

VA Programs help vets gain access to benefits quickly after discharge

Did you know that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) offers two programs, including “Benefits Delivery at Discharge” and “Quick Start” to assist Solano County veterans receive disability benefits much faster than usual after discharge from service? That’s right, now you can gain access to the benefit services you’ve earned – much quicker than ever before – and our office can help.

The Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) program allows a service member to file a VA disability claim while still on active duty and without the completed DD-214 paperwork. As part of the program, the VA will process any claims made within 30 to 45 days after separation from military service. Currently, claims filed for disability benefits take anywhere from three to five months to process and return a decision. The BDD program reduces this wait time by nearly two-thirds, helping Veterans gain access to the disability claims they have earned faster than ever before.

The Quick Start program allows a service member to file a disability claim for compensation up to 59 days prior to separation from military service, retirement or release from active duty or demobilization. Submitting a disability claim through the Quick Start program makes it possible for Solano veterans to receive VA benefits as soon as possible after separation. The program is available nationwide and open to all service members on full-time active duty, including members of the National Guard and Reserves.

The Solano County Veterans Service Office (VSO) can help you determine which of these programs is right for you. We can also assist you with filing a claim or file one for you. Additionally, John Gilbertson is our full-time Vet Representative stationed at Travis Air Force Base at the family readiness center. He stands ready to assist with all discharge requests, ensuring vets receive all the benefits to which they are entitled.

Whether you visit the VSO or Mr. Gilbertson at Travis AFB, you will need to bring with you the original Service Medical Records or a certified copy. You will also need to provide all supporting documentation for your dependents, including marriage certificates, divorce decrees, children’s birth certificates and all family social security card information. Don’t forget your banking information, as you will need it in order to receive benefit compensation through direct deposit.

I encourage all vets to visit our office to see if they qualify for these benefit program or any other benefit services we offer, as our staff is happy to answer any questions you may have. We can even help you complete the DMV Veteran Status Verification Form for the new California Veteran Designation on your driver’s license and veteran’s ID card if you like – it’s a great benefit!

Call, email or drop on by, we’re here to help!

Ted Puntillo is Director of Veteran’s Services for Solano County. Reach him at (707) 784-6590 or TEPuntillo@SolanoCounty.com. The Solano County Veteran’s Services Office, 675 Texas St. in Fairfield, is open from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.