



Setting This Up With Claude, on a Mac

You do not need to be good with computers to do this. There is no typing of commands anywhere in this guide. If you can install a program and drag a file, you can do this.

Time: about 20 minutes, once.

Cost: Claude Pro, about \$20 a month. There is no free version of this.

Would you rather not pay? Use the ChatGPT guide instead. It does the same job and it is free. Nothing in this system requires Claude.

Before you start, you need:

- A Mac. Not a phone or a tablet. There is a separate guide for Windows.
- An email address.
- A credit card, for the monthly plan.
- **The starter zip** from vetclaimssystem.org. If you have not downloaded it yet, this guide tells you when to.
- Your records, or at least some of them. You can start without them.

Part 1. Make your Claude account

- 1 Open your web browser and go to **claude.ai**
- 2 Click **Sign up** and follow what it asks. Use your email address.
- 3 Once you are signed in, look for your name or initials in a corner of the screen. Click it, then look for **Settings**, then **Plans** or **Upgrade**. Choose **Pro** and pay.

✓ **Where you should be now.** You now have a Claude account with Pro on it. You will use this same account in Part 2.

Part 2. Install the Claude app on your computer

This is a program that lives on your computer, like Word or Chrome. It is not the website.

- 4 Go to **claude.ai/download**
- 5 The page should offer you the right version automatically. Click the download button.
- 6 When the file finishes downloading, open it.

A window opens showing the Claude icon and a folder marked Applications. Drag the Claude icon onto the Applications folder.

- 7 Open the Claude app the same way you open any program.

Press **Command** and **Space** together, type `Claude`, and press Enter.

- 8 Sign in with the same email you used in Part 1.

✓ **Where you should be now.** The Claude app is open on your computer and you are signed in. It looks a lot like the website, because it is the same thing in a program.

Part 3. Get your claim folder

- 9 Go to **vetclaimsystem.org** and press **Download the zip**.
- 10 Open your **Downloads** folder and double-click the file called **VA Claim Starter.zip**. It turns into a folder called **VA Claim**.
- 11 Drag that **VA Claim** folder into your **Documents** folder, so it is somewhere you will find it again.
- 12 If you already have records saved on your Mac, put those in the **VA Claim** folder too. If you do not have any yet, that is fine.

✓ **Where you should be now.** There is a folder called **VA Claim** in your Documents. Inside it are two files: **START HERE** and **Build Your Own VA Claim System**.

Part 4. Point Claude at your folder

- 13 Go back to the Claude app.
- 14 Look for a way to add a folder or choose a project folder. Depending on your version this may be a + button, a paperclip, or a menu item that mentions folders or directories.
- 15 Choose your **VA Claim** folder in Documents.
- 16 Claude may ask permission to read that folder. Say yes. It can only see the folder you chose, nothing else on your computer.

✓ **Where you should be now.** Claude can now see your VA Claim folder.

Part 5. Start

- 17 Type this sentence and press Enter:

SAY THIS

Read the toolkit file in this folder and follow the instructions in it.

- 18 That is the whole setup. It will start asking you questions a few at a time. Answer them in your own words. There are no wrong answers.

You are done setting up. From here, follow what it tells you. Every reply ends with one next step. You never have to figure out what comes next.

Coming back later

This runs for months, not one afternoon. That is normal.

Open the Claude app and go back to the same VA Claim folder every time. Do not start somewhere new. It remembers where you left off and will tell you what is next.

You can walk away for a month and pick up exactly where you stopped.

If something goes wrong

It will not let me sign in.

Make sure you paid for Pro. The free Claude account will not run this, and the error message does not always say so.

It cannot see my files.

You are probably pointed at the wrong folder. Check that the folder you chose is the **VA Claim** folder, and that your files are actually inside it.

It only read part of a long document.

Tell it exactly this:

SAY THIS

Read the entire file from the beginning to the end before you reply.

It told me what a rating requires but did not show me the rule.

Tell it exactly this:

SAY THIS

Show me the actual text of that regulation. If it cannot show you the text, it did not read it. Do not act on what it said.

It seems to have forgotten everything.

You are in a new conversation instead of your folder. Go back to the VA Claim folder and start from there.

Something else, or nothing here helped.

Email help@vetclaimssystem.org. Do not send medical records, claim numbers, or personal information.

What this does and does not protect

Worth knowing, in plain terms.

Your records stay in your folder on your computer. You are not uploading them into a company's storage where they sit until you delete them.

But Claude itself runs on Anthropic's computers, not yours. When it reads one of your files, the contents of that file get sent to them to be read. Every time. Nothing is kept there afterwards, and there is no pile of your documents sitting in an account somewhere, but the reading does happen on their end.

That is a real improvement over uploading everything. It is not the same as nothing ever leaving your computer. Anyone who tells you different is not being straight with you.

Checked against Anthropic's own documentation on 22 August 2026. Software changes. If your screen does not match this guide, trust your screen.

Claude Code setup: <https://code.claude.com/docs/en/setup>

Download: <https://claude.ai/download>