



**Department of
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News Release

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New VA Rules for Specially Adapted Housing Grants *Program Aids Most Seriously Injured*

WASHINGTON – A change in the law that allows certain seriously injured veterans and service members to receive multiple grants for constructing or modifying homes has resulted in many new grants, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today.

Before the change, eligible veterans and servicemembers could receive special adaptive housing grants of \$10,000 or \$50,000 from VA only once. Now they may use the benefit up to three times, so long as the total grants stay within specified limits outlined in the law.

“Veterans seriously disabled during their military service have earned this benefit,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake. “This change ensures that every eligible veteran and servicemember has the chance to use the maximum amount afforded to them by our grateful nation.”

In order to ensure all previous recipients are aware of this opportunity, VA has mailed more than 16,000 letters to eligible veterans, reaching out to those who used only a portion of their grant or who decided not to use the grant even after initially qualifying.

The response over the past year has been dramatic, with more than 4,600 applications received thus far. Of these, approximately 3,900 veterans have been determined eligible under the new law, and more than 200 grants already awarded.

VA has averaged about 1,000 adaptive housing grant applications per year during the past 10 years. Since the program began in 1948, it has provided more than \$650 million in grants to about 34,000 seriously disabled veterans.

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Specially Adapted Housing Grants 2/2/2/2

To ensure veterans' and service members' needs are met and grant money is spent properly, VA works closely throughout the entire process with contractors and architects to design, construct and modify homes that meet the individuals' housing accessibility needs.

Eligible for the benefit are those with specific service-connected disabilities entitling them to VA compensation for a "permanent and total disability." They may receive a grant to construct an adapted home or to modify an existing one to meet their special needs.

VA has three types of adapted housing grants available. The Specially Adapted Housing grant (SAH), currently limited to \$50,000, is generally used to create a wheelchair-accessible home for those who may require such assistance for activities of daily living.

VA's Home Loan Guaranty program and the Native American Direct Loan program may also be used with the SAH benefit to purchase an adaptive home.

The Special Housing Adaptations (SHA) grant, currently limited to \$10,000, is generally used to assist veterans with mobility throughout their homes due to blindness in both eyes, or the anatomical loss or loss of use of both hands or extremities below the elbow.

A third type established by the new law, the Temporary Residence Adaptation (TRA) grant, is available to eligible veterans and seriously injured active duty servicemembers who are temporarily living or intend to temporarily live in a home owned by a family member.

While the SAH and SHA grants require ownership and title to a house, in creating TRA Congress recognized the need to allow veterans and active duty members who may not yet own homes to have access to the adaptive housing grant program.

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Under TRA, veterans and service members eligible under the SAH program would be permitted to use up to \$14,000, and those eligible under the SHA program would be allowed to use up to \$2,000 of the maximum grant amounts. Each grant would count as one of the three grants allowed under the new program.

“The goal of all three grant programs is to provide a barrier-free living environment that offers the country’s most severely injured veterans or servicemembers a level of independent living,” added Peake.

Other VA adaptive housing benefits are currently available through Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service’s “Independent Living” program, the Insurance Service’s Veterans Mortgage Life Insurance program, and the Veterans Health Administration’s Home Improvement and Structural Alterations grant.

For more information about grants and other adaptive housing programs, contact a local VA regional office at 1-800-827-1000 or local veteran service organization. Additional program information and grant applications (VAF-26-4555) can be found at <http://www.homeloans.va.gov/sah.htm>.

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