BILL'S HOME TECH

Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

AN EXTENDED GUIDE · NO. 1960

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VA Travel Pay — Filing for Mileage Reimbursement Online

Getting paid back for mileage to your VA appointments

Tech Made Simple. Service Made Personal.

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THE 60-SECOND VERSION

1 The 60-Second Version

The whole idea, if you only have a minute.

If you are an eligible veteran, the VA will pay you back for the miles you drive to and from your VA health appointments. The program is called Beneficiary Travel, and most people just call it travel pay. You file a claim, the VA checks it, and the money goes to your bank account.

- What it pays: a set rate per mile for approved travel, with a small monthly deductible taken out first.
- Who it is for: veterans who meet the VA's eligibility rules — a disability rating of 30% or higher is the most common way in.
- The one deadline: you must file within 30 days of the appointment. Claims filed late are usually denied.
- How to file: online at VA.gov or on the BTSSS website, in a few minutes, with no form to mail.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> A simple round-trip, drive-your-own-car, mileage-only claim is the easy case — no receipts needed. You just sign in, pick the past appointment, and file. Most of your trips to the VA will be exactly this kind.

This guide is not benefits advice, and the VA decides every claim. It is just a plain-English walk-through of how filing online works.

WHAT IT COVERS

2 What Travel Pay Actually Covers

Mileage is the heart of it — with a few extras.

Beneficiary Travel pays eligible veterans back for the cost of getting to and from health care. For most folks, the whole thing comes down to one word: mileage. The VA pays a set amount for each mile you drive to an approved appointment and back home.

What the VA may pay for

- Mileage driven to and from your appointment — the main thing, and it needs no receipts.
- Parking and tolls — keep the receipts for these.
- Preapproved public transportation, taxi, rideshare, or plane fares.
- Preapproved meals and lodging for longer trips.
- VA-approved special rides, like an ambulance or wheelchair van, when your health requires it.

The VA bases your mileage on the shortest, most direct route from your home to the closest VA facility that can give you the care you need — often called 'door to door.' It pays round-trip mileage for scheduled appointments.

> **WATCH OUT**
>
> Meals, lodging, and special rides usually need the VA's approval before you travel. Mileage, parking, and tolls do not need preapproval. If you think you will need a hotel or a special ride, call your facility's travel office first.

WHO QUALIFIES

3 Who Is Eligible

The common ways a veteran qualifies.

Not every veteran qualifies for travel pay, and the rules can feel like fine print. Here is the plain version. First, the trip itself has to count: you must be traveling for care at a VA facility, or for care in your community that the VA approved in advance.

Then at least one of these must be true

- You have a VA disability rating of 30% or higher.
- You are traveling for treatment of a service-connected condition, even if your rating is under 30%.
- You receive a VA pension.
- Your income is below the maximum annual VA pension rate.
- You cannot afford the travel, as the VA's guidelines define it.
- You are traveling for a scheduled VA claim exam (a C&P exam), to get a service dog, or for VA-approved transplant care.

Some caregivers, medically required attendants, and transplant donors may also be covered. The rules there are their own subject, so if that is your situation, check the details on VA.gov or ask the travel office.

GOOD TO KNOW

If you are not sure whether you qualify, it is worth asking rather than assuming you do not. Many veterans who are eligible never file, and that is money left on the table over a year of appointments.

> *A lot of folks I sit with are surprised they qualify at all. The only way to know for sure is to check — not to guess yourself out of it.*

THE 30-DAY RULE

4 The One Deadline That Matters

File within 30 days, every time.

If you remember only one thing from this guide, make it this: you have 30 days from the date of your appointment to file your travel claim. The VA can still accept a late claim, but claims filed after the 30-day limit are usually denied.

- The clock starts on your appointment date, not when you get home or when you remember.
- You file a separate claim for each appointment — there is no once-a-month batch.
- Filing online is the fastest way to stay inside the window, since there is no mail time.
- If you file by mail instead, the VA counts the postmark date as your filing date.

WATCH OUT

Make filing part of the trip home. When you walk back in the door from a VA appointment, sit down and file the claim while it is fresh — the whole thing takes just a few minutes, and then the deadline can never catch you.

WATCH OUT

One appointment, one claim, one 30-day window. If you have several appointments in a month, do not wait to do them all at once — the oldest one may slip past its deadline while you wait.

BEFORE YOU FILE

5 Setting Up Before Your First Claim

A little setup once, smooth sailing after.

A few minutes of setup before your first claim makes every claim after it quick. The two big ones are direct deposit and a way to sign in.

Set up direct deposit for travel pay

This is the one that surprises people: travel pay has its own direct deposit, separate from the direct deposit for your other VA benefits. Even if the VA already sends your benefits to your bank, you still have to set up direct deposit for travel pay, or there is nowhere for the money to land.

Have a way to sign in

To file online you sign in with a secure account. The VA accepts Login.gov, ID.me, or CLEAR. If you do not have one yet, you can create one, and it is the same kind of sign-in you would use for the rest of VA.gov. Keep your bank's routing and account numbers handy, hold on to any parking and toll receipts, and for community-care visits ask for proof you attended.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> Setting up the sign-in and the direct deposit is a one-time job. Once it is done, a routine mileage claim really is just a few taps, start to finish.

TWO WAYS TO FILE

6 Two Online Doors: VA.gov and BTSSS

Pick the right one for your trip.

There are two online places to file, and which one you use depends on your trip. BTSSS stands for the Beneficiary Travel Self-Service System — it is the VA's full travel-claim website. VA.gov offers a simpler, quicker path for the most common kind of trip.

If this is true	File here
Round trip from your address on file	VA.gov
Mileage only, your own car	VA.gov
One-way trip	BTSSS website

Started from a different address	BTSSS website
You are an eligible caregiver	BTSSS website

In short: if you drove your own car, round trip, from the home address the VA has on file, the quick VA.gov path works and is the easiest. Anything out of the ordinary — a one-way trip, a different starting address, or a caregiver claim — goes through the fuller BTSSS website.

GOOD TO KNOW

Both doors lead to the same program and the same bank account in the end. VA.gov is just a shortcut for the simple cases; BTSSS handles everything, including the less common trips.

Rather not do this yourself? I'll come to your home and set it up for you — a flat $99 first visit across Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities. Outside the area? I also help remotely by phone or screen-share. Book at billshometech.com/book or call (330) 200-8042.

THE SIMPLE PATH

7 Filing on VA.gov, Step by Step

The quick path for a round-trip mileage claim.

This is the path most veterans will use most of the time — a round-trip, drive-your-own-car, mileage-only claim. No receipts needed.

1. Sign in to VA.gov with your Login.gov, ID.me, or CLEAR account.
2. Go to your appointments list, then select 'Past' to see past appointments.
3. Pick the appointment you want to claim. If it is eligible, you will see 'File a travel reimbursement claim.'
4. Select 'Start a travel reimbursement claim,' then choose 'Mileage' as your expense and answer the two short questions.

5. Review it, select 'Sign agreement,' accept the travel agreement, and select 'Submit claim.'

That is the whole thing. The VA will tell you when it starts processing your claim, and you can check the status any time from your claims list.

> **WATCH OUT**
>
> If all you are claiming is mileage for a round trip in your own car, you do not need a single receipt. Do not let the idea of 'paperwork' stop you — for this kind of trip, there isn't any.

THE FULL PATH

8 Filing on the BTSSS Website

For one-way trips, other addresses, and caregivers.

When your trip does not fit the simple VA.gov path, you file on the BTSSS website. It asks for a little more, but the shape is the same: sign in, pick the appointment, add your expenses, submit.

1. Go to the BTSSS website and sign in with VA PIV, Login.gov, ID.me, or CLEAR.
2. On the welcome page, select 'Proceed to my Dashboard.'
3. Open 'Appointments' or 'Claims,' find the appointment, and start a new claim. Confirm or update your address, then continue.
4. Choose an expense type, add the details, and attach any receipts or proof of attendance (up to five attachments).
5. Review, accept the beneficiary travel agreement, and select 'Submit.'

After you submit, BTSSS takes you back to your dashboard and your claim shows up in review status. If you are not ready to finish, you can save a claim and come back — but you still have to submit it within 30 days of the appointment.

GOOD TO KNOW

Approved BTSSS claims generally pay out within three to five business days. The review step is normal; a claim sitting in 'review' for a little while is not a sign anything is wrong.

THE MATH

9 The Mileage Rate and the Deductible

How the dollars are figured — in plain numbers.

Two numbers decide what lands in your account: the rate the VA pays per mile, and a small deductible it takes out first. Here are the figures as of late 2026 — always confirm the current ones on VA.gov, because they do change.

The mileage rate

As of late 2026, the VA pays 41.5 cents per mile (that is $0.415) for approved, health-related travel. It measures the distance door to door, by the shortest and fastest route, to the closest facility that can provide your care. Before it pays you back, a small deductible comes out — as of late 2026, $3 one way or $6 round trip per appointment, capped at $18 total in a month.

Once you have paid $18 of deductible within a single month, the VA pays the full cost of your approved travel for the rest of that month.

Deductible	Amount
One-way trip	$3
Round trip	$6
Most per month	$18

GOOD TO KNOW

The monthly cap rewards frequent trips. If you have several appointments in one month, the first few cover the deductible, and the rest of that month's approved travel is paid in full. In some cases the VA may waive the deductible entirely.

> *Folks hear 'deductible' and picture a big bite. It is a few dollars a trip, capped at eighteen a month — and after that, the VA pays the whole way.*

ON YOUR PHONE

10 Filing From Your Phone

The VA app and smartphone check-in.

You do not need a computer. The VA's official mobile app — the VA: Health and Benefits app — lets you handle a lot of your VA business from your phone, including travel claims for eligible appointments. You sign in the same secure way you would on the website.

Filing during smartphone check-in

Some VA facilities let you check in for your appointment with your phone. If yours does, you may be able to file your travel claim right there as part of checking in. The system asks a couple of questions about how you got there to see if you qualify to file during check-in.

- You traveled in your own vehicle, and
- You started from your home address, and
- You are claiming only mileage — no other expenses.

If all three are true, you can often file your mileage claim in the same moment you check in, and never think about it again.

WATCH OUT

Download the official VA app only from your phone's app store, and make sure it is the one from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. If an app or a text ever asks for your bank login or a payment to 'release' your travel pay, it is a scam — the VA does not work that way.

CHECKING STATUS

11

Checking on Your Money

Where your claim is, and when you get paid.

Once you file, you do not have to wonder. You can check the status of any claim online, in the same place you filed it.

- On VA.gov, open your travel reimbursement claims list and select 'Check your travel reimbursement claim status.'
- On BTSSS, your claims appear on your dashboard with their current status, such as 'in review.'
- The VA pays approved claims by electronic funds transfer — straight to the bank account you set up for travel pay.
- Approved claims generally pay within about three to five business days.

A claim moves through a review before it is approved, so seeing 'in review' for a little while is normal. If it stays stuck much longer than you would expect, that is the moment to call and ask — not to re-file.

GOOD TO KNOW

Because the money arrives by direct deposit, there is no check to watch for in the mail. If a payment does not show up after it is marked approved, the first thing to check is that your travel-pay direct deposit has the right bank information.

AVOIDING TROUBLE

12 Common Reasons Claims Get Denied

The slip-ups to sidestep.

Most denied claims come down to a handful of avoidable reasons. Knowing them ahead of time keeps your claims clean.

- Filed too late. The 30-day deadline is the single most common reason a claim is denied.
- No eligible appointment. If the appointment does not qualify, or the community-care visit was not approved in advance, there is nothing to pay.
- Missing direct deposit. With no travel-pay direct deposit set up, an approved claim has nowhere to go.
- Missing receipts or proof. Parking, tolls, and other extras need receipts; community-care visits need proof you attended.
- Wrong address or route. Claims based on a different starting address, or a longer route than the direct one, can be reduced or denied.

Free rides do not count, either. If you rode with a no-cost service like a DAV van or a VA transportation program, there is no expense to pay back, so there is nothing to claim.

WATCH OUT

If a claim is denied, read the reason before you re-file. Re-submitting the exact same claim the same way will get the same answer. Fixing the actual problem — the deadline, the address, a missing receipt — is what changes it.

GETTING HELP

13 Getting Help and Getting Started

You do not have to figure it out alone.

If any of this feels like a lot, that is normal, and there is real help available. You do not have to get it perfect on the first try.

- Call your VA facility's Beneficiary Travel contact for questions about your own claims and eligibility.
- Call the VA's BTSSS toll-free call center, open weekdays, for help with the online system.
- Ask the travel office in advance about meals, lodging, or a special ride — those need approval before you travel.
- Sit down with someone you trust the first time, so the setup and the first claim feel familiar after that.

The first claim is always the slow one, because of the one-time setup — the sign-in and the direct deposit. After that, a routine mileage claim takes just a few minutes, and the money comes quietly into your account.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> If you would like a hand, I am glad to help you get signed in, set up your travel-pay direct deposit, put the VA app on your phone, and walk through your first claim together — so filing feels like a small, calm routine instead of a chore. I help with the how; the VA decides every claim.

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

Keep this page handy. It points you straight to what to do for each task.

I want to...	Do this...
Understand what it pays	Mileage to and from your approved VA appointments, paid to your bank
Check if you qualify	Most common: a 30% or higher rating, or travel for a service-connected condition
Beat the deadline	File within 30 days of the appointment — late claims are usually denied
Set up to get paid	Add a separate direct deposit for travel pay before you file
File the simple way	Sign in to VA.gov, open the past appointment, file a mileage claim
Check on your money	Watch the claim status online; approved claims usually pay in 3-5 business days
Get help	Call Bill: (330) 200-8042

AT A GLANCE

A Picture to Follow Along

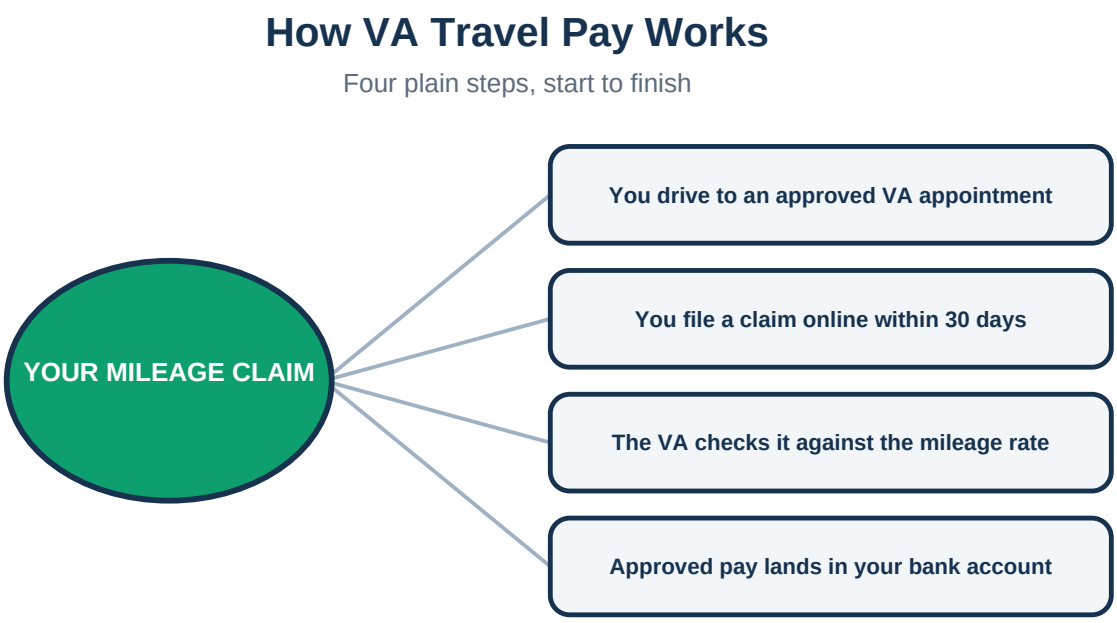


Illustration — a schematic. Set-up screens differ; each takes only a few minutes.

AT A GLANCE

A Second Look

Filing a Mileage Claim Online

The simple round-trip path

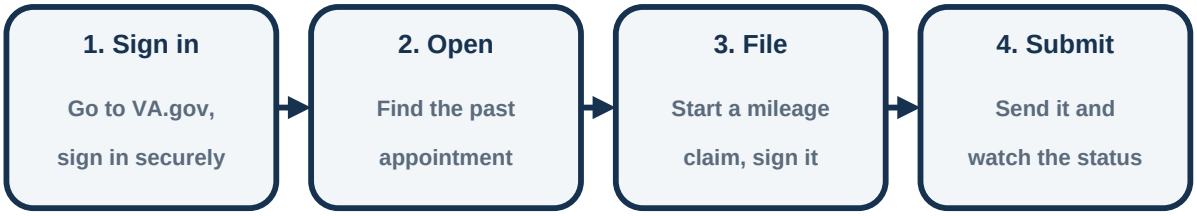


Illustration — a schematic. The order is a suggestion; do one box at a time.

A schematic of the plan — company steps vary; the order does not have to.

BEFORE YOU GO

A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill. I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results.

HOW I CAN HELP

Your Visit — and My Promise

You don't have to remember all of it — just that a friendly, patient person is one call away, whenever you'd rather have a hand.

KEY SPECS

In your home — $99 flat for the first visit, no contracts and no surprises, with a 30-day come-back-free follow-up. In-home visits cover Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities.
Outside the area? Remotely — $49 for a screen-share session (free for Support Plan members, $39/mo), refundable if I can't fix it — and credited toward a visit if you'd rather have me in person. Book either at billshometech.com/book.

GOOD TO KNOW

My promise — If you're not 100% satisfied with your visit, I'll come back at no charge, or refund the full $99. No questions, no awkwardness. That's how I'd want to be treated.

Whenever you're ready, I'll come to your home anywhere in Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities, at your pace. Too far for a house call? I also help remotely. Book at billshometech.com/book or call (330) 200-8042. — Bill

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