

TDVS Benefits Bulletin
20-3

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TDVS Updates

Training Opportunity – March 24th or 25th NVLSP Webinar: VA Vocational Rehabilitation Benefits Claims: A Guide for Advocates

This webinar will cover topics including:

- The purpose of the VA's VR&E services
- Entitlement and eligibility requirements for VR&E benefits
- The VR&E Case Status System
- The application and evaluation process for VR&E benefits
- VR&E counseling services
- An in-depth discussion of vocational rehabilitation services, including induction into a rehabilitation program, the duration of programs, individualized written rehabilitation plans, education & vocational training services, employment services, and monetary assistance
- Independent Living
- The appeal process if a veteran is denied VR&E services

You can register for this training opportunity here - https://stateofennessee.formstack.com/forms/march_2020_live_trainingwebinar_vocrehab_benefits

VA and Veteran Benefit Updates

VA Solid Start

VA has launched the [Solid Start](#) program to connect transitioning service members with benefits as well as resources through partner organizations that can assist in their transition to civilian life. As part of this program, VA is calling veterans three times within the first year of separation.

Proposed Rule – Caregiver Program

On Friday, March 6, 2020, VA [proposed a rule](#) in the federal register related to the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers. Specifically, VA proposed addressing improvements and amendments made by the VA MISSION Act of 2018. Notably, the VA MISSION Act of 2018 expanded eligibility to the Caregiver Program to veterans of all eras. This rule does not provide a timeline for that expansion.

Quality Review Insights

Digital Filing

The Digits to Digits (D2D) program remains the Appeals Division’s preferred method to file eligible forms, which include the VA Form 21-22, VA Form 21-0966 and VA Form 21-526EZ. Here are some tips to help ensure the forms you generate are D2D eligible.

- **Digital Signatures.** A digital signature is required for successful D2D filing. [Instructions](#) for installing and using the Topaz Signature Pad are available if you need assistance.
- **Military Service Information.** Section V of the 21-526EZ requires information about a veteran’s military service. Much of the information in blocks 18A. to 23B. is required in order to successfully file using D2D.
- Some digital filing tips related to military service include:
 - VetraSpec has annotated blocks 20C through 23B in red text in order to assist users in properly completing military service information.
 - The National Guard and Reserve addresses are limited to 20 characters.
 - Military Service information can be entered in the “Military Service” tab of VetraSpec in order to auto-populate 21-526Ezs. Select the “Military Service” button from VetraSpec’s menu and either “Add New” or “Edit this Record” to add or edit a veteran’s military service information.



Additional digital filing tips can be found here -- [Digits to Digits and Digital Filing Fact Sheet](#)

Practice Like a Pro

VetraSpec's "Pending Issues" Tab

VetraSpec's "Pending Issues" tab is used to track issues that are/were pending. Use of this tab allows you to effectively manage each individual claim the veteran has sought. Every issue/claim will receive its separate record (i.e.: if the veteran is filing for 5 conditions each condition will be tracked separately). Effective claims management will allow you to track each individual claimed condition through the rating process.

Here's a [step-by-step](#) guide for to effectively use this tool.

VSO Hotline

VA's [Debt Management Center](#) has a dedicated VSO hotline – 612-970-5737 – that can assist service officers in addressing questions and concerns related to debts incurred as a result of participation in a VA benefit program.

Don't forget that VA also has a dedicated VSO hotline for compensation and pension issues, which was covered in [Benefits Bulletin 20-1](#).

TDVS Benefits Bulletins Can Be Found on the [VSO Tools](#) Portion of TDVS's Website