

Pro Bono Representation of Veterans

Civil legal aid providers across North Carolina are dedicated to honoring and protecting low-income veterans and their families through high-quality legal assistance and representation. Pro bono attorneys can help.

Where can you find more information about VA accreditation?

- Visit www.NCVetsLegal.org for information about accreditation, resources for attorneys, and contact information for legal aid providers across North Carolina that partner with pro bono attorneys to represent veterans.
- Visit the VA for more information about the accreditation process: <http://www.va.gov/ogc/accreditation.asp>.
- The rules related to VA accreditation are found in the United States Code, Chapter 59 of title 38. §14.626 thru §14.637 regulate representation of claimants of the Department of Veterans Affairs, including accreditation.

Questions?

Contact your local legal aid office or Charlotte Stewart, Coordinator of the North Carolina Veterans Pro Bono Network, vets@ncbar.org.

How can attorneys help veterans in need?

- Nearly 775,000 veterans call North Carolina home. Poverty among veterans is rising. Growing numbers of veterans, young and elderly, require legal assistance to navigate the complex process of obtaining VA benefits.
- Representation of veterans ensures the livelihoods of those who have served our country are protected. Pro bono attorneys can assist veterans by providing advice and extended representation regarding veterans' disability claims and appeals at the VA and the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. Pro bono attorneys can also represent low-income veterans in other civil cases including consumer, housing, employment, and income maintenance matters.
- Attorneys and other individuals representing veterans in the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims for VA benefits must be accredited by the Veteran's Administration. **Accreditation is not required to provide assistance to veterans in other areas of law.**

How do attorneys apply for accreditation?

- Fill out VA Form 21a, Application for Accreditation as a Claims Agent or Attorney and submit to the VA Office of the General Counsel (022D), 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420. Submissions should include a certificate of good standing from all state bars, courts, and federal and state agencies where admitted to practice.
- After receiving notification from the VA of the accreditation determination, complete a qualifying continuing legal education (CLE) course within 12 months of the date of accreditation by the VA. Legal aid offices around the state can assist you in satisfying the CLE requirement.

What are the continuing requirements once accredited?

- Certify in writing to the VA's Office of the General Counsel that the CLE requirement has been fulfilled by providing the title of the CLE, date and time of the CLE, and name of the CLE provider.
- Starting one year from the date of accreditation, an additional three hours of CLE must be completed every two years and notice of completion should be sent to the Office of the General Counsel in writing.
- Each year accredited attorneys must personally certify that they maintain good standing in all jurisdictions and tribunals where admitted to practice.