

The Aid-and-Attendance Pension Benefit

Aid and Attendance will pay a specific amount to an eligible former veteran or a spouse of an eligible former veteran. This is not to be confused with military retirement.

Eligibility requirements (must meet all four):

- 1) A discharge from service under honorable conditions (not discharged dishonorably),
- 2) Veteran served in a period of war (WWI, WWII, Korean, Vietnam, and Persian Gulf War).
 - If served prior to 1980 – 90 days or more of service, one day in a period of declared war,
 - If served after 1980 – 24 continuous months or more of service or the full period for which you were called to active duty.
- 3) Your family income is below the standard set by Congress (this will vary depending on marital status, dependents and the year you file).
- 4) You at least 65 or permanently and totally disabled through no willful misconduct of your own.

In addition, Aid and Attendance benefits require at least one of the following (medical evidence required):

- 1) The veteran requires the aid of another person in order to perform Activities of Daily Living. (ADL's can include: 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
- 2) The veteran is bedridden, or

- 3) The veteran is a patient in a nursing home due to mental or physical incapacity, or
- 4) The veteran is blind, with corrected visual acuity of 5/200 or less, in both eyes or concentric contraction of the visual field to 5 degrees or less.

Even if a veteran has passed away, their surviving spouse who has not remarried and who meets the above criteria can qualify for this benefit.

The pension is paid monthly but based on the annual income limit. Any deductions are subtracted from the total payments. Although annual amounts may change each year. The current (2009) payments can be up to:

- \$1,645 per month for a single person
- \$1,949 per month for a married couple
- \$1,057 per month for the widow of a Veteran

Applications take four to six months for the Department of Veterans Affairs to process. Once a pension benefit is approved, though, it's retroactive to when the senior applied. If a veteran does not qualify upon filing, they can file again once they meet the specific criteria.

For more information contact your regional Office for Veterans Affairs. In Portland, the number is 800-827-1000 and in Washington you can call 800-827-1000. Or go to www.2.va.gov for more information.