

VA Modernized Decision Review System

SOC/SSOC Opt-In Fact Sheet

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) continues to look for ways to put Veterans in control of how they receive services and interact with VA. The *Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017* (Appeals Modernization Act), created a modernized review system for claims and appeals. The modernized system provides streamlined choices for seeking review of your VA claim decision.

The Appeals Modernization Act allows appellants with an appeal under the old system, referred to as a “legacy appeal,” with an opportunity to withdraw from the legacy system and enter the modernized system. Upon receipt of a Statement of the Case (SOC) or Supplemental Statement of the Case (SSOC), you may elect to continue your appeal by seeking review under one of the new review options.

You are receiving this fact sheet because you are eligible to opt-in to the modernized system based on the SOC/SSOC you received.

You have 60 days from the date of your SOC/SSOC or within the one year appeal period, whichever is later, to opt-in to the modernized system. *Opt-ins will not be accepted if received after the Board of Veterans’ Appeals (Board) has issued a decision on your legacy appeal.*

What is the Modernized Review System?

The modernized review system gives claimants the opportunity to participate in the new **Supplemental Claim** and **Higher-Level Review** options, or choose to file an **appeal directly to the Board**.

As a modernized system participant, you will benefit from:

- A new, more efficient review process
- Potentially faster decisions and early resolution of disagreements
- Multiple review options
- The same potential effective date for your benefits regardless of the review option that you choose

Which Appeals are Eligible for the Modernized Review System?

You may opt-in to the modernized system for any appeal currently in the legacy system for which you have received an SOC/SSOC dated on or after February 19, 2019.

Which Review Option is Right for You?

The enclosed document entitled **VA Form 20-0998, “Your Rights To Seek Further Review Of Our Decision”** provides your options under the modernized system. You can also find information on how to participate and the benefits of participating by visiting <https://www.va.gov/decision-reviews/>.

What it Means to Opt-In

If you choose to opt-in to the modernized system, VA will process your claim under the review option(s) selected. We will no longer process your appeal in the legacy system and you will not be able to request additional review of VA’s decision under the legacy appeals process. You will have access to all the review options and benefits of the modernized system.

Choosing one review option now does not prevent you from submitting another supplemental claim or choosing another review option after receiving a decision based on the chosen review option.

How You Can Opt-In

You can choose to have your appeal reviewed under one of the modernized system options by completing the appropriate form for the review option you choose to participate in, as there is a separate form for each option. These forms can be found online at www.va.gov/vaforms/. If you choose to participate in the modernized system, you must **submit your completed application form(s) within 60 days from the date of your SOC/SSOC or within the one year appeal period, whichever is later.**

If you received this Fact Sheet as part of a SSOC, please note the 30-day timeframe to respond to the SSOC **does not apply** to the timeframe noted above for filing of an opt-in if you choose to participate in the modernized system.

Send the appropriate form to the address listed in your SOC/SSOC or to the appropriate address on the “Where to Send Correspondence” if provided. Please ensure the **SOC/SSOC Opt-in box** on the appropriate form(s) is checked. This block indicates that you are submitting your appeal as an opt-in from the legacy system.

If you choose not to participate in in the modernized system, you do not need to take any action. Your appeal(s) will remain in the legacy system.