

## **Increase Grants for Housing Adaptations**

The Department of Veterans Affairs' Home Improvements and Structural Alterations (HISA) grants help veterans and service members make medically necessary improvements and structural alterations to their primary residence.

As the name suggests, the HISA grant helps fund improvements and changes to an eligible veteran's home. Examples of qualifying improvements include improving the entrance or exit from their homes, restoring accessibility to the kitchen or essential lavatory and sanitary facilities (e.g. lowering counters/sinks), and making necessary repairs or upgrades to plumbing or electrical systems due to installation of home medical equipment. It does not pay for walkways to exterior buildings; spas, hot tubs, or Jacuzzis; exterior decking; or new construction.

A lifetime HISA benefit is worth up to \$6,800 for veterans with service-connected conditions and \$2,000 for veterans who have a non-service-connected condition.

HISA rates have not changed since Congress last adjusted them in 2009. Meanwhile, the cost of home modifications and labor has risen more than 40 percent during the same timeframe.

With veterans sheltering in place during and following the resolution of the pandemic, ensuring veterans can safely remain in their homes is more essential than ever. HISA rates must be raised to reflect current costs and better meet veteran's current needs.

### **PVA Position**

- Congress must raise HISA grant rates to at least \$10,000 for service-connected disabled veterans and \$5,000 for non-service-connected disabled veterans.
- Congress should also tie these grants to The Turner Building Cost Index or similar formula to help ensure rates remain current.