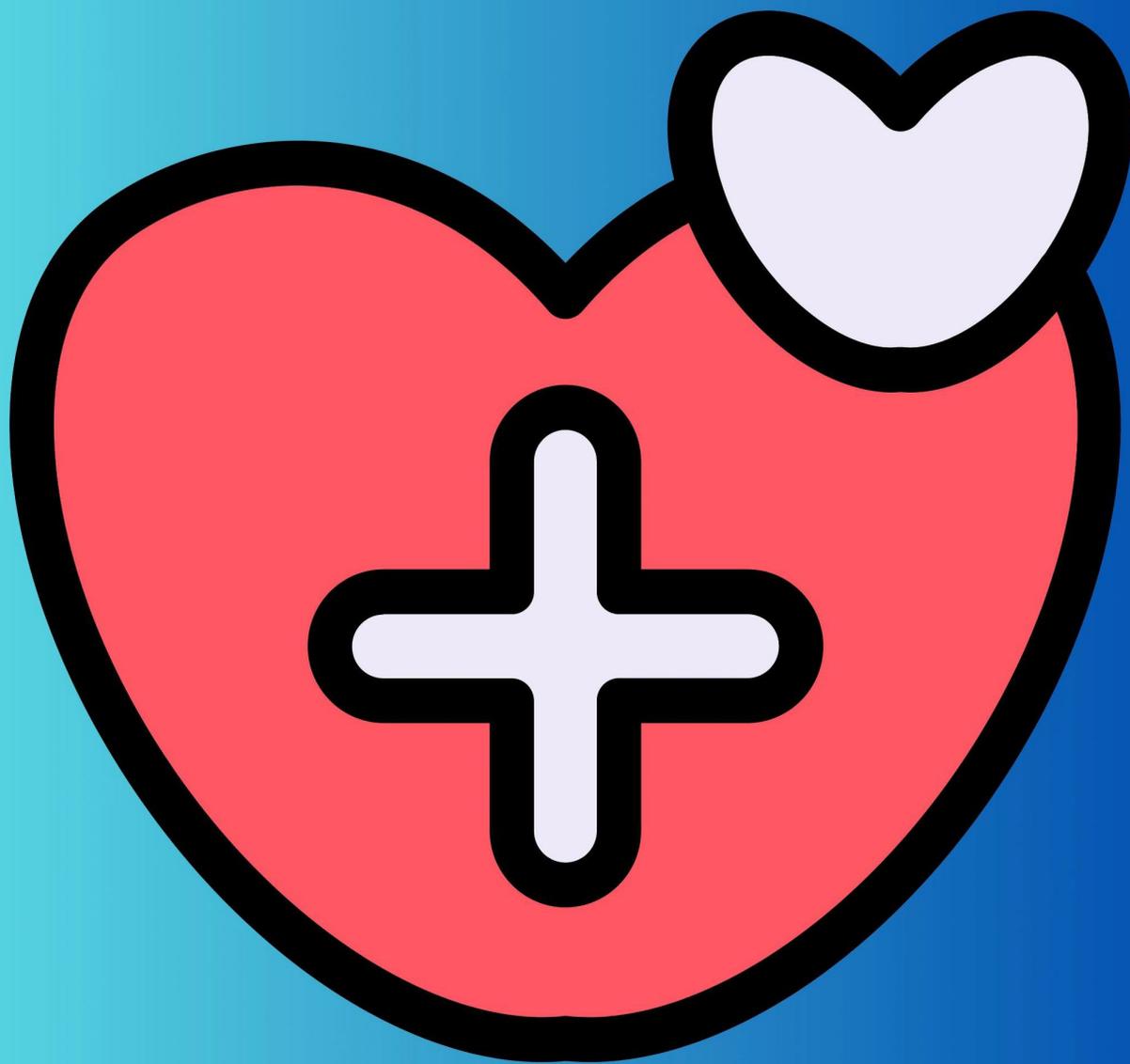


# Veterans Guide for **CAREGIVERS**



LEGAL HELP FOR VETERANS, PLLC

# About the Firm: Fighting Exclusively for Veterans' Rights

Legal Help For Veterans, PLLC is a law firm dedicated to assisting our Nation's veterans receive the veterans disability compensation to which they are entitled based on their service to the country.

The law firm has been assisting veterans since 1998. Our legal staff has decades of experience in dealing with medical disability matters and employs a network of medical specialists many former military physicians, who can ensure your claim has the best likelihood of success. Our staff includes former officers and enlisted personnel, health care professionals, and dedicated individuals.

We have an acclaimed national practice representing veterans from across the country. This representation occurs at the United States Court of Appeals for Veteran Claims, the Board of Veteran Appeals, and the regional offices throughout the country.

Over the years, Legal Help For Veterans has become a trusted name in the legal community for providing services to veterans. Our lawyers are regularly asked by law schools, bar associations, and veterans' service organizations to lecture and train others to practice in this area.



## **Brigadier General** **Carol Ann Fausone (ret.)**

Brigadier General Carol Ann Fausone (ret.) served for over 36 years with the U.S. Air Force and Michigan National Guard. As a nurse, her duty assignments took her around the country, and the world, assisting commanders with troop readiness.

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## Who is a Caregiver?

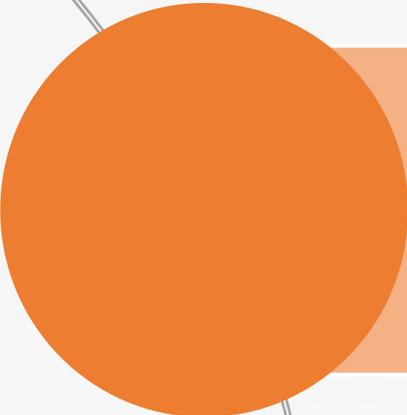
There are three types of caregivers based on the caregiving program your veteran is part of:

- ★ Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC)
- ★ Program of General Caregiver Support Services (PGCSS)
- ★ Veteran-Directed Caregiver (VDC)

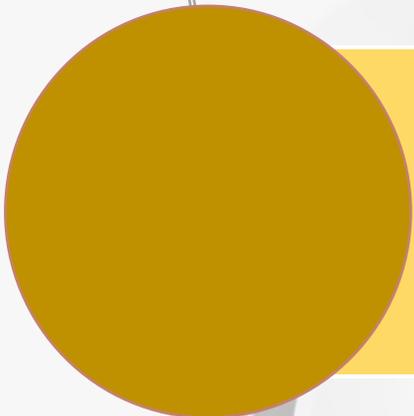
## **“Legacy” Veterans and their Family Caregivers**

- VA is extending eligibility and applicable benefits for Legacy Participants and Legacy Applicants through September 30, 2025 for Veterans and caregivers in the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) program.
- During this time, the VA will not discharge or decrease any support to Legacy Participants, Legacy Applicants and their Family Caregivers, based on reassessment, to include monthly stipends paid to Primary Family Caregivers.
- This extends the transition period and timeline to complete reassessments for Legacy Participants, Legacy Applicants and their Family Caregivers for an additional three (3) years.
- The VA will continue to complete reassessments of Legacy Participants, Legacy Applicants and their Family Caregivers at the request of the Veteran or Family Caregiver or if evidence of an increased need for personal care services is identified.

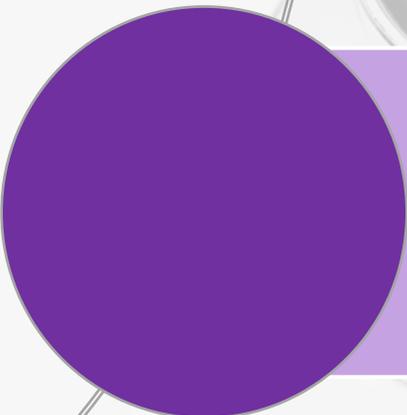
# Eligibility Requirements for the Veteran



The Veteran has a VA disability rating (individual or combined) of 70% or higher on injuries incurred or aggravated in the line of duty, **and**



The Veteran was discharged from the U.S. military or has a date of medical discharge, **and**



The Veteran needs at least 6 months of continuous, in-person personal care services

# Who is Eligible for a Family Caregiver?

You may be eligible if you meet **all** of the following requirements:

Family caregivers of eligible Veterans of all eras can now apply. This includes eligible Veterans who served after May 7, 1975, and before September 11, 2001.

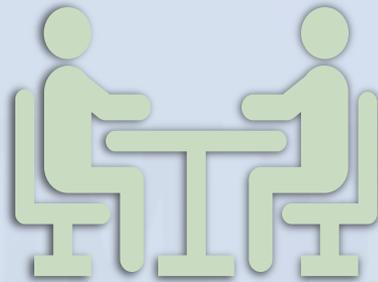
You must be at least 18 years old. And at least 1 of these must be true for you:

- You are a spouse, son, daughter, parent, stepfamily member, or extended family member of the Veteran, or
- You live full time with the Veteran, or you're willing to live full time with the Veteran if we designate you as a family caregiver

# Caregiver Self-Assessment



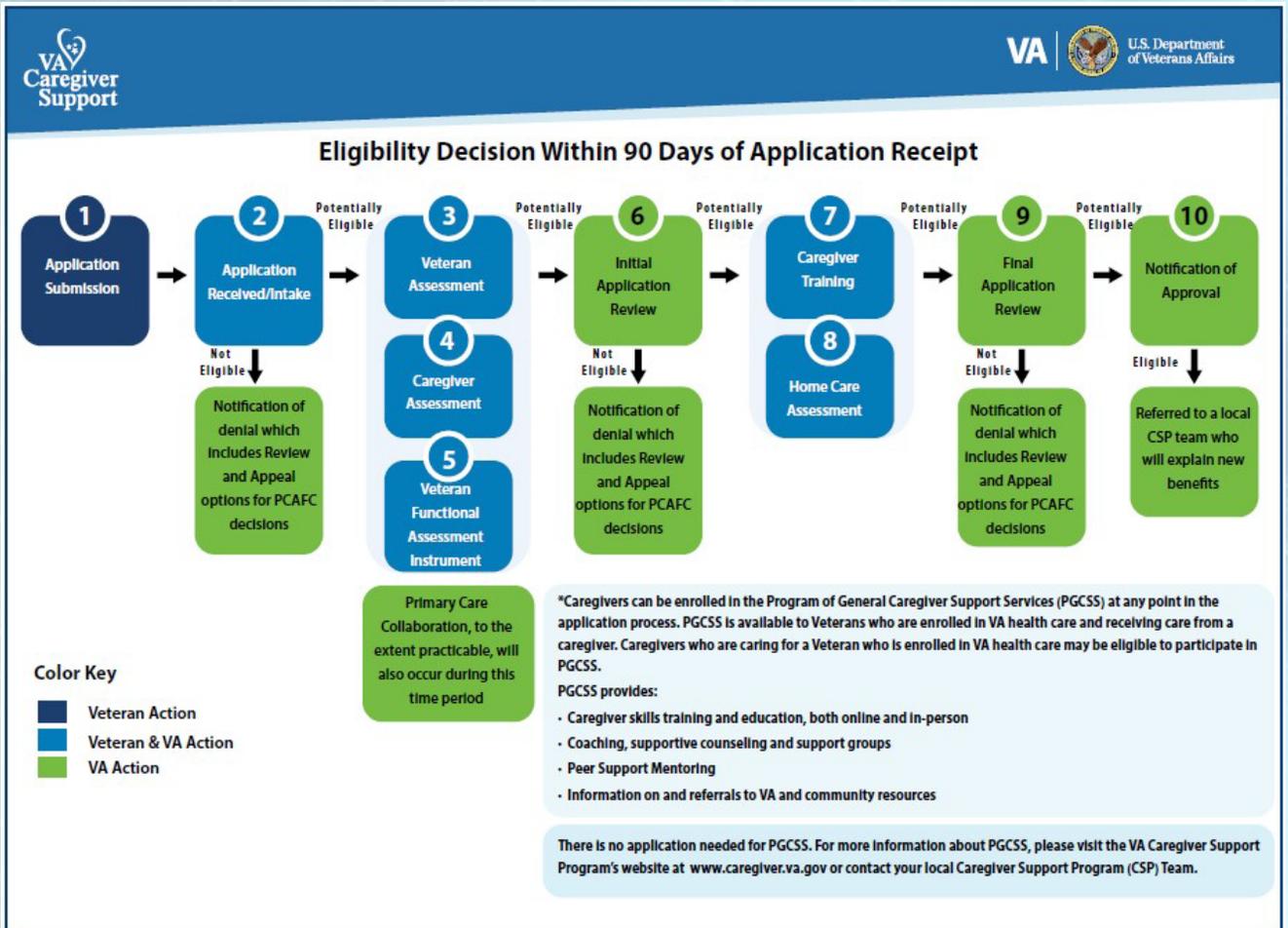
Review your roles and responsibilities and evaluate your stress.



Use this Self-Assessment in discussions with your Veteran's social worker and care team about the home and community services and supports that are best for you and your Veteran.

You can find the Caregiver Self-Assessment form at <https://www.caregiver.va.gov/>

# Caregiver Self-Assessment Application Process



You can learn more about the services VA has available by visiting [www.caregiver.va.gov](http://www.caregiver.va.gov) or contacting the VA Caregiver Support Line at (855) 260-3274

# What is the Definition of “Inability to Perform Activity of Daily Living (ADL)”

For purposes of PCAFC, the “inability to perform an ADL” means the Veteran or Service member requires personal care services each time he or she completes one or more of the ADLs listed below.

Dressing or undressing oneself

Bathing

Grooming oneself in order to keep oneself clean and presentable

Adjusting any special prosthetic or orthopedic appliance, that by reason of the particular disability cannot be done without assistance (this does not include the adjustment of appliances that nondisabled persons would be unable to adjust without aid, such as supports, belts, lacing at the back, etc.)

Toileting or attending to toileting

Feeding oneself due to loss of coordination of upper extremities, extreme weakness, inability to swallow, or the need for a non-oral means of nutrition

Mobility (walking, going up stairs, transferring from bed to chair, etc.)

Requiring assistance with an ADL only some of the time does not meet the definition of an “inability to perform an ADL”

# What is the Definition of “Unable to Self-sustain in the Community”

For purposes of PCAFC, “unable to self-sustain in the community” means that an eligible Veteran either:



Requires personal care services each time he or she completes three or more of the seven activities of daily living (ADL) listed in the definition of an inability to perform an activity of daily living in this section, and is fully dependent on a caregiver to complete such ADLs; or Has a need for supervision or protection based on symptoms or residuals of neurological or other impairment or injury on a continuous basis; or



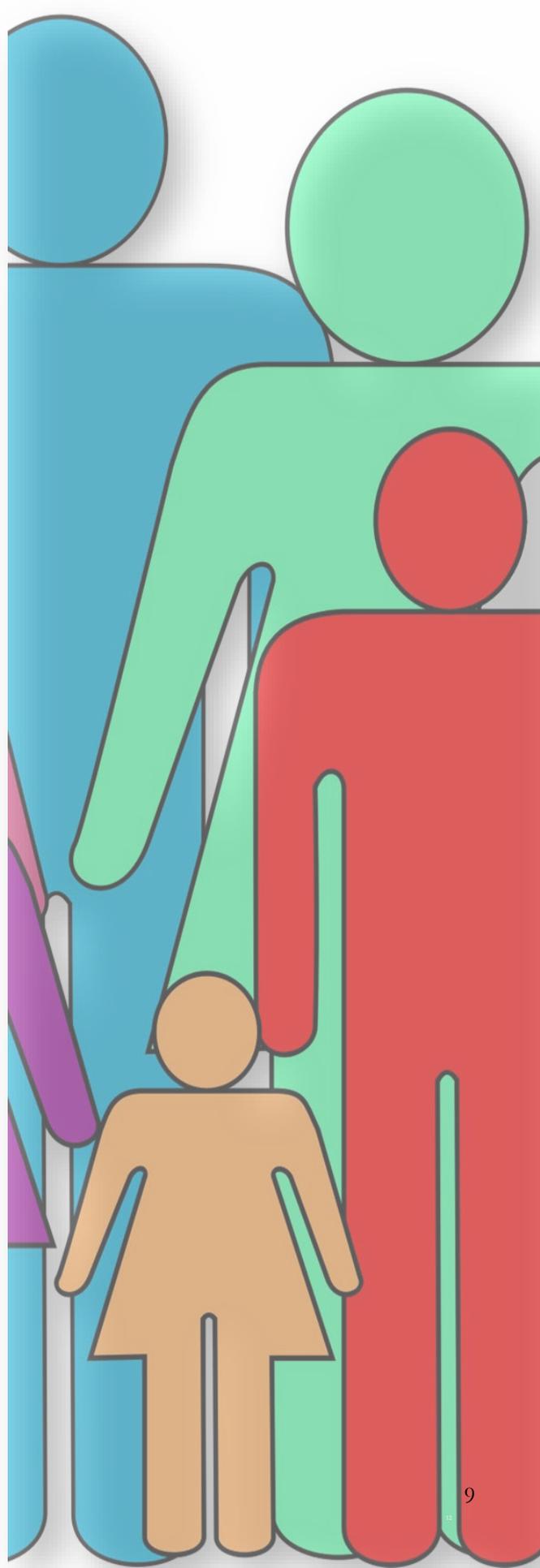
Has a need for supervision or protection based on symptoms or residuals of neurological or other impairment or injury on a continuous basis; or Has a need for regular or extensive instruction or supervision without which the ability of the Veteran to function in daily life would be seriously impaired on a continuous basis; or



Has 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 on a continuous basis.

# How do I Become a Family Caregiver?

- Unlike general caregiver services, there is an application process for family caregiver services.
- The application (VA Form 10-10CG) is submitted by both the veteran and the caregiver
  - The application can be filled out online [here](#) or in person at your local VA facility with the CSP team
- Complete the application intake with your local CSP team member
  - In your intake, the veteran and caregiver will review the application with a CSP team member
- A CSP team member will conduct a clinical assessment of the veteran to get input on care needs
- A CSP member will then conduct a caregiver assessment to learn more about the family caregiver



## How do I Become a Family Caregiver? (cont.)

- A veteran functional assessment is then completed
- The CSP Centralized Eligibility Appeals Team (CEAT) then reviews the veteran's medical records
- Each family caregiver applicant will then complete caregiver training
- A CSP clinical assessor will then conduct a home-care assessment with the veteran and the caregiver
- CEAT will do a final application review to determine eligibility for PCAFC, and then the veteran and caregiver(s) will receive notification of approval

If you are not approved and disagree with the decision, you may file an appeal with the Veteran's Health Administration Clinical Review Process by filling out VA form 20-0995.



# Monthly Stipend

The VA offers benefits to family caregivers such as monthly stipends for primary family caregivers

The rate for stipend payments is set based on the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) General Schedule Annual Rate

Stipend is then based on grade 4, step 1, based on locality pay where the resident resides, divided by 12

The amount of the monthly stipend the caregiver is eligible to receive is based on info gathered during the VA's evaluation of the veteran's personal care needs



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## Monthly Stipend (cont.)

- Level one is the monthly stipend rate previously described, multiplied by 0.625
- Level two is used if the VA determines the veteran is unable to self-sustain in the community, and it is the normal stipend rate multiplied by 1.00
- The OPM can make annual updates to the pay tables used to determine stipend, and stipends will be adjusted to reflect any changes
- If overpayment occurs, it is subject to collection, even if made due to a VA error



## Appointment of a Family Caregiver

- Veterans have the ability to appoint one primary caregiver and up to two secondary caregivers as backup support when needed
- Eligible primary and secondary caregivers can receive education and training, mental health counseling, travel, lodging, and more when traveling with the veteran to receive care
- Caregivers may also receive healthcare benefits through the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veteran Affairs (CHAMPVA)

If the veteran you care for is not eligible for a family caregiver, PGCSS may be right for you.

# What is a General Caregiver?

- The VA offers the Program of General Caregiver Support Services (PGCSS)
- General caregivers can provide services to veterans enrolled in VA healthcare who:
  - Need assistance with one or more activities of daily living
  - Need supervision or protection based on symptoms or residuals of neurological impairment or other impairment/injury
- General caregivers do not need to be a relative or live with the veteran
- PGCSS also offers resources for caregiver training such as skills training, individual counseling, peer support mentoring, and more





## Eligibility and Enrollment

- Any veteran enrolled in VA healthcare meeting the following requirements may be eligible for a caregiver:
- The veteran needs assistance with one or more activities of daily living or
- The veteran needs supervision or protection based on symptoms or residuals of neurological impairment or other impairment or injury
- Once the caregiver is enrolled, they will appear on the veteran's healthcare record
- The VA will also establish a healthcare record specifically for the caregiver
  - This record will be used to offer services and support for the established caregiver

# How to Enroll

Below is the step-by-step enrollment process for general caregivers:



## Veteran-Directed Care

- Veteran directed care allows veterans of all ages the ability to receive Home and Community Based Services in a consumer-directed way
- This program can be used for veterans who are isolated, or if their caregiver is experiencing burden
- In this program veterans receive a budget that is managed by them or their representative
- Any enrolled veteran eligible for community care and meeting clinical criteria for service are eligible for this type of care
- Available services are based on needs as assessed by a VA social worker



# What's the Difference Between Program of General Caregiver Support Services (PGCSS) and Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) and Veteran-Directed Care (VDC)?

TYPE OF SUPPORT	PCAFC	PGCSS	Direct
<a href="#">Caregiver Support Team</a>	X	X	X
<a href="#">Resources for Enhancing All Caregivers Health (REACH) VA</a>	X	X	X
<a href="#">Caregiver Support Line (CSL)</a>	X	X	X
Caregiver Health & Wellbeing Coaching	X	X	
<a href="#">Building Better Caregivers</a>	X	X	
<a href="#">Supportive Services</a>	X	X	
Caregivers FIRST Skills Training	X	X	
<a href="#">Peer Support Mentoring</a>	X	X	
<a href="#">Respite Care</a>	X	X	
Annie Caregiver Text	X	X	
Self-care/Resilience courses	X	X	
<a href="#">Connection to VA/Community Resources</a>	X	X	
<a href="#">Caregiver &amp; Family Resource Fairs</a>	X	X	
VA S.A.V.E. Training	X	X	
Mental Health Counseling (as applicable)	X	X	
<a href="#">CHAMPVA</a> (if uninsured)	X		
Monthly Stipend	X		
Beneficiary Travel (as applicable)	X		

## Legal Help and Appeals

Legal Help For Veterans, PLLC has over twenty years of experience helping veterans apply for service-connected disability benefits and starting their claims, appealing VA decisions, and filing claims for an increased disability rating so veterans can receive a higher level of benefits.

If you were denied service-connection or benefits for any service-connected disease, our firm can help. We can also put you and your family in touch with other critical resources to ensure you receive the treatment that you deserve.

Give us a call at 800-693-4800 or visit us online at [www.LegalHelpForVeterans.com](http://www.LegalHelpForVeterans.com).



*“It Is Our Duty  
To Protect Those  
Who Protected  
Us.”*

*-BRIGADIER GENERAL  
CAROL ANN FAUSONE  
(RET.)*



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