



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Veterans Benefits Administration
Washington, D.C. 20420

September 26, 2019

VR&E Letter 28-19-02

Director (00/28)
All VA Regional Offices

SUBJ: Cost of Living Adjustment and Options to Fiscal Year 2020 Subsistence Allowance Rates

On October 1, 2019, a 2.04 percent Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) to traditional Chapter 31 subsistence allowance rates will go into effect. This letter provides information on:

1. The new Chapter 31 subsistence allowance rates and the first increased payment date
2. Processing subsistence allowance in Corporate WINRS Subsistence Allowance Module (SAM)
3. How running Chapter 31 awards will be adjusted
4. How Veterans will be notified about the Chapter 31 COLA increase
5. Who to contact with Chapter 31 subsistence allowance questions

1. The new Chapter 31 subsistence allowance rates and the first increased payment date:

Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Service received confirmation from Hines Information Technology Center (ITC) that the FY 2020 COLA rates were installed for the traditional Chapter 31 subsistence allowance rates. This COLA affects traditional Chapter 31 subsistence allowance rates where the award period ends on or after October 1, 2019. Post-9/11 subsistence allowance (P911SA) based on Department of Defense (DoD) Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) rates is unaffected by this COLA.

The enclosed table reflects the new traditional Chapter 31 subsistence allowance rates that are effective October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020. Since the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) pays subsistence allowance for training that has been completed in the previous month, the first payment at these rates will be reflected in the November 1, 2019 subsistence allowance payment/disbursement.

Chapter 31 Subsistence Allowance Rate Increase As of October 1, 2019
Based Upon 2.04% Consumer Price Index (CPI) Increase

Type of Training	Training Time	No Dependents	One Dependent	Two Dependents	Each Additional Dependent
Institutional; Nonpay or nominal pay work experience in a facility of a Federal, State, local, or federally recognized Indian tribe agency; Improvement of Rehabilitation Potential:	Full-Time	\$644.74	\$799.74	\$942.44	\$68.68
	¾ Time	\$484.45	\$600.68	\$704.61	\$52.83
	½ Time	\$324.14	\$401.62	\$472.08	\$35.24
	¼ Time ¹	\$162.05	\$200.84	\$236.04	\$17.58
Nonpay or nominal pay on-job training in a facility of a Federal, State, local, or federally recognized Indian tribe agency; Training in the home; Vocational course in a rehabilitation facility or sheltered workshop; Independent instructor:	Full-Time Only	\$644.74	\$799.74	\$942.44	\$68.68
Farm Cooperative, Apprenticeship or other On-Job Training ² :	Full-Time Only	\$563.71	\$681.70	\$785.65	\$51.09
Combination of Institutional and On-Job Training (Institutional Greater than One Half); Non-farm Cooperative Institutional Training and Non-farm Cooperative On-Job Training (FT Non-Farm Coop/Institutional):	Full-Time Only	\$644.74	\$799.74	\$942.44	\$68.68
Combination of Institutional and On-Job Training (On-the-Job Greater than ½); Non-farm Cooperative Institutional Training and Non-farm Cooperative On-Job Training (FT Non-Farm Coop/On-the-Job):	Full-Time Only	\$563.71	\$681.70	\$785.65	\$51.09

Effective 10-01-2019, the maximum monthly rate for Chapter 31 Subsistence Allowance is **\$2,728³**.

¹ The quarter-time rate may be paid only during extended evaluation.

² For On-Job Training, training wage plus subsistence allowance cannot exceed the journeyman wage.

³ This maximum rate was calculated based upon full-time enrollment for a Veteran with the following dependents: spouse, mother, father and 25 children.

2. Processing subsistence allowance in Corporate WINRS SAM:

Traditional Chapter 31 subsistence allowance rate awards already entered into SAM have been automatically adjusted with the COLA rate effective October 1, 2019. New award entries will display the COLA adjustment effective October 1, 2019.

Post 9/11 subsistence allowance rate awards require no additional action in SAM at this time. The revised rate for P911SA rates will be available later this year.

3. How running Chapter 31 awards will be adjusted:

In early October 2019, a batch computer program will identify and automatically retroactively adjust awards that include an effective date of October 1, 2019, or earlier.

The automatic adjustment to Chapter 31 awards will:

- Generate online notice of exception messages for cases that could not be adjusted by the batch process and that require regional office action to manually adjust the subsistence rate.
- Generate a report of all SAM adjusted and non-adjusted cases in early October 2019.
- Generate award letters to Veterans notifying them of the change in their subsistence rate(s) effective on or after October 1, 2019.

4. How Veterans will be notified about the Chapter 31 COLA increase:

All Veterans receiving the traditional Chapter 31 subsistence rate at the end of September 2019 will receive notification of the new rates by VA Form 28-0347, which includes a copy of the traditional Chapter 31 subsistence allowance rate table enclosed with this letter.

5. Who to contact for Chapter 31 subsistence allowance questions:

Please refer to M28R, Part V, Section B, Chapter 8, located on the Knowledge Management Portal (KMP), for additional procedural guidance on the authorization and processing of subsistence allowance payments.

Questions regarding subsistence allowance award processing may be directed to your district VR&E Field Liaison at the e-mail address listed below.

District	Primary	Alternate	E-mail
Northeast	Latrese Arnold	Veronica Brown	VAVBAWAS/CO/VRE/NE
Southeast	Veronica Brown	Latrese Arnold	VAVBAWAS/CO/VRE/SE
Continental	LeGuster Seawright	Lynn Horwatt	VAVBAWAS/CO/VRE/CONT
Pacific	Lynn Horwatt	LeGuster Seawright	VAVBAWAS/CO/VRE/PA

Sincerely,

/s/

William Streitberger
Executive Director, Vocational Rehabilitation
and Employment Service