Readjustment Counseling

Vet centers are located around the state to help veterans with readjustment. Women veterans trying to cope with problems such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or Military Sexual Trauma (MST) are encouraged to 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: 585-393-7608
- Staten Island: 718-816-4499
- Syracuse: 315-478-7127
- Watertown: 315-782-5479
- White Plains: 914-682-6250
- Woodhaven (Queens): 718-296-2871

For more support

Women Veterans Call Center: 1-855-VA-WOMEN (829-6636)
Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255 (press 1) or text 838255
Help for chemical dependency or problem gambling: 1-877-8-HOPENY (1-877-846-7369)

Updated 8/22

Benefits for women veterans and their families

Are you a woman who served in the U.S. Armed Forces? If so, you may be eligible for state and federal veterans benefits – hard-earned benefits available from a grateful nation and state.

Benefits are not awarded automatically; veterans and their families must apply to receive them. I have prepared this brochure to outline some of the many programs and services available to all eligible veterans through the New York State Division of Veterans’ Services and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, as well as some resources available specifically for women veterans.

Thank you for your service. Please contact my office if I can assist you in this or any other matter.

Carl E. Heastie
Speaker of the Assembly

A message to veterans from Speaker of the Assembly Carl E. Heastie

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

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

Email: speaker@nyassembly.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 va.gov or call 800-827-1000. You can also contact the NYS Division of Veterans’ Services at 888-VETNSNY (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 certain states. For more information, visit benefits.va.gov/gibill.

**State benefits** - New York State offers several programs to assist with education or vocational training.

- **State Veterans Tuition Awards (VTA):** Awarded to eligible veterans who served in Vietnam, Afghanistan, the Persian Gulf or other qualified combat that earned an Expeditionary Medal. Recipients must be matriculated full or part-time at an approved program at an undergraduate or graduate degree-granting institution or in an approved vocational training program in New York State and must have been a state resident for at least 12 continuous months before the start of the school term. Contact the Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC) for more information about eligibility, award amounts and the application process at 888-697-4372 or visit hesc.ny.gov/pay-for-college/military-corner.html.

- **NYS Regents Awards for Children of Deceased and Disabled Veterans (CDDV):** For students whose parent(s) served during specified periods of war or national emergency and, as a result of service, died, suffered a 40% or more disability, was classified as missing in action or was a prisoner of war. This is a noncompetitive annual award of $450. The parent must be a New York State resident or must have been a New York State resident at time of death. The applicant must be pursuing an approved undergraduate degree at a college or university located in New York State. Must apply before June 30 of the academic year for which you are requesting payment. Contact HESC for more information at 888-697-4372 or visit hesc.ny.gov/pay-for-college/military-corner.html.

- **Military Enhanced Recognition Incentive and Tribute (MERIT) Scholarships:** Available to children, spouses and financial dependents of members of the United States Armed Forces or state organized militia who at any time, while New York State residents, died or became severely and permanently disabled while performing their military duties, whether in combat or not. Members who were severely and permanently disabled as described above are also eligible. MERIT provides funds to help meet the cost of attending college, including both tuition and non-tuition components, for up to four years of full-time undergraduate study (or five years in an approved five-year bachelor’s degree program). For more information about eligibility, award amounts and the application process please contact the HESC at 888-697-4372 or visit hesc.ny.gov/pay-for-college/military-corner.html.

- **Operation Recognition:** Eligible veterans who left high school before graduating or have a GED will be awarded a high school diploma. There is no fee for this service. Recipients must be a New York State resident, have engaged in active duty service for at least one day and have received a satisfactory discharge. Deceased veterans may also receive a diploma. The child or spouse of a deceased veteran who met the criteria may apply and accept a posthumous diploma on the veteran’s behalf. For more information, visit acces.nysed.gov/aepp/high-school-diploma-veterans, call the NYS Education Department at 518-474-8940 or email adulted@nysed.gov.

**Career advancement**

The NYS Veterans Bill of Rights for Employment Services entitles veterans and their eligible spouses to priority services in all New York State employment and training programs for which they are eligible and qualified. For more information, visit the NYS Department of Labor Veterans’ Program at dol.ny.gov/services-veterans.

NYS Division of Veterans’ Services (DVS) benefits advisors can prepare and file discharge upgrade applications to the Discharge Review Board or the Board for Corrections of Military Records for each branch of the military, free of charge. New York State also has a Discharge Advisory Board to provide free, non-binding advisory opinion to veterans with discharge upgrade appeals. Contact DVS at veterans.ny.gov or 888-838-7697 to learn more.

**Civil service**

**Federal benefits** - Veterans seeking a federal civil service job who meet certain eligibility requirements may benefit from Preference Points, which add up to a 10-point advantage to your passing competitive examination score or rating. Some requirements may also be waived and special priority given in particular job categories. A parent or spouse (including unremarried surviving spouse) may be eligible to claim veterans’ preference when the veteran is unable to use it. For more information, visit veterans.va.gov/benefits/veteran-benefits.

**State benefits** - Eligible New Yorkers may have their status as a veteran designated by 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. It easier to access veteran programs, benefits and discounts. Apply by mail or in person at a State and local benefits requirements may benefit from Preference Points, which add up to a 10-point advantage to your passing competitive examination score or rating. Some requirements may also be waived and special priority given in particular job categories. A parent or spouse (including unremarried surviving spouse) may be eligible to claim veterans’ preference when the veteran is unable to use it. For more information, visit veterans.ny.gov or call 888-697-4372.

**Homeownership**

**Federal benefits** - Certain veterans and spouses may be eligible for a home loan guaranty benefit from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to help you buy a home. The VA home loan

**Automobile**

**Federal benefits** - Severely disabled veterans may qualify for a one-time payment of up to $21,488.29 toward the purchase of a specially equipped vehicle. Automobile adaptive equipment grants are also available. Visit va.gov/disability/eligibility/special-claims/automobile-allowance-adaptive-equipment for more information.

**State benefits** - Eligible New Yorkers may have their status as a veteran designated by 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. It easier to access veteran programs, benefits and discounts. Apply by mail or in person at a State and local benefits requirements may benefit from Preference Points, which add up to a 10-point advantage to your passing competitive examination score or rating. Some requirements may also be waived and special priority given in particular job categories. A parent or spouse (including unremarried surviving spouse) may be eligible to claim veterans’ preference when the veteran is unable to use it. For more information, visit veterans.ny.gov or call 888-697-4372.
guaranty benefit can help a private lender provide you with more favorable terms, such as a reduced or eliminated down payment, a competitive interest rate or limited closing costs. Visit benefits.va.gov/homeloans for more information.

**State benefits**
- Low-interest mortgage loans are available to qualified first-time homebuyers through the State of New York Mortgage Agency (SONYMA). Visit hcr.ny.gov/sonyma or call 800-382-4663 to learn more.

**Tax exemptions**

**Property tax**
- Eligible veterans or their unremarried surviving spouses may be able to receive one of three different property tax exemptions. These exemptions are not automatic and are not provided by all municipalities. Contact your local assessor’s or clerk’s office to see whether these exemptions are offered in your area, the requirements for eligibility and how to submit an application to receive the benefit. You can also visit tax.ny.gov/pit/property/exemption/vetexempt.htm for additional details.

**Income tax**
- 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 taxes. To learn more, visit tax.ny.gov/property/exemption/vetexempt.htm

**Health Care**

Honorable discharged veterans may be eligible for free or low-cost care through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, whether or not they served during times of war.

Women may be entitled to VA benefits if they are veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps or Coast Guard), served in the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC), Women’s Air Force Service Pilots (WASP) during World War II or in the Women’s Reserve of the U.S. Navy (WAVES). Contact the NYS Division of Veterans’ Services at 888-VETSNYS (888-838-7697) for more information.

If you were involuntarily discharged from the military for pregnancy before 1974 and have questions about your eligibility for services, contact your nearest VA health care facility.

**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center Services**
- Each VA medical center has a designated Women Veterans Program Manager to assist women veterans. She can help coordinate all the services you may need, from primary care medical services to mental health and sexual abuse counseling. There are also gender-specific health care services, such as hormone replacement therapy, breast and gynecological care, maternity and limited infertility care (excluding in-vitro fertilization).

Treatment for Military Sexual Trauma (MST) experienced on active duty is also available. Every VA facility has a designated MST Coordinator who serves as a contact person and advocate for these issues.

Learn more by visiting womenshealth.va.gov or call or text the Women Veterans Call Center (WVCC) at 855-829-6636.

VA Medical Centers are located in: Albany, Batavia, Bath, Bronx, Brooklyn, Buffalo, Canandaigua, Montrose, Manhattan, Northport, Syracuse and Wappingers Falls.

**Blindness**

Federal benefits
- A veteran who is legally blind or has low vision may be able to get vision-enhancing devices and technologies through VA’s blind and low vision rehabilitation services. Blindness does not need to be service-connected. Visit va.gov/heath-care/about-va-health-benefits/vision-care/blind-low-vision-rehab-services or call 800-698-2411.

VA does not provide guide or service dogs but does offer a service dog veterinary health insurance benefit (VHIB) and other benefits in support of service dogs to eligible veterans. Visit prosthetics.va.gov/serviceandguidedogs.asp for more information.

**State benefits**
- An annuity is available to legally blind wartime veterans or surviving unremarried spouses of legally blind wartime veterans who are New York State residents. Blindness need not be a service-connected disability. Visit veterans.ny.gov/content/new-york-state-blind-annuity-program to download a form.

**Disability benefits**

**Federal benefits**
- Veterans with a physical or mental health disability that occurred while serving in the military or whose service made an existing condition worse may apply for VA disability compensation. Visit va.gov/disability for more information.

To receive hearing aids through VA, first register at a local VA Medical Center for an evaluation of your hearing. If you are determined to be eligible, the hearing aid(s), repairs and future batteries will be provided at no charge as long as you maintain VA eligibility for care. Visit prosthetics.va.gov/psas/hearing_aid_program.aspx for more details.

A clothing allowance is available as a special claim under the VA disability compensation benefit and provides money to help replace clothes damaged by a prosthetic or orthopedic device or medicine taken related to a service-connected disability. Visit va.gov/disability/eligibility/special-claims/clothing-allowance for more information.

Veterans with a documented disability are eligible for a National Parks & Federal Recreational Lands Lifetime Access Pass that...
provides free admittance to more than 2,000 recreation sites managed by five Federal agencies. A $10 processing fee will apply. Visit store.usgs.gov/access-pass for more information on eligibility or to apply.

State benefits ➤ NYS Parks and Recreation offers a Lifetime Liberty Pass available to qualified New York State veterans with disabilities for free and discounted access to and use of state parks, historic sites and state-operated campground and recreational facilities. Visit parks.ny.gov/admission/lifetime-liberty-pass.aspx or call 518-474-2324 for more information.

Home accessibility grants

Federal benefits ➤ VA offers housing grants for veterans with a qualifying service-connected disability to help purchase a home or adapt their current home to meet accessibility needs. For more information, visit va.gov/housing-assistance/disability-housing-grants.

State benefits ➤ The Access to Home for Heroes/Veterans Program allows experienced municipalities and not-for-profit corporations to apply for a grant to adapt homes for eligible disabled veterans. Learn more at hcr.ny.gov/access-home-heroesveterans.

Nursing home care

There are five NYS Veterans’ Homes located in Oxford, Montrose, St. Albans, Long Island and Batavia. These are skilled nursing facilities owned and operated by the NYS Department of Health (DOH) and State University of New York (SUNY) that offer free or lower-cost skilled nursing care and rehabilitative services for eligible veterans and their dependents, subject to bed availability. Admission preference is based on severity of illness or disability. Learn more at veterans.ny.gov/content/new-york-state-veterans’-nursing-homes.

Aid and Attendance and Housebound benefits

Wartime veterans and their 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 qualify, these benefits are paid in addition to your monthly pension. Go to benefits.va.gov/pension for more information.

Burial benefits

Federal benefits ➤ VA offers an allowance to certain individuals who pay for an eligible veteran’s burial and funeral costs that won’t be reimbursed by any other organization. There is no time limit to file for a service-connected burial, plot, or interment allowance. Non-service-connected burial claims must be filed within two years after burial or cremation. Review the eligibility requirements and allowance amounts at va.gov/burials-memorials/veterans-burial-allowance.

Burial in national cemeteries is available to eligible veterans and certain family members. You or your chosen funeral director may call the National Cemetery Scheduling Office at 800-535-1117 to request a burial. Next of kin or a close friend may be eligible to receive a United States flag to drape the casket or coffin or be placed with an urn to honor the service of a military veteran. Visit va.gov/burials-memorials/memorial-items/burial-flags to learn more about burial flags and download an application form.

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-VETS-NYS (888-838-7697) for more information.

Surviving family members of eligible servicemembers who died in combat, while receiving hazardous duty pay or from wounds which were sustained in a combat zone or while receiving hazardous duty pay may be eligible for a supplemental burial allowance of up to $6,000 to defray funeral and interment costs not covered by the federal government. Call 888-VETS-NYS (888-838-7697) to learn more.

Survivors’ benefits

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (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. 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.

For more information on these and other survivors’ benefits, visit the VA Office of Survivors Assistance online at va.gov/survivors.

Insurance

To learn how to convert a Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance (SGLI) policy to a Veterans’ Group Life Insurance (VGLI) policy or a civilian policy after you leave the military, go to va.gov/life-insurance/options-eligibility/sgli.

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. For help with your claim, contact the Office of Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance (OSGLI) at 800-419-1473.

Veterans’ benefits are not awarded automatically. To learn more about the benefits and services you may be eligible for as a veteran, servicemember, or as a family member of a veteran or servicemember, please call the NYS Division of Veterans’ Services Help Line at 888-VETS-NYS (888-838-7697), or visit veterans.ny.gov. You can also download the NYS Veterans Official NY App, available for iOS and Android devices.