



# Survivor's Benefits



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## DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION (DIC)

DIC is a monthly benefit paid to eligible survivors of a:

- Military service member who died while on active duty,
- Veteran whose death resulted from a service-related injury or disease, OR
- Veteran whose death resulted from a non service-related injury or disease, and who was receiving, or was entitled to receive, VA compensation for service-connected disability that was rated as totally disabling:
  - For at least 10 years immediately before death,
  - Since the veteran's release from active duty and for at least five years immediately preceding death, OR
  - For at least one year before death if the veteran was a former prisoner of war who died after September 30, 1999.

### **Who Are Eligible Survivors For DIC?**

The surviving spouse if he or she:

- Validly married the veteran before January 1, 1957,
- Was married to a service member who died on active duty,
- The veteran within 15 years of discharge from the period of military service in which the disease or injury that caused the veteran's death began or was aggravated,
- Was married to the veteran for at least one year, OR
- Had a child with the veteran, AND
- Cohabited with the veteran continuously until the veteran's death or, if separated, was not at fault for the separation, AND
- Is not currently remarried. If the surviving spouse remarries on or after December 16, 2003, and on or after turning 57, they are entitled to continue receiving DIC.

The surviving child(ren) if he or she is:

- Unmarried AND
- Under age 18, or between the ages of 18 and 23 and attending school.

(Note: Certain helpless adult children and surviving parents are eligible for DIC.)

### **How Much Does VA Pay?**

As of 2009, the basic monthly rate of DIC is \$1,154 for an eligible surviving spouse. The rate increases for each dependent child, and if the surviving spouse is housebound or in need of aid and attendance. In addition, add \$286 per child for each dependent child under the age of 18.

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The information provided in this document is meant for the sole use of Active Duty service members, retirees, their families, and those individuals eligible for legal assistance. The information is general in nature and meant only to provide a brief overview of various legal matters. Rights and responsibility vary widely according to the particular set of circumstances in each case. Laws can vary across states, services, and civilian jurisdictions and laws are changed from time to time. Do not rely upon the general restatements of background information presented here without discussing your specific situation with a legal professional.

## **How Can You Apply?**

You can apply by filling out VA Form 21-534 (Application for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, Death Pension and Accrued Benefits by a Surviving Spouse or Child), and submitting it to the VA regional office that serves your area. Call the toll-free number below for information about supporting materials that VA may need to process your claim.

## **Write, Call, or Visit To Obtain More Information:**

Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Services Division  
810 Vermont Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20420  
Telephone: 1-800-827-1000  
Fax: (202) 273 - 6891  
E-Mail: [vets@raex.com](mailto:vets@raex.com).  
For More Information, you can visit the VA's Web Site at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov).

## **SOCIAL SECURITY SURVIVOR'S BENEFITS**

### **What To Do When A Beneficiary Dies:**

The person responsible for the beneficiary's affairs should do the following:

- Notify Social Security of the death by calling 1-800-772-1213.
- If monthly benefits were being paid via direct deposit, notify the bank or other financial institution of the beneficiary's death. Request that any funds received for or after the month of death be returned to Social Security as soon as possible.
- If benefits were being paid by check, DO NOT CASH any checks received for the month in which the beneficiary died or thereafter. Return the checks as soon as possible.

A one-time payment of \$255 is payable to the surviving spouse if he or she was living with the beneficiary at the time of death, OR if living apart, was eligible for Social Security benefits on the beneficiary's earnings record for the month of death. If there is no surviving spouse, the payment is made to a child who was eligible for benefits on the beneficiary's earnings record in the month of death. Monthly survivors benefits can be paid to certain family members, including the beneficiary's widow or widower, dependent children and dependent parents.

### **Contacting Social Security:**

Social Security's website is [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov). You can apply for benefits; get the address of your local Social Security office; and get forms to request documents such as a Social Security Statement, a replacement Social Security or Medicare card, etc. You may also call 1-800-772-1213, or, if deaf or hard of hearing, their TTY number at 1-800-325-0778.

### **Conclusion:**

If you have further questions, or are in need of legal assistance, please call the Buckley AFB Legal Office at (720) 847-6444 for an appointment.