

Why You Should Hire A Lawyer For Your VA Appeal

If you have been denied the full compensation you deserve from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), you have the right to handle the entire process yourself. However, you should consider working with a knowledgeable veterans law attorney. You will be at a significant disadvantage without one.

The appeals process that follows a denial can be confusing, frustrating and full of delays. A qualified attorney can make the appeals process easier and more effective than you would experience on your own. An attorney can be valuable throughout the appeals process, which may include hearings before the Board of Veterans Appeals and the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.

Data Shows Legal Counsel Is More Effective

Data provided by the [Board of Veterans Appeals](#) show how having an attorney can be valuable. According to the board, in 2011 the denial rate for veterans with no representation was 36 percent. Cases handled by an attorney were denied 17.7 percent of the time.

The total denial rate was 24.2 percent. That figure includes representation from veterans organizations and other forms of representation.

As noted by the National Organization of Veterans' Advocates Inc., attorneys also have one of the highest rates of success. Veterans with attorney representation had a 30.1 percent success rate, with 1,295 successful cases. Agents had a higher success rate, at 32.7 percent, but they handled just 71 successful cases.

Veterans Attorneys Know The Law, The Procedures And The Arguments

Why might this be? The Board of Veterans Appeals does not speculate on reasons in its report. In general, attorneys offer significant advantages in dealings with the VA and related agencies. A qualified lawyer:

- **Knows the law:** Veterans law is complex and frequently changes. A lawyer will be up to date on veterans law and can advise you of the best strategy for your case.
- **Knows procedures and paperwork:** A veterans attorney will understand how the VA appeals process works and how to correctly fill out paperwork.
- **Creates strong evidence for your case:** An attorney will understand what documents and evidence will create the best position for you and will use that evidence to create a strong position for you.

Work With An Experienced Attorney

An attorney does not have the power to speed up your case, but he or she can help it proceed more efficiently through the system. Veterans law is complex, and not all lawyers are equally qualified to help you. Attorneys who represent veterans in these cases must be accredited by the VA.