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BADGER BENEFITS BRIEF



WISCONSIN



AID & ATTENDANCE

an Under Used Benefit

The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) is reaching out to inform wartime veterans and surviving spouses of deceased wartime veterans about an under-used, special monthly pension benefit entitled, "Aid and Attendance". This is not a new program, and not everyone is aware of his/her potential eligibility. The Aid and Attendance pension benefit may be available to wartime veterans and surviving spouses who have in-home care, who live in nursing homes or assisted-living facilities. Many elderly veterans and surviving spouses whose incomes are above the congressionally mandated legal limit for a VA pension may still be eligible for the special monthly Aid and Attendance benefit if they have large medical expenses, for which they do not receive reimbursement.

To qualify, claimants must be incapable of self-support and in need of regular personal assistance. The basic criteria for the Aid and Attendance benefit include the inability to feed oneself, to dress and undress without assistance, or to take care of one's own bodily needs. People who are bedridden or need help to adjust special prosthetic or orthopedic devices may also be eligible, as well as those who have a physical or mental injury or illness that requires regular assistance to protect them from hazards or dangers in their daily environment. For wartime veterans or surviving spouses to qualify for this special monthly pension, the veteran must have served at least 90-days of active military service, one day of which was during a period of war, and be discharged under conditions other than dishonorable. Wartime veterans who entered active duty on or after 8 September 1980 (16 October 1981 for officers) must have completed at least 24 continuous months of military service or the period for which they were order to active duty.

If all requirements are met, VA determines eligibility for the Aid and Attendance benefits by adjusting for unreimbursed medical expenses from the veteran's or surviving spouse's total household income. If the remaining income amount falls below the annual threshold for the Aid and Attendance benefit, VA pays the difference between the claimant's household income and the Aid and Attendance threshold. The Aid and Attendance income threshold for a veteran without dependents is now \$18,234 annually. The threshold increases to \$21,615 if a veteran has one dependent, and by \$1,866 for each additional dependent. The annual Aid and Attendance threshold for a surviving spouse alone is \$11,715. This threshold increases to \$13,976 if there is one dependent child and by \$1,866 for each additional child.

Additional information and assistance in applying for the Aid and Attendance benefit may be obtained by calling 1-800-827-1000. You may also contact your local County Veterans Service Officer. Applications may be submitted on-line at www.vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/main.asp. Information is also available on the internet at www.va.gov.

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