

Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) 2017–18 Service Standards Results

<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/about-vac/what-we-do/service-standards>

Veterans Affairs Canada is committed to providing you with quality service in a timely manner and this is monitored through our service standards. Our service standards tell you how long you can expect it will take our staff to provide a service or make a decision.

We recently reviewed our service standards and consulted with Veterans through our Service Excellence Advisory Group for their input. As a result of this review and consultation, we are taking a hard look at our processes and are working to implement further measures to reduce the backlog and improve service standards results. Measures we are taking to address this include hiring more frontline staff and simplifying the decision-making process. We will continue to monitor, report and improve on these service standards.

Current Service Standard and 2017–18 Results

Accessing Services

When you...	You can...	Target	2017–18 Results
Call our National Contact Centre Network (1-866-522-2122)	You can expect to be connected with the next available analyst within 2 minutes.	80%	62%

Note: The service standard was not met primarily due to the influx of calls that followed the introduction of programs unveiled in Budget 2017 and new announcements related to Budget 2018. As a result, we started the year with a 5% performance in April 2017. The impact of the announcements were also felt in the following months. In addition, we have experienced a significant growth in the number of My VAC Account messages to which our analysts have responded, from 53,762 in 2016–17 to 93,417 in 2017–18 (a 73.8% increase). Finally, staffing has been a challenge and we have been experiencing a high turnover. We are taking active measures to increase our staffing and to enhance their tools in order to increase capacity.

Applying for Programs [Footnote 1](#)

When you apply for VAC's...	Your decision will be made within...	Target	2017–18 Results
Disability Benefits	16 weeks.	80%	33%

Note: Although we saw 60% more first applicants from 2014–15 through 2017–18, we were nonetheless able to increase the number of decisions made on individual conditions by 44%. Over the same time period, we also increased favourable Disability Pension decisions from 66% to 78% and increased the total

numbers of Veterans who received a Disability Award by 37% (from 49,372 to 67,575). We are working to improve response times further by upgrading online tools like My VAC Account, simplifying our processes and adjusting our organizational structure.

Long Term Care Program	10 weeks.	80%	26%
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Note: Each province is responsible for placing Veterans in long term care, and as a result the way we measured decision turnaround times in 2017–18 included periods of time that were beyond our control. We have changed the way we measure this for 2018–19 so we can more accurately track the time we take making decisions.

Rehabilitation Program	2 weeks.	80%	74%
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Note: We received 4,292 new applications for Rehabilitation Services in 2017–18. We experienced delays in adjudicating new applications during the summer of 2017 when staff had to focus on the backlog of current rehabilitation files. Some of this work continued into the fall. We have hired more staff and we are also enhancing online services like My VAC Account to improve our performance.

Career Transition Services Program	4 weeks.	80%	37%
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Note: Our practice is to track the time we take to make a decision once we receive a completed application. However, we were incorrectly tracking time from the date we received an application-even if the application was incomplete. We corrected this error and expect to see improvements in 2018–19.

Earnings Loss Benefit (ELB)	4 weeks.	80%	62%
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Note: The backlog in processing ELB payments resulted from the influx of applications received following the October 1, 2016 change to the ELB (increase from 75% to 90% of pre-release salary) that continued into the 2017–2018 fiscal year. For example, in 2015-2016, 3,238 ELB applications were received. This increased by 95% to 6,304 applications in 2016–2017, and in 2017–2018, the number of applications remained high at 5,154. It has also been noted that this service standard currently measures both the time it takes to make an eligibility decision for ELB and the time to calculate the total monthly amount the client will be paid. The calculation of the amount is dependent on information from sources outside VAC's control, such as income offsets, which can impact the overall service standard result. VAC is reviewing these service standards to identify a more accurate method for reporting this data in the 2018-2019 fiscal year.

Health Benefits Program (Public Service Health Care Plan)	4 weeks.	80%	31%
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Note: The Public Sector Health Care Plan (PSHCP) is administered by a third-party provider that receives all approved applications on the 20th day of each month. As a result, applications approved after that day are not processed until the following month. Delays to decisions around the rehabilitation program or the Department of National Defence pension affect this benefit as their decisions are needed before we can confirm eligibility for PSHCP.

War Veterans Allowance Program	4 weeks.	80%	72%
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Note: When we calculate the number of weeks we need to make a decision on War Veterans Allowances, we track time once we receive all the information we need to make a decision. However, we were incorrectly tracking time from the date we received an application – even if the application was incomplete. We corrected this error and expect to meet our target in 2018–19.

Attendance Allowance	6 weeks.	80%	81%
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Reviewing a previous decision

Disability Benefits Program – Bureau of Pensions Advocates (BPA)	Target	2017–18 Results
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You can expect your case to be ready for hearing 21 weeks from the date of your first contact with the Bureau of Pensions Advocates, less any delays in obtaining necessary medical or other supporting information.	75%	69%
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Note: The Bureau's capacity to meet its service standards has been slowly degrading over the last several years as a result of an increase in intake, the growing complexity of cases, and a heavier evidentiary burden required to prove a claim, resulting in a growing backlog of cases.

All other programs	Target	2017–18 Results
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If you are dissatisfied with a decision you received for any program other than Disability Benefits, National First and/or Second Level of Appeal will complete a review of that decision within 12 weeks of receiving your written request for review.	80%	69%
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Note: In 2017–18, the Department received an increased number of requests for appeals compared to the previous year. The service standard was also impacted by the number of reviews requested for Cannabis for Medical Purposes, Career Impact Allowance, and Budget 2017 enhancements (Family Caregiver Relief Benefit and Education and Training Benefit). Due to the changing nature and variety of VAC programs (over 28 programs and benefits), decisions are more complex and often necessitate consultations with Medical Health Professionals, Policy and Program Management. New employees will be hired in 2018–19 and as they gain experience in VAC programs, more timely decisions will be made.

VAC Program Recipients

Once you are eligible for VAC's...	You will...	Target	2017–18 Results
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Disability Benefits Program or War Veterans Allowance Program	Be sent your VAC Health Care Identification Card within 6 weeks of your eligibility.	100%	100%
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Veterans Independence Program	Have your reimbursement processed within 10 business days of claim receipt by the contractor.	98%	100%
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Rehabilitation Program	Work with your case manager and develop a plan to best meet your needs within 45 days of your eligible Rehabilitation Program decision.	80%	64%
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Note: The service standard was not met as there were a number of new Case Managers being trained throughout all 5 phases of the National Orientation and Training Program last fiscal year. There was also an increase in Rehabilitation Program applications related to the Earnings Loss Benefits Program changes that were implemented on October 1, 2016. The number of new Rehabilitation Program applications increased by 51% from 2015–16 to 2017–18. The number of eligible Veterans also went up by 54% from 2015–16 to 2017–18. The increase in applications combined with the number of new Case Managers going through the national training program impacted VAC's ability to develop a plan within 45 days of the eligibility decision.

Case Management Recipients

Metric	Target	2017–18 Result
The ratio of case managed clients to case managers will not exceed 25:1	25:1	33:1

Note: While Federal Budget investments in both 2015 and 2016 have improved case management ratios, the demand for case management services has exceeded Departmental forecasts and is the primary reason for caseload ratios remaining greater than 25:1. The surge in Veterans requiring case management can be explained by two factors: Government of Canada approved changes to the Earnings Loss Benefit which increased Veteran earnings from 75% to 90% of pre-release salary, coupled with increased medical releases from the Canadian Armed Forces between 2013 to 2017, from an average of 1,200 to 2,500 per year. Staffing of the positions approved in Budget 2017 is ongoing and should result in reduced case loads over the next 6 months once the new Case Managers are fully trained.

Applying for Commemoration Programs/Services

When you request...	You can expect...	Target	2017–18 Results
War service medals (first issue)	Your medals to be shipped within 8 weeks.	90%	65%
Note This service standard was not met due to a procurement issue during the first quarter. This issue was resolved, and the service standard was met 100% of the time during the second, third, and fourth quarters.			
Replacement war service medals	An entitlement decision within 8 weeks.	90%	100%
	Your medals to be shipped within 4 weeks of receiving payment Footnote 2 .	90%	100%
Commemorative	Your materials to be shipped	90%	100%

information, products and education material within 2 weeks.

When you submit a request related to...	You can expect...	Target	2017-18 Results
Care and Maintenance of Veterans' Graves	A response within 5 working days.	90%	97%
	Required actions to be completed within 12 months of the request Footnote 3 .	90%	98%

When you apply for...	Your decision will be made within...	Target	2017-18 Results
Community Engagement funding under the Commemorative Partnership Program (CPP)	12 weeks of receiving your completed application.	80%	45%

Note Demand for funding greatly exceeded the resources available. In an effort to manage this situation, funding decisions were delayed to allow time to conduct a thorough analysis of applications and to determine how to maximize the use of funds. A new approach is being developed to help address the situation going forward.

Community War Memorial funding under the Commemorative Partnership Program (CPP)	12 weeks of the posted application deadline.	80%	23%
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Note: Demand for funding greatly exceeded the resources available. In an effort to manage this situation, funding decisions were delayed to allow time to conduct a thorough analysis of applications and to determine how to maximize the use of funds. A new approach is being developed to help address the situation going forward.

Means-tested funeral and burial benefits	30 calendar days.	80%	89%
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[Video — Bruyeya: Culture of disconnect with senior bureaucrats and veterans](#)

Global News

Veterans advocate retired captain Sean Bruyeya and retired warrant officer Ed Storey join Mercedes Stephenson to discuss why vets were so upset when vets and family were not

invited to the unveiling of the Afghanistan memorial in Ottawa. [WATCH NOW](#)

[Retired soldier who helped bring back Kandahar memorial is furious, too, about its fate](#)

National Post

The recent unveiling of the Kandahar battlefield memorial in secret, at a secure Department of National Defence site that is closed to the public, was neither aberration nor oversight, says the retired soldier who led the effort to collect mementos and historic material from the Afghanistan mission. Rather, he said, much of the material has either been dispersed to units, is in storage or has vanished at least from his view, though he retired as a reservist, after a 26-year career in the regular force, only in 2014. [READ MORE](#)

[Gen. Jon Vance apologizes for Afghan memorial fiasco — here is his statement](#)

Ottawa Citizen

General Jonathan Vance, the Chief of the Defence Staff, recently issued the following statement in response to the growing controversy on how the Canadian Forces handled the ceremony to dedicate the Afghan memorial at the National Defence headquarters in Ottawa.

Here is that statement. [READ MORE](#)

[Compétition BEST SOLDIER 2019 : Deux représentants de la Base Valcartier s'illustrent](#)

Journal Adsum

Organisée par la Force de sécurité du Kosovo, la compétition multinationale BEST SOLDIER a eu lieu à Ferizaj, du 21 au 26 avril. Parmi les participants triés sur le volet figuraient les sapeurs Pascal Michel et Ahmed Malik, tous les deux membres du 5^e Régiment du génie de combat (5 RGC). [LIRE PLUS](#)

[Catch screening of *Clearing the Way* on June 1](#)

Canadian Military Family Magazine

The Smith Falls Lions Chapter is presenting two screenings of the film *Clearing the Way: Combat Engineers in Kandahar* on June 1, at the local Smith Falls Station Theatre. The documentary, based on the book written by Mark Gasparotto, is the story of the 2 Combat Engineer 23 Field Engineer Squadron during their deployment in Kandahar in 2006-

2007. [READ MORE](#)

[Canadians play key roles in NATO Mission Iraq](#)

Government of Canada

Iraq has the unenviable task of rebuilding their nation after years of waging war against Daesh and at the same time addressing the challenges that could lead to resurgence. Strong institutions in a well-functioning bureaucracy are key elements to transitioning towards a stable, transparent and peaceful Iraq. [READ MORE](#)

[New CFHA online interactive map!](#)

Government of Canada

The Canadian Forces Housing Agency (CFHA) has just launched a new Portfolio Explorer Interactive Map application. This new technology is an internal tool used by all CFHA employees across the 27 bases/wings in order to create imagery of their asset locations, and was designed with collaboration in mind, whether that be with future CFHA occupants or CFHA stakeholders. [READ MORE](#)