



Paralyzed Veterans of America

Wisconsin Chapter

Program/Benefit Policies and Procedures Manual

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Paralyzed Veterans of America – Wisconsin Chapter Program/Benefits Policies and Procedures

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DISCLAIMERS / WAIVERS / CONSENT

To be eligible for any Paralyzed Veterans of America – Wisconsin Chapter (PVA-WI) programs/benefits, an individual must be in good standing with the organization, must not be under suspension or subject to disciplinary action, and must conduct themselves in a manner that does not disparage PVA-WI's reputation or mission.

Eligibility Requirements for PVA-WI Programs/Benefits

To participate in PVA-WI programs/benefits individuals must:

- Meet the eligibility requirements for the applicable program/benefit as outlined in this Program/Benefit Policies & Procedures Manual.
- Comply with all obligations described in the PVA-WI Chapter bylaws, this manual, and any required registration forms. Noncompliance will suspend eligibility until requirements are met and approved.
- Agree to complete a brief survey, if requested, to aid in research or donor development efforts.

Additional Program Information

- Programs/benefits, policies, and procedures may change at any time and are contingent upon the availability of chapter funds.
- Applications and forms are available at: <https://wisconsinpva.org/forms>.
- For questions or additional information, email info@wisconsinpva.org or call (414) 328-8910.
- All application materials will be kept confidential.

Liability Waiver

By participating in PVA-WI events or programs, participants release and discharge PVA-WI, event organizers, sponsors, volunteers, staff, property owners, affiliated organizations, and their representatives from any liability, claims, or actions arising from injury, loss, or damage experienced while participating in, observing, or traveling to or from an event.

Media Consent

By participating in PVA-WI programs or events, participants grant permission to PVA-WI to use their verbal or written statements, photographs, digital images, and audio or video recordings. These materials may be used for publicity, promotional, educational, or informational purposes, including but not limited to newsletters, websites, social media, marketing materials, and other PVA/PVA-WI communications, in any medium now known or developed in the future.

ADAPTIVE SPORTS PROGRAM POLICY & PROCEDURE

Eligibility

- **Life Members:** Eligible - see detailed requirements below.
- **Associate Members:** Eligible - see detailed requirements below.

The Adaptive Sports Reimbursement Program encourages members to participate in recreational and athletic activities by helping offset associated costs.

Reimbursement Amounts & Limits

Life Members

- **Granted PVA-WI Membership BEFORE 2/11/26:** Up to **5** events per fiscal year (October 1–September 30); maximum reimbursement per event: **\$1,500**
 - VA Certified Caregiver Stipend: Up to **\$300** per event for medically necessary assistance.
- **Granted PVA-WI Membership AFTER 2/11/26:**
 - **Residing in Wisconsin or within 50 miles of the state's borders:** Up to **5** events per fiscal year (October 1–September 30); maximum reimbursement per event: **\$1,500**
 - VA Certified Caregiver Stipend: Up to **\$300** per event for medically necessary assistance.
 - **Residing outside of Wisconsin or beyond 50 miles of the state's borders:** Up to **2** events per fiscal year (October 1–September 30); maximum reimbursement per event: **\$1,500**
 - One reimbursement must be used for the National Veteran Wheelchair Games (NVWG).
 - The second reimbursement must be for a PVA (National or Chapter hosted/sponsored event), such as the National Veterans Golden Age Games, National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, or National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic.
 - VA Certified Caregiver Stipend: Up to **\$300** per event for medically necessary assistance.

Associate Members

- **Granted PVA-WI Membership BEFORE 2/11/26:** Up to **5** events per fiscal year (October 1–September 30); maximum reimbursement per event: **\$500**
 - VA Certified Caregiver Stipend: Up to **\$300** per event for medically necessary assistance.

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- **Granted PVA-WI Membership AFTER 2/11/26:**
 - **Residing in Wisconsin or within 50 miles of the state's borders:** Up to **5** events per fiscal year (October 1–September 30); maximum reimbursement per event: **\$500**
 - VA Certified Caregiver Stipend: Up to **\$300** per event for medically necessary assistance.
 - **Residing outside of Wisconsin or beyond 50 miles of the state's borders:** Not eligible for any reimbursement.

An increased reimbursement rate for the NVWG may be established annually by the Board of Directors. Associate Members may also be eligible for this rate, contingent upon the availability of NVWG funds (in accordance with the eligibility guidance outlined above).

Eligible Expenses

Reimbursable expenses include, but are not limited to:

- Registration or entry fees
- Event-related banquet or award ceremony fees
- Annual membership fees required by the governing/sponsoring organization
- Additional travel-related expenses as outlined in the PVA-WI Travel Policy (see page 4).
- Personal training sessions may be authorized, subject to availability, prior approval, and at the sole discretion of the Board of Directors (WI residents only).

Request for Funding & Reimbursement Procedure

1. Pre-Approval Requirement

To be eligible for reimbursement, participants must submit an online **Financial Request Form** at least **30 days before** the event or before making any purchases or commitments.

- Form available at: <https://wisconsinpva.org/financial-request-form>
- Applicants will receive an approval decision via email within 2 weeks of submission.

2. Expense Report Submission

Once approval is received and the event has concluded, participants must submit an online **Expense Report** within **30 days** at <https://wisconsinpva.org/expense-report>

- Expense report must include:
 - Itemized purchase receipts
 - Banking information for direct deposit
 - A brief event summary
 - Photos of participation

Documentation Requirements

- Acceptable documentation of purchases includes itemized, legible receipts, credit card statements, and invoices. Meal and gas receipts are not required.
- Banking information (deposit slip, voided check, or screenshot of account/routing numbers) is required for direct deposit reimbursement.

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Documentation Requirements (Continued)

- Once expense reports are submitted, participants may not amend or add additional expenditures.
- Only expenses personally paid by the participant are eligible. Costs paid by another individual, organization, sponsor, or third party are not reimbursable.

Photographs & Event Report Requirements

As a condition of reimbursement, participants must also provide:

- Photographs of themselves at the event as a condition of receiving reimbursement.
 - For team events, a team leader will coordinate a mutually convenient time for a team photo; all team members are expected to participate.
- A brief written summary of the event.
 - For team events, one designated participant may submit the report on behalf of the group.

Reimbursement Processing

- Reimbursement processing may take up to **30 days** after all required materials are received and approved.
- All payments are issued ACH transfer (direct deposit).

Partial Advance Reimbursement (Financial Hardship)

PVA-WI may provide a partial advance reimbursement (75% prior to travel and 25% after) for participants who can demonstrate financial hardship.

- To qualify:
 - Proof of financial hardship
 - The participant must notify the Chapter when submitting the Financial Request Form that they intend to request a partial advance.
 - A completed expense report with all required documentation (excluding photos and event report) must be submitted within **2 weeks** of approval notification.

PVA-WI TRAVEL POLICY

PVA-WI provides reimbursement to help reduce the travel costs associated with participation in events under the Adaptive Sports Reimbursement Program.

These funds are intended to reduce financial burden but are not designed to cover all expenses.

General Guidelines

- Use the most cost-effective transportation option available.
- Lodging reimbursements will not exceed the event's contracted hotel rate.
- Per diem reimbursements will follow GSA rates for the event location's ZIP code.

Lodging

- Approved lodging nights may include one night prior to the event (when PVA-WI determines it is not feasible or safe to travel on the day of the event) as well as the actual nights of the event itself. Lodging for the final night of the event is eligible for reimbursement only if PVA-WI determines that travel after the event concludes is not feasible or safe.
- Lodging is reimbursed at the contracted hotel rate; reimbursement is capped at that rate if staying elsewhere.
- Incidental charges (food, drinks, hotel restaurants, damages, entertainment, etc.) are not reimbursable.
- No reimbursement for cancellation fees or unused room nights due to late arrival or early departure.

Meals

- Per diem is provided unless meals are supplied by the event.
- Rates follow GSA guidelines: <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>
- First and last travel days reimbursed at 75% of the full per diem rate.
- Meal receipts should not be submitted in expense report.

Transportation

- **Driving**
 - Mileage reimbursed at the IRS rate for roundtrip travel using the most direct route (per Google Maps).
 - Mileage reimbursement must total at least \$50.
 - Gas receipts should not be submitted in expense report.
 - IRS mileage rates update annually in January.
- **Air Travel**
 - Reimbursed at the most economical one-stop coach fare.
 - First-class or upgraded tickets are not reimbursable.
 - **Luggage:**
 - Reimbursed only for airlines that charge baggage fees.
 - Only items required for the event (wheelchairs, sports equipment, etc.) are eligible.

ENTERTAINMENT & RECREATION PROGRAM POLICY & PROCEDURE

Eligibility

- **Life Members:** Eligible
- **Associate Members:** Not eligible

The Recreation & Entertainment Reimbursement Program assists PVA-WI members in participating in therapeutic, leisure-based, community, and entertainment activities that promote well-being, community engagement, and quality of life. This program provides financial support for adaptive recreation, non-competitive therapeutic activities, and member-selected entertainment outings. All reimbursement requests are subject to Board of Directors approval and contingent upon the availability of chapter funds.

Reimbursement Amounts & Limits

- **Life Members:** 2 reimbursements per fiscal year (October 1 – September 30); maximum reimbursement per event/item(s): **\$250**

Eligible Activities & Expenses

1. Adaptive & Therapeutic Recreation Events

- Adaptive leisure and hobby activities
- Therapeutic recreation programs
- Fitness center memberships
- Adaptive sports clinics (non-competitive)
- Approved adaptive recreation equipment

2. Entertainment Events

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Movies
- Concerts and live performances
- Dining out
- Sporting events
- Community festivals
- Museum or cultural outings

3. Eligible Expense Types

- Tickets or entry fees
- Transportation
- Equipment or activity fees
- Other documented costs directly related to participation

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Request for Funding & Reimbursement Procedure

1. Pre-Approval Requirement

To be eligible for reimbursement, participants must email a **written request** to info@wisconsinpva.org at least **30 days before** the event or before making any purchases or commitments.

- **Requests must describe** the activity/event, date(s), how funds will be used, and any caregiver support requested.
- Applicants will receive an approval decision via email within **2 weeks** of submission.

2. Expense Report Submission

Once approval is received and the event has concluded, participants must submit an online Expense Report within 30 days at <https://wisconsinpva.org/expense-report>.

- Expense report must include:
 - Itemized purchase receipts
 - Banking information for direct deposit
 - A brief event summary and photos of participation
 - Photos of equipment/adaptive recreation purchase if involved.

Documentation & Reporting

- Acceptable documentation includes itemized, legible receipts, credit card statements, and invoices.
- Banking information (deposit slip, voided check, or screenshot of account/routing numbers) is required for ACH transfer (direct deposit) reimbursement.
- Lost receipts cannot be reimbursed.
- Once expense reports are submitted, members may not amend or add additional expenditures.
- Only expenses personally paid by the participant are eligible. Costs paid by another individual, organization, sponsor, or third party are not reimbursable.

Photographs & Participation Report Requirements

- Participants must provide photographs of themselves at the event or of the equipment/adaptive recreation purchases as a condition of reimbursement.
- A brief written summary of the event.

Reimbursement Processing

- Reimbursement processing may take up to **30 days** after all required materials are received and the application is formally approved.
- All payments are issued via ACH transfer (direct deposit).

INVESTFIT PROGRAM POLICY & PROCEDURE

Eligibility

- **Life Members:** Eligible
- **Associate Members:** Not eligible

The InvestFit Program supports eligible members in improving health, fitness, and overall well-being by assisting with the cost of VA OT/PT-recommended exercise equipment and approved fitness services. All reimbursement requests are subject to Board of Directors approval and contingent upon the availability of chapter funds.

Reimbursement Amounts & Limits

- PVA-WI will reimburse **50%** of the cost of **1 approved piece of exercise equipment** priced at **\$200** or more, up to a maximum reimbursement of **\$500**.
- Reimbursement is limited to **1** per fiscal year (October 1 – September 30).
- Reimbursement applies to a single item only and may not be combined or split across multiple purchases.

Request for Funding & Approval Procedure

1. Pre-Approval Requirement

To be eligible for reimbursement, participants must email the required items below to info@wisconsinpva.org.

- **Required items:**
 - A VA Physical Therapy (PT) or Occupational Therapy (OT) recommendation.
 - A brief written statement describing how the equipment will be used to support fitness, health, and wellness goals.
 - Any applicable documentation from the VA Prosthetics Department indicating denial of equipment coverage.
- Applicants will receive an approval decision via email within **2 weeks** of submitting the required materials.

2. Expense Report Submission

Once approval is received and the equipment is purchased, participants must submit an online **Expense Report** within **30 days** at <https://wisconsinpva.org/expense-report>.

- Expense Report must include:
 - Itemized purchase receipt
 - Banking information for ACH transfer (direct deposit)
 - Photographs using the equipment obtained.

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Documentation Requirements

- Acceptable documentation of purchase includes itemized, legible receipts, credit card statements, and invoices.
- Banking information (deposit slip, voided check, or screenshot of account/routing numbers) is required for ACH transfer (direct deposit) reimbursement.
- Lost receipts cannot be reimbursed.
- Once expense reports are submitted, members may not amend or add additional expenditures.
- Only expenses personally paid by the participant are eligible. Costs paid by another individual, organization, sponsor, or third party are not reimbursable.

Photographs & Reporting Requirements

As a condition of reimbursement, participants must also provide:

- Photographs using the equipment obtained.
- Periodic updates regarding their health or fitness progress to help demonstrate program impact.

Reimbursement Processing

- Reimbursement processing may take up to 30 days after all required materials are received and approved.
- All reimbursements are issued via ACH transfer (direct deposit)

ADAPTIVE TECHNOLOGY & ACCESSIBILITY PROGRAM POLICY & PROCEDURE

Eligibility

Life Members: Eligible

Associate Members: Not eligible

Reimbursement Guidelines

The Adaptive Technology & Accessibility Program assists eligible members with funding for adaptive technology and accessibility-related needs that improve independence, safety, and quality of life. This includes, but is not limited to, home accessibility modifications and adaptive vehicle controls.

This program is intended to support needs not covered by other funding sources, such as Social Security, Medicare, or the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (e.g., SAH Grant, HISA Grant). All program requests are subject to Board of Directors approval and contingent upon the availability of chapter funds.

Eligibility & Application Requirements

- Applicants must have been a PVA-WI life member for at least **1 year** prior to submitting a request.
- Funding may be provided only when **no other VA or public funding source is available**.
 - **Proof of denial** from the VA or other funding sources (e.g., Social Security or Medicare) must be submitted with the request.
- This is a **1-time award**, except in cases of **extreme or extenuating circumstances**, such as:
 - Natural disasters
 - Home or apartment fires
 - Other significant emergencies, as determined by the Board of Directors.

Reimbursement Procedures

- Reimbursement is issued **after verification that the project or installation has been completed**.
- Members must submit:
 - **Photographs of the completed project or installed equipment**, and
 - A **written statement** describing how the modification or technology improves accessibility, safety, or independence.
- Payment will be made **directly to the service provider** that performed the work.
- Approved funds will be disbursed only after project completion and submission of all required documentation and receipts.

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Covered Expenses

1. Home Structural Modifications

Funding assistance may be provided for **modifications or adaptations to a primary residence** that improve accessibility or safety in or around the home.

- Reimbursement is limited to **50% of the total project cost**.
- Each request must include **at least 2 written bids**.
- Each bid must clearly describe the **scope of work to be performed**.

2. Adaptive Driving Controls

Funding may be provided for adaptive driving controls installed on a member's **personal vehicle**, including but not limited to:

- Hand controls
- Left-foot accelerators
- Other adaptive driving equipment

Requirements:

- Installation must be completed by a **certified dealer or technician**.
- Reimbursement is limited to **50% of the total project cost**.
- Requests must include **at least 2 written bids**, unless the equipment is available from a **single source only**.
- Each bid must include a **description of the work and equipment**.

3. Other Adaptive Technology or Accessibility Needs

Funding for other adaptive technology or accessibility needs not listed above may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

- In general, reimbursement is limited to **50% of the purchase or project cost**.

Chapter Liability

- Funding provided under this program is considered a charitable gift.
- The member acknowledges that **PVA-WI assumes no liability** related to the funded project, service, or equipment.
- By submitting a funding request, the member agrees to **hold PVA-WI harmless** and releases the Chapter from any responsibility or obligation related to the funded item or work.

HARDSHIP ASSISTANCE GRANT POLICY & PROCEDURE

Eligibility

Life Members: Eligible

Associate Members: Not eligible

The Hardship Assistance Grant is available to PVA–WI Life Members who are experiencing an unexpected or unavoidable financial crisis that threatens their basic stability, such as housing, utilities, or essential services. All grant requests are subject to Board of Directors approval and contingent upon the availability of chapter funds.

To be considered for assistance, applicants must demonstrate that **all other available financial resources have been fully exhausted**, including but not limited to:

- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits
- State and federal government assistance programs
- Assistance or funding from private or nonprofit entities

Program Guidelines

- Grant awards are available up to a **maximum of \$1,000**.
- The Hardship Assistance Grant is intended as a **one-time award**.
- Additional funding requests may only be considered under **extreme extenuating circumstances (with executive committee review/approval)**, such as:
 - Natural disasters
 - House or apartment fires
 - Other extraordinary emergencies impacting basic living needs

Application and Documentation Requirements

To be considered for funding, applicants must submit:

1. A completed **Hardship Assistance Grant Application**.

<https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwisconsinpva.org%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2F2024-09%2FHardship%2520Assistance%2520Application%2520Final.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK>

2. Documentation verifying that **all other sources of financial assistance have been exhausted**, including VA benefits, state and federal programs, and/or private assistance.

Payment Procedures

Approved grant funds are **paid directly to the service provider** (e.g., landlord, utility company, medical provider). Funds are **not distributed directly to the applicant**.

CAREGIVER RESPITE PROGRAM POLICY & PROCEDURE

Eligibility

Life Members (with an unpaid caregiver):

Associate Members: Not eligible

PVA-WI offers the Caregiver Respite Program to support unpaid caregivers by providing temporary relief from caregiving responsibilities. This program provides eligible PVA-WI Life Members residing in Wisconsin with access to high-quality, in-home care services at no cost to the member or caregiver.

Program Guidelines

- Eligible members may receive up to 15 hours of caregiver respite services per fiscal year.
- The PVA-WI fiscal year runs from October 1 through September 30.
- Service hours may be used:
 - All at once, or
 - Incrementally over a period of time, based on member needs

Application and Request Procedure

1. Members must complete the **Caregiver Respite Program online request form**, available in the Forms section of the PVA-WI website: <https://forms.office.com/r/NCEb7ztB13?origin=IprLink>
2. Upon program approval PVA-WI staff will opt the member into the program.
3. **The service provider will contact the caregiver by phone** to conduct an assessment, which includes:
 - The member's care needs
 - Service location
 - Caregiver information

Program Restrictions and Important Notes

- Participation in this program **does not impact or reduce** any existing caregiver funding or benefits the member may be receiving.
- The primary caregiver **cannot be paid** through this program.
- All services are coordinated and provided through the service provider in accordance with program guidelines.
- This program is subject to service provider availability and applicable coverage areas.
- Incomplete applications will not be considered.

FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP POLICY & PROCEDURE

Eligibility

Life Members and their Spouse, Children, or Granchildren: Eligible

Associate Members and their Spouse, Children, or Granchildren: Not eligible

PVA-WI offers annual tuition scholarships to support post-secondary education for eligible members and their families (**maximum of \$1,000**). This program is intended to assist with educational expenses while recognizing the impact of living with or being connected to a veteran with a spinal cord injury or disease.

Program Guidelines

- Eligibility is limited to **1 application and 1 scholarship** award per PVA-WI fiscal year (October 1 through September 30).
- Funds are **paid directly to the educational institution** and are not distributed to the applicant.

Application Review and Notification

- **Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.**
- Scholarship applications are **reviewed at the monthly board meeting** (2nd Wednesday of every month).
- To be considered at that month's Board meeting, the application **must be received no later than the 1st Wed of the month**; otherwise, it will be reviewed at the following month's meeting.
- Applicants will be notified of the funding decision via email within **2 weeks** of the committee vote.

Application Requirements

To be considered for a scholarship award, applicants must submit all of the following:

- Members must complete the **Family Scholarship online request form**
https://wisconsinpva.org/sites/default/files/2026-01/SCI%20_0.pdf
- Proof of enrollment in an **accredited college, university, technical school**, or certifying authority.
- A **500–600 word essay** describing how the applicant has been impacted by a veteran living with a spinal cord injury or disease.
- A description of any **civic engagement or community involvement activities**
- Proof of a **cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher**, including the most recent transcript showing grades and GPA (if currently or recently enrolled).
- An **itemized bill** from the educational institution showing charges and a due date
- Incomplete applications may not be considered.

VIRGINIA “BEA” ROOT & KATHY WELTER RESEARCH AND EDUCATION ENDOWMENT SCHOLARSHIP POLICY & PROCEDURE

Eligibility

- Applicants must be currently employed at the Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center SCI Unit or provide care to patients within the Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) Unit.
- Eligible professionals include, but are not limited to:
 - Nurses
 - Physical Therapists
 - Occupational Therapists
 - Dietitians
 - Social Workers
 - Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs)
 - Individuals pursuing Certified Rehabilitation Registered Nurse (CRRN) certification

PVA-WI is proud to offer the Virginia “Bea” Root & Kathy Welter Research and Education Endowment Scholarship to support the professional growth and development of staff serving veterans in the Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center SCI Unit.

This scholarship is designed to enhance education, training, and professional advancement, ultimately strengthening the quality of care provided to veterans living with spinal cord injury or disease.

Program Guidelines

- Scholarship awards are available up to a **maximum of \$1,000**.
- Eligibility is limited to 1 application and one scholarship award per PVA-WI fiscal year (October 1 through September 30).
- Scholarship funds are **paid directly to the educational institution** and are not distributed to the applicant.

Employment Commitment

- In exchange for receipt of scholarship funding, recipients are expected to maintain employment within a VA Spinal Cord Injury Unit for a minimum of **2 years**.

Application Review and Notification

- Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.
- Scholarship applications are reviewed at the monthly board meeting (2nd Wed of every month).
- To be considered at that month’s Board meeting, the application must be received no later than the 1st Wednesday of the month; otherwise, it will be reviewed at the following month’s meeting.
- Applicants will be notified of the funding decision via email within 2 weeks of the committee vote.

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Application Requirements

To be considered for a scholarship award, applicants must submit all of the following:

- Members must complete the SCI Scholarship online request form at <https://forms.office.com/r/tfdNFgj0VF?origin=IprLink>
- A statement demonstrating **financial need**.
- Proof of enrollment in an **accredited college, university, or technical school**.
- A **500–600 word essay** describing how the applicant has been impacted by a veteran living with a spinal cord injury or disease
- A description of any **civic engagement or community involvement activities**
- Proof of a **cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher**, including the most recent transcript showing grades and GPA (if currently or recently enrolled)
- An **itemized bill** from the educational institution showing charges and a due date
- Incomplete applications will not be considered.