

Increasing Access to Accessible Housing for Disabled Veterans

Presented by



a program of United Spinal Association



Presenter

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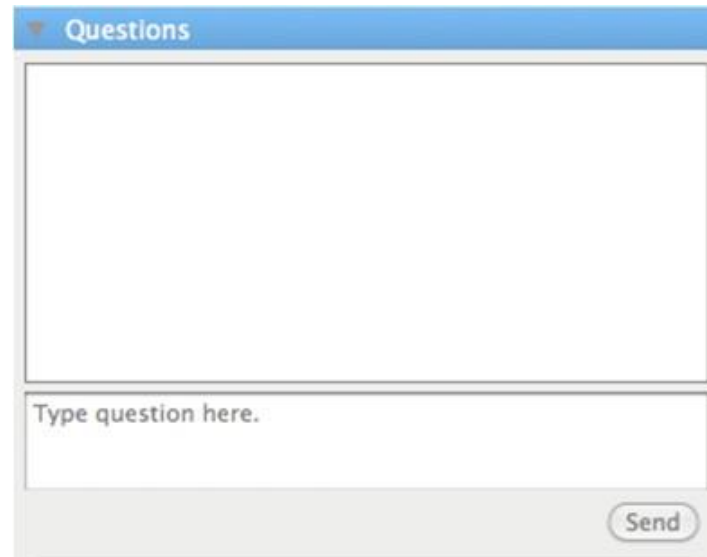
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Questions

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Questions

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VetsFirst's History

- Represents over 65 years of service to veterans and their families.
- Provides representation for veterans, their dependents and survivors in their pursuit of VA benefits and health care.
- Fights to ensure all veterans with disabilities have the ability to live and work in their communities and achieve greater independence.

Veterans Living with Disabilities

- VA estimates that there are 22.3 million veterans.
- Overall, 5.5 million veterans are living with disabilities.
- 3.6 million veterans receive VA disability compensation.
- Another 300,000 veterans receive VA pensions.

Housing Needs for Disabled Veterans

- Access to affordable, accessible housing is a critical issue for many disabled veterans.
- The ability to return home after incurring a significant disability is an important aspect of reintegrating into your family and community.
- For veterans who have newly acquired injuries, this may mean living for a time with family members.

VA Housing Programs

- Specially Adapted Housing
- Special Housing Adaptation
- Temporary Residence Adaptation
- Housing Improvements and Structural Alterations



Special Adapted Housing (SAH)

- VA program that provides assistance with modifying a home or building an accessible house for veterans or servicemembers who are permanently and totally disabled as the result of a disability connected to their service.
- The veteran or servicemember must have a qualifying disability.

SAH: Qualifying Disabilities

- Loss of or inability to use both legs.
- Blindness in both eyes along with the inability to use one leg.
- Loss of or inability to use one leg along with the loss or inability to use one arm or problems due to injury or disease.
- Loss of or inability to use both arms.
- Severe burns.

SAH: Uses and Benefits

- Individuals who qualify are currently eligible for a maximum of \$67,555 of assistance.
- The grant may be accessed three times up to the maximum grant amount.
- Funds may be used to construct a house on land acquired for that purpose, build a house on land already owned, remodel an existing house, or apply it against the unpaid principle of an already acquired adapted house.

Special Housing Adaptation (SHA)

- VA program that provides assistance with modifying a house or acquiring a home that has already been modified for veterans or servicemembers who are permanently and totally disabled as the result of a disability connected to their service.
- The veteran or servicemember must have a qualifying disability.

SHA: Qualifying Disabilities

- Blindness with a visual acuity of 20/200 or less.
- Loss of or inability to use both hands.
- Certain severe burns.
- Impact of a respiratory injury.

SHA: Uses and Benefits

- Individuals who qualify are currently eligible for a maximum of \$13,511.
- The grant may be accessed three times up to the maximum grant amount.
- Funds may be used to adapt a house that the veteran or a family member plans to purchase or that the veteran or family member already owns, or to purchase a house that has already been adapted.

Applying for SAH or SHA

- Complete VA Form 26-4555, Application in Acquiring Specially Adapted Housing or Special Home Adaptation Grant.
- Veterans and servicemembers should contact a local veterans service organization for assistance in applying for this benefit.

Temporary Residence Adaptation (TRA)

- Available to veterans and servicemembers who are or will be living temporarily in a home owned by a family member.
- To receive this grant, the individual must be eligible for either SAH or SHA.

TRA: Uses and Benefits

- Individuals eligible for SAH are eligible for up to \$29,657.
- Individuals eligible for SHA are eligible for up to \$5,295.
- As of August 6, using TRA does not count against the amount of funding an individual is eligible for under SAH or SHA. However, it does count as one of the three uses of those grants.

Applying for TRA

- Veterans or servicemembers interested in TRA should apply for either SAH or SHA.
- Once approved, the individual should tell the agent that he or she wishes to use the TRA program.



Housing Improvements and Structural Alterations (HISA)

- Available to both veterans who have a disability related to their military service and those who have disabilities that are not service connected.
- Veterans may use HISA funds for alterations such as, improved access to the home, bathrooms, and kitchens.

HISA: Benefits

- Veterans who need a housing modification due to a service-connected disability may receive up to \$6800.
- Veterans who are 50 percent service connected may also receive \$6800 for a modification needed due to a non-service-connected disability.
- Veterans who are not service connected but who are enrolled in the VA health care system are eligible for \$2000.

Applying for HISA

- A veteran must complete VA Form 10-0103, Veterans Application for Assistance in Acquiring Home Improvement and Structural Alterations.
- If the home is a rental home then the veteran must have the permission of the landlord.
- A veteran must have a prescription for a home modification.

Veterans with Unmet Modification Needs

- Veterans who have disabilities that are not related to their military service are not eligible for SAH or SHA .
- Veterans who have a service-connected disability but who are not rated as permanent and total are limited to HISA funds.

ADDRESSING UNMET HOUSING MODIFICATION NEEDS

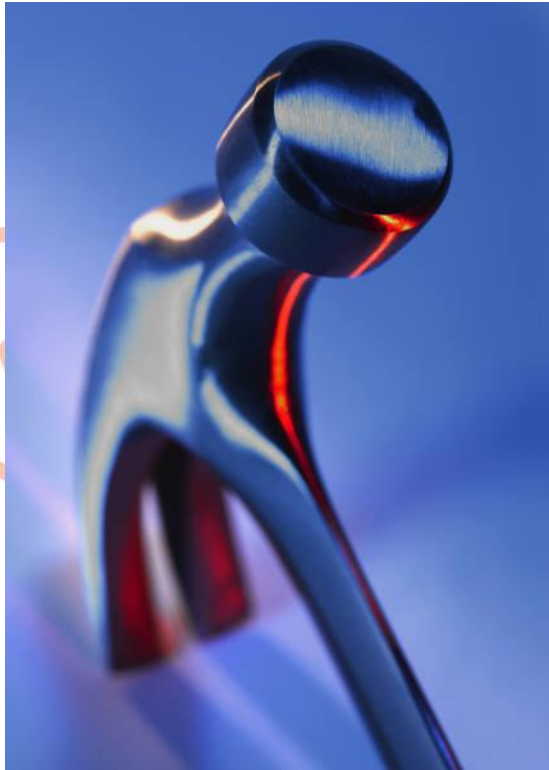
Leveraging Non-Profit Resources to Serve Veterans with Disabilities

Veterans with Disabilities Who Are Homeowners

- 4.3 million veteran homeowners have disabilities.
- Of that number, 2.7 million are veterans who are elderly.



High Costs of Adaptations



- Typically, most housing adaptations are paid for by homeowners.
- Failure to make needed modifications may lead to injury or institutionalization.

Housing Assistance for Veterans Act

- The Housing Assistance for Veterans Act (HAVEN Act) establishes a pilot program that would provide grants to nonprofit organizations to rehabilitate and modify homes of disabled and low-income veterans.
- Nonprofits would compete for these grants which would be available through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Leveraging Non-Profit Resources

- Nonprofits have access to volunteers.
- Nonprofits bring in leverage from the private sector and foundations.



Veteran Eligibility

- HAVEN Act would serve veterans who are low-income or disabled and who own their own homes or are living in the owner-occupied home of a family member.
- The definition of disability considers the impact of a disability regardless of whether the disability is related to military service.

Types of Work



- Wheelchair ramps
- Widening doorways and passageways
- Installing handrails and grab bars
- Repairs to roofs, floors, electrical wiring, and plumbing

Benefit to the Veteran

- Nonprofits will be required to match not less than 50 percent of the grant award.
- All repairs and adaptations must be at either no or very low cost to the veteran.

Coordination with VA

- The HAVEN Act requires HUD and VA to establish and oversee the pilot program.
- Applying organizations will need to detail their plans for working with VA and veterans service organizations to identify veterans.



HAVEN Outlook

- Last year, the HAVEN Act passed both the House and Senate but failed to become law because in order for a bill to become a law it must pass the House and Senate in the same piece of legislation.
- This year, the HAVEN Act has been reintroduced in the House by Rep. Al Green (D-TX) and in the Senate by Sen. Jack Reed (D-RI) and Sen. Mike Johanns (R-NE).

How Can You Help?

- Visit the VetsFirst advocacy center on VetsFirst.org to keep up to date on this legislation.
- Let your member of Congress and your Senators know that you support the HAVEN Act (H.R. 385/S. 1387).

Presentation Resources

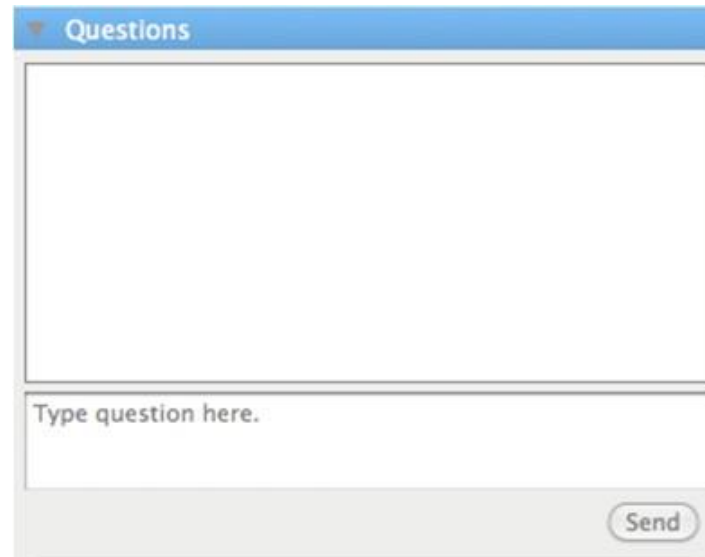
- VetsFirst Advocacy Center
 - www.vetsfirst.org/disabled-veterans-need-improved-access-to-accessible-housing
- Department of Veterans Affairs
 - www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/adaptedhousing.asp
- Rebuilding Together
 - www.rebuildingtogether.org/veterans

Upcoming Webinar

- Non-Service-Connected Disability Pension Benefits
- Tuesday, November 19, 3:00-4:00 p.m. EST
- Registration information at VetsFirst.org.

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