

STAKEHOLDER ENTERPRISE PORTAL

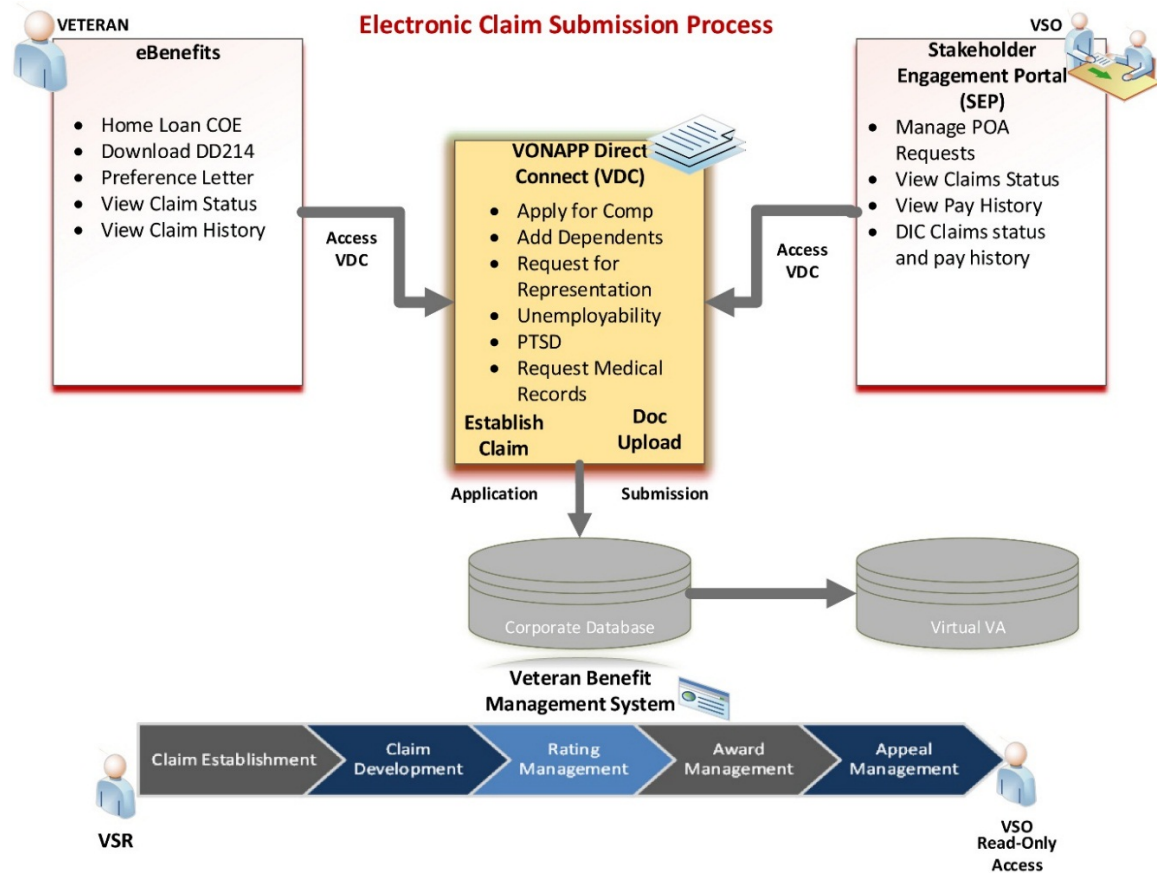
Frequently asked questions


Q: What is the Stakeholder Enterprise Portal?

A: Stakeholder Enterprise Portal (SEP) is a secure web-based access point for VA’s business partners. This portal helps Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) and other external VA business partners represent Veterans more quickly, efficiently, and electronically.

Q: How will SEP address the backlog?

A: The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) goal is to eliminate the backlog and process all claims within 125 days with 98% accuracy in 2015. SEP is one element of the plan to make that goal a reality. SEP helps eliminate the submission of paper-based forms, ultimately contributing to a reduction in the claims processing time. Just as the Veteran is being encouraged to use the eBenefits portal to interact with VA, external stakeholders are encouraged to use the SEP portal to interact with VA. For more information about SEP, visit www.sep.va.gov.





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Q: Who can/should use SEP?

A: External business partners such as Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs), education providers, doctors, attorneys, loan appraisers, benefit providers, and others will be able to access information, upload documents, submit claims, and perform other actions on behalf of Veterans. VSOs are currently the only authorized partners able to use SEP. Other partners will be added through 2014. Please continue to check with VA for future releases as more accesses are granted.

Q: How do I login to SEP?

A: Go to www.sep.va.gov and look for the “Login” button in the header.

Q: What do I need to login to SEP?


A: SEP can be accessed at www.sep.va.gov via Personal Identity Verification (PIV) card or through Norton Symantec’s credentialing service. For PIV card access, business partners must have an active Personal Identity Verification (PIV) card and a PIV card reader for their computer.

For access to SEP through Norton Symantec’s credentialing service, business partners will need a valid Norton account. Visit the SEP login page and select the “Log in with Norton” option. More information is available in the Norton Symantec step-by-step job aid available for download here: [the SEP FAQ web page](#).

There is an SEP User Guide and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) available on the SEP website. If you encounter any additional issues, please feel free to contact the VSO-dedicated support line at 1-855-225-0709

Q: What is a Personal Identity Verification (PIV) card?

A: A Personal Identity Verification (PIV) Card is an ID card issued by the VA that contains a computer chip, which allows it to receive, store, recall, and send information in a secure manner. The card will encrypt data to strengthen the security of both employees' and Veterans' information and for physical access to secured areas. Please make sure that you can use your PIV card for logical access (computer access) and not just physical access (i.e. building access)



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Q: How does a Veterans Service Officer get a PIV card?

A: A Veterans Service Officer must be sponsored by VA to be issued a PIV card. Ask your manager for more details.

Q: What should a Veterans Service Officer do if he/she forgets the PIN number for their PIV card?

A: A Veterans Service Officer must consult his/her local or regional badge office to get their PIN reset. This must be done in person.

Q: How does a Veterans Service Officer obtain a Norton credential to login to SEP?

A: Veteran Service Officers will have to complete the identity proofing process, which includes:

- Visiting the Norton [Login](#) page on the SEP website to register for a Norton account
- Completing the identity proofing questionnaire
- Receiving the Norton access code via USPS and completing the login process

For explicit instructions, please visit the Norton Symantec step-by-step job aid found under the Frequently Asked Questions section of the SEP website.


Q: How can VSOs receive assistance?

A: There is a VSO-dedicated phone line which is serviced by a group of specialists. The number is 1-855-225-0709 and assistance is available from 9:00am to 5:00pm (ET) Monday through Friday.

The Public Contact Representatives (PCRs) who are servicing the phone lines will be able to address queries regarding the Stakeholder Enterprise Portal (SEP). Additionally, these specialists are trained to identify and expedite those claims which are identified as hardship cases.

Q: Who will provide SEP training to VSOs?

A: You can access the SEP User Guide at <https://www.sep.va.gov/sep/web/guest/faq>. Training overviews and seminars are also being held on a periodic basis. Please contact the Change Management Agent (CMA) at your local RO for more information on upcoming demonstrations or trainings.



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Q: As a VSO, do I need Power of Attorney (POA) to support Veteran claim submissions?

A: Yes. In order to build and submit claims on behalf of a Veteran, or to access any Veteran information, you must have a current POA for that Veteran and be accredited through your organization.

Please note that due to signature requirements for disability compensation claims, not all claims completed in SEP can be submitted directly to VA on behalf of Veterans. These claims will be routed to the Veteran's eBenefits account for electronic signature and subsequent submission to VA.

Q: What if SEP tells me that I don't currently have any active POA associations?

A: If you receive a message from the SEP portal that you don't have any active POAs, first speak with your manager to confirm that you have been registered in the Office of General Counsel (OGC) database. Next, check with your manager to ensure that the OGC database recognizes your organization. You must have a record in the OGC database that is associated with an OGC-recognized VSO to successfully login to SEP.

If you have a record in the OGC database and your organization is accredited and recognized by OGC, please call our VSO-dedicated support line at 1-855-225-0709 for further troubleshooting assistance.

Q: What Veterans can I support using SEP?


A: As a VSO representative, you will only be able to support Veterans for which your organization has POA and only if the Veteran's sensitivity level is less than or equal to your security level. For instance, as a VSO, if you have a security level of 7, you will not be able to use SEP to serve a Veteran that has a sensitivity level of 8, even if you have an active POA for the Veteran.

Q: How do I get technical assistance if I cannot see a Veteran for which I have a POA?

A: Please call the VSO-dedicated support line at 1-855-225-0709 for additional assistance.

Q: How can I provide feedback and/or suggestions for SEP?

A: Please send feedback to the Change Management Agent (CMA) at your local VA Regional Office or call the VSO-dedicated support line at 1-855-225-0709.



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Q: What features does SEP currently offer VSOs?

A: Currently, SEP offers several features that allow VSOs to provide better service to the Veterans they serve. VSOs can accept or decline electronic Power of Attorney (POA) requests submitted by Veterans on eBenefits using VA Form 21-22. VSOs can also complete online claims forms, check the status of pending claims, upload documents and view payment history for claims that have already been granted. Additionally, SEP offers the VSO Work Queue, which allows VSO representatives to quickly identify which claim applications require their review.

Q: As a Veteran Service Organization (VSO) representative, we often need to find Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) information for Veterans, their spouses and dependents. Where in SEP can I procure that information?

A: Stakeholder Enterprise Portal (SEP) provides the ability for VSO representatives to access VA's public Knowledge Management (KM) website from SEP. This enables VSO representatives and business partners to research answers to previously asked questions, as well as to locate relevant information about VA policies, systems, forms, and directives.

Q: Can I accept and decline VA Form 21-22s (representation requests) from Veterans?

A: Only accredited VSO representatives who are authorized to accept and decline requests on behalf of their organization can do so using SEP.

Q: How can I search for VA Form 21-22 requests?


A: You can locate VA Form 21-22 requests by logging into SEP and clicking on the "Representation Requests" button under the banner. You will then locate requests by selecting search criteria, such as organization, status and location (U.S. State/City).

Q: What representation requests statuses are available for search?

A: VSOs can search for new POA requests, pending POA requests, accepted and declined POA requests as well as withdrawn POAs. We encourage VSOs searching for new requests to select both "new" and "pending" to ensure that no Veteran is left without representation.

Q: Can I save my VA Form 21-22 representation request searches?

A: Yes. You can save up to 10 frequently used searches and easily recall their search criteria without having to re-enter them into the search form. After you execute a search that you'd



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like to save for later, simply select the “Save this Search” option from the Search Results page and provide a unique name for the search. When you return to the Search screen, your new search will appear in the list of saved searches.

Q: Why is the VA Form 21-22 representation request search so slow?

A: By specifying a broad search range (i.e. selecting many U.S. States, selecting many statuses, and/or selecting multiple VSO names), the response time on the search will be slower than if more specific criteria are specified.

Q: Can I view which Veterans have withdrawn Power of Attorney from the organization that I represent?

A: Yes. To do this, execute a search for 21-22 requests, using the status of “Withdrawn.” Provide a date range and the search results will display the Veterans’ names, claimant information and the date the POA was withdrawn. Please note that you cannot search for Withdrawn POAs in combination with any other status (new, pending, etc).

Q: What information can I see from VA Form 21-22 in the representation request search results?


A: All information from VA Form 21-22, including limitations of consent (box 13) and the authorization to change address information (box 14) are included on the VA Form 21-22 detail screen.

Q: Will I be able to tell who from my organization has accepted or declined a request?

A: Yes. When accepted or declined requests are listed on the search results page, the system displays the name of the person who accepted or declined it, as well as the date the action occurred. In addition, when viewing the details of an accepted or declined request, the system will again display information about who accepted or declined the request.

Q: Can I see a list of VSO representatives that have already reviewed a VA Form 21-22 representation request, but have not accepted or declined it?

A: In the future, you will be able to see a list of VSO representative names that have reviewed non-accepted or non-declined VA Form 21-22 requests.



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Q: Will the Veteran be notified when I accept or decline a request?

A: In the future, Veterans will receive notice in their eBenefits message center that their VA Form 21-22 representation request was accepted or declined.

Q: Who will be able to see the “Reason for Declining” that I am required to enter?

A: Any other VSO from your organization who searches for “declined” representation requests will be able to view the reason that the request was declined. The Veteran is not provided this information in eBenefits.


Q: What can prevent me from accepting a VA Form 21-22 representation request?

A: There are several scenarios:

- Authorization – your organization may not have identified you as a person authorized to accept or decline VA Form 21-22 requests. Check with your manager if you should be able to accept/decline and do not have the ability to do so in SEP.
- Status of the VA Form 21-22 Representation Request – Requests that are already in accepted or declined status cannot be re-accepted or re-declined.
 - 1) In addition, if someone else has accepted the request from another computer while you were reviewing it on yours, the status may actually have changed from what it appears on your screen. Refresh the page first to rule this out.
- The VA Form 21-22 representation request has been superseded – If the Veteran first submitted an electronic 21-22 request, but then also submitted a paper-based VA Form 21-22 request to a regional office, there may be a more recent POA relationship established that should not be overwritten by the request you are trying to accept. SEP will provide a warning in this case, but allow you to proceed provided you confirm that you have contacted the Veteran to be sure he or she wants your organization to represent them.
- Interruption in service – There may be a problem with the system. Try to complete the action again at a later time.
- If you need additional troubleshooting assistance, please contact the VSO-dedicated line at 1-855-225-0709.

Q: Can I view pending VA Form 21-22 representation requests for more than one VSO Organization at a time if I happen to represent multiple organizations?

A: Yes. When you perform a search, you can select one or more of the organizations you represent from the VSO Organization search parameter. This will return VA Form 21-22



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representation requests that have been submitted for any of those organizations that meet your other search criteria.

Q: How soon after I accept a VA Form 21-22 representation request will I be able to access that Veteran's data on SEP or in other VBA applications?

A: Acceptance of a VA Form 21-22 representation request in SEP establishes POA for your organization instantaneously. You can immediately access that Veteran's record through SEP or other VBA systems that require POA.

Q: How can I tell if my organization has already accepted POA for a particular Veteran?


A: SEP provides two convenient ways to tell if your Organization has already accepted POA for a Veteran:

- If the Veteran has submitted an electronic VA Form 21-22 representation request and is inquiring on the status of it, you can access the Representation Requests page, enter applicable search criteria, and determine the current status of that Veterans' request.
- If the Veteran wants you to access his or her records, you can attempt to locate that Veteran using the VSO Dashboard's Veteran Search feature. If the Veteran record is not returned in the search, your organization may not yet have POA, or you may not have the appropriate security level. Errors that appear on the page should indicate what condition is preventing your access to that Veterans' record.

Q: I am trying to assist a Veteran, but my organization has not yet accepted POA for that Veteran. The Veteran has submitted an electronic VA Form 21-22 Representation Request, but I do not have permissions to accept or decline requests. What can I do?

A: This situation can be resolved in several ways:

- Speak to your supervisor and ask that someone from your organization with proper permissions go into SEP and accept the Veterans' electronic VA Form 21-22 representation request.
- Request that the Veteran submit a paper-based VA Form 21-22 form instead, if your organization is not yet processing electronic VA Form 21-22 representation requests through SEP in a timely fashion. The Veteran can complete the VA Form 21-22 representation request again through eBenefits and print it instead of submitting it online. However, it is HIGHLY ENCOURAGED that the VA Form 21-22 be submitted



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electronically as this allows for real-time updates to VA systems which will grant the VSO immediate access to the Veteran's information.

- If you should have permission to accept or decline requests but SEP is not reflecting that authorization, please have your manager contact OGCDATA.VBAVACO@va.gov with your information so that we can update our systems and ensure you have the proper permissions.

Q: What forms can I complete in SEP?

A: VA Form 21-526ez, VA Form 21-0781, VA Form 21-8940, VA Form 21-686C, VA Form 21-674, VA Form 21-4502 and VA Form 21-2680 can be completed by VSOs in SEP using the "Access Online Forms" feature. In addition, Veterans can also complete and submit VA form 21-2122 and VA form 21-4142 through their eBenefits account.

Q: Can I file a VA Form 21-526 through SEP?

A: VA Form 21-526EZ is available for VSOs to complete in SEP, but they cannot be submitted directly to VA by VSOs due to the requirement for Veteran's signature. These claims are sent to the Veteran's eBenefits account for electronic signature and submission to VA. Please note that a Veteran must have a premium eBenefits account in order to take advantage of the electronic claim submission process.


Q: What is VONAPP Direct Connect (VDC)?

A: VDC is the online claims form dashboard that is accessed by Veterans through eBenefits and VSOs through SEP. All electronic claims forms are accessible through VDC. Please see the graphic depiction of how eBenefits, SEP, and VDC integrate to support electronic claims submission, available under the "How will SEP address the backlog?" question.

Q: As a VSO representative what am I currently able to do in VONAPP Direct Connect (VDC)?

A: As a VSO representative, you are able to access VDC as if you were the Veteran. You will be guided through the electronic claims form interview depending on which form you select. Some differences to note between the current interviews are:

- As the VSO representative, if you select "Apply for Compensation Benefits" interview, you will be able to complete the application. Once completed, you will be directed to have the Veteran access the application, review it, and submit it using their eBenefits account.



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- As the VSO representative, if you select the “Apply for Dependent Benefits” interview, you will be able to complete the applications and submit to VA on behalf of the Veteran.

Q: As the VSO representative, is there anything special I need to know as I begin the interview process for the Veteran I am representing?

A: Yes. It is very important that the Veteran you are representing has established a premium eBenefits account. This account will enable the Veteran to gain access to VDC forms, and is required in order to review and submit the electronic VA Form 21-526EZ application. Without access, the application cannot be submitted electronically, which will delay the processing of the claim. Having access to VDC will also allow the Veteran the ability to review and make updates to open applications. In order to establish an eBenefits account, the Veteran can access the following link and follow the instructions: <http://www.ebenefits.va.gov/>.


Q: Does a Veteran have the ability to print and sign an application versus submitting it electronically?

A: Yes. The Veteran can print the application at any time during the interview, continue filling it out manually, sign it, and mail or fax it to the VA. This method is not the method of choice as it will take longer to process the application, and it also could cause the potential loss of data that the VA could save in their database for future requests. The preferred method of submission is electronic submission.

Q: Can a VSO attach supporting documents and evidence to an electronic claim application prior to submission to VA?

A: VSO representatives may upload and attach documents to electronic claims submissions, or may upload documents in support of pending claims on behalf of a Veteran for whom they have POA authority. To upload documents to an electronic claim that is pending submission:

- Login to SEP and search for the Veteran
- Click on the “actions” button and select “access online forms”
- Click on the claim pending submission
- Click on the “upload documents” tab at the top of the screen and follow the instructions for attaching documents to the claim form



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Q: What is the VSO Work Queue?

A: The VSO Work Queue functionality assists VSOs in managing electronic claim application reviews between CVSOs, NVSOs and Veterans. It allows a VSO to search and display a list of electronic applications that are pending submission and may require attention from the VSO Representative. The representative must first enter search criteria to find work items that pertain to their organization and/or location. Currently, the only form included in the work queue is the Application for Disability Compensation (VA Form 21-526EZ).

Q: Why do some claims require review by another VSO rather than being sent directly to the Veteran?

A: Some county and state service organizations have Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) with national service organizations that require the county and state representatives to send claims to the national representatives for review prior to submission to VA. The VSO Work Queue facilitates compliance with these MOAs.

Q: Are all claim applications included in the VSO Work Queue?

A: No. Only the electronic VA Form 21-526EZ is included in the VSO Work Queue.


Q: What can be done through the VSO Work Queue?

A: VSO representatives can search for claims that require their review and attention. The VSO Work Queue provides a read-only list of applications that meet the search criteria indicated by the VSO. To access the online form and take further action, VSOs must search for the Veteran using the dashboard search feature and select “access online forms” from the “actions” dropdown menu.

Q: What do the different statuses in the VSO Work Queue mean?

A: There are four statuses that an application may be in prior to submission to VA. These are:

- Pending VSO Review – this status reflects that the CVSO has submitted the claim to the NVSO and the claim is pending NVSO review.
- Pending Additional VSO Review and Action – this status reflects that the NVSO has returned the claim to the CVSO and it is pending CVSO review and action.



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- Pending Veteran Review – this status reflects that all CVSO and NVSO reviews have been completed and the claim is pending the Veteran’s final review and submission to VA.
- Open – this status reflects that the claim has been prepared electronically, has not gone through CVSO or NVSO review, and has not been submitted to VA. This status will only reflect open claims prepared electronically in VDC.

Q: How does SEP know whether I am a VSO representative that requires national review or not?

A: When the VSO Work Queue functionality was released, all VSO representatives were flagged as requiring national review. Each organization’s leadership was asked to submit the names of their representatives that did not require review and could send applications directly to Veterans for final review and submission.

If you believe that you should have the ability to send applications directly to Veterans, but SEP is only allowing you to send an application for review, please have your manager send an email with your information to OGCDATA.VBAVACO@va.gov so that we can update your permissions.


Q: How does SEP know which status to assign an application that is showing in the VSO Work Queue?

A: When a VSO representative is working on an electronic VA Form 21-526EZ application and has completed all their input, they will be taken to the final review screen. In the final review screen, the VSO will be given different options depending on their role:

- County and state service officers that require national review of applications will only have the option to click “send for review.”
- County and state service officers that do not require national review of applications will be given the option to “send to veteran.”
- National service officers who review county or state officers will be given the option to “return for additional VSO review and action” or “send for veteran review.” If “return for additional VSO review and action” is selected, the national service officer will have the opportunity to enter comments, thereby indicating to the county or state service officer where they need to make adjustments to the application.

Q: I want to check the payment history for a Veteran for which I have POA. How do I do this?

A: After completing a search for the Veteran, click on the “Actions” drop-down menu located in the search results and select “View Payment History.”



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Q: What information will the Payment History page allow me to see?

A: You will be able to see all payments made to the Veteran from January of the current year to the present month. To view detailed information for a particular payment or returned payment, click on the payment date. You will also be able to see returned payments

Q: What information will the Claims Status page allow me to see?

A: The Claims Status page allows you to view a summary of the Veteran's open and historical claims. This summary includes information on the type of claim, the phase the claim is in, and any actions that are needed on that claim. You may then select a specific claim to see more details including information about the Regional Office, tracked items, contentions, next steps required, and key dates associated with the claim. You will also be given the opportunity to upload documents in support of the pending claim.

Q: How should I handle the requirement of "supporting documentation"?

A: To upload documents to an already-submitted claim that is pending a decision, VSO representatives will:


- Log into SEP and search for the Veteran's record. Click on the Veteran and select "View Claim Status" from the "Actions" dropdown.
- Select the pending claims from results screen.
- Select the "Upload a Document" option. Please note that the "Requested Items" may vary from claim to claim, and each claim may have several different items requested.
- Click on the "add a document for this item" button. The pop-up window is then shown, prompting the user to select a file to upload from a local device.
- The VSO can only upload documents that are 5 MBs or less. If the document is larger than 5 MB, the file can be broken up and uploaded as several attachments.

Q: Why can't I see the historical claims?

A: If there is no historical claim data provided by the VBA Claims System of record, no data will appear in this section of the claims status summary page.

Q: Can I see the details for claims done through another VSO?

A: As long as you currently have Power of Attorney for the Veteran, you will have access to details on all claims displayed through the claims status feature, regardless of which VSO submitted the claim.



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Claim Completion Dates

Q: How were these estimated claim completion dates determined?

A: The minimum estimated claim completion is determined by adding the average claim processing time from the current phase to the phase start date. The maximum estimated claim completion is determined by adding the average claim processing time from the current phase and the standard deviation to the phase start date.

Q: How is the average claim processing time determined?

A: The average claim processing time is determined by averaging the processing time for all claims at each Regional Office for each type of claim for the most recent 12 month period (a rolling 12 month average). The averages are based on calendar days (versus work days).

Q: What do I do if I get a message that the Estimated Claim Completion Date is unavailable?

A: Estimated Claim Complete Dates will only be displayed if the Claim Phase is something other than “Closed” or “Cancelled”. Check the claim phase, and if you still suspect a problem with the data, contact the VSO-dedicated phone line.


Q: Why did the estimated claim completion date change dramatically from the last time I looked?

A: The estimated dates are refreshed: 1) at the beginning of each calendar month; and 2) whenever the claim changes status to a new phase. At the beginning of each calendar month, the estimates may shift slightly. A larger shift may occur if there were not enough of your specific type of claim to reference over the most recent 12 month period in order to average out a more accurate completion date, in which case the average may have been computed using a different method.

Phase Completion Dates

Q: How is the average phase processing time determined?

A: The average phase processing time is determined by averaging the phase processing time for all claims at each Regional Office for each type of claim for the most recent 12 month period (a rolling 12 month average). The averages are based on calendar days (versus work days).



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Q: How accurate is the estimated phase completion date range? How likely is it that the claim will move to the next phase within that range?

A: We estimate that about half of all claims will move to the next phase after the minimum estimated date and 84% of all claims will move to the next phase prior to the maximum estimated date. This also means we estimate half of all claims will move to the next phase before the minimum estimated date.

Claim and Phase Completion Dates

Q: Why is the estimated range not displaying (it only says “Unavailable”)?

A: We don't have any processing times for that specific claim type for the past 12 months. This is likely because this is a new claim type that has recently been introduced. Please check again at the beginning of the following month, and there will be an estimate if any claims of that type have completed processing.