



Department of
Veterans Affairs

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Fact Sheet

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The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is implementing an initiative to expedite compensation claims decisions for Veterans who have waited one year or longer. Effective April 19, the VA will begin to make provisional decisions on the oldest claims in inventory, which will allow Veterans to begin collecting compensation benefits more quickly, if eligible. This initiative provides a one -year safety net to submit further evidence should it become available and - protects the Veteran's right to appeal the decision.

- **For the oldest claims, VA will make a provisional rating based on all current evidence associated with the claim.**
 - When benefits are awarded in the provisional decision, the Veteran will begin receiving compensation immediately.
 - These will be decisions based on all evidence VA has received to date and during the time the claim has been pending.
 - Provisional rating notices will note the evidence on which the decision was based and list any documentation that has not been provided or the VA has been unable to obtain.
 - Exams will be provide by VHA in an expedited manner if they are required for a rating
 - **Veteran has a safety net – up to one year to submit additional evidence or request VA obtain additional evidence to change the provisional decision.**
 - Any awarded benefits will be retroactive to the original date the claim was submitted.
 - If no additional evidence is obtained, the provisional decision will become final after one year (or earlier if the Veteran requests), at which time a final decision and appeal rights will go into effect.
 - These Veterans then will have the standard year to appeal the decision, effectively extending the current appeal window, while also providing them with near-term decisions and benefits, if eligible, based on the evidence in the claims file.
 - As a result of this initiative, metrics used to track benefits claims will experience significant fluctuations. Average Days to Complete (ADC) – the average amount of time it takes VA to process a claim – will rise significantly in the near term as the oldest claims are completed.
 - Average Days Pending (ADP) – the average age of a claim in the inventory – will decrease since the oldest claims will no longer be part of the inventory.
 - **The most vulnerable Veterans will continue to be fast tracked.**
 - Wounded, Ill and Injured Veterans from the wars in Iraq & Afghanistan will continue to have priority through the Integrated Disability Evaluation System.
 - VA will continue to prioritize Veterans who are homeless, terminally ill, former Prisoners of War, and Medal of Honor recipients, those facing financial hardship and our most seriously injured.
 - Fully Developed Claims will continue to receive priority processing
- Veterans can learn more about disability benefits on the joint Department of Defense—VA web portal *eBenefits* at www.ebenefits.va.gov.