



VA Offers a Variety of Financial Benefits for Veterans MAY 2019

Through the County's Veteran Services Office, for calendar year 2018, veterans and or dependents received over \$2.9 million in retroactive pay with a combined monthly payment of over \$430 thousand! Compensation and pensions are one of the main categories of benefits provided by the Veterans Administration (VA). The primary benefit is a service-connected compensation commonly called disability compensation. This tax-free benefit is paid to veterans with disabilities resulting from a disease or injury experienced or aggravated during active military service. Compensation may also be paid for post-service disabilities considered related or secondary to disabilities that occurred during service and for disabilities presumed to be related to the circumstances of military service, even though they may arise after service. There are numerous causes for this type of disability, and they are divided into several categories. Direct causation is an injury that occurs while the veteran was in the service. Presumptive causations are usually substances the service member was exposed to while in service. It could be Agent Orange, radiation, weapons of mass destruction or conditions that prisoners of war were exposed while in enemy captivity. The most common presumptive service connected disabilities are the ones associated with Agent Orange. <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/conditions/index.asp>

Secondary conditions are conditions that are caused by the service-connected condition. Non-service connected pension is a benefit that is like a safety net for disabled veterans with very low or no income and a low amount of liquid assets.

VA offers two broad categories of pension benefit programs:

- Veterans Pension: Tax-free monetary benefit payable to low-income wartime veterans.
- Survivors Pension: Tax-free monetary benefit payable to a low-income, un-remarried surviving spouse and/or unmarried minor children of a deceased veteran with wartime service. This benefit may help wartime veterans who have non-service connected conditions that prohibit them from working or if they are over age 65 and not working. The widows of wartime veterans who were married to the veteran at the time of the veteran's death and have not remarried may also apply for this benefit. This VA benefit is offset by any other form of income, including Social Security. For VA purposes, income is also offset by medical expenses. In most cases the entire cost of the assisted-living and skilled-nursing facility may be an income offset and qualify the veteran or widow for the pension with aid and attendance. There are liquid asset limits however, this amount is fluid but it does not include a house and cars. For more information, please visit our office at 550 Quarry Street in San Carlos. **SAVE THE DATE - May 11th, VA Benefits Seminar at the Veterans Memorial Senior Center, from 9am-12pm, 1455 Madison Ave., Redwood City.**

The Veterans Crisis Line connects Veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, or text. Veterans and their loved ones can call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1, chat online, or send a text message to 838255 to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Support for deaf and hard of hearing individuals is available. <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>

