

Readjustment Counseling

Vet centers are located around the state to help veterans deal with readjustment issues. Veterans who want counseling can call one of the federal veterans centers listed below. Visit www.va.gov for their addresses.

Albany:	518-626-5130
Babylon:	631-661-3930
Binghamton:	607-722-2393
Bronx:	718-367-3500
Brooklyn:	718-630-2830
Buffalo:	716-862-7350
Hicksville (Nassau):	516-348-0088
Middletown:	845-342-9917
New York (Harlem):	646-273-8139
New York (Manhattan):	212-951-6866
Rochester:	585-232-5040
Staten Island:	718-816-4499
Syracuse:	315-478-7127
Watertown:	315-782-5479
White Plains:	914-682-6250
Woodhaven (Queens):	718-296-2871

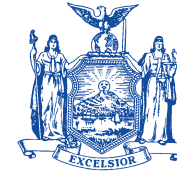
Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255
(press 1) or text 838255

Help for chemical dependency or problem gambling, call: 1-877-8-HOPENY (46-7369)

Homelessness: 1-877-424-3838



Benefits for veterans and their families



A Message to Veterans from Speaker of the Assembly Carl E. Heastie



The state Assembly has been a strong ally for the nearly 1 million veterans and their families living in New York State, ensuring they receive the resources and services they've so bravely earned.

Enclosed is information about the many programs and services available through the New York State Division of Veterans' Services and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Since benefits are not awarded automatically, veterans and their families must apply for them.

I am grateful for your selfless contributions to our country and pledge my continued dedication to meeting the needs of all veterans. If you have any questions or concerns about this or any other matter, please contact my district office.

Carl E. Heastie
Speaker of the Assembly

Albany Office:
Room 932
Legislative Office Bldg.
Albany, NY 12248
518-455-3791

District Office:
250 Broadway, Suite 2301
New York, NY 10007
212-312-1400

Email: speaker@nyassembly.gov

Information

Veterans' benefits are not awarded automatically.

Contact the state Division of Veterans' Services Helpline: 888-838-7697 or visit www.veterans.ny.gov or email DVAInfo@veterans.ny.gov

Education

Federal benefits. The federal government offers several programs for veterans and service members seeking assistance for education or vocational training. Visit the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs at www.va.gov or call 800-827-1000. You can also contact the NYS Division of Veterans' Services at 888-838-7697 for more information.

If you meet the requirements under the provisions of the GI Bill Fairness Act of 2011, you may be eligible for tuition and fees if attending private colleges and universities in seven states: Arizona, Michigan, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and Texas. For more information, visit www.benefits.va.gov/gibill.

State Veterans Tuition Awards. Eligible veterans are those

who served in Vietnam, Afghanistan or the Persian Gulf, have earned an Expeditionary Medal and have received a discharge under honorable conditions. Awards are set at the SUNY rate of tuition. These awards apply to full-time study and part-time study for eligible veterans. Vocational students should contact the Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC) about tuition eligibility. In many instances, to establish eligibility, applicants must apply to HESC and must also apply for the state Tuition Assistance Program, known as TAP, and to the federal Pell Grant Program with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Visit www.hesc.ny.gov or call 888-697-4372 for information.

Children of Veterans (Regents) Awards. Provides eligible children of deceased veterans, those missing in action or prisoners of war, or those service-connected disabled veterans with a disability rate of 40 percent or greater an annual, noncompetitive monetary award up to \$450 per year. The parent must be a New York State resident or must have been a New York State resident at time of death.

Military Service (MERIT) Recognition Scholarships. Available to certain dependents of members of the armed forces or state organized militia who, any time after Aug. 2, 1990, while in service performing their military duties including training, died, was severely and permanently disabled or was declared missing in action. The service member would be required to have been a New

York State resident at the time of the event.

Operation Recognition. Awards high school diplomas to veterans who served during World War II, the Korean War or the Vietnam War who left school before graduating. GED recipients are also eligible. For more information, call 518-474-8940.

Career advancement

Under the Veterans Bill of Rights for Employment Services, veterans are entitled to priority service at all NYS Department of Labor offices in job referrals, employment counseling, testing and other services. Visit www.labor.ny.gov/vets/vetintropage.shtml for more information.

Review of discharge. DVS Veterans benefits advisors can prepare and file discharge upgrade applications free of charge to the Discharge Review Board or the Board for Corrections of Military Records for each branch of the military. Also, New York State has the first in the nation Discharge Advisory Board to provide non-binding advisory opinion to veterans with upgrade appeals. Contact DVS at 888-838-7697 for further information.*

Civil service

Federal benefits. On competitive exams only, there is a 10-point preference for eligible disabled veterans and a 5-point preference for wartime honorably discharged veterans. Some requirements may be waived and special priority

given in particular job categories. Unremarried surviving spouses, certain spouses and mothers of disabled veterans may also be eligible for preference. Visit www.military.com.

State and local benefits. Civil service examination fees are waived for honorably discharged veterans. Credit preferences and retention rights are available for disabled and nondisabled veterans for competitive positions. Some competitive positions are filled by appointment for qualified wartime veterans with disabilities. For an application and program information, visit www.cs.ny.gov/rp55. You can also call 518-233-3118 or 866-297-4356.

Automobile

Federal benefits. Severely disabled veterans may qualify for a one-time payment of up to \$21,488.29 toward the purchase of an automobile or other conveyance. Automobile adaptive equipment grants are also available. Visit www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/claims-special-auto-allowance.asp for more information.

State benefits. Eligible New Yorkers may have their status as a veteran designated on their New York State driver's license. Those who qualify can have the word "Veteran" printed on the upper

left corner of their newly issued license, learner permit or nondriver photo ID card at no additional charge.

This identification shows proof of service, making it easier to access veteran programs, benefits and discounts. Apply by mail or in person at a NYS motor vehicle office. You must provide verification that you received an honorable discharge from military service or were released from military service under honorable conditions.

Auto registration and license plates are free for certain, qualifying veterans who receive VA adaptive vehicle grants. For auto registration, visit www.veterans.ny.gov/content/new-york-state-motor-vehicle-registration-fee-exemption.

Home loan guarantee

Certain veterans and spouses may be eligible for loans from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to buy homes. The guarantee often reduces or eliminates the need for a down payment. See www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans for information. New York State provides low-interest mortgages through the State of New York Mortgage Agency known as

SONYMA. Visit www.nyshcr.org or call 800-382-4663.

Tax exemptions

Property. Municipalities have the option to grant an exemption. This provides a property tax exemption of 15 percent of assessed value for veterans who served during wartime, and an additional 10 percent exemption for those who served in a combat zone. Disabled veterans are provided with an additional exemption equal to one-half of their service-connected disability rating multiplied by the assessed value of the property. School districts may offer up to 15 percent reduction in assessed value if a local resolution was passed. Check with your assessor to determine the maximum exemption limits in your community. Veterans who have received the Armed Forces, Navy, Marine Corps or Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal are eligible, and, under certain conditions, members of the reserves are also eligible.

Municipalities that offer this exemption can increase the limits imposed under the Real Property Tax Law. In 1997, municipalities were given the option to allow veterans residing in cooperative apartments to apply for the exemption.

The eligible funds tax exemption is another benefit and provides a partial exemption where property owned by a veteran (or certain other persons designated in the law) has been purchased with funds, such as a pension,

bonus or insurance monies, referred to as “eligible funds.”

There is a third exemption, known as the Cold War veterans exemption, available for residential property of veterans who served during the period covering Sept. 2, 1945, to Dec. 26, 1991, and who do not receive eligible funds or alternative veterans’ exemptions.

Surviving spouses who have not remarried may also be eligible for all three exemptions. These exemptions are not automatic and are not provided by all municipalities. Veterans should contact their local assessor’s office for information and an application. Visit www.tax.ny.gov/pit/property/exemption/vetexempt.htm or call 888-838-7697 for additional details.

Income. Military pay received for active service as a member of the United States Armed Services in an area designated as a combat zone is exempt from New York State, New York City and Yonkers income taxes. To learn more about these exemptions and to access the forms, visit www.tax.ny.gov/pit/file/military_page.htm.

Blindness

Federal benefits. Blindness need not be service-connected. Guide dogs and electronic and mechanical aids may be available. Visit www.ebenefits.va.gov.

State benefits. An annuity is available to blind wartime veterans and qualified unremarried, surviving spouses plus

a percentage increase, if any, for compensation and pension benefits administered by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in the previous year. The NYS Division of Veterans’ Services publishes by Feb. 1 of each year the amount of the annuity, as adjusted. Visit www.veterans.ny.gov/content/new-york-state-blind-annuity-program to download a form.

Disability benefits

Compensation. Veterans may apply for compensation for a service-connected disability at any time. The disability rating is based on the severity of the condition and the reduction in earning power. Visit www.benefits.va.gov/compensation for more information.

Non-service connected disability pension. A monthly pension, based on a financial means test, may be available for eligible wartime veterans with disabilities who are no longer able to work. Veterans must be permanently and totally disabled or have reached the age of 65. Visit www.benefits.va.gov/pension for more information.

Licenses and permits. Veterans with a 40 percent or greater disability rating are eligible for low-cost hunting and fishing licenses and free use of state parks, historic

sites and recreational sites, with a park pass. Visit store.usgs.gov/faq#US-Military or call 866-472-4332 to get yours.

Hearing aids. This is a federal benefit. A veteran first has to register at a local VA Medical Center. If eligible, the hearing aid, repairs and future batteries would be provided at no charge. Visit www.prosthetics.va.gov/psas/hearing_aids.asp for more details.

Clothing allowance. Clothing allowance is money to help you replace clothes damaged by a medicine or prosthetic or orthopedic device related to your service-connected disability. A benefit of \$830.56 can be paid once or once each year.

Home accessibility grants

Federal benefits. Veterans who are totally and permanently disabled may be eligible for grants to adapt their home to meet their wheelchair needs. There are two grant programs at www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/adaptedhousing.asp.

State benefits. Seriously disabled veterans who have received federal funds for houses with special fixtures can be exempt from property taxes. The same exemption applies to the veteran's surviving spouse, not remarried,

who may transfer the exemption to any new residence. Visit www.veterans.ny.gov/content/property-tax-exemptions-veterans.

The New York Access to Home for Heroes Program allows experienced municipalities and not-for-profit corporations to apply for a grant to adapt homes for disabled veterans.

Nursing home care

New York State has five veterans' homes in operation for eligible veterans and their dependents. Four are operated by the NYS Department of Health:

A 242-bed home in Oxford, Chenango County; a 250-bed facility in St. Albans, Queens; a 126-bed home in Batavia, Genesee County; and a 252-bed facility in Montrose, Westchester County.

The fifth veterans' facility – the Long Island State Veterans Home – is a 350-bed facility on the campus of the State University at Stony Brook. It's the first in the country to be integrated into the teaching, research, health care and regional development mission of a major university.

Health-related care and nursing services are available at all facilities. Admission preference is based on severity of illness or disability.

Aid & Attendance and Housebound benefit

Veterans and survivors who are eligible for a VA pension and require the aid and attendance of another person, or are housebound, may be eligible for additional monetary payment. If you're eligible, these benefits are paid in addition to a monthly pension. Go to www.benefits.va.gov/pension/aid_attendance_housebound.asp for more information.

Burial

Federal benefits. Financial assistance for burial and plot expenses is available for certain eligible veterans. Claims must be filed within two years after permanent interment. Burial in national cemeteries is available to veterans and certain family members. An American flag to drape the casket and be given to the next of kin is available. Call Veterans Affairs at 800-827-1000.

State benefits. Burial expenses and the cost of headstones for indigent state veterans and certain family members are authorized by the county of the veteran's residence. Call 888-838-7697.

Supplemental burial allowance. A supplemental burial allowance of up to \$6,000 is authorized for certain military personnel killed in combat or while on active duty in hostile or imminent danger zones on or after Sept. 29, 2003. Call 888-838-7697 for more details.

Survivors' benefits (federal)

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC). DIC payments may be available to eligible spouses and certain dependents of veterans who died of service-related injuries or disease. Monthly awards are based on the veteran's military rank. Certain remarried surviving spouses may also be eligible. For information, visit www.va.gov/survivors.

Surviving spouse pension. Certain surviving spouses and single children of deceased wartime veterans may be eligible for a non-service related pension based on need. Minor children may be eligible even if the surviving spouse remarries.

Insurance

Designated beneficiaries of deceased persons covered by all forms of government insurance may submit their claims to the nearest counseling center of the state's Division of Veterans' Services. Visit www.benefits.va.gov/insurance/sgli.asp to convert a Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) policy after discharge.