

## Qualifying for Service-Connected and Non-service-Connected Veteran Benefits

For those that serve their country, the Department of Veteran Affairs provides a wide range of disability benefits. But each veteran receives different types of benefits-- and not all of these benefits are equally valuable. The Department of Veteran Affairs has 8 "priority groups" which they use to decide which types of benefits a veteran will receive; "1" is the highest and "8" (which as of 2003 is no longer assigned to new veterans) is the lowest. The level of priority you are given will depend entirely on your disability (and whether it is service- or non-service-connected), your situation financially, and the level or intensity of your disability.

Since whether or not a disability is service-connected or non-service-connected can have a great effect on the benefits you will receive, its important to have a good understanding of the specific requirements for each of these two types of benefits.

### The Requirements for Non-service-Connected Benefits

A veteran who suffers from a total and permanent disability qualifies for non-Service-connected benefits. Qualifying for non-service-connected benefits can also be dependant on a few other issues:

â€¢ Income- Eligibility is based on a veteran having both a limited income and a net worth that does not provide sufficient maintenance. To get more information on income eligibility requirements, please see 38 U.S.C.S. Â§1521-22.

â€¢ Service - To reach eligibility for a non-service-connected pension, a veteran must have one day or more of active duty in a "period of war", with at least 90 days total active duty. However, for a veteran who entered military service after 1980, the service requirement is simply to have completed a full period of active duty. Specifically, an individual who enlisted for the first time on or after September 8, 1980, is required to complete a minimum period of service, either twenty-four months of continuous active duty or the full period for which the veteran was called to active duty. Additionally, the veteran must have active service that includes a total of ninety days during one or more periods of war; ninety or more consecutive days, one day of which is during a period of war; or at least one day of wartime service that results in a discharge for service-connected disability.

â€¢ Discharge- To be eligible for benefits from the Department of Veteran Affairs, your discharge from the military needs to have been under non-dishonorable circumstances.

### The Requirements for Service Connected Benefits

Unlike with non-service-connected benefits, veterans who receive service-connected benefits do not need to be fully disabled, have served during wartime, or meet an income or net worth requirement. Instead, you need to be able to prove the source and current status of your disability with:

â€¢ Evidence of current disability- Because benefits for a service-connected disability are awarded only to those with a current disability, an applicant for these benefits must provide recent medical records diagnosing the current state of their disability.

â€¢ Substantiation of the disability or injurys occurrence Veterans applying for service-connected benefits must next provide evidence that their current disability was either incurred during or worsened by military service. Its important to know, however, that "in-service" is a broad term, and can include injury incurred even during leave.

â€¢ Support of the connection between the current disability and the service-connected injury- This requires that applicants give evidence of a connection between the injury incurred in service and the current disability. Related Information [Disability attorney](#) . [Social security attorney](#) . [Attorneys for social security disability](#) . [Social security attorney](#) .

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