



VA & Tricare Newsletter

OCTOBER 28, 2020

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Websites:

Snowball Express Websites:

<https://www.garysinisefoundation.org/snowball-express/>

Snowball Express: Helping the children of deceased service members

Gary Sinise Foundation Snowball Express serves the children of fallen military heroes. In 2017, Snowball Express became an official Gary Sinise Foundation initiative. We are committed to maintaining the wonderful traditions while finding new and exciting ways to serve our families of the fallen.

Snowball Express is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization that was established to help create new memories and a few days of joy for children and spouses that have been affected by the loss of their fallen hero. It is a chance to give a gift of gratitude to the children and spouses of those men and women in the U.S. Armed Forces who made the ultimate sacrifice since September 11, 2001.

By attending Snowball Express a child can see that "service above self" is honored by others and is a value they should subscribe to as they continue to mature as adults. They also realize they can honor their fallen hero in ways other than by being sad or at a somber place.

Snowball Express gives them a piece of their childhood back, allowing them to have fun and that it's OK to laugh.

Who is eligible to attend?

Children of military fallen heroes who have died while on active duty (not medically retired) on or after September 11, 2001 who are between the ages of 5 years of age and 18 years of age. The children **MUST BE** listed on the DD1300, Report of Casualty in order to attend, no exceptions. The names will be confirmed upon receipt of the DD1300. Biological, step-children and adopted children

are all eligible to attend IF their names are on the DD1300.

The death of the fallen hero can be either combat or non-combat related.

Ages – Children must be 5 years of age by December 9, 2017. Children cannot have turned 19 years of age before December 7, 2020 to be eligible to attend.

One accompanying parent/legal guardian or designated adult.

This year to find out if they will be holding event please check out their website for the most current information. For more information and registration can be found at <https://www.garysinisefoundation.org/snowball-express/>

To find out more about this program to volunteer or donate please go to the website <https://www.garysinisefoundation.org/snowball-express/>

To contact Snowball Express with questions or request, please send communications to:

Office: (817) 410-4673

Toll Free (866)276-6922

Snowball Express

611 S. Main St., Suite 400

Grapevine, TX 76051

Source: Snowball Express website

Transition Assistant Advisor
(TAA): Amy Eagen

The TAA is the TRICARE and
VA liaison for the state.

Assistance provided for:

- TRICARE for Life
- TRICARE Reserve
Select/TRICARE
Retired Reserve
- TRICARE Dental,
Active Duty Dental
- VA Services and
Benefits
- Filing assistance for
benefits with VA,
DOD and Tricare
- The TAA is available*
to provide in-person
briefings for TRICARE
and/or VA benefits.
(Available during drill
weekends)
- Pre-separation
counseling
associated with
Transition Assistance
Program (TAP).

VA Benefits

What is the Fiduciary Program?

The purpose of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Fiduciary Program is to protect Veterans and beneficiaries who are unable to manage their VA benefits through the appointment and oversight of a fiduciary.

If you have been determined unable to manage your VA benefits, the VA will conduct a field examination to appoint a fiduciary to assist you.

The VA Field Examination

A VA field examination will be scheduled for the purpose of appointing a fiduciary to assist you in managing your VA benefits. During the field examination, please have the following information available for review by the field examiner:

- Photo identification.
- The source and amount of all monthly bills, recurring expenses (annual, bi-annual, quarterly, etc.), and income.
- A list of all assets, to include bank accounts, owned property, stocks, bonds, life insurance, burial plans, etc.
- A list of all current medications.
- Name, phone number, and address of your primary care doctor.
- Name, phone number, and address of your next of kin.

Selection Process

During the selection process, the VA will first seek to qualify the individual you desire to serve as your fiduciary.

The fiduciary selection is based on an assessment of the qualifications of the proposed fiduciary. When seeking a fiduciary the following individuals may be considered:

- A spouse or family member
- Court-appointed fiduciaries
- Another interested party, or
- A professional fiduciary

An assessment of the qualifications of a proposed fiduciary includes, but is not limited to:

- The willingness to serve and abide by all agreements
- An interview with a VA representative
- Credit report review
- An inquiry into the criminal background, and

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- Interviews with character witnesses

What Are My Rights?

The determination that you are unable to manage your VA benefits does not affect your non-VA finances, or your right to vote or contract.

You have the right to appeal VA's decision finding that you are unable to manage your VA benefits. You also have the right to appeal VA's selection of the fiduciary. If you disagree with the VA on either of these matters you may:

- appeal to the Board of Veterans' Appeals (Board) by telling us you disagree with our decision and want the Board to review it, or
- Give us evidence we do not already have that may lead us to change our decision.

For more information on filing an appeal, please see the sections titled, "What is an Appeal to the Board of Veterans' Appeals?" and "How Can I Appeal the Decision?"

You may also request to have your ability to manage your VA benefits be re-evaluated, or to have a new fiduciary appointed, at any time. If you wish a re-evaluation, please submit your request in writing with any supporting medical evidence to the Regional Office of jurisdiction.

The Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act prohibits you from purchasing, possessing, receiving or transporting a firearm or ammunition if you have "been adjudicated as a mental defective or been committed to a mental institution." In compliance with this act, VA reports the names of incompetent beneficiaries to the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), which then adds the names to a database called the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS). Gun dealers must check NICS for the name of a potential buyer before selling him/her a firearm. You may be fined and/or imprisoned if you knowingly violate this law. You may apply to VA for relief of firearms prohibitions imposed by the law by submitting your request to the VA. The VA will determine whether such relief is warranted.

What is an Appeal to the Board of Veterans' Appeals?

An appeal is your formal request that the Board review the evidence in your VA records and review the law that applies to your appeal. The Board can either agree with our decision or change it. The Board can also send your case back to us for more processing before the Board makes its decision.

How can I Appeal the Decision?

How do I start my appeal?

To begin your appeal, write us a letter telling us you disagree with our decision and wish to appeal. This letter is called your "Notice of Disagreement." Send your Notice of Disagreement to the address to the fiduciary hub of jurisdiction. You may also submit any additional evidence in support of your appeal.

What happens after VA receives my Notice of Disagreement?

We will review your case and consider any additional evidence you provide. If we change our decision, we will notify you in writing. If we make no change in our decision, we will send you a Statement of the Case. A Statement of the Case describes the facts, laws, regulations, and reasons we used to make our decision. We will also send you a VA Form 9, "Appeal to Board of Veterans' Appeals," with the Statement of the Case. You must complete this VA Form 9 and return it to us if you want to continue your appeal.

How long do I have to start my appeal?

You have one year from the date of the notification letter regarding the selection of your fiduciary to submit a Notice of Disagreement. Your letter saying that you disagree with our decision and wish to appeal must be postmarked or received by us within one year from the date of this letter.

What happens if I do not start my appeal on time?

If you do not start your appeal on time, our decision will become final.

Can I have a hearing with the Board?

Yes. If you decide to appeal, the Board will give you a hearing if you request one. The VA Form 9 we will send you with the Statement of the Case has complete information about the kinds of hearings the Board offers and provides check boxes for requesting a Board hearing. The Board does not require you to have a hearing. It is your choice.

Where can I find out more about appeals to the Board?

You can find a booklet called "How Do I Appeal" on the Internet at: [Appeal Booklet](#)

Please realize if you want more information about the Fiduciary program please go to the VA website for more details. This is just some information on the Fiduciary program, if you want to know how to apply go to the VA

website: www.benefits.va.gov/fiduciary

SOURCE: VA website

Watch out for the November Tricare Open Season and VA Dental Program.

If there is any material on Tricare, VA or DoD program you would like to see me address in my next newsletter please feel free to contact me at (720) 250 -1173 or email amy.j.eagen.ctr@mail.mil