

After careful and compassionate consideration of your claim, we have reached a decision. This document outlines your rights to seek further review of our decision as part of the *Rapid Appeals Modernization Program* (RAMP).

If you choose to do so, you may **ONLY SELECT ONE** review option for all issue(s) for which you are seeking review under RAMP. **If you are satisfied with our decision, you do not need to take any action, including any of the actions listed below.**

VA must receive your request to proceed with a review of the issue(s) you disagree with within **one year** of the date VA sent you notice of our decision to maintain your eligibility to receive the earliest possible effective date for benefits. Choosing one of the review options described below does not exclude you from choosing another review option after completion of VA's review and issuance of a decision.

You must follow the application requirements outlined below to seek further review until the new decision review system becomes effective **on or after February 14, 2019**, at which time you may select different lanes for each issue and will have to follow the application requirements of the new system. VA will provide additional information to RAMP participants once the new system is operational.

You may select one of the following review options for continued review under RAMP:

- File a **Supplemental Claim**
- Request a **Higher-Level Review**
- File an **Appeal to the Board of Veterans' Appeals (Board)** (Note that the Board will not be able to begin to process your appeal until **no earlier than October 2018**)

The following is an overview of each option to help you select the most appropriate course of action. You can find more information on the review options at <https://benefits.va.gov/benefits/appeals.asp>.

File a Supplemental Claim

- Use this option when you have additional evidence that is **NEW AND RELEVANT** to support granting the benefit(s) sought or you can identify existing relevant records that you would like VA to obtain. (**NEW evidence** means information not previously considered by the local VA office, and **RELEVANT evidence** means information that tends to prove or disprove a matter at issue.)
- To be a complete application, you must submit evidence with your application or identify evidence that VA can assist you in gathering to support the Supplemental Claim.

Request a Higher-Level Review

- Use this option when you have **NO** additional evidence to submit, or that you would like VA to obtain, in support of any of the previously decided issue(s), and you would like VA to conduct another review of the issue(s) with only the evidence of record at the time of the last decision.
- The designated reviewer will conduct a brand new review of the issue(s) based on the evidence that was previously considered by the local VA office, but any factual or legal finding in the decision that was **favorable** to you **cannot be changed** unless there is evidence to the contrary that is clear and unmistakable. VA **WILL NOT** consider any new evidence submitted after VA issued the decision under review or assist you in obtaining new evidence.
- The designated reviewer may find that VA did not fulfill its duty to assist you in the original claim process with respect to obtaining documents or providing an examination. The reviewer will return the claim on that basis for further development and readjudication.
- An **informal conference** is available to you and/or your representative, if you choose to exercise this option. The purpose of this telephonic contact is to point out specific errors in the case. VA will not receive new evidence during an informal conference. **This option may cause some delay in the processing of your higher-level review.**
- You **MAY NOT** request a higher-level review after receiving a decision on a higher-level review or an appeal to the Board.

File an Appeal to the Board

- Use this option to appeal to the Board for consideration by a Veterans Law Judge.
- The Board will not process your appeal until **NO EARLIER THAN OCTOBER 2018**.

- When appealing to the Board, you have three options. By selecting one of these options, the Board will place your appeal onto a list for consideration in the order it was received.
 - **Direct Review.** Choose this option if you do not have additional evidence to submit and you do not want a hearing.
 - **Evidence Submission.** Choose this option if you **DO NOT** want a hearing, but you do have additional evidence to submit. The Board will review the issue(s) in your appeal considering the evidence that the local VA office considered, along with any additional evidence that you submit **within 90 days** of the date that the Board receives your request. After 90 days, any additional evidence added to your claims file will not be considered by the Board.
 - **Hearing.** Choose this option if you want to testify before a Veterans Law Judge, and have the opportunity to submit additional evidence. **This option may cause some delays in receiving a decision by the Board.** The Board will contact you regarding the scheduling of your hearing **NO EARLIER THAN OCTOBER 2018.** After your hearing has been held and you have had the opportunity to submit additional evidence, the Board will review the issue(s) in your appeal, considering the evidence that the local VA office considered along with your hearing testimony and any additional evidence that you submit **within 90 days** of your hearing. After 90 days, any additional evidence added to your claims file will not be considered by the Board.

How do I request review by VA of my decision? To select a review option during RAMP, you **must** submit the attached VA Form 21-4138, *Statement in Support of Claim, "RAMP Selection"* form to the appropriate office for review.

For a Supplemental Claim or a Higher-Level Review , complete and mail or fax VA Form 21-4138, "RAMP Selection" and the provided coversheet to:	DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS EVIDENCE INTAKE CENTER PO BOX 4444 JANESVILLE WI 53547-4444 FAX: 844-531-7818
For an Appeal to the Board , complete and mail or fax VA Form 21-4138, "RAMP Selection," to:	BOARD OF VETERANS' APPEALS P.O. BOX 27063 WASHINGTON DC 20038 FAX: 202-495-6803

If requesting the opportunity to submit evidence without a hearing before a Veterans Law Judge, you may submit evidence to the address or fax number above **within 90 days** of your Appeal to the Board.

Can I get someone to help me with my request for review? Yes. You can have a Veterans Service Organization representative, an attorney, or an "agent" help you with your request. You are not required to have someone represent you. It is your choice. You can have a Veterans Service Organization representative help you with your review free of charge.

An attorney or agent can also represent you but may require you to pay for their services. VA cannot pay any attorney or agent fees. VA only recognizes attorneys licensed to practice in the United States or in one of its territories or possessions. An agent is a person who is not an attorney, but who VA recognizes as being knowledgeable about veterans' law. If you do hire an attorney or agent to represent you, a copy of any fee agreement must be sent to VA. You can find more information on accredited representatives (VSOs, attorneys, and agents) and fee agreements at: <https://www.va.gov/ogc/accreditation.asp>.

How long do I have to request a review of my decision? You must act within **one year** of the date VA sent you notice of our decision to preserve your right to receive the earliest effective date for benefits. Upon the conclusion of RAMP, if you are still within your one-year period, you may seek review by filing under the new claims and appeals system.

What happens if I do not submit my request for review on time? If you do not request a review option within the required time limit, you may only seek review through the following options:

- File a request for review based on a clear and unmistakable error in our decision **or**,
- File a Supplemental Claim along with new and relevant evidence to support your issue(s).