

Disability Evaluation System (DES) Pilot One Year Post Separation Survey Administered by VA

VA is conducting a survey of Veterans who were separated under the Disability Evaluation System, or DES, Pilot and have been discharged for a year or more. We would like to know how you feel about your experience in the DES Pilot. Your comments will help us identify the areas of the Pilot that worked well, and areas that can be improved. The feedback gathered from this survey will have a direct effect on the future of the DES program and the way we provide service to veterans.

VA would like to ask you some questions about your experience. This survey will take about 15 minutes of your time and your responses will help VA improve services to other Veterans who are undergoing Disability Separations. If this is a bad time for you, I will call back at a time you tell me is more convenient.

This survey is being conducted in accordance with the privacy act of 1974. Your responses will be kept private. Your participation, or non-participation, will not affect your VA benefits.

Would you like to participate?

A. Medical Evaluation Board (MEB) Phase

I am going to read a list of statements regarding your experiences during the Medical Evaluation Board (MEB) Phase of the DES Process. Please tell me how much you agree with each statement. You responses can include strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, or neither agree nor disagree. Or, if you don't know or can't remember, you can just say so.

1. The Disability Evaluation System (DES) Pilot medical exams associated with your VA disability were thorough.
2. The Medical Evaluation Board (MEB) process was fair.
3. The MEB case outcome was fair.
4. Your Physical Evaluation Board Liaison Officer (PEBLO) explained the overall DES Pilot in a way you could understand.
5. During the MEB phase, your PEBLO keep you well informed about the status of your case?

6. During the MEB phase, your PEBLO managed your case and assisted you in a satisfactory manner.
7. During the MEB phase, your VA Military Service Coordinator (MSC) manage your case and assist you in a satisfactory manner.
8. During the MEB phase of your case, your VA MSC explained the VA's role in the DES Pilot in a way you could understand.

The next two questions please answer with a yes or no. Again, if you don't know or can't remember, just say so.

9. Did you know legal counsel was available to you throughout the DES Pilot?
10. Did you use legal counsel to represent you at any point during the DES Pilot? (If no, skip question 11)
11. On a scale of 1-10, how satisfied were you with your legal counsel during the DES Pilot? (1 representing very dissatisfied; 10 representing very satisfied)
12. On a scale of 1-10, how satisfied were you with your overall experience with the MEB phase of determining your retention status in the military? (1 representing very dissatisfied; 10 representing very satisfied)

B. Physical Evaluation Board Phase

Now I am going to read a list of statements regarding your experience during the Physical Evaluation Board (PEB) Phase of the DES Process. Please tell me how much you agree with each statement. Your responses can include strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, or neither agree nor disagree. Or, if you don't know or can't remember, you can just say so.

13. You understood that the Physical Evaluation Board (PEB) fitness decision was based only on conditions that made you unfit to serve in your job and grade?
14. The PEB process was fair.
15. The PEB case outcome was fair.
16. The informal PEB rating was appropriate for your conditions.
17. If you went before a formal PEB, the formal PEB rating was appropriate for your conditions.

18. During the PEB phase, your PEBLO keep you well informed about the status of your case
19. During the PEB phase, your PEBLO managed your case and assisted you in a satisfactory manner.
20. Your VA MSC explained, in a way you could understand, how the VA rates disability conditions.
21. Your VA MSC explained, in a way you could understand, the VA rating reconsideration process.
22. On a scale of 1-10, how satisfied with your overall experience with the PEB phase of determining your retention status in the military? (1 representing very dissatisfied; 10 representing very satisfied)

C. Transition Phase

Now I am going to read a list of statements regarding your experiences in the Physical Transition Phase of the DES Process. Please tell me how much you agree with each statement. You responses can include strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, or neither agree nor disagree. Or, if you don't know or can't remember, you can just say so.

23. You felt better prepared to transition into the civilian job market after attending the Transition Assistance Program (TAP).
24. During the Transition phase of your case, your PEBLO explained what to expect during the Transition phase in a way you could understand?
25. During the Transition phase, your VA MSC explained VA's role in a way you could understand?
26. On a scale of 1-10, how satisfied were you with your VA MSC, during the transition phase? (1 representing very dissatisfied; 10 representing very satisfied)
27. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 represents slow and 10 represents fast, how would you evaluate the timeliness of the DES Pilot? (1 representing very slowly; 10 representing very fast)
28. On a scale of 1-10, how would you evaluate your overall experience in the DES Pilot? (1 representing very dissatisfied and 10 represents very satisfied)
29. Did you attend an interview with the VA MSC before you exited the Service?

- a. If yes, on a scale of 1-10, how well were your VA benefits explained to you prior to leaving the Service? (1 represents poorly and 10 represents very well)
- b. If no, why?

D. VA Post Separation Phase

30. On a scale of 1-10, how well do you understand the benefits VA provides? 1 represents very little understanding and 10 represents great understanding.
31. Are you enrolled in VA Healthcare?
32. Are you currently using VA education benefits?
 - a. If yes, what program are you enrolled in (Post 9/11 GI Bill, Montgomery GI Bill, or Other)?
 - b. If no, do you intend to in the next twelve months?
33. Have you used VA Loan Guaranty benefits since separation?
34. Have you used VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) benefits since separation from service?
35. Are you currently employed (either full or part time)?
 - a. If yes, do you have access to family health care coverage through your employer?
36. If married, do you have access to health care coverage through your spouse's employer?
37. Were you serving in the Reserve or National Guard when you were referred to the DES Pilot?
 - a. If yes, were you in an active duty status?
 - b. If yes, did you return to the same civilian job you had prior to mobilization or referral to the DES Pilot?
 - c. Were there barriers to your return?
38. Have you submitted an additional claim with VA since you separated from service?
 - a. If yes, for what reason (reopen, new or increase claim)

39. Have you filed a claim with the Board of Correction for Military Records (BCMR) regarding your DES outcome?
40. Have you filed a claim with the Physical Disability Board of Review (PDBR) regarding your DES outcome?
41. Have you filed an appeal with VA on any DES decisions after being discharged from service?
- a. If yes:
- (1) Is/was the appeal related to issues that were denied service connection
 - (2) Is/was the appeal related to initial evaluations assigned for your disabilities
 - (3) Is your appeal still pending?
 - (a) If yes, on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being very dissatisfied and 10 being very satisfied, how satisfied are you with the appeal process?
 - (b) If no, on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being very dissatisfied and 10 being very satisfied how satisfied were you with the resolution of your appeal?

Please provide any comments on other matters relating to the DES Pilot that were not offered in the questions.