

## Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents and Survivors

**Eligibility for Disability Pension:** Veterans with low incomes who are either permanently and totally disabled, or age 65 and older, may be eligible for monetary support if they have 90 days or more of active military service, at least one day of which was during a period of war. (Veterans who entered active duty on or after Sept. 8, 1980, or officers who entered active duty on or after Oct. 16, 1981, may have to meet a longer minimum period of active duty). The veteran's discharge must have been under conditions other than dishonorable and the disability must be for reasons other than the veteran's own willful misconduct.

Payments are made to bring the veteran's total income, including other retirement or Social Security income, to a level set by Congress. Un-reimbursed medical expenses may reduce countable income for VA purposes.

**Protected Pension:** Pension beneficiaries, who were receiving a VA pension on Dec. 31, 1978, and do not wish to elect the Improved Pension, will continue to receive the pension rate received on that date. This rate generally continues as long as the beneficiary's income remains within established limits, or net worth does not bar payment, and the beneficiary does not lose any dependents.

Beneficiaries must continue to meet basic eligibility factors, such as permanent and total disability for veterans. VA must adjust rates for other reasons, such as a veteran's hospitalization in a VA facility.

**Medal of Honor Pension:** VA administers pensions to recipients of the Medal of Honor. Congress set the monthly pension at \$1,194.

**Improved Disability Pension:** Congress establishes the maximum annual improved disability pension rates. Payments are reduced by the amount of countable income of the veteran, spouse and dependent children. When a veteran without a spouse or a child is furnished nursing home or domiciliary care by VA, the pension is reduced to an amount not to exceed \$90 per month after three calendar months of care. The reduction may be delayed if nursing-home care is being continued to provide the veteran with rehabilitation services.

| 2010 VA Improved Disability Pension Rates                 |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| Status of Veteran's Family Situation and Caretaking Needs | Maximum Annual Rate |
| Veteran without dependents                                | \$11,830            |
| Veteran with one dependent                                | \$15,493            |
| Veteran permanently housebound, no dependents             | \$14,457            |
| Veteran permanently housebound, one dependent             | \$18,120            |
| Veteran needing regular aid and attendance, no dependents | \$19,736            |
| Veteran needing regular aid and attendance, one dependent | \$23,396            |
| Two veterans married to one another                       | \$15,493            |
| Increase for each additional dependent child              | \$2,020             |

\* Additional information can be found in the Compensation and Pension Benefits section of VA's Internet pages at [www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/index.htm](http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/index.htm).