

VA Burial Benefits - www.VA.gov

<https://www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/factsheets/burials/Burial.pdf>

What Are VA Burial Allowances?

VA burial allowances are flat-rate monetary benefits. They help cover eligible Veterans' burial and funeral costs. Generally, they are paid at the maximum amount allowed by law.

A 2014 VA regulation change helped simplify the program. Eligible surviving spouses are now paid automatically. This happens upon notification of the Veteran's death. There is no need to submit a claim.

However, VA may grant additional benefits after receiving a claim. These include plot or interment allowance and transportation allowance.

Who Is Eligible?

If the surviving spouse has not been automatically paid, VA will pay whomever files a claim first of the following:

- The Veteran's surviving spouse
- The Veteran's children, regardless of age
- The Veteran's parents
- The executor or administrator of the estate
- The survivor of a legal union with the Veteran. This applies to formal relationships that continued up until the Veteran's death. The couple needs to have formalized the relationship under the law of the state. There should be state-issued documentation of the relationship.

The Veteran must have a discharge other than dishonorable. The Veteran must also have met one of the following conditions:

- Death as the result of a service-connected disability
- Receiving VA pension or compensation at time of death
- Entitled to receive VA pension or compensation at time of death, but instead received full military retirement or disability pay
- Died while hospitalized by VA or while receiving care under VA contract
- Died while traveling under the following circumstances:
 - Under proper authorization and at VA expense
 - To or from a place for the purpose of examination, treatment or care
- Had an original or reopened claim for VA compensation or pension pending at the time of death
 - Only if the Veteran would have been entitled to benefits from a date prior to the death date
- Died on or after Oct. 9, 1996, while a patient at a VA-approved state nursing home

How Much Does VA Pay?

For service-connected deaths:

- If the Veteran died on or after Sept. 11, 2001: maximum \$2,000
- If the Veteran is buried in a VA national cemetery: some or all of the costs of transporting remains

For non-service-connected deaths:

Effective Oct. 1, 2011, non-service-connected death rates have changed. Payable rates are higher if the Veteran was hospitalized by VA at time of death.

- If the Veteran died on or after Oct. 1, 2017: \$762 burial allowance; \$762 for a plot
- If death occurred while the Veteran was hospitalized by VA: some or all costs of transporting remains
 - This also applies to VA-contracted nursing home care.

Note: If the Veteran dies while traveling at VA expense, VA will pay burial, funeral, plot or interment allowances. VA will also pay transportation expenses. The traveling must have been for the purpose of an exam, treatment or care.

How Can You Apply?

Apply by filling out VA Form 21P-530, "Application for Burial Benefits." You can find the form at <https://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21p-530-ARE.pdf>.

Attach a copy of the deceased's discharge document and a death certificate. Attach a receipt if you are claiming transportation expenses.

Mail your application to the VA regional benefit office in your state. You can find your office location by visiting <https://www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/offices.asp>.

For more information, call 800-827-1000, or contact your local VA regional benefit office.

Headstones, Markers and Medallions

<https://www.cem.va.gov/cem/hmm/index.asp>

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) furnishes upon request, at no charge to the applicant, a Government headstone or marker for the unmarked grave of any deceased eligible Veteran in any cemetery around the world, regardless of their date of death.

A Government-furnished headstone or marker may be provided for eligible Veterans who died on or after Nov. 1, 1990 and whose grave is marked with a privately purchased headstone. A Government-furnished medallion may be provided for eligible Veterans who served on or after Apr. 6, 1917 and whose grave is marked with a privately purchased headstone or marker.

Flat markers in granite, marble, and bronze and upright headstones in granite and marble are available. Bronze niche markers are also available to mark columbaria used for inurnment of cremated remains. The style chosen must be permitted by the officials in charge of the private cemetery where it will be placed.

When burial or memorialization is in a national cemetery, state Veterans' cemetery, or military post/base cemetery, a headstone or marker will be ordered by the cemetery officials based on inscription information provided by the next of kin or authorized representative.

Spouses and dependents are not eligible for a Government-furnished headstone or marker unless they are buried in a national cemetery, state Veteran's cemetery, or military post/base cemetery.

Note: There is no charge for the headstone or marker itself, however arrangements for placing it in a private cemetery are the applicant's responsibility and all setting fees are at private expense.