



Services for Pennsylvania Veterans by Disability Rating

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There are several programs and services offered to veterans and their families. Some of these programs provide services directly to veterans and their families, while others provide indirect support via the funding of an organization or program whose mission is to support veterans. Some services are provided as an incentive for military service, or as a “thank you.” Examples of these services include free birth and death records, and free antlerless deer licenses.

Other services are provided to veterans because they are entitled to them as a form of compensation for their military service. For example, disability compensation, veterans pension programs, home loan guarantees, and medical care, are all services that military veterans are entitled to. That said, in some cases, there are other eligibility requirements beyond being a veteran that an individual must qualify for to receive specific state-level services. For example, while many veterans are entitled to medical care through the VA, only those who have a 40% disability compensation rating or higher in each limb may be eligible for the Amputee and Paralyzed Veterans’ Pension in Pennsylvania. Examples of other eligibility requirements include proof of Pennsylvania residency, honorable military discharge status, and demonstration of financial need.

For the services available to those who have suffered a service-connected disability, some require a certain disability percentage to qualify, whereas others only require that you have a VA disability claim number. In cases where a certain percentage of disability is not required, often the percentage is still used to determine the amount of compensation the veteran or family member is eligible for. At times, the number of dependents a veteran has is also factored into determining the amount of money a veteran can receive.

The VA disability rating system provides a streamlined method to determine veteran eligibility based on disability severity. For example, a 0% disability rating may indicate the veterans’ condition does not negatively impact their day-to-day life, and a 100% disability rating may indicate the condition is severe enough to impact the veterans’ ability to work or properly care for themselves. In theory, this provides the most compensation and support to those with the greatest need. However, given that disparities in healthcare exist (Hsieh & Ruther, 2017; Manuel, 2018) the potential for biases in determining disability percentage cannot be ruled out. For example, one study found that Black veterans were significantly less likely to receive a PTSD diagnosis from their compensation and pension examiner than White veterans (Marx et al., 2017). Given that the population of veterans is becoming more diverse in race, gender, and sexual identity, measures that address potential biases in the determination of disability rating may be of increasing importance in ensuring all veterans are receiving appropriate compensation and benefits.

Table 1 lists the Pennsylvania services that require a VA determined service-connected disability and the percentage of disability required when applicable. Note, this table does not include information on the federal benefits provided to veterans based on disability rating.

Table 1
 Pennsylvania Services for Disabled Veterans

Service provided	Disability percent requirement	Other disability-related requirements
Amputee and Paralyzed Veterans' Pension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40% or higher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The loss or loss of use in two or more extremities.
Blind Veterans' Pension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual acuity with the best correcting lens is 3/60; or, • 10/200 or equivalent, or less normal vision in the better eye. • Includes circumstances where the widest diameter of the visual field of the better eye has contracted to an angular distance not greater than 20 degrees.
Education of Veterans Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also includes children of veterans who have died in service.
Disabled Veterans' Real Estate Tax Exemption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veterans who are blind, paraplegic, or have sustained the loss of two or more limbs may also qualify regardless of disability rating.
Military Family Relief Assistance Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Former service members (AD, Reserve and Pennsylvania National Guard) qualify for up to four years after being medically discharged for a medical disability incurred in line of duty while serving on a qualifying tour of active duty of 30 or more consecutive days. They must demonstrate a financial need that is directly related to the former member's service, to emergency or extraordinary circumstances beyond the eligible members control, or to the disability incurred in the line of duty of the military service. • Not connected to disability rating. • This program is also available to current military members. Eligibility requirements are based on need, not disability.
Veterans' Temporary Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Died in service or was killed in action; or, • Incurred a service-connected disability as certified by the VA.

For more information, see the “Programs/Services” section on the [DMVA’s Veterans Affairs webpage](http://www.dmv.pa.gov/veteransaffairs/Pages/default.aspx) at www.dmv.pa.gov/veteransaffairs/Pages/default.aspx

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