

## Specially Adapted Housing Grants for Disabled Veterans

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Certain servicemembers and veterans with service-connected disabilities may be entitled to a housing grant from VA to help build a new specially adapted house, to adapt a home they already own, buy a house and modify it to meet their disability-related requirements, or apply the grant against the unpaid principal mortgage balance of an adapted home already acquired without the assistance of a VA grant.

Eligible veterans or servicemembers may now receive up to three grants, with the total dollar amount of the grants not to exceed the maximum allowable. Previous grant recipients who had received assistance of less than the current maximum allowable may be eligible for an additional grant.

To obtain up to date general information about the Specially Adapted Housing program, to [www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/adaptedhousing.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/adaptedhousing.asp), or call the program's local office of jurisdiction at 1-877-827-3702.

**Modifications can include but are not limited to:** Ramps allowing entrance to, or exit from, the Veterans/Service members primary residence; Widening of doorways to allow access to essential lavatory and sanitary facilities; Raising or lowering kitchen or bathroom sinks and/or counters; Improving entrance paths or driveways in immediate area of the home to facilitate access to the home by the veteran/servicemember; improving plumbing or electrical systems made necessary due to installation of dialysis equipment or other medically sustaining equipment in the home.

# I. Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) Grant - Maximum of \$81,080

## What is a Specially Adapted Housing Grant?

The Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) program offers grants to certain servicemembers and veterans with severe service-connected disabilities to assist them in building, remodeling, purchasing an adapted home, or applying the grant against an existing mortgage.

The SAH grant is designed to help disabled veterans by providing a barrier-free living environment, such as a wheelchair accessible home, that affords Veterans a level of independent living they may not otherwise enjoy. Veterans and servicemembers with specific service-connected disabilities may be entitled to a grant for the purpose of constructing or modifying a home to meet their adaptive needs, up to the current maximum of **\$81,080**.

The SAH grant is available to certain veterans and servicemembers who are entitled to disability compensation due to:

- Loss of or loss of use of both legs, OR
- Loss of or loss of use of both arms, OR
- Blindness in both eyes having only light perception, plus loss of or loss of use of one leg, OR
- The loss of or loss of use of one lower leg together with residuals of organic disease or injury, OR
- The loss of or loss of use of one leg together with the loss of or loss of use of one arm, OR
- Certain severe burns, OR
- The loss, or loss of use of one or more lower extremities due to service on or after September 11, 2001, which so affects the functions of balance or propulsion as to preclude ambulating without the aid of braces, crutches, canes, or a wheelchair. \*
- Permanent Home is owned by an eligible individual.
- Maximum of 3 grants, up to the maximum dollar amount allowable.

\* This eligibility criteria is limited to 30 recipients per fiscal year (FY).

## **SAH grants can be used in one of the following ways:**

- Construct a specially adapted home on land to be acquired
- Build a home on land already owned if it is suitable for specially adapted housing
- Remodel an existing home if it can be made suitable for specially adapted housing
- Apply the grant against the unpaid principal mortgage balance of an adapted home already acquired without the assistance of a VA grant

## **II. Special Home Adaption (SHA) Grant - Maximum of \$16,217**

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VA may approve a benefit amount up to a maximum of **\$16,217** for the cost of necessary adaptations to a servicemember's or veteran's residence or to help him/ her acquire a residence already adapted with special features for his/ her disability, to purchase and adapt a home, or for adaptations to a family member's home in which they will reside.

To be eligible for this grant, servicemembers and veterans must be entitled to compensation for permanent and total service-connected disability due to one of the following:

- Blindness in both eyes with 20/200 visual acuity or less, OR
- Loss of or loss of use of both hands, OR
- Certain severe burn injuries, OR
- Certain severe respiratory injuries
- Permanent Home is owned by an eligible individual or family member
- Maximum of 3 grants, up to the maximum dollar amount allowable

## **III. Temporary Residence Adaptation (TRA) \$6355 to \$3593**

A temporary grant may be available to SAH/SHA eligible Veterans and servicemembers who are or will be temporarily residing in a home owned by a family member. The maximum amount available to adapt a family member's home for the SAH grant is **\$35,593** and for the SHA grant is **\$ 6,355**.

## How to Apply:

To apply for a grant, fill out and submit **VA Form 26-4555<sup>1</sup>**, Application in Acquiring Specially Adapted Housing or Special Home Adaptation Grant. You can access this form by:

Applying online via [www.ebenefits.va.gov](http://www.ebenefits.va.gov)

Downloading **VA Form 26-4555**, Application in Acquiring Specially Adapted Housing or Special Home Adaptation Grant from

<https://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-26-4555-ARE.pdf>

and mailing it to your nearest Regional Loan Center

Calling VA toll free at **1-800-827-1000** to have a claim form mailed to you

Visiting the nearest VA regional office. Find the office nearest you by visiting VA Regional Office Locations or calling VA toll-free at **1-800-827-1000**.

## IV. Home Improvement & Structural Alteration Grant (HISA) - \$2000 to \$6800

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### Application for HISA benefits

Veterans and servicemembers may receive assistance for any home improvement necessary for the continuation of treatment or for disability access to the home and essential lavatory and sanitary facilities. A veteran may receive a HISA grant in conjunction with either a SAH or SHA grant. The HISA program is available for both veterans with service-connected disabilities and veterans with non-service-connected disabilities.

VA provides up to **\$6,800** lifetime benefits for service-connected veterans/service-members and up to **\$2,000** lifetime benefits for nonservice-connected veterans to make home improvements and/or structural changes necessary for the continuation of treatment or for disability access to the veterans/servicemembers' home and essential lavatory and sanitary facilities. For application information, contact the Prosthetic Representative at the nearest VA medical center or learn more about at: [www.prosthetics.va.gov/HISA2.asp](http://www.prosthetics.va.gov/HISA2.asp). VA Forms are available at: [www.va.gov/vaforms/](http://www.va.gov/vaforms/)

#### (a) Application package.

To apply for HISA benefits, the beneficiary must submit to VA a complete HISA benefits application package. A complete HISA benefits application package includes all of the following:

- (1) A prescription, which VA may obtain on the beneficiary's behalf, written or approved by a VA physician that includes all of the following:
  - (i) The beneficiary's name, address, and telephone number.
  - (ii) Identification of the prescribed improvement or structural alteration.
  - (iii) The diagnosis and medical justification for the prescribed improvement or structural alteration.

- (2) A completed and signed **VA Form 10-0103**, online fill-in version available at:

<http://www.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/10-0103-fill.pdf>

Veterans Application for Assistance in Acquiring Home Improvement and Structural Alterations, including, if desired, a request for advance payment of HISA benefits.

(3) A signed statement from the owner of the property authorizing the improvement or structural alteration to the property. The statement must be notarized if the beneficiary submitting the HISA benefits application is not the owner of the property.

(4) A written itemized estimate of costs for labor, materials, permits, and inspections for the home improvement or structural alteration.

(5) A color photograph of the unimproved area.

### **Example Photographs**

**Before HISA Improvements**



**After HISA Improvements**



**(b) Pre-award inspection of site.**

The beneficiary must allow VA to inspect the site of the proposed improvement or structural alteration. VA will not approve a HISA application unless VA has either conducted a pre-award inspection or has determined that no such inspection is needed. No later than 30 days after receiving a complete HISA benefits application, VA will conduct the inspection or determine that no inspection is required.

### **(c) Incomplete applications.**

If VA receives an incomplete HISA benefits application, VA will notify the applicant of the missing documentation. If the missing documentation is not received by VA within 30 days after such notification, VA will close the application and notify the applicant that the application has been closed. The closure notice will indicate that the application may be re-opened by submitting the requested documentation and updating any outdated information from the original application.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 1717)

(The Office of Management and Budget has approved the information collection requirements in this section under control number 2900–0188.) §§ 17.3121–17.3124  
[Reserved]

## **Approving HISA benefits applications**

### **(a) Approval of application.**

VA will approve the HISA benefits application if:

- (1) The application is consistent with §§ 17.3100 through 17.3130, and
- (2) VA determines that the proposed improvement or structural alteration is reasonably designed to address the needs of the beneficiary and is appropriate for the beneficiary's home, based on documentation provided and/or through a pre-award inspection of the home.

### **(b) Notification of approval.**

No later than 30 days after a beneficiary submits a complete application, VA will notify the beneficiary whether an application is approved. The notification will:

- (1) State the total benefit amount authorized for the improvement or structural alteration.
- (2) State the amount of any advance payment, if requested by the beneficiary, and state that the advance payment must be used for the improvements or structural alterations detailed in the application. The notification will also remind beneficiaries receiving advance payment of the obligation to submit the request for final payment upon completion of the construction.
- (3) Provide the beneficiary with the notice of the right to appeal if they do not agree with VA's decision regarding the award.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 1717, 7104)

### **Disapproving HISA benefits applications**

VA will disapprove a HISA benefits application if the complete HISA benefits application does not meet all of the criteria outlined in § 17.3125(a). Notification of the decision provided to the beneficiary will include the basis for the disapproval and notice to the beneficiary of his or her right to appeal.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 7104)

§§ 17.3127–17.3129 [Reserved]

### **HISA benefits payment procedures**

#### **(a) Advance payment.**

If the beneficiary has requested advance payment of HISA benefits in VA Form 10–0103, as provided in § 17.3120(a)(2), VA will make an advance payment to the beneficiary equal to 50 percent of the total benefit authorized for the improvement or structural alteration. VA will make the advance payment no later than 30 days after the HISA benefits application is approved. The beneficiary may receive only one advance payment for each approved HISA benefits application. A beneficiary must use the advance payment only for the improvement or structural alteration described in the application and must submit a final payment request, as defined in paragraph (b) of this section, to document such use after the construction is finished.

#### **(b) Final payment request.**

No later than 60 days after the application is approved or, if VA approved an advance payment, no later than 60 days after the advance payment was made, the beneficiary must submit a complete final payment request to VA for payment. The complete final payment

(1) A statement by the beneficiary that the improvement or structural alteration, as indicated in the application, was completed;

(2) A color photograph of the completed work; and

(3) Documentation of the itemized actual costs for material, labor, permits, and inspections.

#### **(c) VA action on final payment request.**



(1) Prior to approving and remitting the final payment, VA may inspect (within 30 days after receiving the final payment request) the beneficiary's home to determine that the improvement or structural alteration was completed as indicated in the application. No payment will be made if the improvement or structural alteration has not been completed.

(2) No later than 30 days after receipt of a complete final payment request, or, if VA conducts an inspection of the home under paragraph (c)(1) of this section, no later than 30 days after the inspection, VA will make a determination on the final payment request. If approved, VA will remit a final payment to the beneficiary equal to the lesser of:

(i) The approved HISA benefit amount, less the amount of any advance payment, or

(ii) The total actual cost of the improvement or structural alteration, less the amount of any advance payment.

(3) If the total actual cost of the improvement or structural alteration is less than the amount paid to the beneficiary as an advance payment, the beneficiary will reimburse VA for the difference between the advance payment and the total actual costs.

(4) After final payment is made on a HISA benefits application, the application file will be closed and no future HISA benefits will be furnished to the beneficiary for that application. If the total actual cost of the improvement or structural alteration is less than the approved HISA benefit, the balance of the approved amount will be credited to the beneficiary's remaining HISA benefits lifetime balance.

**(d) Failure to submit a final payment request.**

(1) If an advance payment was made to the beneficiary, but the beneficiary fails to submit a final payment request in accordance with paragraph (b) of this section within 60 days of the date of the advance payment, VA will send a notice to remind the beneficiary of the obligation to submit the final payment request. If the beneficiary fails to submit the final payment request or to provide a suitable update and explanation of delay within 30 days of this notice, VA may take appropriate action to collect the amount of the advance payment from the beneficiary.

(2) If an advance payment was not made to the beneficiary and the beneficiary does not submit a final payment request in accordance with paragraph (b) of this section within 60 days of the date the application was approved, the application will be closed and no future HISA benefits will be furnished to the beneficiary for

that application. Before closing the application, VA will send a notice to the beneficiary of the intent to close the file. If the beneficiary does not respond with a suitable update and explanation for the delay within 30 days, VA will close the file and provide a final notice of closure. The notice will include information about the right to appeal the decision.

**(e) Failure to make approved improvements or structural alterations.**

If an inspection conducted pursuant to paragraph (c)(1) of this section reveals that the improvement or structural alteration has not been completed as indicated in the final payment request, VA may take appropriate action to collect the amount of the advance payment from the beneficiary. VA will not seek to collect the amount of the advance payment from the beneficiary if the beneficiary provides documentation indicating that the project was not completed due to the fault of the contractor, including bankruptcy or misconduct of the contractor.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 1717) (The Office of Management and Budget has approved the information collection requirement in this section under control number 2900–0188.)

**This grant provides medically necessary improvements and structural alterations to veterans/servicemembers primary residence for the following purposes:**

- Allowing entrance to or exit from their homes
- Use of essential lavatory and sanitary facilities (e.g. roll in showers)
- Allowing accessibility to kitchen or bathroom sinks or counters (e.g. lowering counters/sinks)
- Improving entrance paths or driveways in immediate area of the home to facilitate access to the home through construction of permanent ramping
- Improving plumbing or electrical systems made necessary due to installation of home medical equipment

**HISA will not pay for:**

- Walkways to exterior buildings
- Widening of driveways (in excess of a 7ft x 6ft area)
- Spa, hot tub, or Jacuzzi
- Exterior decking (in excess of 8ft x 8ft)