



VA Companion

Claims, care, benefits, crisis help, and local veteran support tools.

Public overview for board members, veteran groups, VA contacts, and community partners

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Executive summary

VA Companion is a free, veteran-built suite of web, desktop, and browser-extension tools that helps veterans, dependents, survivors, caregivers, VSOs, and accredited representatives find information, prepare claims, understand healthcare options, locate support, and keep personal VA.gov data organized. The website is the shared public workspace. The desktop application is the private Windows command center for signed-in VA.gov snapshots, encrypted local records, letters, packets, and planning tools. The browser extension adds a lightweight VA.gov claim-status sidebar for users who prefer to stay inside their normal browser.

3.3M+	provider directory records	11,977	VSO and accredited-rep records
3,418	community/helper contacts	94	C&P practice exam sets
835	C&P practice prompts	5,432	emergency-care facilities
411	military funeral honors contacts	323	toxic exposure and Superfund records
99	official VA news items	82	hosted claim and benefit forms

Website, desktop app, and browser extensions

Component	What it does
Website	Public tools, guides, searches, forms, news, chat rooms, crisis help, and member registration. Many tools work without logging in.
Desktop Application	Private Windows workspace with read-only VA.gov capture, encrypted local document vault, claim/rating snapshots, letters, packets, calculators, and in-app update alerts.
Chrome Extension	Approved by Google and published in the Chrome Web Store. Reads VA.gov claim metadata already loaded in the signed-in browser session and stores it locally in extension storage.
Edge Extension	Submitted for Microsoft Edge Add-ons review. Intended to provide the same sidebar and popup claim-dashboard workflow once approved.
Future Apple Desktop	An Apple/macOS version is planned for a future release after the Windows app and shared web data services mature.

A free public web app with a private desktop upgrade

The website is designed as a public, enterprise-style operations workspace. Veterans can use many lookup tools, calculators, guides, forms, C&P practice exams, crisis resources, official VA news, and chat-room reading without creating an account. A free

member account unlocks saved work, forum posting, helper/provider submissions, desktop licensing, support eligibility, and future member features.

The desktop app is also free for registered VACompanion.us members. It is not a paid claim service. It does not replace a VSO, accredited representative, attorney, claims agent, doctor, or official VA decision. It gives the user better organization, local records, private planning tools, and a read-only view of their own VA.gov information after they sign in through the official VA.gov browser session inside the app.

Major tools and user value

Tool or area	User value
VSO & Reps Search	Find VSOs, accredited representatives, claims agents, attorneys, county offices, state veterans offices, and community helper profiles.
Medical Provider Search	Search CHAMPVA-capable and TRICARE provider leads from local VA Companion data, CMS/NPPES records, and community submissions. Users should still verify assignment, network, referral, and authorization status before care.
Death & Burial Benefits	Search military funeral honors coordinators, emergency and burial resources, future funeral-home/cemetery leads, and guidance on requesting records and honors.
C&P Practice Exams	Use official DBQ-informed practice sets and prompts to prepare truthful, organized answers for compensation and pension exams.
Rating Calculator	Estimate combined VA disability ratings using VA math and bilateral-factor planning.
Pay Calculator	Estimate monthly compensation and rough retroactive pay scenarios based on rating and dependent status.
Benefits by Rating	Review federal and state benefit items by disability percentage, including confirmed 100% P&T CHAMPVA eligibility for dependents and California benefit references.
Education & Survivor Benefits	Guidance on Chapter 35, DIC, survivor pension, dependent education paths, and school enrollment considerations.
TERA Toxic Exposure	Search exposure and Superfund records and build a TERA statement letter based on duty locations and exposure history.
Claim Forms	Download locally hosted VA, CHAMPVA, appeal, decision-review, statement, and record-request PDFs while using official VA submission paths when filing.
Official VA News	A local, organized feed of official VA news items so users can stay informed without leaving the VA Companion workspace.
Chat Rooms	Publicly readable rooms with member posting, moderation, badging, and room-specific support for CHAMPVA, claims, TERA, education, VSOs, and desktop support.
Crisis Help	Plain-language emergency cards for 911, 988 Press 1, text/chat, Military Crisis Line guidance, local emergency resource lookup, and scripts for veterans, family members, and responders.
Browser Extension	Chrome and Edge extension workflow for VA.gov claim metadata, including popup and sidebar dashboard views.
Desktop Application	No-charge registered-member Windows app with private VA.gov capture, local encrypted snapshots, document vault, packet export, and update notifications.

Desktop app: private Windows claim workspace

Live VA.gov claim and rating snapshots

The desktop application includes an embedded VA.gov browser. After the user signs in to VA.gov, the app can capture allowed read-only claim, rating, letter, appointment, prescription, card, and status data that VA.gov already returns to that user's authenticated session. It can show additional claim metadata that may not be prominent in the standard VA.gov page, such as phase details, jurisdiction clues, document-needed status, decision-letter status, and related response data.

Encrypted local document vault

The desktop document vault stores VA.gov downloads, letters, benefit cards, claim files, Blue Button records, statements, photos, drafts, and packet materials on the user's own computer. The local workspace database is opened with SQLCipher encryption, and the database key is generated locally and protected by Windows DPAPI for the current Windows user. VA Companion does not upload VA.gov credentials, MFA codes, cookies, tokens, claim snapshots, or local vault files to VA Companion servers.

Packet and letter generation

The app helps build personal statements, buddy statements, condition packets, CHAMPVA paperwork plans, provider-call notes, DBQ preparation notes, appointment packets, and export bundles that a veteran can take to a VSO, doctor, attorney, claims agent, or personal records folder.

Update experience

Desktop updates are posted to VACompanion.us. The app checks a small release manifest and can notify users in the app when a newer approved desktop version is available. The goal is that users should not have to wonder whether an update exists; the app should surface it clearly and guide them to the current member download.

Browser extensions: claim status dashboard inside VA.gov

The Chrome extension has been reviewed by Google and approved in the Chrome Web Store. The Microsoft Edge extension has been submitted to Microsoft and is expected to appear in the Edge Add-ons store after approval. The extension reads VA.gov claim and appeal status information already loaded in the user's signed-in browser session and displays it in a popup or sidebar dashboard. It stores captured claim and appeal data locally in browser extension storage and does not send that data to VA Companion servers.

Chrome Web Store: <https://chromewebstore.google.com/detail/lifkgoolmgilcnemlnfdeoeohlphdalj>

Data and reliability

VA Companion stores searchable public and community data in its own SQL database on AWS infrastructure running Windows Server 2025 Datacenter Edition. This lets VA Companion searches continue returning results even if an outside public web page changes layout, moves a link, or has temporary maintenance. The database is backed up every 24 hours, and a complete server image is taken every 7 days.

Provider, VSO, state-office, emergency-care, military-honors, form, toxic-exposure, news, practice-exam, and other records are gathered from official public sources, public datasets, community submissions, and administrator review. Search results are designed as leads and planning tools; users should verify provider acceptance, CHAMPVA assignment, TRICARE network/referral/authorization, appointment availability, and official claim or application requirements before acting.

Privacy, safety, and mission

Strong tools without credential collection

VA Companion is built around a simple privacy boundary: public reference data can live on the website, but personal VA.gov claim data belongs to the user. The website does not collect VA.gov usernames, passwords, MFA codes, cookies, tokens, or personal claim snapshots. The desktop app keeps captured VA.gov snapshots and vault documents on the local computer. The browser extension stores captured VA.gov claim metadata locally in extension storage.

Crisis help

VA Companion includes crisis and suicide-prevention guidance using official Veterans Crisis Line information: call 988 then Press 1, text 838255, use chat, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room when someone may be hurt immediately, and use Military Crisis Line guidance for service members and overseas callers.

Not a claim shark

VA Companion does not promote non-accredited paid claim services. The goal is the opposite: give veterans and families free tools, official information, and clearer paths to accredited VSOs, accredited representatives, attorneys, claims agents, medical providers, and official VA or CHAMPVA application pages.

Logo inspiration

The VA Companion logo uses two friendly characters shaped as the letters V and A. The V wears combat boots and dog tags marked USMC and 0311, the MOS for Marine Corps infantry. The A wears a stethoscope with a caduceus, representing Navy corpsmen and medical staff. Together they are a tip of the hat to James and Carolina, both service-connected veterans: James as a Marine infantryman and Carolina as a Navy corpsman.

Future roadmap

- Apple/macOS desktop application after the Windows release matures.
- Mental-health and suicide-prevention tools and resources, expanding the current Crisis Help workspace.
- VA community events calendar for town halls, outreach events, stand-downs, webinars, and VSO/community sessions.
- More county VSO records, funeral-home/cemetery imports, provider confirmations, community review workflows, and member-controlled profile features.
- Additional desktop search views that consume VA Companion's own SQL-backed web API while keeping personal claim data local.

Contact

Website: <https://vacompanion.us>

Support email: admin@vacompanion.us

VA Companion is currently self-funded by James Brown, a service-connected disabled veteran. Support and donations help grow, host, maintain, and improve the tools and resources for veterans and families.