

✓ Veteran Status

• Minimum Length In Service

- 24 consecutive months (enlisted 09/08/1980-today)
- 90 days (enlisted before 09/08/1980)
- Full time ordered to active duty for Guard & Reserve
- **Exceptions:**
 - Service-Connected Condition
 - Hardship or Early Out discharge

• Level of care and co-pays based on “Priority Group”

- Service-connected disability rating
- Income
- Discharged within five years

Notable Eligibility Exceptions for VHA Care

- Mental health care expansion (VA Form 20-0986)
- Chapter 17 healthcare benefits
- See VHA Directive 1601A.02

Enrolling at VHA

- **In-Person:** Complete **VA Form 10-10EZ** at Enrollment Office at local VHA Facility
- **Via Phone:** VHA Help Line: 877-222-8387
- **Via Mail:** **VA Form 10-10EZ** to Health Eligibility Center, 2957 Clairmont Rd., Suite 200, Atlanta, GA 30329
- **Via Online Portal:** <https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction>



VBA Benefits Overview



Income



Education &
GI Bill



Vocational
Rehabilitation



Survivor's
Benefits



Home Loans



Life Insurance

Main VBA Cash Benefits

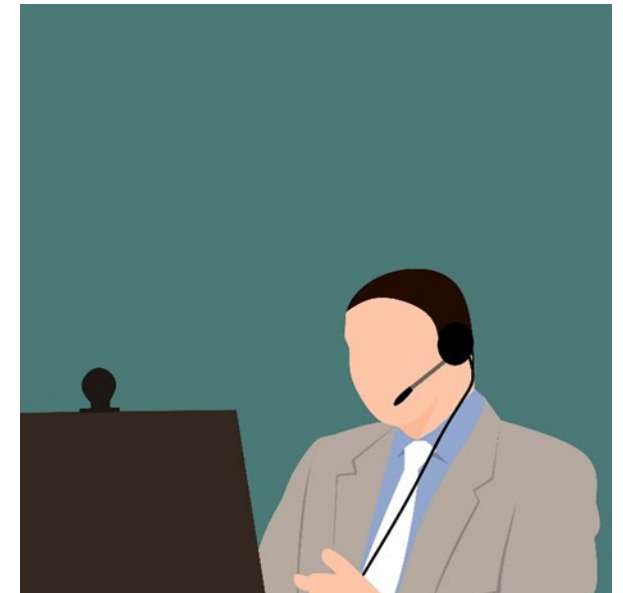
Monthly, Tax-free Monetary Benefits

Duly entitled Veterans receive higher benefit

For Veterans with a current health condition connected to their military service	For low-income wartime Veterans who are age 65+ or “totally and permanently disabled”

Accreditation Requirements

- No individual may assist claimants in the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims for VA benefits as an agent or attorney **unless he or she has first been accredited by VA** for such purpose.
- For more information, including form, visit <http://www.va.gov/ogc/accreditation.asp>



VA-Accredited VSOs

- Veteran Service Offices:

African American PTSD Association
American Legion
American Red Cross
AMVETS
American Ex-Prisoners of War, Inc.
American GI Forum, National Veterans Outreach Program
Armed Forces Services Corporation
Army and Navy Union, USA
Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America
Blinded Veterans Association
Catholic War Veterans of the U.S.A.
Disabled American Veterans
Fleet Reserve Association
Gold Star Wives of America, Inc.
Italian American War Veterans of the United States, Inc.
Jewish War Veterans of the United States
Legion of Valor of the United States of America, Inc.
Marine Corps League
Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)
Military Order of the Purple Heart
National Amputation Foundation, Inc.

National Association of County Veterans Service Officers, Inc,
National Association for Black Veterans, Inc.
National Veterans Legal Services Program
National Veterans Organization of America
Navy Mutual Aid Association
Paralyzed Veterans of America, Inc.
Polish Legion of American Veterans, U.S.A.
Swords to Plowshares, Veterans Rights Organization, Inc.
The Retired Enlisted Association
The Veterans Assistance Foundation, Inc.
The Veterans of the Vietnam War, Inc. & The Veterans
Coalition
United Spanish War Veterans of the United States
United Spinal Association, Inc.
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States
Veterans of World War I of the U.S.A., Inc.
Vietnam Era Veterans Association
Vietnam Veterans of America
West Virginia Department of Veterans Assistance
Wounded Warrior Project

CVSOs & Lawyers

- **Government Agencies**

- State's Department of Veterans Affairs
- County's Veteran Service Office
- See VA's website

- **Free Legal Assistance**

- Local Legal Services Organizations
- Stateside Legal - <https://www.statesidelegal.org/>
- Law School Clinics
 - National Law School Veterans Consortium (<https://nlsvcc.org/>)

- **Private Attorneys**

- Able to charge fees on claims appeals
- National Organization of Veterans Advocates (<https://www.vetadvocates.org/>)

Accredited Representatives

VSOs at Regional Benefit Offices

State Index

A | C | D | F | G | H | I | K | L | M | N | O | P | R | S | T | U | V | W

A

ALABAMA

[Montgomery Regional Benefit Office](#)

ALASKA

[Anchorage Regional Benefit Office](#)

QUICK LINKS

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[VSOs at Regional Benefit Offices](#)

[VA Recognition as a Tribal Organization](#)

[Fully Developed Claims](#)

[Benefits of Working with a VSO](#)

Service-Connected Compensation

A monthly cash benefit for Veterans who have a current physical or mental health condition that was incurred or aggravated during their active military service, and the health condition is not the result of the Veteran's willful misconduct.

Elements of Service-Connected Compensation

1. Eligibility: Veteran Status



2. Entitlement: **Prove all three elements of service-connection:**

CURRENT PHYSICAL OR
MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION



IN-SERVICE INCIDENT



Service-Connected Compensation

- Receipt comes with automatic health care priority and other VA services/benefits
- Many veterans are eligible
 - Not means tested; not offset by other income
 - No minimum length of service requirement
 - No wartime requirement
- Provides lifelong income
 - Awarded on a percentage basis called a “rating” (0%-100%)
 - Amount of rating based on severity of health condition(s)
 - Can increase rating anytime condition worsens

Service-Connected Rates in 2021

RATING	COMPENSATION	RATING	COMPENSATION
10%	\$144	60%	\$1,146
20%	\$284	70%	\$1,445
30%	\$441	80%	\$1,679
40%	\$636	90%	\$1,887
50%	\$905	100%	\$3,146

Wartime (aka Non-Service-Connected) Pension Basics

Non-Service-Connected Pension is a benefit for wartime Veterans who have low income, few assets, and are totally disabled or age 65+.

Eligibility: Veteran Status



Entitlement

- Wartime Service & Minimum Length of Service
- Low-income & Few Assets
- Totally Disabled or Age 65+

Amount of benefit based on Veteran's countable income, number of dependents, and severity of disabilities

NSC Pension: Wartime Service

Veteran served at least **1 day** during wartime **AND** meets minimum time in service requirement

WARTIME PERIOD	START	END	MINIMUM TIME IN SERVICE
World War II	Dec. 7, 1941	Dec. 31, 1946	90 days of active duty OR Discharged prior to completion of 90 days due to service-connected disability
Korean Conflict	June 27, 1950	Jan. 31, 1955	
Vietnam Era	In Republic of Vietnam: February 8, 1961 Outside Republic of Vietnam: August 5, 1964	May 7, 1975	
Gulf War Era	August 2, 1990	Present	Same as above <i>AND if enlisted on or after Sept 8, 1980:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Served 24 months or • Served time required at enlistment or • Has any service-connected condition

NSC Pension: Low-Income & Few Assets

Needs-Based Benefit

- **Countable annual income must be below “Maximum Annual Pension Rate.”**
 - Single Veteran: \$13,752 (\$1,146/month)
 - Veteran with a spouse: \$18,008 (\$1,500/month)
- **Asset limit** is \$129,094 with three year lookback period
- **Calculating Annual Award:** VA reduces MAPR dollar-for-dollar by the amount of the Veteran’s **countable income** to determine the annual award.

NSC Pension: Calculating Award Example

Single Veteran MAPR = \$13,931 (\$1,161/month)

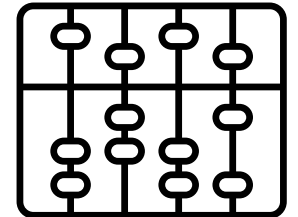
Example #1

Single Veteran has \$0 in Countable Income → Annual VA Pension award of \$13,931 (\$1,161/month)

Example #2

Single Veteran has \$1,000/month in Countable Income and \$300/month in unreimbursed medical expenses

MAPR (\$13,931) – Veteran's Annual Countable Income (\$12,000) + medical expenses (\$3,600) = Annual VA Pension award of \$5,531 (\$461/month)



Review

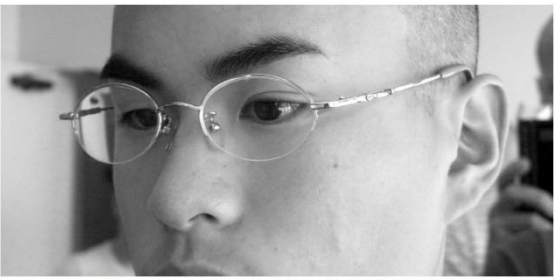
Step 1: Do they have “veteran status”? (i.e. active, federal, not dishonorable service)

Step 2: Are they entitled to the particular VA benefits?

- **Healthcare:** those with minimum length in service, and priority group (service-connected, pension, awards, low-income, etc.)
- **Service-Connection** (current disability that stems from or was aggravated by some event, injury, or diagnosis on active duty)
- **Wartime Pension** (low-income, 100% disabled or 65+, at least one day of wartime service)

Resources:

- VHA Enrollment Offices
- VSO Offices
- CVSO Offices
- Legal Service Providers, Legal Clinics, and Law Schools



Accessing SNAP Benefits

Lexie Holden, Emerson Hunger Fellow



FRAC is the leading national nonprofit organization working to eradicate poverty-related hunger and undernutrition in the United States.



Agenda



Basics of Food Insecurity
What it is & the rate of food insecurity
among homeless veterans



Overview of SNAP
How the program works & barriers to
accessing benefits



SNAP Myths
Debunking common myths around
accessing SNAP benefits



Action Items
Taking the next step to connect
homeless veterans with resources

What is food insecurity?

Hunger

Personal, physical sensation of discomfort from lack of food [1]

Food Insecurity

A lack of consistent access to enough healthy, affordable food for a healthy, active life [1]

[1] <https://hungerandhealth.feedingamerica.org/understand-food-insecurity/>



Statistics

11.8%

Rate of food insecurity in the U.S. in 2017 [4]

8.4%

Rate of food insecurity for veterans in 2017 [5]

35.2%

Rate of food insecurity for veterans experiencing mental illness in 2017 [5]

40,020

Number of homeless veterans in 2017 [6]



[4] <https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/90023/err-256.pdf?v=5873.3>

[5] https://impaqint.com/sites/default/files/issue-briefs/VeteransFoodInsecurity_IssueBrief_V1.3.pdf

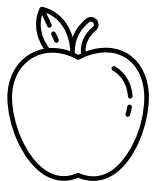
[6] <https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/homelessness-statistics/state-of-homelessness-2020/>

Causes of food insecurity

- Lack of Sufficient Income
- Lack of Affordable Housing
- Job Instability
- Illness & Disability
- Age, Gender, Race/Ethnicity
- Era of Service
- Educational Attainment
- Marital Status

A limited selection of the root causes which may affect homeless veterans

[2] & [3]



[2] <https://www.csis.org/analysis/food-insecurity-among-us-veterans-and-military-families>

[3] https://impaqint.com/sites/default/files/issue-briefs/VeteransFoodInsecurity_IssueBrief_V1.3.pdf

Effects of food insecurity

- Poor Health
- Diabetes
- Anemia
- Depression
- Disability
- Limitations in Daily Activities
- Decreased Quality of Life
- Reduced Intake of Calories & Key Nutrients



What is SNAP?

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

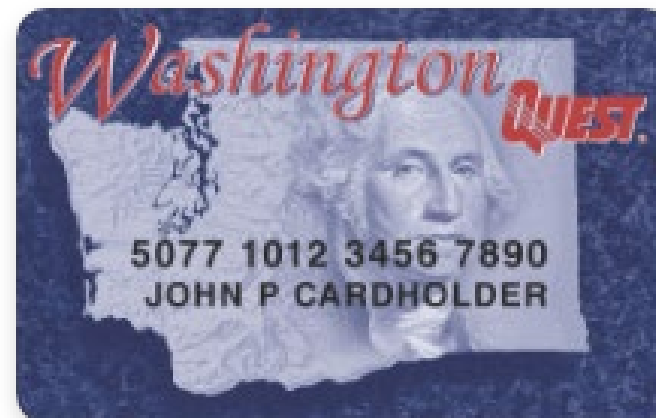
Formerly known as food stamps, name varies by state

Nation's first line of defense against hunger

Entitlement program administered by USDA-FNS

Operated by states, counties

Can be used at any approved retailer



What does SNAP do?

Reduces Hunger

By providing low-income people with food money

Bolsters Local Economies

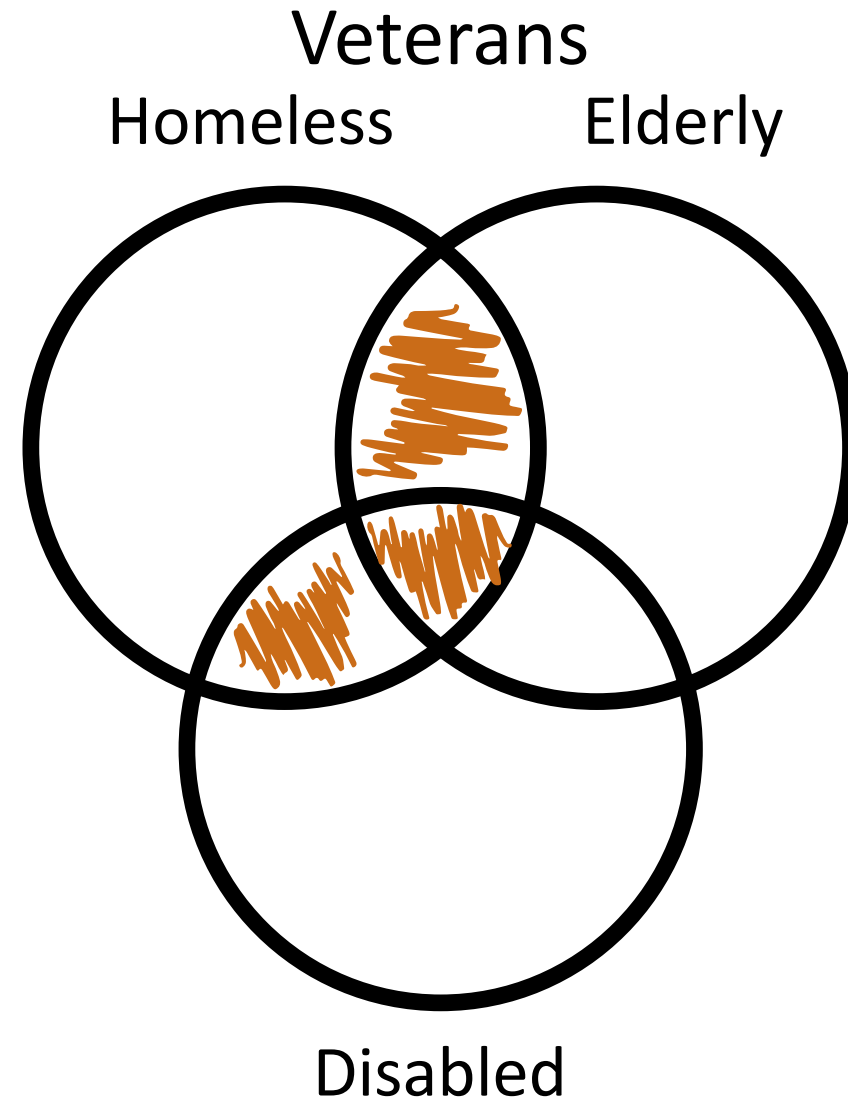
By increasing money spent on food at local retailers

Delivers Assistance

Quickly & effectively to those in need



SNAP for Homeless Veterans



SNAP for Homeless Veterans

Elderly defined as:

Those eligible individuals aged 60 years & older

Disabled defined as:

Those eligible individuals who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and/or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

Homeless defined as:

Those eligible individuals lacking fixed & regular nighttime residence, or whose primary nighttime residence is a shelter/welfare hotel/institution/temporary accommodation where they will live for fewer than 90 days/non-traditional sleeping space



SNAP

Eligibility

Anyone who meets one of these requirements is "Categorically Eligible" in some states [7] & many states do not have asset limits for TANF or similar programs

Receives SSI

Supplemental Security Income

Receives Public Assistance

Or General Assistance from a state/local government, like the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

Otherwise, eligibility is means-tested

[7] <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/BBCStatesChart%28May2020%29.pdf>



SNAP

Eligibility

All other households have their gross income, net income, and assets taken into consideration [8]. Disabled or elderly individuals only have a net income test, not a gross income test.

Gross Monthly Income

Household income, generally at or below 130% of the federal poverty line, may vary by state

Includes: all cash income, cash assistance, SSI, unemployment insurance, child support

Net Income

Income after deductions, including homeless deductions, must be at or below poverty line

Assets* (Rare)

Must fall below \$2,250 for those who are not elderly and do not have a disability, or \$3,500 for those who are elderly and/or disabled

Includes: Bank accounts

[8] <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/a-quick-guide-to-snap-eligibility-and-benefits>



SNAP Eligibility

Depending on the state, an individual may be eligible if their income is between 130% and 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).

Federal Poverty Level (FPL)

\$12,880 for HH of one

130% of FPL

\$16,744 for HH of one

200% of FPL

\$25,760 for HH of one

How Benefits Amount is Determined

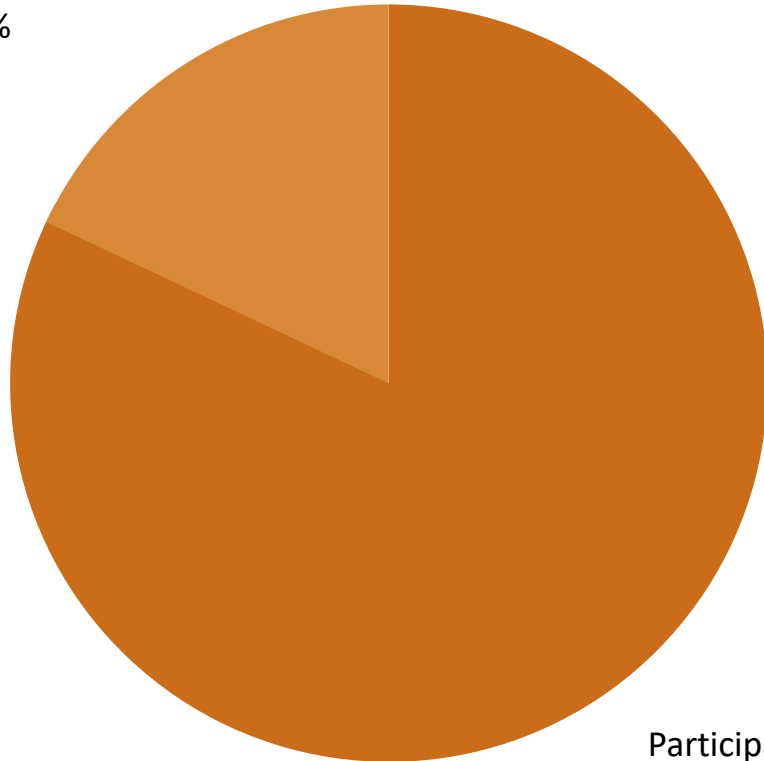
The lower your income and the larger your HH (how many people purchase and prepare food together), the more benefits you receive.

Household Size	Pre-COVID Maximum Benefit	COVID Max. Benefit + 15%	115% Benefit + \$95
1	\$204	\$234	\$329



Barriers to Access

Did Not Participate
18%



Participated
82%

Not everyone who is eligible for SNAP currently receives benefits. In 2018, nearly one-fifth of eligible people did not participate in SNAP.





Don't know how to apply



Think benefits couldn't really help



No computer or phone access



Need help navigating the process



Language barriers



Misinformation & stigma

Barriers to Access



Permanent Address

Myth

You need a permanent or mailing address to receive SNAP benefits.

Truth

You do not need a permanent address, place to cook, or regular place to live in order to receive benefits.



Using multiple food sources

Myth

You cannot receive SNAP if you use a food bank or soup kitchen to get food.

Truth

You can use those resources AND receive SNAP benefits.



Verifying Identity

Myth

You must provide a photo ID when applying for SNAP benefits.

Truth

You only need to prove your identity, which can be done in several ways.



Time Limits

Myth

If not disabled or elderly, you must be currently working to continue receiving SNAP benefits after 3 months.

Truth

During the pandemic, no time limits apply and during non-pandemic times there are many exemptions to such time limits.



Where Benefits Can Be Spent

Myth

SNAP benefits can only be used at grocery stores.

Truth

SNAP benefits can be spent at any authorized retailer, including farmers markets and convenience stores. Homeless, elderly, or disabled SNAP recipients can also visit restaurants in some states.



Connecting Veterans to Benefits

Benefits Check Up Tool

<https://www.benefitscheckup.org/>

USDA-FNS SNAP Page

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program>

SNAP Retailer Locator

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailer-locator>

USDA-FNS Directory

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/state-directory>



Information to Have On Hand

- Compelling message encouraging participation, in multiple languages
- Knowledge of where the local SNAP office is located & how to apply; be prepared to help walk the veteran through the application process
- Knowledge of authorized local retailers, including any restaurants, and transit options
- Other resources to address veterans' housing, employment, mental health, etc. needs



Resources

For advocates, policymakers, etc.

Toolkit for Connecting Seniors, Veterans to SNAP:

https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/senior_snap_toolkit_aarp_frac-1.pdf

More SNAP Myths and Truths:

https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/myths-homeless.pdf

SNAP Homeless Shelter Deduction, Explained:

<https://www.cbpp.org/research/snaps-homeless-shelter-deduction-can-provide-much-needed-help-for-homeless-individuals-and>

SNAP for Homeless Individuals, Basics:

https://www.k12northstar.org/cms/lib/AK01901510/Centricity/Domain/1096/snaphomeless_qa.pdf

SNAP Restaurant Meals Program:

<https://ask.usda.gov/s/article/Can-I-buy-food-at-restaurants-with-Supplemental-Nutrition-Assistance-Program-benefits-For-SNAP-Clien>

Thank You!

For more questions, please reach
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Q&A



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**THANK
YOU**

