

### ***What is RECA?***

RECA stands for “Radiation Exposure Compensation Act”. Congress originally enacted RECA in 1990 to establish a procedure to make partial restitution to certain individuals who lived in parts of Nevada, Utah, and Arizona that were downwind from atmospheric testing sites and for certain individuals who were employed in uranium mines in Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Wyoming, and Utah. Since then, Congress has periodically updated RECA to include additional classes of individuals from different states, update compensable disease lists, and create a program for individuals affected by Manhattan Project Waste.

### ***Who currently qualifies for RECA?***

RECA currently covers 4 main groups:

1. **Downwinders**, who are individuals who were present in one of the listed affected areas downwind from atmospheric nuclear testing;
2. **Onsite Participants**, who are military and civilian personnel who participated onsite in a test involving the atmospheric detonation of a nuclear device;
3. **Uranium Workers**, who are individuals employed in a uranium mine, mill, core drilling operation, the transportation of uranium or vanadium-uranium ore, or in the remediation of a uranium mine or mill
4. **Manhattan Project Waste Applicants**, who are individuals who were physically present in affected ZIP codes near current and former Manhattan Project facilities in certain areas of the country.

In order to qualify for compensation under RECA, individuals must meet strict physical presence or employment requirements, have contracted one or more of a list of specified cancers and diseases, and meet certain age requirements.

### ***What are the physical presence or employment requirements?***

See list. [HYPERLINK needed]

### ***What are “specified cancers and diseases”?***

Under current law, Congress must enumerate specific cancers and diseases for eligibility under the compensation program. As of July 1, 2025, the following cancers and diseases are specified under Federal law:

#### **For the Downwinder/Onsite Participant Program:**

- Leukemia (other than chronic lymphocytic leukemia), provided that initial exposure occurred after the age of 20 and the onset of the disease was at least 2 years after first exposure;
- The following diseases, provided onset was at least 5 years after first exposure:
  - Multiple myeloma;

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- Lymphomas (other than Hodgkin's disease);
- Thyroid cancer;
- Male and female breast cancer;
- Esophageal cancer;
- Stomach cancer;
- Pharyngeal cancer;
- Small intestine cancer;
- Pancreatic cancer;
- Cholangiocarcinoma (bile duct cancer);
- Gall bladder cancer;
- Salivary gland cancer;
- (Urinary) Bladder cancer;
- Brain cancer;
- Colon cancer;
- Ovarian cancer;
- Liver cancer (except if cirrhosis or hepatitis B is indicated);
- Lung Cancer.

### For the Uranium Workers Program

For Uranium Miners exposed to 40 or more working level months of radiation or who worked for at least 1 year between Jan. 1, 1942, and Dec. 31, 1990:

- Nonmalignant respiratory disease<sup>1</sup>;
- Renal cancer;
- Any other chronic renal disease, including nephritis and kidney tubal issue

For uranium millers, core drillers, ore transporters, or those involved in remediation efforts at such a uranium mine or mill who worked for at least 1 year between Jan. 1, 1942 and Dec. 31, 1990:

- Lung cancer<sup>2</sup>;
- Nonmalignant respiratory disease<sup>3</sup>;
- Renal Cancer;
- Any chronic renal disease, including nephritis and kidney tubal tissue injury

For individuals employed in a mine or mill (including transportation or ore from such a mine or mill) who don't meet one of the above descriptions or who worked during the period between Jan. 1, 1942, and Dec. 31, 1990; or in 2 or more of the following positions: miner, miller, core driller, ore transporter:

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<sup>1</sup> the term 'nonmalignant respiratory disease' means fibrosis of the lung, pulmonary fibrosis, cor pulmonale related to fibrosis of the lung, silicosis, and pneumoconiosis

<sup>2</sup> 'lung cancer' means any physiological condition of the lung, trachea, or bronchus that is recognized as lung cancer by the National Cancer Institute; and includes in situ lung cancers.

<sup>3</sup> See 1.

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- Lung cancer<sup>4</sup>
- Nonmalignant respiratory disease<sup>5</sup>;
- Renal cancer;
- Any chronic renal disease, including nephritis and kidney tubal tissue injury

### For the Manhattan Project Waste Program:

- Any leukemia, provided that the initial exposure occurred after 20 years of age and the onset of the disease was at least 2 years after first exposure.
- Any of the following diseases, provided that the onset was at least 2 years after the initial exposure:
  - Multiple myeloma.
  - Lymphoma, other than Hodgkin's disease.
  - Primary cancer of the-
    - thyroid;
    - male or female breast;
    - esophagus;
    - stomach;
    - pharynx;
    - small intestine;
    - pancreas;
    - bile ducts;
    - gall bladder;
    - salivary gland;
    - urinary bladder;
    - brain;
    - colon;
    - ovary;
    - bone;
    - renal;
    - liver, except if cirrhosis or hepatitis B is indicated; or
    - lung.

### ***Who administers RECA?***

RECA is administered by the Civil Division of the U.S. Department of Justice.

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<sup>4</sup> See 2.

<sup>5</sup> See 1.

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### ***How much am I eligible for if I qualify?***

The current program authorizes payments in different amounts for different groups. Generally, if an applicant is successful, the following amounts apply:

- Downwinders and Onsite Participants are entitled to \$100,000;
- Uranium Workers are entitled to \$100,000; and
- Manhattan Project Waste Applicants are entitled to the greater of \$50,000 or compensation in the amount of all documented out-of-pocket medical expenses incurred as a result of the specified disease suffered by the claimant.

### ***What is my spouse or parent qualified for RECA but is no longer alive?***

For Downwinder, Onsite Participant, and Uranium Worker claims:

You may file a claim under RECA for full compensation if you are a survivor of an individual eligible for compensation under section 4 (Downwinder and Onsite Participants) or section 5 (Uranium Workers). Survivors are defined as spouses, children (if there is no surviving spouse), parents (if there is no surviving spouse of children), and grandchildren (if there is no surviving spouse, child, or parent).

For Manhattan Project Waste claims:

You may apply for compensation under RECA on behalf of a deceased spouse or parent for the Manhattan Project Waste program. Spouses of affected individuals are only eligible for \$25,000; children of affected individuals are eligible for \$25,000, paid unequal shares to each surviving child.

### ***Are RECA payments taxable?***

Payments made under RECA are not subject to federal income tax, do not count as income for the purposes of determining eligibility for benefit programs like SNAP and Medicaid, and are excluded from income by the Social Security Administration.

### ***What is the deadline to apply?***

Pub. L. 119-21 authorizes the DOJ to accept and process claims filed before December 31, 2027. That same law authorizes the RECA Trust Fund until December 31, 2028.

***Why are you introducing the Radiation Exposure Compensation Reauthorization Act of 2026?***

Although Congress has updated RECA over the last 36 years, communities across the nation continue to be unfairly excluded from the program because Congress did not explicitly include them under the law.

***Who is being added to RECA under the bill?***

The Radiation Exposure Compensation Reauthorization Act of 2026 expands the program to:

- Include Guam, Colorado, Montana, and fully include the states of Nevada and Arizona under the downwinder program.
- Add 113 ZIP codes to the Manhattan Project Waste program
- Include Enewetak Atoll cleanup veterans and individuals who responded to the Palomares and Thule aircraft collisions
- Expand the list of compensable cancers and diseases
- Create a new pathway for groups to be compensated under RECA by establishing a petitioner cohort.

***How do I know if I live in an area that qualifies for one or more of the programs?***

See [map](#). This map shows all currently eligible areas and which programs they are eligible for. Additionally, it illustrates the proposed geographic expansion.

***What is the petitioner cohort?***

The Radiation Exposure Compensation Reauthorization Act of 2026 establishes a new authority for the President to include additional classes of individuals. This process is based on the “Special Exposure Cohort” process utilized under the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act (EEOICPA). Under the petition process, the Attorney General advises the President on new classes of individuals to include in the program. The Secretaries of Energy, Defense, and Health and Human Services are also required to provide information supporting the addition of new classes to the Attorney General.

***What diseases are being added to RECA?***

The *Radiation Exposure Compensation Reauthorization Act of 2026* proposes the following cancers and diseases for eligibility under the RECA program:

For the Downwinder/Onsite Participant/Cleanup/Response Effort Program under §4—

- Chronic lymphocytic leukemia;
- Renal disease;
- Thyroid disease;

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- Bone cancer;
- Renal cancer;
- Rectal cancer;
- Prostate cancer;
- Uterine cancer;
- Cervical cancer; and
- Skin Cancer.

### For the Manhattan Project Waste Program under §5A—

- Renal disease;
- Thyroid disease;
- Rectal cancer;
- Prostate cancer;
- Uterine cancer;
- Cervical cancer; and
- Skin Cancer.