

What is a Primary Family Caregiver stipend?

A Primary Family Caregiver stipend is monetary compensation paid to a Primary Family Caregiver for providing personal care services to an eligible Veteran enrolled in the Caregiver Support Program. The stipend benefit is not intended to replace career earnings, and receipt of the stipend payments does not create an employment relationship between VA and the Primary Family Caregiver.

Can all Caregivers receive the stipend?

No. Only the designated Primary Family Caregiver of an eligible Veteran is entitled to receive a stipend. There can be only one Primary Family Caregiver designated at a time.

Will my stipend be taxable income?

No. The stipend is a VA enhanced service and is not considered taxable income.

Who determines the number of hours of personal care services a Veteran requires?

The Veteran's Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) at your assigned VA Medical Center (VAMC) will make a determination after evaluating the eligible Veteran. The PACT provides a clinical evaluation of the Veteran's level of dependency, based on the degree to which the eligible Veteran is unable to perform one or more activities of daily living, or the degree to which the Veteran is in need of supervision or protection, based on symptoms or residuals of neurological or other impairment or injury. As a result of the clinical evaluation and score, the eligible Veteran will be rated as follows:

- **High Tier:** Equates to a maximum of 40 hours of care per week.
- **Medium Tier:** Equates to a maximum of 25 hours of care per week.
- **Low Tier:** Equates to a maximum of 10 hours of care per week.

What is the role of the VHA Office of Community Care in the stipend process?

The VHA Office of Community Care (VHA CC), located in Denver, Colo., performs administrative processing for the stipend payments using the PACT-determined tier level and the Veteran's geographic location. VHA CC makes recurring monthly payments, processes all updates related to the stipend and also administers CHAMPVA benefits for eligible Caregivers with no other health insurance.

How will my stipend amount be determined?

The stipend amount is based on the weekly number of hours of personal care services that an eligible Veteran requires during the month. It is calculated by multiplying the Bureau of Labor Statistics hourly wage for home health aides, Skill code 311011, for the geographic region in which the eligible Veteran resides by the Consumer Price Index Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA), and then multiplying that total by the number of weekly hours of Caregiver assistance required (assigned tier level hours). This product is then multiplied by the average number of weeks in each month (4.35).

For example: If an eligible Veteran requires 10 hours of personal care services weekly (Tier 1) and the Caregiver's hourly wage (including COLA) is \$10 per hour, then the monthly stipend would be: (10 hours x \$10) x 4.35 = \$435.

How often will I receive a stipend payment when I am a Primary Family Caregiver?

The stipend is paid monthly for personal care services that a Primary Family Caregiver provided in the prior month. Once an application is approved, the stipend will be retroactive to the date the application was received at the VAMC.

How do I get more information?

The Caregiver support line can provide information on the Caregiver Support Program along with eligibility requirements:

- Phone: 1-855-260-3274, Monday-Friday
8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Eastern Standard Time
- Caregiver website at <http://www.caregiver.va.gov>

You may contact VHA CC for information on the processing activities for the stipend benefit via:

- Mail: VHA Office of Community Care
Caregiver Support Program
PO Box 460637, Denver CO 80246-0637
- Phone: 1-877-733-7927, Monday-Friday
8 a.m. to 7 p.m., Eastern Standard Time
- Email: Follow the directions for submitting email via IRIS at <https://iris.custhelp.com/app/ask>
- Website: <http://www.va.gov/purchasedcare/>