

What is a Decision Ready Claim (DRC)?

The DRC Program allows you to submit VA compensation claims that are decision-ready so you can get your claim processed as fast as possible.

To submit a DRC, you must:

- Appoint and work with an accredited Veterans Service Organization (VSO),
- Gather all relevant and required evidence to support your claim, and
- Attend a VA claim exam, if needed, before submitting your claim.

DRC Submission Process

- Submit through Direct Upload
- Review of completeness by Super User at station (eventually contractor)
- CA reviews for completeness and establishes the claim, issues any exclusion and makes claim RFD
- RVSR makes a decision on the claim

What type of claims can I file through the DRC Program?

- Currently, the DRC Program is available for the following types of compensation claims:
- **Direct Service Connection Claims:** Claims for conditions that began during your military service or were caused by an event while serving.
- **Presumptive Service Connection Claims:** Claims for conditions that are presumed to have been caused by an event during your military service, even if there is no specific evidence showing a connection between your condition and your military service in your service records. This includes conditions related to Agent Orange, chronic disabilities, and the following conditions tied to service during the Gulf War:
 - fibromyalgia,
 - chronic fatigue syndrome, and
 - functional gastrointestinal disorders.
- **Secondary Service Connection Claims:** Claims for conditions that were caused or aggravated by a service-connected disability.

Continued

- **Increased Disability Claims:** Claims for existing service-connected conditions that you have medical evidence to show have gotten worse.
- **Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) Claims:** Claims for surviving spouses of Veterans whose death resulted from a service-related injury or disease or who was rated 100% disabled due to service-connected conditions (including entitlement to Individual Unemployability) for 10 years prior to their death. To learn more about DIC, including eligibility requirements, go to the [Dependency and Indemnity Compensation page](#).
- **Pre-Discharge Claims:** Claims for disability compensation filed by Servicemembers who have less than 90 days remaining before their separation from military service.
- To file a DRC, you must have previously filed a VA claim and received a rating decision from VA on that claim (this does not include DIC and Pre-Discharge claims).

Am I eligible to file a claim through the DRC Program?

- To file a DRC, you must have previously filed a VA claim and received a rating decision from VA on that claim (this does not include Pre-Discharge or DIC claims). The following exclusions also apply for DRC claims:
- **All Disability Compensation DRCs**
- Waiting for a decision on a pending disability claim, unless the claim was submitted via the Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) program
- Currently appealing the condition you want to file a DRC for
- Filing a claim for a previously denied condition
- Rated at 100% for your condition
- Filing a direct service connection DRC for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Camp Lejeune Contaminated Water (CLCW), and conditions related to Mustard Gas or as a Former Prisoner of War (FPOW)

Exception:

- Pre-Discharge claims involving PTSD, and/or TBI may be processed under the DRC program if an in-service diagnosis has been documented on examination
- Filing a claim for a disability incurred during a prior period of active duty for training or inactive duty for training, unless you are a Service member filing a VA claim prior to discharge
- Filing a claim for Pension
- An incarcerated Veteran
- Claiming Individual Unemployability
- Seeking Special Monthly Pension
- Seeking only Special Monthly Compensation
- Living outside of the U.S.
- Submitting a DRC application without a Veteran signature
- Filing for Chapter 18 (Spina Bifida) and any other birth defects for dependent children
- Filing a restricted access claim (includes VBA employees, relatives of VBA employees, National Service Officers, or high-ranking government officials)

- **Pre-Discharge DRCs**
- Your Pre-Discharge claim will be disqualified from the DRC Program if you are:
 - claims involving one or more of the factors outlined above
 - claims in which the Service member has more than 90 days remaining on active duty, unless there is a pending BDD claim
 - claims in which the Service member is currently
 - enrolled in IDES
 - awaiting discharge while hospitalized in a VA or military treatment facility, or
 - pregnant
 - claims requiring a character of discharge determination, and/or
 - claims for aggravation of a condition that pre-existed service or was noted at the time of entry into service (unless evidence of pre-service baseline severity is provided).

- **DIC Decision Ready Claims**
- Your DIC claim will be disqualified from the DRC Program if you are:
- Filing a claim for Parents Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)
- Filing a burial claim (unless it's submitted with a DRC-eligible DIC claim)

Decision Ready Claim (DRC)



VSO ensures:
1. ITF
2. 21-22 of record
3. Claim folder



VSO Gathers Evidence and Requests Exam from VBA (optional)



EP 400

21-4138 requesting exams



VBA Determines if Exam is Warranted; Input Exams Into CAATS



Vendor Completes Exam(s) (DBQ(s))



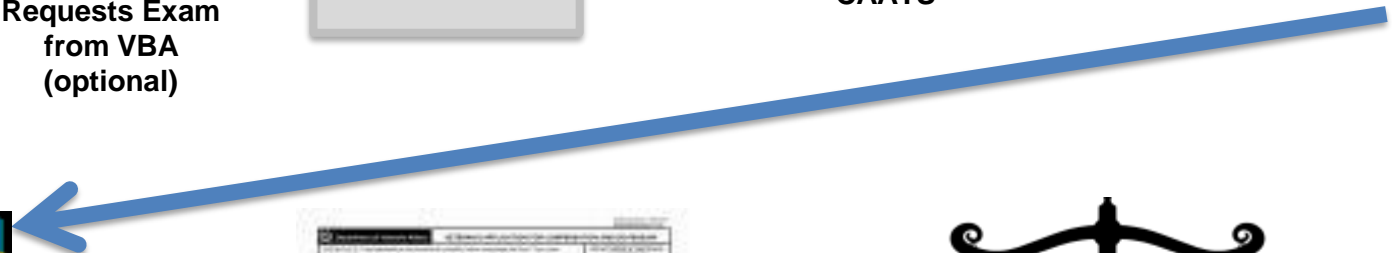
Vendor Sends DBQ to VBMS



VSO Submits Formal DRC Claim for Increase



VA Decision in < 30 Days



ITF Submission

- Submit ITF through normal channels
- Benefit: Compensation or DIC
- Ensure DRC is filed within a year of active ITF
- **IMPORTANT:** remind the Veteran that you will submit 21-526ez within a year after all necessary DRC documents and evidence have been obtained. Veteran should not submit 21-526ez per ITF letter.

VA Form 21-526ez

- Will need signature of Veteran as it satisfies 5103 notification
- List increase claims only and SMC (if claimed)

TIPS:

- Use rating code sheet wording (example Fibromyalgia)
- Enclose additional records or clearly state records are enclosed when listing treatment

Tips for Success

Do	Do not
Ensure entire claim folder, 21-22, and ITF are viewable in VBMS	Request another issue to be examined prior to original DRC establishment
Upload exam related medical records with contract exam request	Mention relevant records on 21-526ez without including and noting they are included
Have Veteran sign 21-526ez	Allow an ITF to expire (1 year)
Use Direct Upload for uploading at time of exam and DRC submission	Submit statements or records without a DRC evidence coversheet

Questions

