

# Veterans Affairs Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers

## Monthly Stipend for Primary Family Caregivers

### Fact Sheet



The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) provides a monthly stipend to Primary Family Caregivers of eligible Veterans.

**Who qualifies:** A Veteran or Service member may be eligible for a Family Caregiver if all of the following requirements are met:

1. The individual is either:
  - o A Veteran; or
  - o A member of the Armed Forces undergoing a medical discharge from the Armed Forces.
2. The individual has a serious injury (including serious illness) incurred or aggravated in the line of duty in the active military, naval, or air service.
  - o For purposes of PCAFC, serious injury means any service-connected disability that: (1) Is rated at 70 percent or more by VA; or (2) Is combined with any other service-connected disability or disabilities, and a combined rating of 70 percent or more is assigned by VA.
3. The individual is in need of in-person personal care services for a minimum of six (6) continuous months based on any one of the following:
  - o An inability to perform an activity of daily living;
  - o A need for supervision or protection based on symptoms or residuals of neurological or other impairment or injury; or
  - o A need for regular or extensive instruction or supervision without which the ability of the Veteran to function in daily life would be seriously impaired.
4. It is in the best interest of the individual to participate in the program.
5. Personal care services that would be provided by the Family Caregiver will not be simultaneously and regularly provided by or through another individual or entity.
6. The individual receives care at home or will do so if VA designates a Family Caregiver.
7. The individual receives ongoing care from a Primary Care Team or will do so if VA designates a Family Caregiver.

Every VA facility has a CSP team who assists with information and referrals. To learn more about services available, visit us online:

[www.caregiver.va.gov](http://www.caregiver.va.gov)

**VA Caregiver Support Line**  
☎ 1-855-260-3274 toll-free



## PCAFC Monthly Stipend

VA offers a number of benefits through PCAFC to support Family Caregivers, including a monthly stipend to Primary Family Caregivers. Primary Family Caregivers will receive a monthly stipend for each month's participation as a Primary Family Caregiver.

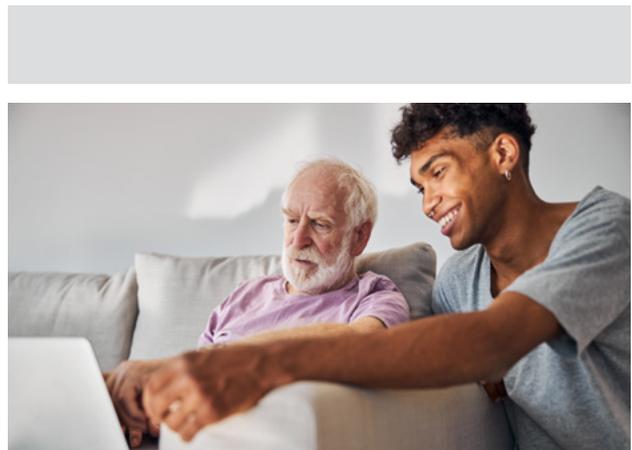
## Monthly Stipend Rate

VA bases stipend payments on the definition of "monthly stipend rate," which means the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) General Schedule (GS) Annual Rate for grade 4, step 1, based on the locality pay area in which the eligible Veteran resides, divided by 12.

## Stipend Payment: Two Levels

The amount of the monthly stipend the Primary Family Caregiver is eligible to receive, is determined based on information gathered during VA's evaluation of the Veteran's personal care needs.

- **Level One:** The Primary Family Caregiver's monthly stipend is calculated by multiplying the monthly stipend rate (OPM GS Annual Rate for grade 4, step 1, based on the locality pay area in which the eligible Veteran resides) divided by 12, multiplied by 0.625.
  - For example, the GS rate at grade 4, step 1, in Dallas, Texas, for 2022 was \$34,916 annually.
  - Thus, the monthly stipend amount for a Primary Family Caregiver of an eligible Veteran in Dallas, Texas, at this rate (\$34,916, divided by 12 multiplied by 0.625) was approximately \$1,818.54 in 2022.
- **Level Two:** If VA determines the eligible Veteran meets the definition of "unable to self-sustain in the community" for the purposes of PCAFC, the designated Primary Family Caregiver's monthly stipend is calculated by multiplying the monthly stipend rate (OPM GS Annual Rate for grade 4, step 1, based on the locality pay area in which the eligible Veteran resides) divided by 12 multiplied by 1.00.
  - For example, the GS rate at grade 4, step 1, in Dallas, Texas, for 2022 was \$34,916 annually.
  - The 2022 monthly stipend amount for a Primary Family Caregiver of an eligible Veteran in Dallas, Texas, at this rate (\$34,916 divided by 12 multiplied by 1.00) was approximately \$2,909.67.



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## Annual Updates to the Monthly Stipend Rate

While not guaranteed, OPM may make annual updates to the GS pay tables. In the event OPM makes updates to the GS Annual Rate for grade 4, step 1, the monthly stipend rates paid to Primary Family Caregivers will be adjusted to reflect these updates. Adjustments to stipend payments that result from OPM's updates to the GS Annual Rate for grade 4, step 1 will take effect the first of the month following the month that OPM announces an update to the GS rates, but no earlier than the date OPM's update becomes effective.

For example:

- This means that in years that OPM announces the update in Dec. (with a Jan. 1 effective date), the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) would update the PCAFC monthly stipend rate effective Jan. 1.
- If OPM announces the update on April 15 (with a Jan. 1 effective date), VHA would update the PCAFC monthly stipend rate effective May 1.

The increase would be reflected in the stipend issued at the end of the month in which it is updated by VHA or the first of the following month since the stipend is paid for the prior month.

The VHA Caregiver Stipend Team (CST) issues the recurring stipend payments and processes all updates related to the stipend. You may contact VHA CST for information on the processing activities for the monthly stipend payment via:

- **Phone:** Call Office of Community Care toll free at 1-877-733-7927 Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. ET
- **Web:** Visit <https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/caregiver/index.asp>

## Collection of Overpayments

For the purposes of PCAFC, an overpayment means **a payment made by VA to an individual in excess of the amount due, to which the individual was not eligible, or otherwise made in error.** An overpayment is subject to collection action, even if the overpayment is the result of VA error.

- When VA seeks to collect an overpayment, the Primary Family Caregiver will receive a letter from VA's Financial Services Center. This letter will provide the amount due and the reason(s) for the overpayment. The letter will include instructions on how to dispute the overpayment, how to request a waiver, and a Notice of Rights and Obligations and VA contacts. Overpayment resolution can be addressed more efficiently by Primary Family Caregivers providing an email address and opting to receive electronic communications.

## Primary Family Caregivers for Legacy Participants and Legacy Applicants:

If you are a Primary Family Caregiver of a legacy participant or legacy applicant, different rules regarding stipend payments will apply. **You may contact your local CSP Team or the VA Caregiver Support Line for more information regarding legacy participants or legacy applicants.**

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