

# VA CAREGIVER SUPPORT PROGRAM

## Caregiver Support Program Overview

---

**Jess Behrends, MSSW, LICSW**

**Saint Cloud VA Caregiver Support Program Manager**

**May 9, 2023**



**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# Program of General Caregiver Support Services



## **Program of General Caregiver Support Services (PGCSS) Mission:**

*To serve caregivers with respect and service excellence through a wide range of support, education and tools that empower them to care for themselves and the Veteran.*



**Choose**  **VA**

Informational Purposes Only

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# General Caregiver Definition

## Caregivers who participate in PGCSS are called General Caregivers.

- A General Caregiver is a person who provides personal care services to a Veteran enrolled in VA health care who:
  - Needs assistance with one or more activities of daily living; Or
  - Needs supervision or protection based on symptoms or residuals of neurological care or other impairment or injury.
- General Caregivers do not need to be a relative or live with the Veteran.



# Education and Support

- Skills Training
  - Veterans Affairs (VA) S.A.V.E. Training
  - Building Better Caregivers (BBC)
- Mobile Support
  - Annie Caregiver Text Program
- One on One Coaching
  - Resources for Enhancing All Caregivers Health (REACH) VA
  - Health and Well-Being Coaching

## S.A.V.E. Suicide Prevention Skills Training

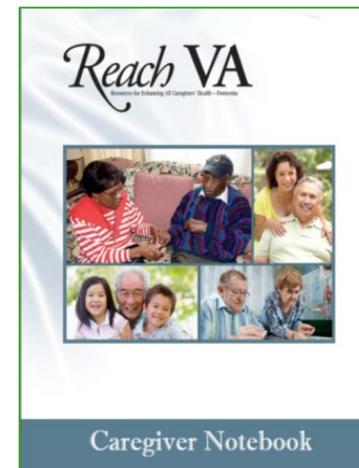
Signs

Ask

Validate

Encourage & Expedite

[Suicide Prevention Toolkit for Caregivers](#)



# Education and Support continued

## Group Support and Coaching Services Provided Through PGCSS

- Caregiver Self-Resilience Courses
- CaregiversFIRST
- Resources for Enhancing All Caregivers Health (REACH VA)
- Peer Support Mentoring Program



# Collaboration & Partnerships

## Annual Caregiver Summit

Each VA Medical Center (VAMC) hosts an annual CSP Caregiver Summit.

The purpose of the summit is to:

- Understand the needs of caregivers in the local community
- Identify both gaps and available resources
- Bring together VA, local area non-profits and community agency participants

At the summit, these entities collaborate, share information, and network on behalf of caregivers.

## CSP Resource Fairs

The annual Caregiver Family and Resource Fairs are held at every VAMC.

These fairs connect caregivers with resources, programs, and services all at one event. The fairs have information and are attended by:

- Representatives from VA programs
- Local area non-profits
- Community agencies



# Resources and Referrals

Support from CSP Team members for referrals to programs and services:

- Other VA (i. e. Whole Health, Mental Health, and many others)
- Community organizations and partners



## VA's Caregiver Peer Support Mentoring Program

Members share their individual journeys as caregivers



Thursday, May 21, 2020 10:00 am Health Vantage Point Contributor 1k views



Choose **VA**

Informational Purposes Only

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs



## Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC)



# PCAFC Eligibility Criteria

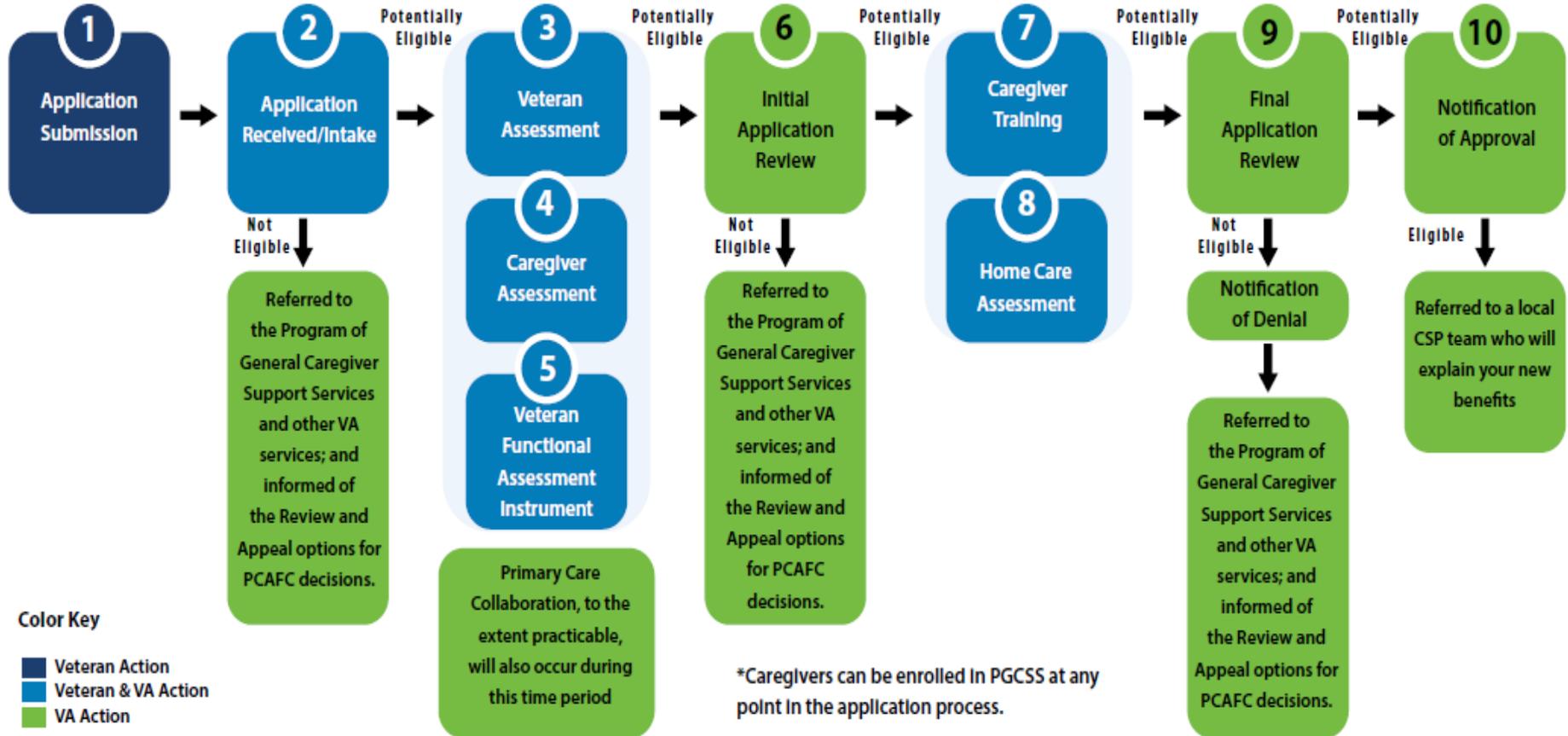
## Eligibility Criteria

- There are seven (7) Veteran eligibility requirements for PCAFC.
- The Veteran or servicemember undergoing medical discharge, must have a serious injury incurred or aggravated in the line of duty. We define serious injury as a 70% service-connected rating. This can be a single or combined rating. It can include a presumptive rating.
- The Veteran must need in-person personal care services for a minimum of six (6) continuous months based on any one of the following:
  - **An inability to perform an activity of daily living;**
  - **A need for supervision or protection based on symptoms or residuals of neurological or other impairment or injury; or**
  - **A need for regular or extensive instruction or supervision without which the ability of the Veteran to function in daily life would be seriously impaired.**



# PCAFC Application Flow

## Eligibility Decision Within 90 Days of Application Receipt



Choose **VA**

Informational Purposes Only

**VA**



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

# PCAFC Services

- Education and Training
- Enhanced Respite Care
- Mental Health Counseling
- Beneficiary Travel (when travelling with Veteran for appointments)
- Monthly Stipend (62.5% or 100% based on the level) – based on OPM General Schedule Grade 4, Step 1
- Access to health care through Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA), if eligible
- Financial planning and legal resources for Primary Family Caregivers.
  - Contract awarded to a vendor; with a phased implementation timeline



# How To Apply

## Veterans and Caregivers may apply for PCAFC in the following ways:

- Complete the application online through: <http://www.caregiver.va.gov>
  - For most, this is the fastest and easiest route!
- Access and download the application ([VA Form 10-10CG](#)). Mail to or walk the application into the local CSP Team.
- Mail the form and any supporting documents to:
  - Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers  
Health Eligibility Center  
2957 Clairmont Road NE, Suite 200  
Atlanta, GA 30329-1647
- You may also contact your local CSP for assistance, [Caregiver Support Team](#) link via CSP Website.



# Caregiver Support Line (CSL)

The VA CSL responds to calls from caregivers, Veterans and community agencies seeking information about VA caregiver services.

- Monday - Friday 8:00AM - 10:00PM (ET) and Saturday 8:00AM - 5:00PM (ET)
- Staffed by VA professional staff
- Links callers to their local Caregiver Support Team
- Provides information about assistance through the VA
- Offers supportive counseling when needed

**1-855-260-3274**



Call 1-855-260-3274 toll-free to reach VA's Caregiver Support Line. Ask questions, get support and referrals, and learn how VA can assist you as a family caregiver.



Choose **VA**

Informational Purposes Only

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# CSP Website

- Program information
- Zip code based interactive CSP Team/Coordinator locator
- Contact info for Caregiver Support Line (CSL)
- Resources for Caregiver (Tips and Tools, Resources by Topics, Self-Care)
- PCAFC online application link

[www.caregiver.va.gov](http://www.caregiver.va.gov)

**VA Caregiver Support Program**

- ▼ Caregiver Program
  - Caregiver Support - Home
  - ▶ Program Compr Assistance Family Caregivers (PCAFC)
  - Program General Caregiver Support Services (PGCSS)
  - Find Your Caregiver Support Coordinator
  - Announcements
  - ▶ VA Caregiver Support Line (CSL)
  - CSP Events
  - Peer Support Mentoring Program
  - Natl Family Caregivers Month
  - ▶ Resources for Caregivers
  - ▶ Support the Veteran

**COVID-19 vaccines:**  
If you'd like to get regular updates about COVID-19 vaccines at VA, [sign up to stay informed](#).

**If you're struggling, take a moment.**

**REACH OUT**

**Take a Moment – Reach Out**  
You carry the heavy stuff, but you don't have to do it alone. If you're struggling, take a moment to learn about resources.  
[Learn more »](#)

**Manage Holiday Stress** | **Struggling? Reach Out.** | **Building Better Caregiver**



Choose **VA**

Informational Purposes Only

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

Thank you!



National Caregiver Support Line:

**1-855-260-3274**

To find your local Caregiver Support Program Team, or  
for more information, please visit:

[www.caregiver.va.gov](http://www.caregiver.va.gov)



Choose **VA**

Informational Purposes Only

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs