

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do I make an appointment?

Call the Grand Forks County Veterans Service Office at 701-780-8296/8297. The Voice Mail is available and your call will be returned once received.

Do we take walk-ins?

Yes, but we strongly recommend you make an appointment. This avoids waiting time and allows us to schedule sufficient time to handle your needs.

Who do we assist?

Veterans, Active Duty, Reserve, and National Guard members of the Armed Forces of the United States. We also assist spouses, surviving spouses, dependent parents, and dependents with their claims.

Do I qualify/who is a veteran?

In order to qualify for benefits from VA an individual must have served in the armed forces of the United States and have been discharged under conditions other than dishonorable. However, there are exceptions so a person who received an other than honorable conditions discharge should check with a Veterans Service Officer to see what (if any) benefits are available.

What services do we provide?

We can assist with County/State/Federal benefits. We also prepare the necessary forms, documentation of claims with pertinent data, proper submission and case management of claims, and if needed representation at hearings.

How do I make a claim for benefits?

Make an appointment with one of our trained Veterans Service Officers who will walk you through all the paperwork ensuring the correct forms are filled out.

What do I need to bring to an appointment?

In general at a minimum we need a copy of your DD214 Military Discharge) and any marriage and divorce certificates and if you have children their birth certificates. We need a death certificate when reporting a veteran's death or for claims for burial benefits. If claiming veterans pension and/or Aid and Attendance, we need any financial award documents, bank statements etc. When you make your appointment we can let you know specifically what you need to bring.

How soon will I hear about my case?

You may anticipate a letter from the VA within 6-8 weeks upon filing a claim acknowledging receipt of your claim. If you do not receive this letter, contact our office right away. To check on your claim, visit **www.eBenefits.va.gov**. If not already registered, you would have to register and then check the status of your claim.

How soon will my case be settled?

The time for settlement of a case depends on many factors such as complexity and type. Thus, one claim may take a few months while others may take a year or more.

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Should I call or correspond directly with the VA?

We recommend Veterans and claimants to keep in touch with us throughout the claims process instead of corresponding directly with the VA. This includes VA letters requesting more information. This helps us keep up to date on what is being done on the claim and provides assistance if issues arise. Ultimately, ensuring your claim flows smoothly and avoids delays.

If I change my address or phone number with the VA Medical Center do I need to inform you as well?

Yes. We will not only update our records, we will inform the VA as well on your behalf.

Is there a charge for your services?

No. You will not receive a bill from our office for any/all services. Our office is funded by the Grand Forks County Government.

What benefits are available?

There are many possible benefits available to you and possibly your immediate family members. Please visit www.va.gov to view potential benefits. On the home page click on Veterans Services for a complete list. Make an appointment today with one of our Service Officers to discuss your individual eligibility.

What do I need to do if admitted to a non-VA Medical Center in the case of an emergency?

Contact the Network Authorization Center within 72 hours of admission at 1-888-795-0773. Must be 100% Service Connected (SC) or emergency must be for a SC disability. Must be enrolled in VA health care system. VA will also pay if veteran is referred by the VA for care to that facility, but still call the Network Authorization Center

How can I qualify for hearing aids from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)?

You may receive free hearing aids from the VA if you have a service-connected disability rating for hearing loss or tinnitus. You may also be eligible for hearing aids if you are drawing compensation from the VA for any disability, although a co-payment may apply. The state also has a grant program that can help low-income veterans pay for hearing aids, although this program is not administered by the VA.

How can I qualify for eyeglasses from the VA?

The criteria for eyeglasses is similar to hearing aids, except service connection for an optical condition may be required.

How can I qualify for medication from the VA?

You must be enrolled in the VA Health Care System to qualify for medications. Co-payments may apply for non-service connected care. Treatment for service connected conditions is free in VA facilities.

My neighbor gets his medications from the VA, and I know he has more money than I do, yet I've been told that I don't qualify because of my income and assets. Why is that?

There are several criteria that may be used to establish health care eligibility. You may be exempt from means testing if you are a former POW; combat veteran of the current conflicts; are a Vietnam veteran; were awarded a Purple Heart Medal; or are receiving VA disability compensation. Also, veterans who enrolled prior to 2003 did not require means testing.