

# New Self-Service Disability Compensation Claims Tool on VA.gov

*VA's new online self-service tool simplifies the claim submission process, reducing the amount of time it takes for Veterans to receive a determination.*

## Modernizing the disability claim process to meet Veterans' needs

- » VA conducted research and testing with Veterans from end-to-end. Use of a self-service capability empowers VA's most important users -- Veterans and their families.
- » VA developed a new Self-Service Disability Compensation Claims Tool (526 EZ). To access the self-service claim tool, visit this webpage and follow the instructions:  
<https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/>
- » The new Self-Service Disability Compensation Claims tool makes it easy for Veterans to provide clear and complete information, allowing adjudicators to easily understand the intent of a disability benefits claim and spend less time requesting clarification from Veterans. The interactive form automatically generates a VA Form 21-526EZ (Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits).
- » As part of VA's commitment to improving service to Veterans through IT modernization, the new Self-Service Disability Compensation Claims Tool features user-friendly functionality designed to improve the intent to file process, streamline the intake process, and shorten the medical record retrieval process.

## Improve the intent to file (ITF) process

- » The tool automatically checks the Veteran's record to find out if there is an active intent to file date (ITF) already pending.
- » If the tool identifies an active ITF, the Veteran receives a notification of the time remaining to submit their claim to retain the ITF as an effective date placeholder.

- » If an active ITF is not pending in the Veteran's record, the tool establishes a new ITF automatically.

## Streamline the intake process

- » The new tool utilizes the current version of the VA Form 21-526EZ (March 2018), which allows the Veteran to provide detailed information specific to their claim.
- » When a Veteran uses the new submission tool, the claim is instantly established in the Veterans Benefit Administration's (VBA's) Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS). The automated process will immediately upload the application form, and any additional documents provided, directly into the Veteran's eFolder. Upon submission, the Veteran receives a claim ID, and a link to the claim status page within VA.gov.

## Shorten the personal medical record retrieval process

- » The automated process to initiate record retrieval has the potential to reduce processing time.
- » Veterans can authorize the disclosure of private medical record information by either uploading an authorization OR answering questions to auto-complete VA Forms 21-4142 and 21-4142a (forms for General Release for Medical Provider Information to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)).

To learn more about the user-friendly updates and processing improvements to the new Self-Service Disability Compensation Claims Tool (526 Disability Form), view the introductory video:

<https://adobe.ly/2EVlvLH>