

# #HONORINGVETS

## 11.11.13

Join us in honoring our Veterans.



**ON TWITTER:** Follow @DeptVetAffairs for updates, news, and moments throughout the day. VA will be live-tweeting events at Arlington Cemetery, and covering other observances in our nation's capital and across the country. A few sample tweets are recommended below:

### Before Veterans Day:

- *Looking for a Veterans Day event in your community? Find (or submit) events here:*  
[www.va.gov/opa/vetsday](http://www.va.gov/opa/vetsday) #HonoringVets
- *More than 60% of Vets have not applied for benefits. Explore what's available:*  
[www.va.gov/explore](http://www.va.gov/explore) #HonoringVets

### On Veterans Day:

- *Thank you, Veterans, for all you have done and continue to do:*  
[www.storify.com/DeptVetAffairs/Veterans-Day-2013](http://www.storify.com/DeptVetAffairs/Veterans-Day-2013) #HonoringVets
- *Today, and every day, is Veterans Day. Infographic:* [www.va.gov/eachday](http://www.va.gov/eachday) #HonoringVets
- *More than 60% of Vets have not applied for benefits. Explore what's available:*  
[www.va.gov/explore](http://www.va.gov/explore) #HonoringVets



**ON INSTAGRAM:** Make sure to tag your Veterans Day photos with #HonoringVets. VA will be selecting photos and featuring them online throughout the day.



**ON FACEBOOK:** The Department of Veterans Affairs Facebook page will be posting information, events and media throughout the day. Please help us spread the word on Facebook—a few pieces of suggested content are listed below:

Before Veterans Day:

- *Looking for a Veterans Day event in your community? Find (or submit) events here:*  
[www.va.gov/vetsday](http://www.va.gov/vetsday)

On Veterans Day:

- *Thank you, Veterans, for all you have done and continue to do:*  
[www.storify.com/DeptVetAffairs/Veterans-Day-2013](http://www.storify.com/DeptVetAffairs/Veterans-Day-2013)
- *Today, and every day, is Veterans Day. Infographic:* [www.va.gov/eachday](http://www.va.gov/eachday)



**BEYOND SOCIAL:** If you have a website, blog, or newsletter, please consider promoting one or more of the following:

- **STORIFY.** A live, curated story of Veterans Day celebrations across the country. This can be embedded into your website or blog, and can be easily shared—just like a YouTube video. [www.storify.com/DeptVetAffairs/Veterans-Day-2013](http://www.storify.com/DeptVetAffairs/Veterans-Day-2013)
- **INFOGRAPHIC.** An infographic produced by VA’s digital team, showing the benefits received by Veterans each day. [www.va.gov/eachday](http://www.va.gov/eachday)
- **TWITTER:** VA will be live-tweeting throughout the day. Please encourage your audience to follow @DeptVetAffairs, and use #HonoringVets.
- **EXPLORE.** A microsite that simplifies benefits available to Veterans, and provides guidance and tips on how to navigate the application process. [www.va.gov/explore](http://www.va.gov/explore)
- **EVENT MAP.** An event map of registered Veterans Day events occurring across the country. [www.va.gov/vetsday](http://www.va.gov/vetsday)

# VA Disability Claims Backlog

VA's Inventory of Claims Pending over 125 Days

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Benefits Administration



# EACH DAY AT VA




**300K**  
EMPLOYEES  
**32%**  
VETERANS



**EVERY DAY  
IS VETERANS DAY**

## VETERANS ACCESS CARE EVERY DAY

**8MIL**  
  
**VETERANS**  
SURVIVORS AND DEPENDENTS



**HEALTH CARE**  
**229K** OUTPATIENT  
APPOINTMENTS  
**+** **1,100** MEDICAL  
SURGERIES

**VETERANS  
CRISIS LINE**

 **530**  
CALLS  
**18** RESCUES

**MENTAL HEALTH**  
**46,575** OUTPATIENT  
APPOINTMENTS

## VETERANS RECEIVE BENEFITS EVERY DAY

 **\$329MIL**  
GUARANTEED  
HOUSING LOANS  
**357K VETS** served  
yearly

 **\$27.6 MIL**  
EDUCATION  
PROGRAMS  
**1 MIL VETS** served  
yearly

 **\$147.3MIL**  
DISABILITY  
COMPENSATION  
**3.7 MIL VETS** served  
monthly

 **\$2.2 MIL**  
VOC REHAB  
PROGRAMS  
**116K VETS** served  
yearly

 **\$13.4MIL**  
PENSIONS FOR LOW  
INCOME BENEFICIARIES  
**516K VETS** served  
monthly

## VETERANS ARE HONORED EVERY DAY

**462** VETERANS INTERRED **AT** **131** NATIONAL CEMETERIES



**3.3MIL** GRAVESITES MAINTAINED AS NATIONAL SHRINES

## CELEBRATE OUR VETERANS

NOVEMBER 11, 2013  
**PARTICIPATE**  
in  
**VETERANS DAY**  
**EVENTS**

across the country.

**#HonoringVets**



Our Veterans served us and now VA is serving them. Visit [va.gov/explore](http://va.gov/explore) to learn more about the programs and services Veterans access every day.



Data is approximate and represents daily averages on FY2012 department-wide statistics. VA health care facilities are also located in U.S. territories and the Philippines.



**Department of  
Veterans Affairs**

Office of Public Affairs  
Media Relations

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# News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 7, 2013

## **Backlog of Disability Claims Reduced by 34 Percent since March *93 Percent of Claims Over One Year Old Completed***

WASHINGTON –The Department of Veterans Affairs has made significant progress in reducing the backlog of disability compensation claims – from 611,000 to 400,835 or 34 percent since peaking in March. Concurrently, VA improved the accuracy of disability ratings, and provided hundreds of thousands of claims decisions to Veterans who have waited the longest.

“Veterans shouldn’t have to wait for the benefits they’ve earned,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki. “This has never been acceptable, but we are executing our plans and moving in the right direction to meet our 2015 goal of eliminating the backlog. We still have more work to do, but we are making clear progress and no one is more committed than our VBA employees, more than half of whom are Veterans themselves.”

Since the VA launched the [initiative](#) to eliminate the oldest claims first, claims processors at the 56 regional offices of the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) have been focused on claims that had been waiting longer than one year. As of Nov. 4, VBA has completed 93 percent of these older claims, resulting in over 476,000 decisions for Veterans since the initiative began on April 19. The proportion of claims decisions that resulted in benefits being granted remained on par with historical averages—between 65 and 70 percent.

At the same time, the accuracy of rating decisions has improved. The three-month average for decision accuracy when evaluating a complete claim file is 90 percent -- a 5 percentage point improvement since 2011, and a 7 percentage point improvement since 2010. The three-month average accuracy for rating individual medical conditions inside each claim has climbed three points to 96.7 percent since December 2012.

VBA also directed 20 hours of mandatory overtime per month for claims processors, and worked with the Veterans Health Administration to place VA physicians in regional offices to review medical evidence to help speed decisions. Mandatory overtime was halted during the government shutdown in October, but has been re-established and will continue through Nov. 23. VBA anticipates mandatory overtime to continue in 2014, based on available funding. Optional overtime for claims processors will remain in effect.

“I am grateful to our employees, many who have been working long periods of overtime since May, for their great dedication in helping our Veterans get the benefits they’ve earned,” said Under Secretary for Benefits Allison A. Hickey. “I talk to them every day and they are committed to building on their record-breaking progress, helping transform the VA into a paperless system, and ending the backlog for good.”

In the coming months, VBA will continue its effort on further reducing the backlog, focusing on those claims that have been pending the longest. VBA will also continue to prioritize disability claims for homeless Veterans, those experiencing extreme financial hardship, the terminally ill, former Prisoners of War, Medal of Honor recipients, and Veterans filing Fully Developed Claims (FDC). Filing an electronic FDC is the quickest way for Veterans to receive a decision on their compensation claim (<http://www.benefits.va.gov/fdc/>).

Regardless of the status of their compensation claims, Veterans who have served in combat since Nov. 11, 1998, are eligible for five years of free medical care from VA for most conditions.

Veterans can learn more about disability and other Veterans benefits on the joint Department of Defense/VA web portal *eBenefits* at [www.ebenefits.va.gov](http://www.ebenefits.va.gov).

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