



Home Improvement & Structural Alterations (HISA) Program

A Brief Overview

Purpose

- Provide eligible beneficiaries monetary benefits to improve and structurally alter their primary residences when:
 - Necessary for the continuation of the provision of home health treatment of the beneficiary's disability; or
 - Provide the beneficiary with access to the home or essential lavatory and sanitary facilities.

Chargeable Improvements and Structural Alterations

- Examples of improvement and structural alterations chargeable against the Veteran's cost limitation include, but are not limited to:
 - Roll-in showers/tub cuts
 - Doorway widening for wheelchair accessibility
 - Lowering of kitchen or bathroom counters and/or sinks
 - Improving entrance paths and driveways in the immediate area of the home
 - Interior/exterior railings
 - Improvements to plumbing or electrical systems made necessary due to the installation of dialysis or other sanitary equipment in the home

Non-Chargeable Improvement and Structural Alterations

- Examples of improvements and structural alterations which are not chargeable (*HISA cannot be used*) against the Veteran's HISA limitation includes:
 - Exterior decking in excess of 8'x8'
 - Construction of pathways to exterior buildings such as barns and workshops
 - Widening of driveways in excess of 8'x8'
 - Purchase or installation of spa, hot tub, or Jacuzzi-type tubs
 - Purchase or installation of home security systems
 - Routine repairs done as part of regular home maintenance.

HISA Benefit Lifetime Limits

\$6,800 will be approved to:	• Address <u>a</u> service-connected disability	• 38 CFR 17.3105(b)(i)
	• Address <u>a</u> compensable disability treated “as if” is a service-connected disability and for which the Veteran entitled to medical services under 38 USC 1710(a)(2)(c) (e.g., disability acquired through treatment or vocational rehabilitation provided by VA)	• 38 CFR 17.3105(b)(ii)
	• Address <u>a</u> non-service- connected disability, if the beneficiary has <u>a</u> service-connected disability rated at least 50 percent disability (no combining or combination of disability percentages is allowed).	• 38 CFR 17.3105(b)(iii)
\$2,000 will be approved to:	• Address <u>a</u> disability that is not covered above	• 38 CFR 17.3105(c)

*As of September 13, 2022, OGC has provided official guidance that disability percentages cannot be combined to equal more than 50%.

*These amounts are effective May 5, 2010.

*These amounts can pay for one or more alterations until the lifetime benefit is exhausted.

HISA- Process

- HISA benefit requests are submitted to Prosthetics Service by Primary Care Providers or Sensory & Physical Medicine Rehabilitation (S&PMR) Therapists
- Requests are reviewed by the Major Medical Equipment committee weekly.
- Decisions made:
 - Approve
 - HISA packet with instructions is mailed to the patient
 - Defer
 - Patient may be referred to S&PMR for evaluation, scheduler will contact patient. A new HISA request which includes evaluation findings is submitted for review.
 - Deny
 - Denial letter and appeal rights are mailed to the patient.

HISA- Disbursement of Funds

- HISA benefit funds are disbursed electronically to approved patients.
- Options
 - Advanced payment
 - Patient may elect to receive up to 50% of the approved funds prior to completion of the modification
 - Remaining funds are distributed upon satisfactory completion of modifications
 - Full payment
 - Patient may choose to receive the entire amount of approved funds upon satisfactory completion of modifications

HISA- More to Know

- Patients have full control over the selection of their contractor per 38 CFR Part 17.
 - Providing contractor lists for a benefit would require regulations and vetting per VA Central Office
 - If necessary, Manchester Prosthetics will assist patients by providing avenues in which to locate contractors.
- Patients are responsible for reimbursing contractors for satisfactory completed work.
- VA will not take part in disputes between patients and their chosen contractors.
- HISA benefit may be used in conjunction with a Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) administered Grant.

VBA Grants

- A Veteran or Service Member with a permanent and total service-connected disability may be entitled to a Specially Adapted (SAH) grant, Special Housing Adaptation (SHA) grant, or Temporary Residence Adaptation (TRA) grant

Specially Adaptive Housing (SAH) Grant

- The maximum amount of this grant for \$101,754
- Eligibility
 - Loss or loss of use of both legs
 - Loss or loss of use of both arms above the elbow
 - Blindness in both eyes having only light perception, plus loss or loss of use of one leg
 - The loss or loss of use of one lower leg together with residuals of organic disease or injury
 - The loss or loss of use of one leg together with the loss of or loss of use of one arm
 - Certain severe burns
 - The loss or loss of use of one or more lower extremities due to service on or after September 11, 2001, which so affects the functions or balance or propulsion as to preclude ambulating without the aid of braces, crutches, canes or a wheelchair

Special Home Adaptation (SHA) Grant

- The maximum amount of this grant is \$20,387
- Eligibility
 - Blindness in both eyes with 20/200 visual acuity or less
 - Loss or loss of use of both hands
 - Certain severe burn injuries
 - Certain severe respiratory injuries

Temporary Residence Adaptations (TRA) Grant

- The maximum that can be used is up to \$40,983 for SAH; and up to \$7318 for SHA
 - *Home must be owned by an eligible individual or family member in which the Veteran/Servicemember intends to temporarily reside.*

VBA

- Manchester Regional Benefit Office
 - Norris Cotton Federal Building
275 Chestnut St. Manchester, NH 03101
 - 1-800-827-1000
- To apply for SAH, SHA, or TRA complete VA Form 26-4555 and submit to your nearest Regional Loan Center or online via www.ebenefits.va.gov
- More information:
 - <http://www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/adaptedhousing.asp>

HISA- Contact

- Questions regarding the HISA benefit can be directed to:
 - Mike Daniels, Prosthetic Rep x2595,
or
 - Patricia Kuhlhoff, Chief, P&SAS
x2537