



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

## Remote One-On-One Assistance Sessions: VA Benefits Advisor Support Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Updated March 30, 2020

- *How do I respond to a service member or Veteran who has questions about their VA benefits and services?*
  - Refer to the “Remote One-On-One Assistance Sessions” flyer which outlines our new remote delivery model. VA Benefits Advisors are standing by to host One-On-One Assistance Sessions over the phone and email. Please refer the service member or Veteran to one of the BAs on your contact list.
- *Who are the remote VA Benefits Advisors?*
  - Our remote VA Benefits Advisors team is made up of many of the same VA Benefits Advisors who support normal in-person VA TAP operations at military installations worldwide. They are trained VA contractors who are able to provide remote One-On-One Assistance sessions about VA benefits and services via telephone or email.
- *Why is the VA making this change? Why are Benefits Advisors remote?*
  - In this unprecedented situation, VA has made decisions over the past few weeks to balance the needs of our TAP mission with the health and safety of our staff and their families, as well as the service members, Veterans, military families, caregivers, and survivors we serve. Effective March 30, 2020, VA is no longer providing any in-person delivery of TAP events or on-site activities. VA recognizes the valuable experience that transitioning service members have when they directly connect with VA in-person, and for us to provide warm handovers for at-risk individuals. Service members will still have the opportunity for remote One-On-One Assistance sessions with VA Benefits Advisors to preserve a sense of connectivity, and get their questions answered after participating in the JKO VA Benefits and Services course.
- *Is the remote VA Benefits Advisor I’m connecting a service member to someone who worked at our installation?*
  - Although we are “open for business,” it’s not business as usual - we are working with a reduced number of VA Benefits Advisors. However, the remote VA Benefits Advisor supported normal TAP operations and therefore has experience conducting One-On-One Assistance sessions. We have developed our staffing model to ensure support is available during business hours for all military installations.
- *A service member is requesting a follow-up with a VA Benefits Advisor who used to work at our installation. How do I connect them?*
  - Service members are able to call any of the VA Benefits Advisors on their contact list. If a VA Benefits Advisor is not on the contact list, that VA Benefits Advisor is not currently available to provide support.
- *Is my regular VA Benefits Advisor still working?*
  - While VA is open for business, it’s not business as usual – so we are currently operating under reduced support. We ask during these unprecedented times, if you or a service member has a question for a VA Benefits Advisor, please reach to one of our remote VA Benefits Advisors on our official list of support.



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- *Is information being collected about service members who seek One-On-One Assistance sessions?*
  - Similar to our face-to-face One-On-One Assistance sessions, we do not collect personally identifiable information (PII) other than what is necessary to conduct business (name, phone number, and email address). Service members should **NOT** send any other PII or protected health information (PHI) like medical records, login information, education or employment history documents to remote VA Benefits Advisors.
- *How do service members provide feedback about their One-On-One Assistance session?*
  - We are still working on this. For now, please provide any feedback directly to your VA Transition Liaison.
- *How will I know the service member was able to reach a VA Benefits Advisor and that the One-On-One Assistance session took place?*
  - VA will be sharing remote VA Benefits Advisor utilization data with the DOD Military-Civilian Transition Office (MCTO).
- *Are there 1-800 numbers available and will service members have to call from OCONUS to reach a CONUS VA Benefits Advisor?*
  - VA is looking into 1-800 numbers and will provide an update on this option shortly. However, OCONUS service members will be able to connect with a local, in-country remote VA Benefits Advisor for support.
- *What hours are the remote VA Benefits Advisors able to take appointments?*
  - Similar to standard operations, remote VA Benefits Advisors are staffed worldwide and are able to provide remote One-On-One Assistance sessions from 0730-1630 local time. In the rare event a service member is unable to reach a remote VA Benefits Advisor, they can leave a voicemail or call another VA Benefits Advisor listed on the contact sheet. Voicemails will be responded to within 24 hours.
- *Can service members request a follow-up directly with the BA they work with?*
  - Yes. If service members are looking for a follow up session, they can set up follow up appointments with their remote VA Benefits Advisor.
- *Do I need to schedule the follow up through my TAP Manager if I've already been working with a remote BA?*
  - No. Service members can coordinate follow up appointments directly with their remote VA Benefits Advisors.
- *How long are the remote One-On-One Assistance sessions?*
  - Not unlike face-to-face appointments, remote One-On-One Assistance sessions are 30-45 minutes long. Service members may request to extend appointments if the schedule allows or ask for a follow up appointment.
- *Can family members participate in a remote One-On-One Assistance session?*
  - Yes, family members and loved ones are always welcome to participate in a remote One-On-One Assistance session at the request of their service member or Veteran.



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- *How do service members schedule remote One-On-One Assistance sessions?*
  - The service member calls one of the VA Benefits Advisor listed on the contact sheet to participate in a One-On-One Assistance session instantly or to schedule a future session. In the rare instance a remote VA Benefits Advisor is not available, the service member can leave a voicemail or call another VA Benefits Advisor listed on the sheet that supports their installation. Voicemails will be responded to within 24 hours.
- *Can service members use video conferencing technology for a One-On-One Assistance session?*
  - No. At this time, we are only conducting remote One-On-One Assistance sessions via telephone or email.
- *Can service members use email for a One-On-One Assistance session?*
  - Of course! However, we ask that service members do not send personally identifiable information (PII) other than what is necessary to conduct business (name, phone number, and email address) via email. Service members should **NOT** send any other PII or protected health information (PHI) like medical records, login information, education or employment history documents to remote VA Benefits Advisors.
- *How will VA support warm handovers for a transitioning service member who self identifies for being at-risk for homelessness post transition?*
  - If a service member self identifies as being at-risk for homelessness post transition, VA will continue to use their standard warm handover process to support transitioning service members. Specifically, remote VA Benefits Advisors can:
    - Provide transitioning service members with contact and location information for VA resources who can help determine eligibility for VA housing or other resources;
    - Connect transitioning service members with a designated Veterans Health Administration or state/local point of contact who will assist with housing;
    - Email homelessness fact sheets to service members who participate in remote One-On-One Assistance sessions.
- *Can I provide a VA Benefits and Services Participant Guide to a service member who is enrolled in the JKO version of the VA Benefits Services course?*
  - Yes, you can refer the service member to the interactive VA Benefits and Services Participant Guide (PG) that will be available on the TAP webpage on April 1, 2020. You may also give them a hard copy of the PG if the service member visits your office.