

California
**VETERANS
RESOURCE
BOOK**



EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
GOVERNOR
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

VITO IMBASCIANI, MD
SECRETARY
CALVET



California

VETERANS RESOURCE BOOK



QUICK REFERENCE

**California Department of
Veterans Affairs (CalVet)**

(800) 952-5626 (Toll free)
www.calvet.ca.gov

**United States Department of
Veterans Affairs (USDVA)**

(800) 827-1000 (Toll free)
www.va.gov

**Veterans Suicide
Prevention Hotline**

(800) 273-8255 (Toll free)
Veterans press 1



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

January 2016

California Veterans

Nearly two million Veterans call our Golden State home. On behalf of the state of California, I express my sincere appreciation to all of those who have served in the Armed Forces. Your sacrifices and contributions have protected our nation's most precious asset: freedom. We owe you our deepest gratitude and unwavering support.

Many benefits and services available to you have expanded and improved over the past decade. The California Veterans Resource Book provides a comprehensive guide for accessing your earned benefits.

I encourage veterans and veteran families of every era to use this resource and to take full advantage of the benefits and services you so richly deserve.

Sincerely,


EDMUND G. BROWN JR.



STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
1227 O STREET, SUITE 300 | SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95814

THE SECRETARY

Dear California Veterans and Families,

I am pleased to present the 6th edition of CalVet's California Veterans Resource Book. This book assists you with accessing the wide variety of services and benefits available to Veterans and family members. I encourage you to take advantage of these services: if you served, you earned.

Each year, California Veteran benefits are expanded and improved. For example, this year California began offering a "Veteran" designation for state driver licenses and identification cards to make it easier to access the benefits and discounts offered to you.

This Resource Book includes detailed information about getting a driver license Veteran designation on page 21, along with much more. It's available both in hard copy and online at www.calvet.ca.gov. Please use it – and share it – to learn more about Veterans benefits available from local, state, and federal governments and how you may access them.

I want to thank our partners: the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, County Veterans Service Offices, and Veterans Service Organizations as well as many agencies, organizations, and nonprofits supporting our state's nearly two million Veterans.

Every day is Veterans Day at CalVet. Your efforts built a solid foundation for men and women serving in our military today. Welcome home, and thank you for your service to our nation and state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vito Imbasciani MD".

Vito Imbasciani, MD
Secretary

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VETERANS BENEFITS TIMETABLE

BENEFITS AND SERVICES	TIME LIMIT	HOW TO APPLY
<p>DISABILITY COMPENSATION</p> <p>USDVA pays monthly compensation to Veterans for disabilities incurred or aggravated during military service. This benefit is not subject to federal or state income tax. Entitlement is established from the date of separation if the claim is filed within one year from separation. Generally, military retirement pay is reduced by any USDVA compensation received. Income from Special Separation Benefits and Voluntary Separation Incentives affects the amount of USDVA compensation paid.</p>	None.	Visit any USDVA office, call (800) 827-1000 or file at www.va.gov . You may also apply at your local County Veterans Service Office.
<p>DISABILITY PENSION</p> <p>This income-based benefit is paid to Veterans with honorable war-time service who are permanently and totally disabled due to nonservice-connected disabilities or who are 65 or older.</p>	None.	
<p>MEDICAL</p> <p>USDVA provides a wide range of healthcare services to Veterans including treatment for military sexual trauma, and for conditions possibly related to exposure to Agent Orange, ionizing radiation, and other environmental hazards in the Persian Gulf. Generally, Veterans must be enrolled in USDVA's Healthcare System to receive care.</p>	None.	Visit any USDVA medical facility, call (877) 222-8387 or file at www.va.gov . You may also apply at your local County Veterans Service Office.
<p>COMBAT VETERANS</p> <p>USDVA provides free healthcare for Veterans who served in a theater of combat operations after November 11, 1998, for any illness possibly related to their service in that theater.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » If discharged from active duty on or after January 28, 2003 » If discharged from active duty before January 29, 2003, and not enrolled as of January 28, 2008 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five years from date of discharge from active duty. • Until January 27, 2011. 	
<p>DENTAL</p> <p>Veterans may receive one-time dental treatment if they were not provided treatment within 90 days before separation from active duty. The time limit does not apply to Veterans with dental conditions resulting from service-connected wounds or injuries.</p>	180 days from separation.	

BENEFITS AND SERVICES

TIME LIMIT

HOW TO APPLY

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Up to 36 months of benefits.

- » Montgomery GI Bill® - Active Duty (Chapter 30) **or**
- » Post-9/11 GI Bill® (Chapter 33) **or**
- » Montgomery GI Bill® - Selected Reserve (Chapter 1606) **or**
- » Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP/ Chapter 1607)

- 10 years from release from last period of active duty. Limited extension available.
- 15 years from last discharge or separation. Limited extensions available.
- 10 years from the date of eligibility for the program, or until released from the Selected Reserve or National Guard, whichever occurs first. Some extensions available if activated.
- No time limit as long as individual remains in the same level of the Ready Reserve from which called to active duty. There are exceptions for discharge due to disability or transfer from the Inactive Ready Reserve to the Selected Reserve. REAP participants who separated from the Selected Reserve after completing their service contract under other than dishonorable conditions are now eligible for REAP benefits for 10 years after they separated from the Selected Reserve.

Visit any USDVA office, call (888) 442-4551 or file at www.gibill.va.gov. You may also apply at your local County Veterans Service Office.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT

USDVA helps Veterans with service-connected disabilities prepare for, find, and keep suitable employment. For Veterans with serious service-connected disabilities, USDVA also offers services to improve their ability to live as independently as possible. Some of the services offered are: job search, vocational evaluation, career exploration, vocational training, education training, and rehabilitation service.

Generally, 12 years from USDVA notice to veteran of at least a 10 percent disability rating.

Visit any USDVA office, call (800) 827-1000 or file at www.va.gov. You may also apply at your local County Veterans Service Office.

BENEFITS AND SERVICES

TIME LIMIT

HOW TO APPLY

HOME LOAN

Veterans with qualifying service are eligible for USDVA home loan services, including guaranteed loans for the purchase of a home, manufactured home, manufactured home and lot, certain types of condominiums, or to build, repair, and improve homes. Certain disabled Veterans can receive grants to have their homes specially adapted to their needs. Native Americans living on Trust Land may qualify for a direct home loan.

None.

Visit any USDVA office or call (800) 827-1000.

LIFE INSURANCE

www.benefits.va.gov/insurance

- » Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) is low-cost life insurance for servicemembers and reservists. It is available in \$50,000 increments up to a maximum of \$400,000. SGLI coverage begins when the service member enters service or changes duty status.
 - » Traumatic Injury Protection under Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (TSGLI) is a traumatic injury protection rider under Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) that provides for payment to any member of the uniformed services covered by SGLI who sustains a traumatic injury that results in certain severe losses. TSGLI is retroactive for members who sustain a qualifying loss as a direct result of injuries incurred on or after October 7, 2001, through November 30, 2005, in Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom, regardless of whether they had SGLI coverage. TSGLI pays a benefit of between \$25,000 and \$100,000 depending on the loss directly resulting from the traumatic injury. In order for a Veteran to qualify for a TSGLI payment, they must have incurred a qualifying loss as a result of a traumatic event that occurred while they were in the service.
 - » Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI) is lifetime renewable term life insurance for Veterans. It is available in increments of \$10,000 up to \$400,000 but cannot exceed the amount of SGLI coverage in force at the time of the service member's separation from service. Premiums are age-based.
- Coverage continues for 120 days from date of separation or up to one year if totally disabled at the time of separation from service.
 - Coverage continues through midnight of the date of discharge, but member/Veteran generally has up to two years from the date of the loss to apply for payment.
 - Must apply within 120 days of separation or 1 year and 120 days if proof of good health is provided. Those on the 2-year disability extension are automatically converted to VGLI at the end of the 2-year period.

Visit any USDVA Insurance Center or call (800) 419-1473.

BENEFITS AND SERVICES	TIME LIMIT	HOW TO APPLY
<p>LIFE INSURANCE (CONT'D) www.benefits.va.gov/insurance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Family Group Life Insurance (FGLI) is life insurance that provides automatic coverage to the spouse and children of servicemembers insured under SGLI. Spousal coverage is available up to a maximum of \$100,000, but may not exceed the service member's coverage amount. Premiums for spousal coverage are age-based. Dependent children are automatically covered for \$10,000 for which there is no cost. » Service-Disabled Veterans' Insurance (SDVI), also called "RH" insurance, is life insurance for service-disabled Veterans. The basic coverage is \$10,000. A \$20,000 supplemental policy is available if premium payments for the basic policy are waived due to total disability. » Veterans' Mortgage Life Insurance (VMLI) is mortgage protection insurance issued to those severely disabled Veterans who have received grants for Specially Adapted Housing from USDVA. Maximum coverage of \$90,000. 	<p>Coverage terminates 120 days after service member is released from service. Spouse may convert to a commercial policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For basic, must apply within two years from date of notification of service-connected disability. For supplemental, must apply within one year of approval of waiver of premiums. • Must apply before age 70. 	<p>Visit any USDVA Insurance Center or call (800) 419-1473.</p> <p>Any USDVA Insurance Center or call (800) 669-8477.</p>
<p>REEMPLOYMENT The Department of Labor's website www.dol.gov contains information on employment and reemployment rights of members of the uniformed services. State Job Banks: www.careeronestop.org.</p>	<p>For military service over 180 days, must apply for reemployment with employer within 90 days from separation. Shorter periods to apply if service is less than 180 days.</p>	<p>Contact your former employer.</p>
<p>UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION The unemployment compensation for ex-service members program is administered by the States as agents of the Federal government. The Department of Labor's website www.dol.gov contains links for each State's benefits.</p>	<p>Limited time.</p>	<p>Any State of California Employment Office (bring your DD Form 214).</p>

CHAPTER
01



**CALIFORNIA
STATE
BENEFITS**



REGIONAL OUTREACH: CONNECTING VETERANS TO THEIR BENEFITS

CalVet works closely with local communities in a joint effort to serve our state's Veterans. To ensure Veterans receive the assistance, benefits, and services they need and earned, CalVet divided California into eight regions and staffed each region with a Local Interagency Network Coordinator (LINC). Our LINC's play a dynamic role within local communities, serving as both informational conduits to the community and feedback resources for CalVet.

LINC's bridge the gap between CalVet and the federal, state, county, and non-government agencies that provide services to our state's nearly two million Veterans. Our LINC's are advocates for our Veterans, military service members, and their families in their regions. In addition, they supplement and support the County Veterans Services Offices (CVSO) and regional partners in the development of improved and expanded services and support for their local Veteran populations and assist Veterans with employment and educational opportunities.

CalVet's eight LINC regions are:

- » **Sacramento Valley and North State:** Sacramento Valley includes; Yolo, Sutter, Yuba, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, El Dorado, Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, Alpine, Siskiyou, Modoc, Trinity, Shasta, Lassen, Tehama, Plumas, Sierra, and Butte Counties
- » **Bay Area:** Sonoma, Napa, Marin, Contra Costa, Alameda, San Francisco, San Mateo, San Joaquin, Santa Clara, and Solano.
- » **Inland Empire:** San Bernardino, Riverside, Inyo, and Mono.
- » **Central Valley:** Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Stanislaus, and Tulare Counties.
- » **Central Coast:** Monterey, San Benito, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Santa Cruz.

- » **Los Angeles:** Los Angeles and Ventura.
 - » **Orange:** Orange and Southwest Los Angeles.
 - » **San Diego:** San Diego and Imperial.
-

JOINING COMMUNITY FORCES

The Joining Community Forces (JCF) is a voluntary military cooperative partnership organized to provide multi-service networking for training and assistance to ensure “Total Force Family Readiness.” The main purpose of JCF is to provide assistance to military and Veteran families regardless of service component. The goal of the JCF is to strengthen existing family assistance delivery systems in the event of military mobilization, deployment, or natural disaster through the interaction of committee members. In addition, the committee serves the purpose of linking outside organizations (nonprofits, faith based, and military associations) and military branches together to make a stronger support network for military personnel and their families throughout the State of California. Many of JCF’s support tools are effective in helping currently serving military members and their families, and this relationship allows CalVet to grow its support base with both professional and volunteer assistance to Veterans.

CALVET VETERANS SERVICES DISTRICT OFFICES

CalVet operates three Veterans Services District Offices. They are located at each of the three U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) Regional Offices in Oakland, Los Angeles, and San Diego. CalVet’s District Office staff provides Veteran’s disability claim representation and, in cases with unfavorable decisions, assists in the appeals process. Veterans and family members interested in filing a new, reopened, or appealed claim for disability benefits with USDVA should first contact their local CVSO for assistance (page 182). Walk-ins are welcome at our District Offices. However, appointments are encouraged due to the volume of cases each office handles.

Oakland District Office

1301 Clay Street, Room 1130N

Oakland, CA 94612

(510) 286-0627

Monday - Thursday: 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Los Angeles District Office

11000 Wilshire Boulevard, Room 5203

Los Angeles, CA 90024

(213) 620-2755

Monday - Thursday: 8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Friday: 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

San Diego District Office

8898 Rio San Diego Drive, Annex B

San Diego, CA 92108

(619) 400-0070

Monday - Thursday: 8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Friday: 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATION FEES WAIVED

This benefit waives registration fees and provides a free license plate for one passenger motor vehicle, one motorcycle, or one commercial motor vehicle of less than 8,001 pounds unladen weight.

Who is Eligible?

Medal of Honor recipients, American Ex-Prisoners of War and “Disabled Veterans” as defined in the “Disabled Veterans License Plate” section of this book are eligible (page 20).

How Do I Apply?

To apply, Medal of Honor recipients should complete a California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) Form REG 17A, and proof of receipt of the Medal of Honor.

Ex-Prisoners of War should complete a DMV Form REG 17, and provide proof of their former POW status. To download DMV Form REG 17 and 17A, visit www.dmv.ca.gov. Veterans may also call (800) 777-0133 to request a mailed copy. Mail the application and necessary documentation to:

Department of Motor Vehicles

Special Processing Unit, MS D238

P.O. Box 932345

Sacramento, CA 94232-0001

VETERANS LICENSE PLATE PROGRAM

California's Veterans' License Plate Program allows current service members, Veterans, family members, and supporters of Veterans with the opportunity to proudly display their support for our men and woman who served in the United States Armed Forces. The program has more than 100 different emblems and logos to choose from and place on the automobile's license plate.

CALIFORNIA "HONORING VETERANS" LICENSE PLATE

Available to all California motorists, this special California license plate may be ordered with the branch of service, unit, or Veteran's service organization logo/emblem of choice. More than 70 insignias are available, and the logo will be prominently displayed to the left of a six number/letter combination. Original sequential plates are \$50 (this may be a tax-deductible contribution and is in addition to normal DMV license fees). "Personalized" license plates (choice of up to 6 characters) are available for \$78. The annual renewal fees for sequential and personalized are the same— \$40 for auto, truck or motorcycle. All proceeds from the sale of Veterans plates are used to expand Veteran services statewide.

How to Apply:

Those interested in an "Honoring Veterans" license plate should apply online at www.dmv.ca.gov/ipp2/welcome.do. More information on how to obtain Veterans

plates is available on the CalVet website, www.calvet.ca.gov/vetservices/pages/license-plates.aspx and can be obtained from a local County Veterans Service Office (page 182).

SPECIAL LICENSE PLATES FOR CALIFORNIA VETERANS

California also offers special license plates to honor the service of the following Veterans:

- » **Medal of Honor**
Medal of Honor recipients are eligible for one set of free commemorative license plates.
- » **Legion of Valor**
Veterans who are recipients of the Medal of Honor, Army Distinguished Service Cross, Navy Cross, or Air Force Cross are eligible for special Legion of Valor license plates.
- » **Former Prisoners of War**
Former American Prisoners of War are eligible for one set of free commemorative license plates.
- » **Pearl Harbor Veterans**
An honorably discharged Veteran who was stationed at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, is eligible for special Pearl Harbor Survivor license plates.
- » **Purple Heart**
Any Veteran who is a Purple Heart recipient is eligible for special Purple Heart license plates.

How to Apply:

Complete a DMV Form REG 17A and provide proof of aforementioned medal award or evidence of being stationed at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Former POWs must complete DMV Form REG 17.

Mail completed application and necessary documentation to:

Department of Motor Vehicles

P.O. Box 932345
Sacramento, CA 94232

For more information, call the DMV at (800) 777-0133 or visit www.dmv.ca.gov.

Note: Veterans with a Medal of Honor, Legion of Valor, Former Prisoner of War, Pearl Harbor, or Purple Heart license plate may park his or her motor vehicle, weighing not more than 6,000 pounds gross weight, without charge, in a metered parking space. This does not exempt a vehicle with the aforementioned license plates from complying with any other state law or ordinance.

GOLD STAR LICENSE PLATES

“Gold Star Family” license plates are available to families free of charge who want to honor loved ones lost during service to their country.

Note: The plates must be assigned to a California-registered vehicle owned by the qualified family member. Gold Star Family License Plates are only available as sequential plates through DMV headquarters.

How to Apply:

Each qualified family member who applies for a Gold Star Family License Plate is required to submit original copies of the following completed and signed forms:

- » Project Gold Star License Plate Application;
- » Special License Plate Application (REG 17A);
- » Report of Casualty (DD Form 1300) from the Department of Defense.

The Project Gold Star License Plate application must be certified by a County Veteran Service Office (page 182). Mail applications and necessary documentation to:

Department of Motor Vehicles

Special Processing Unit
P.O. Box 932345 MS D238
Sacramento, CA 94232

DISABLED VETERANS

Service-connected Disabled Veterans (DV) with any of the conditions listed below may receive, free of charge, a set of special “DV” plates which permit free parking at all parking meters in the state with no time limit and allows for parking in handicapped zones. USDVA proof of service connection is required, and the service-connected disability must, according to California Vehicle Code Section 295.7, be identified as one of the following:

- » Rated at 100% disabled due to a diagnosed disease or disorder which substantially impairs or interferes with mobility; **or**
- » Limits movement without the aid of an assistive device; **or**
- » Due to loss of, or lost use of, one or more limbs; **or**
- » Due to permanent blindness as defined in Section 19153 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

How to Apply:

Have a USDVA official complete the Medical Statement for Service-Connected Disabled Veterans form which indicates that the Veteran has a service-connected disability with at least one of the above listed mobility impairments. Then complete and sign DMV Forms REG 195 and REG 256A. Mail all completed forms to:

DMV PLACARD

Special Processing Unit, MS D238
P.O. Box 932345
Sacramento, CA 94232-0001

To obtain a copy of the Medical Statement for Service-Connected Disabled Veterans (REG 256), contact your local County Veterans Service Office.

VETERAN DESIGNATION ON CALIFORNIA DRIVER LICENSE AND ID CARD

CalVet and the DMV launched the Veteran driver license initiative. This initiative allows California Veterans to obtain a “VETERAN” designation on their California driver license or identification card (DL/ID). Interested Veterans need to present a valid DD Form 214 to a local CVSO to receive a Veteran Status Verification form. Then, the Veteran takes the CVSO verification form to a DMV field office for processing. DMV charges an additional \$5, plus the cost of a new, renewal, or duplicate license fee for this enhancement.

To obtain a copy of your DD Form 214, please see Military Records (page 200).

For faster service, please schedule an appointment with a CVSO. To locate the CVSO nearest you (page 182), call (844) 737-8838. Enter your zip code when prompted and your call will be transferred.

For faster DMV service, please schedule an appointment with the DMV by visiting www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/dmv/detail/portal/foa/welcome?localeName=en or by calling (800) 777-0133.

FISHING AND HUNTING LICENSES

This benefit reduces annual fees for fishing and hunting licenses for disabled Veterans.

Who is Eligible?

Any honorably-discharged Veteran with a 50% or greater service-connected disability from USDVA is eligible for this program. There is no residency requirement to obtain a reduced annual fishing or hunting license fee.

How Do I Apply?

To apply, download and complete a reduced-fee fishing or hunting license application from the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) website at www.dfg.ca.gov/licensing/hunting/reducedfee.html or call (916) 928-5805 to request an application be mailed.

First-time applicants must submit proof of their service-connected disability from USDVA. For subsequent annual licenses, a copy of a previous year's California reduced fee sport fishing or hunting license is required.

After a Veteran purchases the first sport fishing license from a DFW License Sales Office, subsequent licenses may be purchased from any licensed agent. However, hunting licenses are only available at DFW License Sales Offices.

Mail the application with USDVA proof of service-connected disability (if required) to:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife

License and Revenue Branch
1740 N. Market Boulevard
Sacramento, CA 95834

or any Department of Fish and Wildlife Office.

For more information please visit www.calvet.ca.gov/vetservices/pages/fishing-and-hunting-licenses.aspx.

STATE PARKS AND RECREATION PASS

The Distinguished Veteran Pass entitles the holder to the use of all basic State Park System operated facilities, including camping and day use, at no further charge. The pass is not valid at units operated by local governments, private agencies, or concessionaires and it is not valid for special events, group campsites, and commercial use or for supplemental fees. The pass cannot be used in conjunction with any other pass and/or discount.

Who is Eligible?

Any honorably discharged war Veteran who is a resident of California with a 50% or more service-connected disability from USDVA, or was held as a prisoner of war by forces hostile to the United States, or is a recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor.

How Do I Apply?

Download and complete a Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) application found at www.parks.ca.gov/pages/737/files/dpr619.pdf. Submit proof of USDVA service-connected disability rated at 50% or greater or provide documentation showing status as a former Prisoner of War or Medal of Honor recipient along with a copy of the Veteran's California Driver's License and a completed DPR Form DPR 619.

Park Pass Sales Office

1416 9th Street, Room 114
Sacramento, CA 95814

Veterans may also apply by mail. Send completed applications and required documentation to:

California State Parks

Attn: Distinguished Veteran Pass Program
P.O. Box 942896
Sacramento, CA 94296-0001

Please allow 4-6 weeks for processing. Once the pass is received, Veterans may use it for reservations and applicable benefits. The pass holder is required to present the Distinguished Veteran Pass and a valid California Driver License or other suitable photo identification, along with any campsite reservation or tour ticket, and to pay any supplemental fees at the park.

For more information please visit www.calvet.ca.gov/vetservices/pages/state-parks-and-recreation-pass.aspx.

NATIONAL PARKS ACCESS PASS

The access pass is a free, lifetime pass - available to U.S. citizens or permanent residents of the United States medically determined to have a permanent disability - that provides access to more than 2,000 recreation sites managed by five federal agencies. The forest service, the national park service, fish and wildlife service, bureau of land management, and bureau of reclamation honor the access pass at sites where entrance or standard amenity fees are charged.

At many sites the access pass provides the pass owner a discount on expanded amenity fees (such as camping, swimming, boat launching, and guided tours).

Who is Eligible?

The access pass may be issued to U.S. citizens or permanent residents of any age that have been medically determined to have a permanent disability that severely limits one or more major life activities. This includes disabled Veterans.

A permanent disability is a permanent physical, mental, or sensory impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working.

How Do I Apply?

You can obtain an access pass in person, with proper documentation, from a participating federal recreation site or office. To see site locations that issue the access pass visit <https://store.usgs.gov/pass/passissuancelist.pdf>.

Access passes may also be obtained via mail order from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). Mail-order applicants for the access pass must submit a completed application to USGS http://store.usgs.gov/pass/access_pass_application.pdf, proof of residency and documentation of permanent disability, and pay the document processing fee of \$10 to obtain a pass through the mail. Once the application package is received, the documentation will be verified and a pass, with the pass owner's name pre-printed on it, will be issued by USGS to the applicant. Documentation of permanent disability will also be returned to the applicant.

Access pass applications are processed and shipped within 3-5 business days from the day they arrive at USGS. Transit time varies, and is dependent upon the service selected:

- » **USPS** - typically 5-10 business days
- » **FedEx Ground** - typically 3-5 business days
- » **FedEx 2nd Day** - typically 2 business days
- » **FedEx Overnight** - typically 1 business day

If you need your pass within 15 days or less, it is recommended that you either obtain your pass at the first site you visit, or request expedited shipping services for your order.

For more information please visit www.calvet.ca.gov/vetservices/pages/access-pass-national-parks.aspx.

BUSINESS LICENSE, TAX, AND FEE EXEMPTION

The Business License, Tax, and Fee exemption benefit exempts eligible Veterans from municipal, county, and state business license fees, taxes, and fees. The exemption applies to Veterans who hawk, peddle, or vend any goods, wares, or merchandise owned by the Veteran, except spirituous, malt, vinous, or other intoxicating liquor, including sales from a fixed location.

Who is Eligible?

Honorably discharged Veterans who engage in sales (not services) activities may be eligible. Eligibility criteria will differ based upon local jurisdiction.

How Do I Apply?

Bring proof of honorable discharge to the local appropriate county/city licensing authority.

PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS

California has two separate property tax exemptions: one for Veterans and one for disabled Veterans.

Veterans Exemption

The California Constitution provides a \$4,000 real property (e.g., a home) or personal property (e.g., a boat) exemption for honorably discharged Veterans or the spouse or pensioned-parent of a deceased, honorably discharged Veteran. Most persons, however, are disqualified from this exemption due to restrictions on the value of property a claimant may own. A person who owns property valued at \$5,000 or more (\$10,000 or more for a married couple or for the unmarried surviving spouse of a qualified Veteran) is not eligible for this exemption. Thus, a Veteran who owns a home would most likely not qualify for the Veterans exemption.

Disabled Veterans Exemption

The California Constitution and Revenue and Taxation Code Section 205.5 provides a property tax exemption for the home of a disabled Veteran or an unmarried spouse of a deceased disabled Veteran.

There is a basic \$100,000 exemption or a low-income (less than \$52,470) \$150,000 exemption available to a disabled Veteran who, because of an injury incurred in military service:

- » is blind in both eyes; **or**
- » has lost the use of two or more limbs; **or**
- » is totally disabled as determined by USDVA or by the military service from which the Veteran was discharged.

An unmarried surviving spouse may also be eligible if the service person died as the result of a service-connected injury or a disease incurred while on active duty or as the result of active duty. In other words, a Veteran may not have been eligible during his or her lifetime, but the surviving spouse may become eligible for the exemption upon the Veteran's death.

Unlike the Veteran's exemption, the disabled Veterans exemption has no personal wealth restriction. The exemption is only available on a Veteran's principal place of residence. The home may only receive one property exemption. Thus, if a homeowner's exemption has been granted on a property and the owner subsequently qualifies for the disabled Veterans' exemption, the homeowner's exemption should be cancelled to allow for the disabled Veterans exemption as it provides the greater benefit.

The issues regarding these exemptions are complex, and the eligibility requirements are specific. Consult the local assessor's office for detailed requirements regarding these exemptions.

Note: Both exemption amounts are annually adjusted for cost of living index; as of January 1, 2013, the exemption amounts are \$122,128 and \$183,193, respectively.

How Do I Apply?

Eligible Veterans or surviving spouses may apply for an exemption at their local County Assessor's Office. A listing of County Assessor's Office may be found in the county government section of the telephone book or at www.boe.ca.gov/proptaxes/assessors.htm. Veterans may also request more information from their local County Veterans Service Office (page 182).

THE DISABLED VETERAN BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PROGRAM

The State of California established the Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE) Program to assist DVBEs with competing more effectively for a portion of the State's contract dollars. The DVBE program also promotes self-reliance for California's disabled Veterans by offering the opportunity to gain experience in business while sharing their expertise with the citizens of California. The program provides a goal that, at a minimum, 3 percent of all state contract dollars for each state agency shall be spent with certified DVBEs.

What are the DVBE Eligibility Requirements?

To be eligible for DVBE certification, your business must meet the following criteria:

- » Be at least 51 percent owned by one or more disabled Veterans.*
- » Limited Liability Companies must be wholly owned by one or more disabled Veterans.
- » Daily business operations must be managed and controlled by one or more disabled Veterans. The disabled Veteran(s) who manages and controls the business is not required to be the disabled Veteran business owner(s).
- » Home office must be located in the United States and cannot be a branch or subsidiary of a foreign corporation, foreign firm, or other foreign based business.

**For DVBE certification purposes, a "disabled Veteran" is a Veteran of the U.S. military, naval, or air service; and has a service connected disability of at least 10 percent or more as declared by USDVA or the United States Department of Defense (DoD) and must be domiciled in California.*

Does the State also have a Small Business Program?

Yes, California State government requires state agencies to award at least 25 percent of their annual contract dollars to a certified Small Business (SB). Most DVBE can also be certified as a SB. CalVet encourages DVBEs to apply for both certifications to receive the maximum assistance.

What are the Benefits of DVBE and SB Certification?

- » There is no charge for certification as a SB and/or DVBE.
- » The State may give a 5 percent bid preference to certified SBs and may offer up to a 5 percent incentive to DVBEs in the formal bid process.
- » California certified SB and DVBE have their business information added to the Department of General Services (DGS) database which state agencies use to find SBs and DVBEs.

- » All California state agencies may use a streamlined procurement process known as SB Option or DVBE Option to contract directly with California-certified SB or DVBE for goods, services, and information technology goods and services valued from \$5,000.01 to \$249,999.99 (up to \$291,000 for public works contracts) after obtaining price quotes from at least two SBs or two DVBEs.
- » SB and DVBE are eligible, under the Prompt Payment Act, for interest penalties for late, undisputed invoice payments.

How Do I Apply for DVBE and/or SB Certification?

The certification process is the responsibility of DGS, Procurement Division, and Office of Small Business and DVBE Services (OSDS). The OSDS is available to assist in completing the application and to answer questions about required documents. To obtain DVBE certification, a firm must:

- » Complete the online application at www.dgs.ca.gov/pd/programs/osds/getcertified.aspx;
- » Provide a copy of an Award of Entitlement (AOE) letter from USDVA or DoD, dated within six months of the date the application is submitted to OSDS (To obtain a copy of the AOE letter, call USDVA at (800) 827-1000);
- » Other required support documents will be determined when completing the online application. OSDS will provide assistance in this area.

For more information or help certifying, contact:

Office of Small Business and DVBE Services

707 3rd Street, 1st Floor, Room 400

West Sacramento, CA 95605

(916) 375-4940 or leave a message if after hours

COLLEGE TUITION FEE WAIVER FOR VETERANS' DEPENDENTS

The College Tuition Fee Waiver for Veterans' Dependents waives mandatory system-wide tuition and fees at all three of California's public post-secondary education systems. This includes any State of California Community College (CCC), California State University (CSU), or University of California (UC) campus. If eligibility criteria are met, use of the California College Fee Waiver for Veterans' Dependents may be applied to state-supported programs in the CCC, CSU, and UC systems. Some academic programs at these institutions that are considered self-supported, commonly referred to as extension courses or extended education, are not covered under the Fee Waiver because these courses, degrees, and certificates are neither funded by the state nor are they system-wide programs. This program does not cover the expense of books, parking, or room and board. For eligibility requirements and more information, see page 117.

Veteran Driver License and ID Available

HAVE YOU EVER SERVED IN THE U.S. MILITARY? YOU MAY QUALIFY TO PROUDLY DISPLAY **VETERAN** ON YOUR CALIFORNIA DRIVER LICENSE OR IDENTIFICATION CARD.

IT'S AS EASY AS 1, 2, 3!

1 Find your military discharge certificate (DD214). If you need assistance obtaining your military records, then contact your County Veteran Service Officer (CVSO).

2 Take your DD214 and government identification to your CVSO to obtain your Veteran Status Verification Form.

3 Go online or call DMV for an appointment. Then bring your Veteran Status Verification Form to DMV. Complete your application, pay any fees including the \$5 fee to add the Veteran Designation.
Note: tests may be required.

For faster CVSO service, schedule an appointment by finding your local CVSO at www.calvet.ca.gov or calling 1-844-737-8838.

To schedule an appointment at a DMV, visit www.dmv.ca.gov or call 1-800-777-0133.

CALVET
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS



CHAPTER
02



**U.S. DEPT OF
VETERANS
AFFAIRS
CLAIMS &
BENEFITS**



USDVA INFORMATION AND REGIONAL OFFICES

USDVA's mission is to provide benefits and services to Veterans and their families in a responsive, timely, and compassionate manner in recognition of their service to our Nation. Because of the wide variety of services USDVA provides to Veterans and their families, USDVA is structured into three separate administrative divisions.

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is responsible for the administration and operation of over 1,700 sites of care which include hospitals, community clinics, community living centers, domiciliaries, and Vet Centers.

VHA Locations

For a listing of sites of care near you see page 103 or visit www.va.gov/directory/guide/division_flash.asp?dnum=1.

VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION

The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) administers all of the non-medical benefit programs for Veterans, dependents, and survivors. VBA operates three Regional Offices and one Satellite Office in California.

VBA Regional Office Locations

Los Angeles Regional Office

Federal Building
11000 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90024
(800) 827-1000

San Diego Regional Office

8810 Rio San Diego Drive
San Diego, CA 92108
(800) 827-1000

Oakland Regional Office

1301 Clay Street, North Tower
Oakland, CA 94612
(800) 827-1000

Oakland Regional Benefit Satellite Office - Sacramento

10365 Old Placerville Road
Sacramento, CA 95827
(916) 364-6500
Open Tuesday and Thursday only

NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION

The National Cemetery Administration (NCA) operates 131 national cemeteries throughout the United States and its territories, including nine in California. NCA is responsible for honoring the military service of our Nation's Veterans by providing a dignified burial and lasting memorial for our Veterans and eligible family members. NCA maintains national cemeteries as national shrines, sacred to the honor and memory of our Veterans interred or memorialized there. To locate a USDVA National Cemetery near you, visit to www.cem.va.gov/cems/listcem.asp.

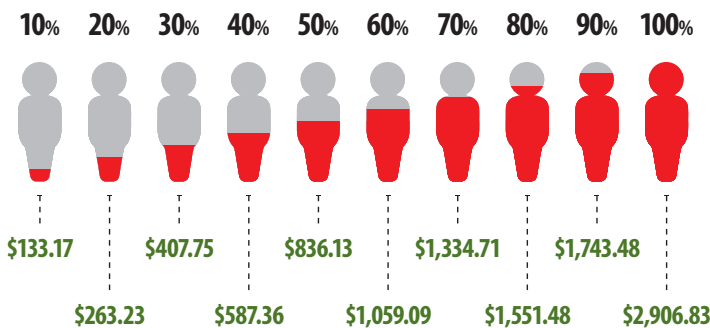
DISABILITY COMPENSATION

Disability compensation is a monthly benefit paid by USDVA to Veterans for any injury, condition, or illness that started during or was exacerbated by active service in the military. This benefit is tax free and also can be paid to Veterans disabled from treatment in a USDVA healthcare facility.

Veterans may be eligible for disability compensation if they have a service-connected disability, often referred to as "S/C", and were discharged under other than dishonorable conditions. A service-connected disability does not have to be a combat injury; any injury or illness suffered or aggravated while in uniform can be considered.

USDVA Disability Compensation Rates for Veterans (Effective 12/01/14)

The dollar amount of benefits paid varies depending on the rating percentage of disability.



Veterans with disability ratings of at least 30 percent are eligible for additional allowances for dependents, including spouses, minor children, children between the ages of 18 and 23 who are attending school, children who are permanently incapable of self-support because of a disability arising before age 18, and dependent parents. The additional amount depends on the disability rating and the number of dependents.

HOW DO I FILE A CLAIM?

Step 1: File a Claim

USDVA's disability claim process begins when a claim is filed, either informally or formally. It is highly recommended that the Veteran complete any USDVA disability claim form with the assistance of a Veteran Service Organization (VSO), Veterans Service Representative (VSR), or a County Veterans Service Office (CVSO) (page 182).

Informal Claim: An informal claim, filed on a USDVA Form 21-0966 (Intent to File a Claim for Compensation and/or Pension, or Survivor Pension and/or Dependency Indemnity Compensation), will preserve the effective date of a claim for up to one year, allowing the claimant to submit the formal claim within one year of the date the USDVA Form 21-0966 was received by USDVA.

Formal Claim: A formal claim for Disability Compensation or Pension is completed on USDVA Form 21-526EZ (Application for Compensation) or USDVA Form 21-527EZ (Application for Pension). Both claims for benefits may be filed using USDVA's Fully Developed Claim (FDC) program. Veterans may also electronically file a claim directly with USDVA using the eBenefits portal located at www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/homepage.

When a claim is filed with a VSO, VSR, or CVSO, then the claimant must sign a Power of Attorney (POA) form authorizing the VSO, VSR, or CVSO to act on behalf of the claimant when preparing, presenting, and prosecuting the claim for any and all benefits with USDVA. The claimant may, at any time through the claims process, revoke the POA with the VSO, VSR, or CVSO. Be aware that when a claimant signs a POA with a VSO, VSR, or CVSO, then they are the only individuals authorized to assist. For example, if a claimant signs a POA with the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), then the American Legion (AL) cannot legally research the status of the claim or act on behalf of the claimant.

The filing assistance provided by a VSO, VSR, or CVSO for Veteran's benefits is a free service. Veterans should never have to pay a person or an organization to assist in filling out forms or advocating on behalf of the Veteran. If a Veteran is asked by a person or an organization for money in return for their services, please report them to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Office of the Inspector General (OIG) hotline

by phone at (800) 488-8244 (between 6:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. PST, Monday through Friday, excluding federal holidays) or by e-mail at vaioighotline@va.gov. Claimants may also write OIG:

USDVA Office of the Inspector General (53E)

810 Vermont Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20420

Step 2: Obtain Evidence

Evidence must be submitted to support a disability claim. Evidence submitted at the time of filing will help expedite the claim. The disability evaluation will be based on the evidence provided so it is essential that the information submitted is accurate and complete. A VSO, VSR, or CVSO can assist by verifying service dates (based on the information furnished) and requesting the claimant's medical records.

USDVA may request more information from the claimant. This may include letters detailing specific experiences in service, medical records, or information on dependents, employment history, or income. Claimants can help speed the process by providing complete addresses for the medical care facilities that treated a claimant, being as exact as possible in reporting dates of treatment, and sending requested information as soon as possible. Private medical records should be obtained by a claimant directly from the claimant's private medical provider.

Note: In order to ensure USDVA processes a claim as quickly as possible, all evidence and information should be provided to USDVA at the same time that the formal claim is submitted to USDVA.

Step 3: USDVA Requests a Physical Exam

Often, USDVA requests medical exams of the Veteran while waiting for other evidence to arrive. Sometimes, USDVA reviews evidence to be certain it is requesting the proper exams for each disability claimed. The exams USDVA requests will depend on the claim and treatment history. The claimant's nearest USDVA Medical Center will schedule the requested exams and contact the claimant by mail and/or phone to let them know the exam reasons, dates, and locations. After each exam, an examination report will be prepared and sent to by USDVA's examiner for review by USDVA's Regional Office. Claimants can expedite this process by completing exam appointments. If a claimant is unable make an appointment, then work with your

VSO, VSR, or CVSO to reschedule the appointment. Failure to report for an exam means the Regional Office will not have information about your current medical status often needed to complete a claim.

Step 4: USDVA Rates Claim

A Veteran's claim is ready to be rated when USDVA has received all necessary evidence. USDVA evaluates all the medical evidence and other documents to support the medical condition and identifies how these conditions correspond to USDVA's rating schedule. This schedule designates which disabilities can be compensated and at what percentage. USDVA pays the maximum benefit allowed by law based on the evidence submitted. Before USDVA decides the claim, if there is a change in disability, or if the claimant wants USDVA to evaluate additional disabilities, the claimant should contact the VSO, VSR, or CVSO assisting with the claim.

Step 5: USDVA Makes a Decision

After USDVA rates the claim, then USDVA notifies the claimant of the decision. USDVA's decision provides the reasons for all decisions to grant or deny benefits. If the claimant disagrees with USDVA's decision, then the claimant should contact their VSO, VSR, or CVSO to discuss an appeal. If a claimant has questions about their claim process, decision, or appeal, contact their VSO, VSR, or CVSO before calling USDVA.

WHAT CAN VETERANS DO TO ACCELERATE USDVA'S CLAIM PROCESSING?

It is highly recommended that each Veteran complete any USDVA disability claim with the assistance of an advocate such as a VSO, VSR, or a CVSO (page 182). Each of the items below should be completed in collaboration with an advocate:

- » Elect to use the FDC program;
- » Submit ALL claim supporting documentation at the time the FDC is submitted to USDVA;
- » Obtain private medical records and forward to USDVA using the FDC process;
- » Be thorough when completing the claim application and do not leave any question unanswered;
- » **Never** assume USDVA has the necessary information on file;

- » **Always** sign the application form;
- » Include the claimant's USDVA claim number on every page of correspondence or documentation submitted to USDVA;
- » Respond quickly and completely to USDVA requests for additional information;
- » Complete all medical exam appointments scheduled by USDVA;
- » Notify USDVA if the claimant is unable to complete a medical exam and reschedule as soon as possible;
- » Include the Veteran's complete mailing address (with apartment number, if applicable) and, if possible, a daytime phone number (with area code) with any application or correspondence submitted;
- » Notify USDVA immediately if a mailing address or phone number changes.

If in doubt about what to do at any time, contact your VSO, VSR, or CVSO before attempting to contact USDVA. Have the claimant's USDVA claim number available to give to the person who offers assistance. If unable to locate the claimant's USDVA claim number, have the Veteran's Social Security number available. Surviving family members of a Veteran should have the Veteran's Social Security number available.

WHAT IF A CLAIM IS DENIED OR THE CLAIMANT DISAGREES WITH USDVA'S DECISION?

If a claimant disagrees with any part of a USDVA Regional Office disability claim decision, then the claimant may appeal any part of the decision. For example, claimant may appeal a denial of service connection, a low percentage rating, or the effective date. The claimant should contact their VSO, VSR, or CVSO to determine the best course of action.

An appeal of a Regional Office decision involves many steps (some optional and some required) and strict time limits. In sequence, the steps are:

1. The claimant starts the appeal process by filing a Notice of Disagreement;
2. USDVA issues a response, called a Statement of the Case;
3. If the claimant still disagrees with USDVA's SOC, then the claimant files a Formal Appeal (USDVA Form 9 or equivalent);

4. The claimant may request, and then USDVA may schedule, a review by a Decision Review Officer at the Regional Office;
5. If the claimant still disagrees with the Regional Office DRO decision, then the claimant may appeal to the Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) in Washington, DC;
6. If the claimant still disagrees with the BVA decision, then the claimant may appeal to the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans' Claims (CAVC) in Washington, DC.

A claim appeal at the BVA or CAVC may have three possible outcomes: the granting of all or part of a claim, a remand, or a denial. When a claim is granted on appeal, it is returned to the Regional Office for processing. When an appeal is remanded, that means additional information is often needed to finish processing the claim. When an appeal is denied by the BVA, the next appeal level is the CAVC. When the CAVC denies an appeal, consult your VSO, VSR, or CVSO for guidance.

1. Notice of Disagreement

A Notice of Disagreement (NOD) is a written statement that a claimant disagrees with an all or part of a decision made by USDVA. When submitting NOD work with your advocate:

- » Claimants must be specific about their disagreement. If decisions were made on multiple medical conditions, claimants must be clear about which medical condition where the claimant disagrees;
- » A NOD can be accepted by USDVA only after a final decision was made by USDVA. Before benefits can be reduced or denied, USDVA must send a "pre-determination notice." If a claimant did not receive paperwork describing the appeals process (USDVA Form 4107), check the letter to see if it is, in fact, a pre-determination notice;
- » Check USDVA's filing deadlines. A NOD must be filed within one year of the date of USDVA's decision letter. If a claimant missed the filing deadline, they may file another claim for the same condition or request that the previous claim be re-opened.

2. Statement of the Case

A Statement of the Case (SOC) is USDVA's summary of the evidence considered, actions taken, decisions made, and the laws governing the decision. An SOC must be sent by USDVA to a claimant when an NOD is filed or when new evidence is received. Once the first SOC is completed on an appeal, subsequent SOCs are called a Supplemental Statement of the Case (SSOC). In many cases, a complicated appeal with many medical conditions may have several SSOCs.

3. Formal Appeal (USDVA Form 9 or equivalent)

An appeal must be formal before it can continue to higher levels. The standard form for formalizing (sometimes called perfecting) an appeal is USDVA's Form 9, Appeal to Board of Veterans' Appeals. This form must be received no later than one of these two dates:

- » one year from the date of USDVA's letter notifying the claimant of the decision
- » 60 days after the date of the last SOC.

4. Hearings (Optional)

Hearings provide an opportunity for claimants to present evidence in person; they are optional. Hearings are held at a USDVA Regional Office by a Decision Review Officer (DRO). The DRO will review the evidence and testimony and make a decision on the case. If the issue is not resolved in the claimant's favor, the appeal will continue.

5. Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA)

The Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA), located in Washington DC, is the highest appellate body within USDVA. Although most decisions are made in Washington, BVA does have travel boards that come to local offices. Because travel boards have been limited in the past couple of years, the pending workload at BVA has dramatically increased. It is usual for an appeal to take two years or more from the initial NOD to the final BVA decision. If there is a grant or a remand, processing by the Regional Office may take an additional year or two.

BVA looks at all of the evidence regarding the issue under appeal. If BVA decides that more information is needed to make a decision, it will issue a remand to the local office. BVA will not reconsider the case until its instructions in the remand are done. If the evidence is sufficient, then BVA will issue a decision. This is the final USDVA decision and the end of the appeal process within USDVA. However, a BVA decision can be appealed by a claimant to the CAVC. A claimant has 120 days from the date of the BVA decision to appeal to CAVC.

6. United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC)

The United States Court of Appeals for Veterans' Claims (CAVC), located in Washington DC, reviews matters of law regarding USDVA benefits and decisions. CAVC is not part of USDVA; it is an appellate court in the U.S. judicial system. CAVC will only consider decisions made by the Board of Veterans Appeals after 1988. As in most courts, a claimant must have either an attorney or personal knowledge of legal proceedings to file the correct legal paperwork for the appeal. CAVC decisions usually concern the procedural and legal issues involved in the "letter of the law." A claimant has 120 days from the date of the BVA decision to appeal to CAVC.

SPECIALLY ADAPTED HOUSING GRANTS

USDVA provides grants to Servicemembers and Veterans with certain permanent and total service-connected disabilities to help purchase or construct an adapted home, or modify an existing home to accommodate a disability. Two grant programs exist: the Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) grant and the Special Housing Adaptation (SHA) grant.

SPECIALLY ADAPTED HOUSING GRANT

Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) grants help Veterans with certain service-connected disabilities live independently in a barrier-free environment. SAH grants can be used in one of the following ways:

- » Construct a specially adapted home on land to be acquired.
- » Build a home on land already owned if it is suitable for specially adapted housing.

- » Remodel an existing home if it can be made suitable for specially adapted housing.
- » Apply the grant against the unpaid principal mortgage balance of an adapted home already acquired without the assistance of a USDVA grant.

SPECIAL HOUSING ADAPTATION GRANT

Special Housing Adaptation (SHA) grants help Veterans with certain service-connected disabilities adapt or purchase a home to accommodate the disability. You can use SHA grants in one of the following ways:

- » Adapt an existing home the Veteran or a family member already owns in which the Veteran lives.
- » Adapt a home the Veteran or family member intends to purchase in which the Veteran will live.
- » Help a Veteran purchase a home already adapted in which the Veteran will live.

TEMPORARY RESIDENCE ADAPTATION

Eligible Veterans and service members who are temporarily residing in a home owned by a family member may also receive a Temporary Residence Adaptation grant to help the Veteran or service member adapt the family member's home to meet their special needs. The maximum amount available to adapt a family member's home for the SAH grant is \$32,384 and \$5,782 for the SHA grant. Grant amounts will also be adjusted annually based on a cost-of-construction index.

HOME IMPROVEMENTS AND STRUCTURAL ALTERATIONS

USDVA may provide assistance for any home improvement medically necessary for the continuation of treatment or for disability access to the primary residence and essential lavatory and sanitary facilities. The Home Improvements and Structural Alterations (HISA) grant may be received in conjunction with either a SAH or SHA grant. HISA grants are available to Veterans with both service-connected and non-service connected disabilities. The lifetime home improvement benefits of up to \$6,800 may be provided to service-connected disabled Veterans and up to

\$2,000 may be provided to Veterans with non-service connected disabilities rated 50 percent or more. To apply, the Veteran must first have a prescription from a USDVA or fee-basis physician which includes the specific items required and the diagnosis with medical justification. To apply, complete USDVA Form 10-0103 (Veterans Application for Assistance in Acquiring Home Improvements and Structural Alterations) and submit to the prosthetic representative at the nearest USDVA Medical Facility.

AUTOMOBILE ALLOWANCE

Veterans and service members may be eligible for a one-time payment of not more than \$20,114.34 toward the purchase of an automobile or other conveyance if they have certain USDVA service-connected disabilities. These service members may also be eligible for adaptive equipment, and for repair, replacement, or reinstallation required because of disability or for the safe operation of a vehicle purchased with USDVA assistance. To apply, contact your VSO, VSR, or County Veteran Service Office. You may also attempt to contact USDVA directly at (800) 827-1000.

CLOTHING ALLOWANCE

Veterans who have unique clothing needs as a result of a USDVA service-related disability or injury may receive a supplement to their disability compensation. The clothing allowance reimburses Veterans if their clothing gets permanently damaged by a prosthetic or orthopedic appliance they wear, or by a prescribed medication used on the skin. If eligible, a Veteran can receive a one-time or yearly allowance for reimbursement. To apply, please contact the prosthetic representative at the nearest USDVA Medical Facility (page 103).

GUIDE AND SERVICE DOGS

What are Guide Dogs?

Guide dogs are trained to lead the blind or vision impaired. The dog acts as a pilot to direct its owner in a straight line unless directed to turn, while avoiding obstacles in all directions.

How do I Get a Guide Dog?

Blind Veterans are assessed and trained for orientation and mobility. If a guide dog is preferred, information on how to contact guide dog schools is provided. Partnership with the guide dog is provided through non-USDVA affiliated guide dog schools.

What is a Service Dog?

A service dog is a dog trained to do specific tasks for a person that he or she cannot do because of a disability. Service dogs can pick things up, guide a person with vision problems, or help someone who falls or loses balance easily. For example, a service dog can help a blind person walk down the street or get dangerous things out of the way when someone is having a seizure.

Protecting someone, giving emotional support, or being a companion do not qualify a dog to be a service animal. To be a service dog, a dog must go through training. Usually the dog is trained to:

- » Do things that are different from natural dog behavior.
- » Do things that the handler (dog owner) cannot do because of a disability.
- » Learn to work with the new handler in ways that help manage the owner's disability.

Because the handler depends on the service dog's help, service dogs are allowed to go to most public places the handler goes. This is the case even if it is somewhere pet dogs usually cannot go, like restaurants or on airplanes. But there are a few exceptions. For example, service dogs can be asked to leave if they are not behaving well.

How do I Get a Service Dog?

Each Veteran's case is reviewed and evaluated by a prescribing clinician for the following:

- » Ability and means, including family or caregiver, to care for the dog currently and in the future.
- » Goals that are to be accomplished through the use of the dog.

- » Goals that are to be accomplished through other assistive technology or therapy.

The Veteran will be informed of an approval or disapproval of their service dog request.

For more information about Guide Dogs and Service Dogs please visit www.prosthetics.va.gov/serviceandguidedogs.asp.

What is an Emotional Support Dog?

An emotional support animal is a pet that helps an owner with a mental health condition. Emotional support dogs help owners feel better by giving friendship and companionship. These dogs are also called comfort dogs or support dogs.

An emotional support dog does not need special training. Generally, a regular pet can be an emotional support dog if a mental health provider writes a letter saying that the owner has a mental health condition or disability and needs the dog's help for his or her health or treatment.

In most states, emotional support dogs do not have special permission to go to all public places like service dogs do. But, emotional support dogs are sometimes allowed special consideration. For example, the owner may be able to get permission to have an emotional support pet in a house or apartment that does not normally allow dogs. Or, the owner may be able to get permission to fly on a plane together with the dog.

To get special permissions, the dog owner needs to show a provider's letter to the landlord or airline. Sometimes, the landlord or airline will also want to see information about the provider, such as a copy of their professional license.

For more information about Emotional Support Dogs please visit www.ptsd.va.gov/public/treatment/cope/dogs_and_ptsd.asp.

For more information or to apply, contact your local County Veterans Service Office (page 182).

PENSION

USDVA helps Veterans and their families cope with financial challenges by providing supplemental income through the Veterans Pension benefit. Veterans Pension is a tax-free monetary benefit payable to low-income wartime Veterans.

Qualifying Wartime Service

Generally, a Veteran must have at least 90 days of active duty service, with at least one day during a wartime period, to qualify for a USDVA Pension. If you entered active duty after September 7, 1980, generally you must have served at least 24 months or the full period for which you were called or ordered to active duty (with some exceptions), with at least one day during a wartime period.

To view a complete listing of beginning and ending dates of each war period starting with World War II, see the 'Healthcare' section (page 70).

In addition to meeting minimum service requirements, the Veteran must be:

- » Age 65 or older, **or**
- » Totally and permanently disabled, **or**
- » A patient in a nursing home receiving skilled nursing care, **or**
- » Receiving Social Security Disability Insurance, **or**
- » Receiving Supplemental Security Income.

What is Considered Totally and Permanently Disabled?

- » A patient in a nursing home for long-term care because of a disability; **or**
- » Disabled, as determined by the Commissioner of Social Security for purposes of any benefits administered by the Commissioner; **or**
- » Unemployable as a result of disability reasonably certain to continue throughout the life of the person; **or**

» Suffering from:

- Any disability which is sufficient to render it impossible for the average person to follow a substantially gainful occupation, but only if it is reasonably certain that such disability will continue throughout the life of the person; **or**
- Any disease or disorder determined by USDVA to be of such a nature or extent as to justify a determination that persons suffering from that disease or disorder are permanently and totally disabled.

What is Countable Income for Veterans Pension Eligibility Purposes?

Most income received by the Veteran and his or her dependents affects pension eligibility, including earnings, Social Security, disability and retirement payments, interest and dividends, and net income from farming or business. The income limits are adjusted periodically.

There is no set limit on how much net worth a Veteran and his dependents can have, but net worth cannot be excessive. The decision as to whether a claimant's net worth is excessive depends on the facts of each individual case. All net worth should be reported. USDVA will determine if a claimant's assets are sufficiently large that the claimant could live off these assets for a reasonable period of time. USDVA's needs-based programs are not intended to protect substantial assets or build up an estate for the benefit of heirs.

How Does USDVA Calculate Pension?

Annual pension is calculated by first totaling all of the Veteran's countable income and then subtracting any deductions from that total. The remaining countable income is deducted from the appropriate USDVA pension rate which is determined by the number of the Veteran's dependents, if any, and whether or not the Veteran is entitled to Housebound or Aid & Attendance benefits. This amount, divided by 12 and rounded to the nearest dollar establishes the Veteran's monthly payment.

AID & ATTENDANCE AND HOUSEBOUND

Veterans and survivors who are eligible for a USDVA pension and require the aid and attendance of another person, or are housebound, may be eligible for additional

monetary payment. These benefits are paid in addition to monthly pension, but they are not paid without eligibility for pension.

Since Aid & Attendance and Housebound benefit allowances increase the pension amount, those who are not eligible for a basic pension because they exceed allowable income limits may be eligible for pension at Aid & Attendance or Housebound rates. A Veteran or surviving spouse may not receive Aid & Attendance and Housebound benefits concurrently.

AID & ATTENDANCE

The Aid & Attendance (A&A) monthly pension amount may be added to a Veteran's monthly pension amount if they meet one of the following conditions:

- » The Veteran requires the aid of another person in order to perform personal functions required in everyday living, such as bathing, feeding, dressing, attending to the wants of nature, adjusting prosthetic devices, or protecting themselves from the hazards of their daily environment;
- » The Veteran is bedridden, in that the disability or disabilities requires the Veteran to remain in bed apart from any prescribed course of convalescence or treatment;
- » The Veteran is a patient in a nursing home due to mental or physical incapacity;
- » The Veteran's eyesight is limited to a corrected 5/200 visual acuity or less in both eyes, or concentric contraction of the visual field is 5 degrees or less.

HOUSEBOUND

The Housebound monthly pension amount may be added to a Veteran's monthly pension amount if the Veteran is substantially confined to their immediate premises because of permanent disability.

How to Apply

The Veteran may apply for A&A or Housebound benefits by visiting their local County Veterans Service Office (page 182). The Veteran should include copies of any evidence, preferably a report from an attending physician, validating the need for A&A or Housebound type care.

- » The report should be in sufficient detail to determine whether there is disease or injury producing physical or mental impairment, loss of coordination, or conditions affecting the ability to dress and undress, to feed oneself, to attend to sanitary needs, and to keep oneself ordinarily clean and presentable.
- » Whether the claim is for A&A or Housebound benefits, the report should indicate how well the applicant gets around, where the applicant goes, and what he or she is able to do during a typical day. In addition, it is necessary to establish whether the claimant is confined to the home or immediate premises.

CEMETERY AND BURIAL BENEFITS

Veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces residing in California are eligible to receive certain end of life benefits. For information about entitlements, contact the County Veterans Service Office (page 182) or call CalVet's Veterans Services Division at (877) 741-8532.

STATE CEMETERIES

Northern California Veterans Cemetery

The Northern California Veterans Cemetery (NCVC) is the first California Veterans Cemetery constructed with the cooperation of USDVA, and is operated by CalVet. State Veterans Cemeteries are intended to serve areas that are not adequately served by a National Cemetery. The NCVC is located near Redding, California, primarily serving the Veteran population in the eighteen Northern-most California counties. The currently developed area of the cemetery provides sufficient burial space for more than thirty years. Beyond that, the cemetery has the capacity for expansion of space for well beyond 100 years. Any eligible Veteran, along with their spouse and eligible dependents, may be interred at the NCVC in Igo.

California Central Coast Veterans Cemetery

The California Central Coast Veterans Cemetery (CCCVC) will be the second California Veterans Cemetery developed and constructed in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Cemetery Grants Program. The facility is located in Monterey County in the City of Seaside. The CCCVC is currently in the construction phase with an estimated opening date of Fall 2016. The first phase of the cemetery will accommodate cremated remains only.

Eligibility applications for a waiting list for columbarium interment are available on the CalVet website and at the Monterey County Military and Veterans Affairs Office.

Eligibility for Burial

USDVA has adopted regulations that establish the eligibility requirements for interment in a state Veterans' cemetery. The regulations make the state eligibility requirements equivalent to the requirements for burial in a USDVA National Cemetery and provide for CalVet collection of information needed to determine eligibility. For eligibility requirements, visit www.cem.va.gov.

There is no cost for eligible Veterans to be interred at a state Veterans cemetery. There is a fee for eligible spouses and dependent children. Associated funeral expenses are incurred by the Veteran and/or family.

Eligibility Determination Form

The Eligibility Determination/Pre-need Form is designed to assist in determining eligibility for burial at a state Veteran's cemetery on a pre-need basis. Pre-need determination allows a Veteran to establish in advance, his/her eligibility for interment at the cemetery. There is no cost for pre-need determination, and it does not obligate the Veteran to be interred at the cemetery.

Pre-need determination is intended to simplify and assist the Veteran's next-of-kin at the time of death, and does not reserve a plot or niche at the cemetery.

The Eligibility Determination Forms and instructions for submission to each cemetery can be downloaded at www.calvet.ca.gov/vetservices/pages/state-veterans-cemeteries.aspx.

NATIONAL CEMETERIES

USDVA's National Cemetery Administration maintains 131 national cemeteries in 39 states (and Puerto Rico) as well as 33 Soldier's lots and monument sites. There are nine national cemeteries in California, of which five (Riverside National Cemetery, Sacramento Valley National Cemetery, San Joaquin Valley National Cemetery, Miramar National Cemetery and Bakersfield National Cemetery) are presently accepting new interments. The other national cemeteries in California are only accepting burials of family members of persons already interred. Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery (near San Diego) still offers interment of cremated remains in a columbarium.

Eligibility for Burial

Persons eligible for burial in a national cemetery include:

- » Veterans;
- » Service members who die on active duty;
- » Certain Reservists and National Guard members;
- » World War II Merchant Mariners;
- » U.S. citizens who served honorably in the Armed Forces of an Allied government during a war;
- » Such other persons or classes of persons as may be designated by either the Secretary of Veterans Affairs or the Secretary of the Air Force.

Additionally, the spouse and the children (as defined) of eligible persons are also eligible for burial in a national cemetery. In some cases, parents of active duty military killed in action may also be eligible.

BURIAL BENEFITS

Burial benefits may include the following: gravesites for casket or cremation remains, headstones or markers, opening and closing of the graves, and continued perpetual care. Burial of eligible Veterans and dependents is at no cost when interred at a national cemetery.

Associated funeral expenses are the responsibility of the Veteran and/or family. For assistance in completing applications for cemetery and burial benefits, please contact the local County Veterans Service Office (page 182).

MILITARY FUNERAL HONORS PROGRAM

Military funeral honors are available within the State of California for honorably discharged Veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces.

What Types of Military Funeral Honors are Available?

At minimum, two service representatives will render honors, sound taps, fold the flag and present it to the next of kin. Additionally, a detail to fire volleys, a chaplain, and/or a detail to serve as pall-bearers may be provided depending on the desires of the surviving family and resources available. Frequently, funeral honors are rendered in concert with a local VSO.

The VSOs that may perform one or more of the above functions might include the Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Marine Corps League, etc.

Who Should I Contact?

Family members of the deceased Veteran should first notify their funeral director of their desire to have military funeral honors rendered at the service. The family should provide the funeral director with as much of the following as possible:

- » Name of Deceased;
- » Date of Birth;
- » Social Security Number;
- » DD Form 214 (Discharge Papers);
- » Other Proof of Veteran Status or Eligibility for Burial Honors.

Who Is Eligible?

Veterans are eligible for military funeral honors if they meet one of the following requirements:

- » Discharged from active duty under conditions other than dishonorable;
- » Completed at least one term of obligated service in the Selected Reserve under conditions other than dishonorable;
- » Enlisted on active duty at the time of death or in the Selected Reserve (drilling with a unit);
- » Discharged from the Selected Reserve due to disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty. The funeral director should contact one of the following Casualty Area Commands depending on the Veteran's branch of service:
 - **Army**
(North of Fresno)
Fort Lewis, WA
(888) 634-7496

(Fresno & South of Fresno)
Fort Huachuca, AZ
(800) 248-0759
 - **Marine Corps**
(866) 826-3628
 - **Navy**
(800) 326-9631
 - **Air Force**
Travis AFB Mortuary Affairs
Military Honors
(800) 586-8402

Casualty Assistance/ Benefits
(866) 819-7250
 - **Coast Guard**
(510) 437-5922

In the event the funeral director cannot make contact with one of the centers listed above, please contact:

Office of the Adjutant General

ATTN: Military Funeral
Honors Program
P.O. Box 269101
Sacramento, CA 95826-9101
(916) 854-3821

BURIAL AND PLOT-INTERMENT ALLOWANCES

USDVA burial allowances are partial reimbursements of an eligible Veteran's burial and funeral costs. When the cause of death is non-service related, the reimbursements are generally described as two payments: (1) a burial and funeral expense allowance, and (2) a plot or interment allowance.

Who Is Eligible?

A Veteran may be eligible for a USDVA burial allowance if:

- » the Veteran paid for a Veteran's burial or funeral; **and**
- » the Veteran has not been reimbursed by another government agency or some other source, such as the deceased Veteran's employer; **and**
- » the Veteran was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable.

In addition, at least one of the following conditions must be met:

- » the Veteran died because of a service-related disability; **or**
- » the Veteran was receiving USDVA pension or compensation at the time of death; **or**
- » the Veteran was entitled to receive USDVA pension or compensation, but decided not to reduce his/her military retirement or disability pay; **or**
- » the Veteran died while hospitalized by USDVA, or while receiving care under USDVA contract at a non-USDVA facility; **or**
- » the Veteran died while traveling under proper authorization and at USDVA expense to or from a specified place for the purpose of examination, treatment, or care; **or**
- » the Veteran had an original or reopened claim pending at the time of death and has been found entitled to compensation or pension from a date prior to the date of death; **or**
- » the Veteran died on or after October 9, 1996, while a patient at a USDVA-approved state nursing home.

HOW MUCH DOES USDVA PAY?

Service-Connected Death

If the Veteran died on or after September 11, 2001, the maximum USDVA service-connected burial allowance is \$2,000. If the Veteran died before September 11, 2001, the maximum service-connected burial allowance is \$1,500. If the Veteran is buried in a USDVA national cemetery, USDVA may reimburse some or all of the cost of transporting the deceased Veteran's remains.

Non-Service-Connected Death

- » If the Veteran died on or after October 1, 2015, USDVA will pay a \$300 burial allowance and \$747 for a plot.
- » If the Veteran died on or after October 1, 2014, but before October 1, 2015, USDVA will pay a \$300 burial allowance and \$745 for a plot.
- » If the Veteran died on or after October 1, 2013, but before October 1, 2014, USDVA will pay a \$300 burial allowance and \$734 for a plot.

Effective October 1, 2011, there are higher non-service-connected death rates payable if the Veteran was hospitalized by USDVA when he or she died.

- » If the Veteran died on or after October 1, 2015, USDVA will pay a \$747 burial allowance and \$747 for a plot.
- » If the a Veteran died on or after October 1, 2014, but before October 1, 2015, USDVA will pay a \$745 burial allowance and \$745 for a plot.
- » If the Veteran died on or after October 1, 2013, but before October 1, 2014, USDVA will pay a \$734 burial allowance and \$734 for a plot.

If the death occurred while a Veteran was properly hospitalized by USDVA, or under USDVA contracted nursing home care, some or all of the costs for transporting the Veteran's remains may be reimbursed.

Note: If the Veteran dies while traveling at USDVA expense for the purpose of examination, treatment or care, then USDVA will pay burial, funeral, plot or interment allowances, and transportation expenses.

How to Apply

To apply for burial benefits, complete USDVA Form 21-530, Application for Burial Benefits. Attach a copy of the Veteran's military discharge document (DD Form 214 or equivalent), death certificate, and funeral and burial bills. The bills should indicate they have paid them in full. The form can be downloaded at www.va.gov/vaforms or obtained from the local County Veterans Service Office (page 182).

PRESIDENTIAL MEMORIAL CERTIFICATES

A Presidential Memorial Certificate (PMC) is an embossed paper certificate, signed by the current President, to honor the memory of a honorably discharged and deceased Veteran.

USDVA administers the PMC program by preparing the certificates which bear the current President's signature expressing the country's grateful recognition of the Veteran's service in the U.S. Armed Forces. Eligible recipients include the next of kin and loved ones of an honorably discharged and deceased Veteran. More than one certificate may be provided.

Eligible recipients, or someone acting on their behalf, may apply for a PMC in person at any USDVA Regional Office or by U.S. mail. Requests cannot be sent via email. Enclose a copy of the Veteran's discharge and death certificate to verify eligibility, as requests cannot be processed without proof of honorable military service. Submit copies only, as original documents will not be returned. To apply for a Presidential Memorial Certificate, or if a request was submitted more than eight (8) weeks ago was not fulfilled, complete the application and submit again. Family members may also visit a local County Veterans Service Office (page 182) for assistance.

Download USDVA Form 40-0247, Presidential Memorial Certificate Request Form, at www.va.gov/vaforms. Instructions can be found at www.cem.va.gov/pmc.asp.

Mail or fax applications to:

Presidential Memorial Certificates (41A1C)

5109 Russell Road
Quantico, VA 22134-3903
(800) 455-7143 (Fax)

Note: Presidential Memorial Certificates are automatically ordered for the families of Veterans buried at national or state Veterans cemeteries.

HEADSTONES AND MARKERS

USDVA furnishes upon request, at no charge to the applicant, a government headstone or marker for the unmarked grave of any deceased eligible Veteran in any cemetery around the world, regardless of their date of death.

For eligible Veterans that died on or after November 1, 1990, USDVA may also provide a head stone or marker for graves that are already marked with a private headstone or marker. When the grave is already marked, applicants will have the option to apply for either a traditional headstone or marker, or the new medallion. Eligible Veterans are entitled to either a government-furnished headstone or marker, or the new medallion, but not both.

Flat markers in granite, marble, and bronze and upright headstones in granite and marble are available. The style chosen must be consistent with existing monuments at the place of burial. Niche markers are also available to mark columbaria used for inurnment of cremated remains.

When burial or memorialization is in a national cemetery, state Veterans cemetery, or military post/base cemetery, a headstone or marker will be ordered by the cemetery officials based on inscription information provided by the next-of-kin or authorized representative.

Spouses and dependents are not eligible for a government-furnished headstone or marker unless they are buried in a national cemetery, state Veterans cemetery, or military post/base cemetery.

Placement of headstones in a private cemetery may be ordered by completing USDVA Form 40-1330, Application for Standard Government Headstone or Marker. The application must be submitted by the next of kin or a representative, such as funeral director, cemetery official or Veterans counselor, along with copies of Veterans military discharge documents. Do not send original documents, as they will not be returned.

Types of Headstones and Markers Available:

- » **Upright Marble or Upright Granite**
- » **Flat Granite or Flat Marble**
- » **Bronze**
- » **Niche Bronze**
- » **Veterans' Medallion** (Each Service has own medallion)

Applications can be mailed to:

Memorial Programs Services (41A1)

Department of Veterans Affairs

5109 Russell Road

Quantico, VA 22134-3903

Applications can also be sent by fax to (800) 455-7143.

When using the toll free fax number, do not send a paper copy of the application through the mail.

Note: There is no charge for the headstone or marker itself; however, arrangements for placing it in a private cemetery are the applicant's responsibility and all setting fees are at private expense.

USDVA NATIONAL CEMETERY LOCATIONS

Bakersfield National Cemetery

Arvin, CA

Open to new casketed and
cremation interments.

(866) 632-1845

Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery

San Diego, CA

Open to columbarium interment of
cremated remains only.

(619) 553-2084

Golden Gate National Cemetery

San Bruno, CA

Closed to new burials.

(650) 589-7737

Los Angeles National Cemetery

Los Angeles, CA

Closed to new burials.

(310) 268-4675

(310) 268-4494

Miramar National Cemetery

San Diego, CA

Open to new casketed and
cremation interments.

(619) 553-6593

Riverside National Cemetery

Riverside, CA

Open to new casketed and
cremation interments.

(951) 653-8417

Sacramento Valley National Cemetery

Dixon, CA

Open to new casketed and
cremation interments.

(707) 693-2460

San Francisco National Cemetery

San Francisco, CA

Closed to new burials.

(650) 589-7737

(650) 589-1646

San Joaquin Valley National Cemetery

Santa Nella, CA

Open to new casketed and
cremation interments.

(209) 854-1040

DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) is a tax-free monthly monetary benefit payable to the surviving dependents of a deceased Veteran. Although it is usually benefit for a Veteran already service-connected by USDVA, DIC may also be authorized for certain non-service-connected deaths. There is no minimum active duty service requirement for DIC claims; however, there may be a 90-day length-of-service requirement if the cause of death was a chronic disease.

DIC FOR SURVIVING SPOUSE AND CHILDREN

As with disability compensation for a Veteran, DIC for a surviving spouse and/or surviving children is not income-based. It is the benefit payable if the Veteran died while on active duty, in line of duty and not due to willful misconduct; or, when death was after service, if a service-connected disability either directly caused, or contributed substantially to and materially hastened, the Veteran's death.

It is not required that service-connection have been established prior to the Veteran's death for the condition which caused or contributed to death. The rules and procedures for establishing service connection for a Veteran's death are essentially similar to the rules for establishing a service-connected disability for a living Veteran, with due consideration of the finality of the evidence in a death claim.

Since 1978, DIC has been payable as if the death were service-connected when a Veteran who had been rated totally disabled from service-connected causes (whether 100% or by reason of individual un-employability) for ten continuous years or longer at the time of death dies from any cause other than willful misconduct. If the Veteran was out of service less than ten years, DIC is payable if a total disability rating was in effect for a period of at least five continuous years, from the date the Veteran left service to the date of death. Since November 30, 1999, DIC is payable to the surviving spouse and/or children of a former prisoner of war who was rated totally disabled from service-connected causes for at least one year at the time of death, and who died from any cause (other than willful misconduct) after September 30, 1999.

DIC is also payable as if the death was service-connected if the Veteran dies as a result of USDVA examination, hospital care, medical or surgical treatment, or Vocational Rehabilitation; or if a disability arising from such circumstances either directly causes, or contributes substantially to and materially hastens, the Veteran's death.

DIC rates payable for a surviving spouse and/or children are dependent on a number of factors, including when the Veteran died and the number and status of any dependent children.

Payments for Deaths on or after January 1, 1993

Surviving spouses of Veterans who died on or after January 1, 1993, receive a basic rate, plus additional payments for dependent children, for the aid and attendance of another person who is a patient in a nursing home, requires the regular assistance of another person, or is permanently housebound. If the Veteran was totally disabled for eight continuous years prior to death, the surviving spouse may receive an additional \$266.32.

DIC Payment Rates for Surviving Spouses

(Veterans who died on or after January 1, 1993)

ALLOWANCES	MONTHLY RATE
Basic Payment Rate	\$1,254.19
ADDITIONAL ALLOWANCES	
If Veteran was in receipt of or entitled to service-connected compensation rated totally disabled at the time of death for a period of 8 continuous years preceding the death and the surviving spouse was married to the Veteran for those 8 years.	\$266.32
Each Dependent Child	\$310.71
Aid & Attendance	\$310.71
Housebound	\$145.55

Payments for Deaths Prior to January 1, 1993

Surviving spouses of Veterans who died prior to January 1, 1993, receive an amount based on the deceased's military pay grade.

DIC Payment Rates for Surviving Spouses

(Veterans who died before January 1, 1993)

ENLISTED	RATE	WARRANT OFFICER	RATE	OFFICER	RATE
E-1	\$1,254.19	W-1	\$1,324.39	0-1	\$1,324.39
E-2	\$1,254.19	W-2	\$1,377.03	0-2	\$1,369.81
E-3	\$1,254.19	W-3	\$1,417.29	0-3	\$1,463.74
E-4	\$1,254.19	W-4	\$1,499.87	0-4	\$1,551.48
E-5	\$1,254.19			0-5	\$1,707.35
E-6	\$1,254.19			0-6	\$1,925.16
E-7	\$1,297.55			0-7	\$2,077.93
E-8	\$1,369.81			0-8	\$2,282.32
E-9	\$1,428.64			0-9	\$2,441.29
				0-10	\$2,873.80

The phrase "entitled to receive compensation" also applies if a total disability rating had been denied during the Veteran's lifetime, the denial was either due to clear and unmistakable error, or new and material evidence in the form of additional relevant service records was submitted (either before or after the Veteran's death) which would allow retroactive assignment of a total disability rating for the requisite period of time. The enhanced rate would not be payable if the spouse was not married to the Veteran for the entire eight-year period or if the Veteran had not applied for benefits (or if the Veteran was out of service less than eight years at the time of death).

Additional amounts are also payable to or for a disabled surviving spouse who is housebound or who is in need of regular aid and attendance, as set out in 38 CFR § 3.351. Beginning January 1, 2005, a surviving spouse with one or more children under age 18 will be paid an additional \$310.71 per month for a transitional period of 24

months from the date entitlement to DIC begins or until the last child reaches age 18, whichever occurs first. This amount is in addition to any other DIC rates payable to the surviving spouse.

If there is an eligible surviving spouse, the Veteran's minor children are considered to be additional dependents on the spouse's award. If the children are in the spouse's custody, they are included on the spouse's basic award. A child not in the spouse's custody will be paid his or her share of DIC on a separate award.

If there is no eligible surviving spouse, there are specified rates for the Veteran's children, in equal shares, up to the time of each child's 18th birthday. Upon reaching age 18, each child attains independent entitlement to DIC without regard to whether there is an eligible surviving spouse. DIC may only be paid to or for a child after age 18 if the child is attending an approved educational institution or is determined to be permanently incapable of self-support (helpless). DIC for school attendance may not be paid concurrently with Dependents' and Survivors' Education Assistance under USDVA Chapter 35; however, if the child has been found to be "helpless," there is no restriction against concurrent payment, since in this case the DIC is not paid because of school attendance.

How Do I Apply?

To apply, complete and submit the application for DIC for a surviving spouse and/or children using USDVA Form 21-534EZ, Application for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, Death Pension and/or Accrued Benefits. For assistance, contact the local County Veterans Service Office (page 182).

PARENTS' DIC

DIC may be payable to a Veteran's surviving parent(s) if the Veteran's death is service-connected or is compensable by USDVA. Parents' DIC is income-based; however, the income limits are adjusted periodically. All of the parents' family income from all sources is counted unless specifically excluded. Medical and certain other expenses, paid by the parent and/or family and not reimbursed from any source, may be deducted from otherwise-countable income to reduce the levels used for determining pension rates payable. The adjusted Parents' DIC limits are posted on USDVA's website and can be found at http://benefits.va.gov/pension/current_rates_parents_dic_pen.asp.

A parent's marital status is not a factor in eligibility but does affect the applicable income limit(s): different income limits apply according to whether one or both parents survive and, if both, whether they are married to each other or have or have not remarried. Net worth is not a factor for parents' DIC.

Additional amounts are payable if one or both parents are in need of Aid & Attendance. If the amount of the total annual benefit payable is less than 4% of the maximum rate, payments will be made semi-annually unless monthly payments are specifically requested. When DIC has been (or will be) awarded, if either parent is awarded any amount from a judicial proceeding, settlement, or compromise by reason of the Veteran's death, DIC payments to or for that parent must be withheld until the full amount of such award has been recovered.

The application for parents' DIC is USDVA Form 21-535, Application for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation by Parent(s). Please contact your local County Veterans Service Office (page 182) for assistance. DIC claims from surviving dependent parents of Veterans who die while on active duty are under the initial jurisdiction of USDVA Regional Office and Insurance Center Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; all others are processed by USDVA's Regional Office with jurisdiction based on the Veteran's address at time of death, or the Regional Office having jurisdiction for the address of the surviving spouse and/or children (if any). If you are not sure which regional office has jurisdiction over your claim, submit your request to nearest USDVA Regional Office.

ESTABLISHING DEPENDENCY

It is not required that a dependent have been recognized prior to the Veteran's death. Note that in certain cases there are time limits for recognition of a surviving spouse for benefits purposes. In general, when the marriage occurred after service, the surviving spouse must have been married to the Veteran for at least one year prior to the Veteran's death or for any length of time if a child was born of the marriage or was born to them before the marriage.

Alternatively, for service-connected deaths only, the marriage may have been for any length of time if it took place within fifteen years after the end of the period of service during which the condition which caused or contributed to the Veteran's death was incurred or aggravated. For example, for a Vietnam-era Veteran, the marriage would have to have been before May 7, 1990, fifteen years after the end of

the Vietnam Era. There are no marriage length requirements if the marriage occurred while the Veteran was in service, or before service, or if a married service member dies while on active duty.

Even if the marriage between the surviving spouse and the Veteran cannot be recognized for USDVA purposes because of some legal impediment, it may still be “deemed valid” for USDVA benefits purposes providing several requirements are all met:

1. The purported marriage occurred one year or more before the Veteran died or existed for any length of time if a child was born of the purported marriage or was born to them before such marriage;
2. The claimant entered into the marriage without knowledge of the impediment;
3. The claimant continuously cohabited with the Veteran from the date of the marriage to the date of the Veteran’s death; and
4. No claim has been filed by a legal surviving spouse who has been found entitled to gratuitous death benefits (other than accrued monthly benefits covering a period prior to the Veteran’s death).

If the Veteran and the surviving spouse had lived in a common-law relationship, then even if such relationship was not legally recognized in their state of residence, it also may still be “deemed valid” for USDVA benefits purposes if all of the above requirements are satisfied.

Remarriage of a surviving spouse generally terminates eligibility for DIC. Eligibility may be reestablished if the remarriage is terminated by death, divorce, or annulment. Beginning January 1, 2004, a surviving spouse age 57 or older who is eligible for DIC and related benefits and who remarries will not lose any eligibility because of such remarriage.

CHAPTER
03



HEALTHCARE



USDVA HEALTHCARE

USDVA operates the nation's largest integrated healthcare system with more than 1,400 care sites including hospitals, community clinics, nursing homes, domiciliary, readjustment counseling centers, and various other facilities. There are more than 100 USDVA facilities in California.

Basic Eligibility

A person who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable may qualify for USDVA healthcare benefits. Reservists and National Guard members may also qualify for USDVA healthcare benefits if they were called to active duty (other than for training only) by a federal order and completed the full period for which they were called or ordered to active duty.

Minimum Duty Requirements

To be eligible, Veterans who enlisted after September 7, 1980, or who entered active duty after October 16, 1981, must have served 24 continuous months or the full period for which they were called to active duty. This minimum-duty requirement may not apply to Veterans discharged for hardship, early out, or a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty.

Certain USDVA benefits require service during wartime. Under these laws, USDVA recognizes the following war periods:

» **World War II**

December 7, 1941, through December 31, 1946, inclusive. If the Veteran was in service on December 31, 1946, continuous service before July 26, 1947 is considered World War II service.

» **Korean War**

June 27, 1950, through January 31, 1955, inclusive.

» **Vietnam War**

February 28, 1961, through May 7, 1975, inclusive, in the case of a Veteran who served in the Republic of Vietnam during that period. August 5, 1964, through May 7, 1975, is inclusive in all other cases.

» **Gulf War**

August 2, 1990, through a date to be set by law or Presidential Proclamation.

Enrollment

For most Veterans, entry into USDVA's Healthcare System begins by applying for enrollment. While some Veterans are not required to enroll due to their special eligibility status, all Veterans—including those who have special eligibility—are encouraged to apply for enrollment. Enrollment helps USDVA determine the number of potential Veterans who may seek USDVA healthcare services and is a very important part of their planning efforts.

Note: Enrollment in USDVA's Healthcare System does not necessarily mean that a Veteran has a service-connected disability.

To apply, complete USDVA Form 10-10EZ, Application for Health Benefits. This form can be obtained from any USDVA healthcare facility or regional benefits office, downloaded at www.va.gov/vaforms, or requested by calling (877) 222-VETS (8387) or contacting the County Veterans Service Office (page 182).

Once enrolled, Veterans can receive treatment at a USDVA healthcare facility anywhere in the country. Veterans enrolled in the USDVA healthcare system are afforded privacy rights under federal law. The following four categories of Veterans are not required to enroll, but are urged to do so to permit better planning of health resources:

- » Veterans with a service-connected disability of 50 percent or more;
- » Veterans seeking care for a disability the military determined was incurred or aggravated in the line of duty, but which USDVA has not yet rated, within 12 months of discharge;
- » Veterans seeking care for a service-connected disability only;
- » Veterans seeking registry examinations (Depleted Uranium, Ionizing Radiation, Agent Orange, Gulf War/Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom Veterans).

PRIORITY GROUPS

During enrollment, each Veteran is assigned to a priority group. USDVA uses priority groups to balance demand for USDVA healthcare enrollment with available resources. Changes in availability of resources may reduce the number of priority groups USDVA can enroll. If this occurs, USDVA will publicize the changes and notify affected enrollees. Priority groups are defined as follows:

Priority Group 1

- » Veterans with USDVA-rated service-connected disabilities 50% or more disabling.
- » Veterans determined by USDVA to be unemployable due to service-connected conditions.

Priority Group 2

- » Veterans with USDVA-rated service-connected disabilities 30% or 40% disabling.

Priority Group 3

- » Veterans who are Former Prisoners of War.
- » Veterans awarded a Purple Heart medal.
- » Veterans whose discharge was for a disability that was incurred or aggravated in the line of duty.
- » Veterans with USDVA-rated service-connected disabilities 10% or 20% disabling.
- » Veterans awarded special eligibility classification under Title 38, U.S.C., § 1151, "benefits for individuals disabled by treatment or vocational rehabilitation".
- » Veterans awarded the Medal of Honor.

Priority Group 4

- » Veterans who are receiving aid and attendance or housebound benefits from USDVA.
- » Veterans who have been determined by USDVA to be catastrophically disabled.

Priority Group 5

- » Nonservice-connected Veterans and noncompensable service-connected Veterans rated 0% disabled by USDVA with annual income below USDVA's and geographically (based on your resident zip code) adjusted income limits.
- » Veterans receiving USDVA pension benefits.
- » Veterans eligible for Medicaid programs.

Priority Group 6

- » Compensable 0% service-connected Veterans.
- » Veterans exposed to Ionizing Radiation during atmospheric testing or during the occupation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.
- » Project 112/SHAD participants.
- » Veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam between January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975.
- » Veterans of the Persian Gulf War who served between August 2, 1990, and November 11, 1998.
- » Veterans who served on active duty at Camp Lejeune for not fewer than 30 days beginning August 1, 1953 and ending December 31, 1987.*
- » Veterans who served in a theater of combat operations after November 11, 1998, as follows:
 - Currently enrolled Veterans and new enrollees who were discharged from active duty on or after January 28, 2003, are eligible for the enhanced benefits for 5 years post discharge.
 - Combat Veterans who were discharged between January 2009 and January 2011, and did not enroll in USDVA health care during their 5 year period of eligibility have an additional one year to enroll and receive care. The additional one-year eligibility period began February 12, 2015, with the signing of the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for America Veterans Act.

Note: At the end of this enhanced enrollment priority group placement time period Veterans will be assigned to the highest Priority Group their unique eligibility status at that time qualifies for.

**While eligible for Priority Group 6; until system changes are implemented you would be assigned to Priority Group 7 or 8 depending on your income.*

Priority Group 7

- » Veterans with gross household income below the geographically-adjusted income limits for their resident location and who agree to pay copays.

Priority Group 8

- » Veterans with gross household income above USDVA and the geographically-adjusted income limits for their resident location and who agrees to pay copays.

Veterans eligible for enrollment:

Non-compensable 0% service-connected:

- » **Sub Priority A:** Enrolled as of January 16, 2003, and who have remained enrolled since that date and/or placed in this sub priority due to changed eligibility status.
- » **Sub Priority B:** Enrolled on or after June 15, 2009 whose income exceeds the current USDVA or geographic income limits by 10% or less.

Nonservice-connected and:

- » **Sub Priority C:** Enrolled as of January 16, 2003, and who have remained enrolled since that date and/or placed in this sub priority due to changed eligibility status.
- » **Sub Priority D:** Enrolled on or after June 15, 2009 whose income exceeds the current USDVA or geographic income limits by 10% or less.

Veterans not eligible for enrollment:

Veterans not meeting the criteria above:

- » **Sub Priority E:** Non-compensable 0% service-connected (eligible for care of their service-connected condition only)
- » **Sub Priority G:** Nonservice-connected

FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT

Most Veterans who do not receive a USDVA disability compensation or pension payment or have a USDVA special eligibility, such as a recently discharged deployed Veteran or a Purple Heart recipient, must complete a financial assessment when applying for enrollment to determine their eligibility for enrollment and copay responsibility for USDVA health care and/or prescription medication. These Veterans must provide their gross household income (which includes spouse and dependent children) for the prior calendar year. This income information will be used to determine the Veteran's enrollment status and copay responsibility for USDVA health care and/or prescription medication.

As of March 24, 2014, most Veterans are no longer required to complete the annual financial assessment known as a Means Test. Instead, USDVA will obtain income information from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and Social Security Administration (SSA), and will contact the Veterans only if the information received indicates a change in their USDVA health benefits may be appropriate. The elimination of the annual means test frees enrolled Veterans to enjoy their USDVA health care benefits without worrying about completing annual income assessment forms. Under the new process, Veterans will be required to have one financial assessment on file – their current file if they're already enrolled, or the assessment they provide when they apply. That assessment will be maintained and monitored by USDVA and updated only as substantial income changes occur.

Exceptions are:

- » Veterans who do not receive a USDVA disability or pension payment or who have a USDVA special eligibility such as a Purple Heart must report their total gross household income (includes spouse and dependents, if applicable) information when applying for USDVA health care enrollment.
- » Veterans who are eligible for enrollment only because their income is below USDVA income limits will:
 - Be still required to complete a means test when applying for USDVA health care enrollment.
 - Not be required to complete annual means test updates.
 - Be required to complete a means test at their next health care visit if their means test status is "Required".

- » Veterans who complete a financial assessment to determine their eligibility for cost-free medications or Beneficiary Travel only will still be required to submit their income on an annual basis.

USDVA will receive income information from IRS and SSA, and will contact the Veteran only when the information received indicates a change in USDVA health benefits may be appropriate. Consistent with USDVA's current income verification processes, Veterans will still have access to care during the period of review should they dispute what IRS or SSA says about their income.

There is no change in USDVA's long-standing policy to provide no-cost care to indigent Veterans, Veterans with catastrophic medical conditions, Veterans with a disability rating of 50 percent or higher or for conditions that are officially rated as "service-connected."

USDVA encourages Veterans to continue to report changes in their income information, as well as their personal information, such as address, phone numbers, dependents, next of kin and health insurance, using USDVA Form 1010EZR available online or at their local medical center.

The income threshold table can be found at nationalincomelimits.vaftl.us.

RECENTLY DISCHARGED DEPLOYED VETERANS

Every USDVA Medical Center has a team ready to welcome service members who deployed to a war zone and assist with coordinating medical care. Generally, this section applies to Veterans who served in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), Operation New Dawn (OND), or other combat zones. OEF/OIF/OND Veterans can receive cost free medical care for any condition related to their service in the Iraq/Afghanistan theater for five years after the date of their discharge or release.

USDVA provides health care services and community living care for any condition possibly related to the Veteran's service in the theater of operations and enrollment in Priority Group 6, unless eligible for enrollment in a higher priority group.

Combat Veterans who were discharged or released from active service on or after January 28, 2003, are eligible to enroll in USDVA health care system for 5 years from the date of discharge or release.

For more information about the various programs available for recent returning service members, visit the Returning Service Members website at www.oefoif.va.gov.

HOME IMPROVEMENTS AND STRUCTURAL ALTERATIONS

USDVA provides up to \$6,800 lifetime benefit for Veterans and Servicemembers who have a service-connected condition or Veterans who have a non-service connected condition rated 50% or more service-connected. Lifetime benefit up to \$2,000 may be provided for Veterans who have a non-service connected condition.

Home Improvement and Structural Alterations grants provide for medically necessary improvements and/or structural changes to the Veteran's residence for the following purposes:

1. Allowing entrance to or exit from the Veteran's residence;
2. Use of essential lavatory and sanitary facilities;
3. Allowing accessibility to kitchen or bathroom sinks or counters;
4. Improving entrance paths or driveways in immediate area of the home to facilitate access to the home by the Veteran;
5. Improving plumbing or electrical systems made necessary due to installation of dialysis equipment in the home.

For application information, please contact the prosthetic representative at the nearest USDVA Medical Facility (page 103).

EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE IN U.S. NON-USDVA FACILITIES

In the case of medical emergencies, USDVA may reimburse or pay for non-USDVA medical care not previously authorized that is provided to certain eligible Veterans when USDVA or other federal facilities are not feasibly available. This benefit may be dependent upon other conditions, such as notification to USDVA, the nature of treatment sought, the status of the Veteran, the presence of other healthcare insurance, and third party liability.

There are different regulatory requirements that may affect USDVA payment and Veteran liability for the cost of care; therefore, it is very important that the nearest USDVA medical facility that provides emergency services is notified as soon as possible after emergency treatment is sought. If emergency inpatient services are required, USDVA will assist in transferring the Veteran to a USDVA facility, if available. For additional information, contact the nearest USDVA medical facility (page 103).

ONLINE ACCESS TO USDVA HEALTH INFORMATION AND SERVICES

My HealtheVet offers Veterans, active duty service members and their dependents, and caregivers anywhere, anytime access to USDVA healthcare information and services via the internet. My HealtheVet is a free, online personal health record that allows Veterans to become more informed by accessing trusted and secure health and benefits information at their convenience.

With My HealtheVet, Veterans can access:

- » USDVA prescription refill services
- » USDVA benefits services
- » Local USDVA events activities
- » Personal health journals
- » Vitals tracking graphing
- » Military health history
- » Activity/food journals
- » Healthy living centers
- » USDVA news feature stories
- » Disease condition centers
- » Trusted health information

To register, visit www.myhealth.va.gov, and begin making more informed decisions in collaboration with healthcare providers.

VETERANS IDENTIFICATION CARD

USDVA provides eligible Veterans a Veterans Identification Card (VIC) for use at USDVA Medical Facilities. VIC protects the privacy of Veterans' sensitive information, as it no longer displays the social security number or date of birth on the front of the card. The VIC displays the Veteran's name, picture, and special eligibility indicators such as service-connected disabled, Purple Heart, and Former POW, if applicable, on the front

of the card. Only Veterans who are eligible for USDVA medical benefits will receive the card.

For additional information on USDVA healthcare, visit www.va.gov/health. To locate a USDVA Medical Center, Outpatient Clinic, or Vet Center, see (page 103).

CAREGIVER PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

USDVA has long advocated for caregivers as vital partners in providing care worthy of the sacrifices by America's Veterans and service members. Each USDVA Medical Center contains a designated caregiver support point of contact to coordinate caregiver activities and serve as a resource expert for Veterans, their families, and USDVA providers. Several programs are available for all Veteran caregivers including:

- » **In-Home and Community Based Care:** Skilled home healthcare, homemaker/home health aide services, community adult day healthcare and home based primary care;
- » **Respite Care:** Designed to relieve the family caregiver from the constant burden of caring for a chronically ill or disabled Veteran at home. Services can include in-home care, a short stay in an institutional setting or adult day healthcare;
- » **Caregiver Education and Training Programs:** Multiple training opportunities which include pre-discharge care instruction and specialized caregiver programs in multiple severe traumas such as Traumatic Brain Injury, spinal cord injury/disorders, and rehabilitation for the blind. USDVA has a caregiver assistance healthy living center on My HealtheVet; www.myhealth.va.gov, as well as caregiver information on USDVA's health page, www.va.gov/health/default.asp. Both websites include information on USDVA and community resources and caregiver health and wellness;
- » **Family Support Services:** Face-to-face and telephone support groups, that can include family counseling, spiritual and pastoral care, family leisure and recreational activities and temporary lodging in Fisher Houses;
- » **Other Benefits:** Durable medical equipment and prosthetic and sensory aides to improve function, financial assistance with home modification to improve access and mobility, and transportation assistance for some Veterans to and from medical appointments.

President Barack Obama signed the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010 into law. Title I of the Act allows USDVA to provide unprecedented benefits to eligible caregivers who support the Veterans who have given so much for this Nation. The law distinguishes between Veterans who incurred or aggravated a serious injury or illness in the line of duty on or after September 11, 2001 (post-9/11 Veterans), and our Veterans whose injuries or illnesses were incurred prior to September 11, 2001 (pre-9/11 Veterans). Pre- and post-9/11 Veteran caregivers are eligible for the following benefits:

- » General caregivers for both pre- and post-9/11 Veterans may be eligible to receive training in how to provide caregiver services, counseling and other services, and information about supportive services available from other public, private and nonprofit agencies in person and online;
- » Family caregivers may be eligible for all general caregiver benefits and for ongoing technical support, counseling, lodging, subsistence, and travel benefits;
- » Primary caregivers may be eligible to receive these same benefits, as well as a stipend, mental health services, and access to healthcare coverage, if they are not already entitled to care or services under a health plan contract, including Medicare, Medicaid or worker's compensation. Primary caregivers must be a family member or a person who resides with the Veteran;
- » Respite services of not less than 30 days per year are made available to primary and family caregivers while attending appointments or undergoing caregiver training for post-9/11 Veterans;
- » All caregivers of both pre- and post-9/11 Veterans are eligible to receive respite care under USDVA's existing program, which provides up to 30 days per year.

For more information on caregiver services, contact the Caregiver Support line at (855) 260-3274 or visit www.caregiver.va.gov. For answers to questions on caregiver eligibility or to apply for benefits, contact USDVA Health Administration Center at (877) 733-7927 or www.va.gov/hac or contact the County Veterans Service Office (page 182).

DEPENDENTS AND SURVIVORS HEALTHCARE

Health Care Benefits

Under the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA), certain dependents and survivors can receive reimbursement for most medical expenses, including inpatient, outpatient, mental health, prescription medication, skilled nursing care, and durable medical equipment.

To be eligible for CHAMPVA, an individual cannot be eligible for TRICARE (the medical program for civilian dependents provided by DoD) and must be one of the following:

- » The spouse or child of a Veteran who USDVA has rated permanently and totally disabled due to a service-connected disability;
- » The surviving spouse or child of a Veteran who died from a service-connected disability or who, at the time of death, was rated permanently and totally disabled;
- » The surviving spouse or child of a Veteran who died on active duty service and in the line of duty, not due to personal misconduct. However, in most of these cases, these family members are eligible for TRICARE not CHAMPVA.

A surviving spouse under age 55 who remarries loses CHAMPVA eligibility on midnight of the date of remarriage. They may re-establish eligibility if the remarriage ends by death, divorce, or annulment effective the first day of the month following the termination of the remarriage or December 1, 1999, whichever is later. A surviving spouse who remarries after age 55 does not lose eligibility upon remarriage. For those who have Medicare entitlement, CHAMPVA is secondary payer to Medicare. For more information, call (800) 733-8387 or visit www.va.gov/purchasedcare/programs/dependents/champva/index.asp.

Many USDVA healthcare facilities provide services to CHAMPVA beneficiaries under the CHAMPVA In-house Treatment Initiative (CITI) program. Contact the nearest USDVA healthcare facility to determine if it participates. Those who use a CITI facility incur no cost for services; however, services are provided on a space-available basis after the needs of Veterans are met. Not all services are available at all times. The coverage of services is dependent upon the CHAMPVA benefit coverage. CHAMPVA beneficiaries who are covered by Medicare cannot use CITI.

Children Born With Spina Bifida to Certain Vietnam or Korean Veterans

The Spina Bifida (SB) program is a comprehensive healthcare benefits program for birth children of certain Vietnam and Korea Veterans who have been diagnosed with SB (except spina bifida occulta). The SB program provides reimbursement for medical services, pharmacy, durable medical equipment and supplies. For more information about SB healthcare benefits, call (888) 820-1756 or visit www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/claims-special-birth_defects.asp.

Children of Women Vietnam Veterans Born With Certain Birth Defects

The Children of Women Vietnam Veterans (CWVV) Health Care Program is a federal health benefits program for children of women Vietnam Veterans born with certain birth defects. The CWVV Program provides reimbursement for medical care related to covered birth defects and conditions associated with the covered birth defect except for spina bifida. For more information about benefits for children with birth defects, call (888) 820-1756 or visit www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/claims-special-birth_defects.asp, and select Spina Bifida/Children of Women Vietnam Veterans.

PRESUMPTIVE HEALTH CONDITIONS

Normally, claimants must show proof of relationship between service and the condition being claimed; however, USDVA presumes that specific disabilities diagnosed in certain Veterans were caused by their military service because of unique circumstances in that particular geographic location.

What Conditions are Presumed to be Caused by Military Service?

Traditionally, there are three categories Veterans may qualify for a service-connected disability based on a condition to be presumed by military service. These groups are Veterans who were diagnosed with a chronic disease such as arthritis, diabetes, or hypertension within one year of being released from active duty; Veterans diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease, at any time after discharge or release from qualifying active service in which they have continuous service of 90 days or more; and Veterans who served in the conflicts/geographic regions associated with the diagnosed conditions identified below:

Former Prisoners Of War

Imprisoned for any length of time, and disability at least 10 percent disabling:

- » Psychosis
- » Any of the anxiety states
- » Dysthymic disorder or depressive neurosis
- » Cold injury
- » Post-traumatic osteoarthritis
- » Heart disease and complications
- » Stroke and complications
- » Osteoporosis, on or after October 10, 2008, when Posttraumatic Stress Disorder is diagnosed

Imprisoned for at least 30 days, and disability at least 10 percent disabling:

- » Avitaminosis
- » Beriberi
- » Chronic dysentery
- » Helminthiasis
- » Malnutrition (including optic atrophy)
- » Pellagra and any other nutritional deficiency
- » Any other nutritional deficiency
- » Irritable bowel syndrome
- » Peptic ulcer disease
- » Peripheral neuropathy, except where directly related to infectious causes
- » Cirrhosis of the liver
- » Osteoporosis, on or after September 28, 2009

Vietnam Era Veterans (Exposed To Agent Orange)

Served in the Republic of Vietnam between January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975; Blue Water Veterans; U.S. Navy and Coast Guard Ships in Vietnam; Korean Demilitarized Zone between April 1, 1968, and August 31, 1971; Thailand Military bases between February 28, 1961, and May 7, 1975; Herbicide tests and storage outside Vietnam; and Agent Orange residue on airplanes used in the Vietnam war:

- » AL amyloidosis
- » Chloracne or other acne form disease similar to chloracne
- » Porphyria cutanea tarda
- » Soft-tissue sarcoma (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma or mesothelioma)
- » Hodgkin's disease
- » Multiple myeloma
- » Respiratory cancers (lung, bronchus, larynx, trachea)
- » Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- » Prostate cancer
- » Acute and sub-acute peripheral neuropathy
- » Type 2 diabetes
- » Chronic B-cell leukemia
- » Ischemic heart disease
- » Parkinson's disease

Atomic Veterans (Exposed To Ionizing Radiation)

Participated in atmospheric nuclear testing; occupied or was a prisoner of war in Hiroshima or Nagasaki; service before February 1, 1992, at a diffusion plant in Paducah, Kentucky, Portsmouth, Ohio, or Oak Ridge, Tennessee; or service before January 1, 1974, at Amchitka Island, Alaska:

- » Leukemia (except for chronic lymphocytic leukemia)

- » Cancers of the bile ducts, bone, brain, breast, colon, esophagus, gall bladder, liver (primary site, but not if cirrhosis or hepatitis B is indicated), lung (including bronchiolo-alveolar cancer), pancreas, pharynx, ovary, salivary gland, small intestine, stomach, thyroid, urinary tract (kidney/renal, pelvis, urinary bladder, and urethra)
- » Multiple myeloma
- » Lymphomas (other than Hodgkin's disease)

Gulf War Veterans (Undiagnosed Illness)

Served in the Southwest Asia Theater of Operations during the Gulf War with condition at least 10 percent disabling by December 31, 2016. Included are medically unexplained chronic multi-symptom illnesses defined by a cluster of signs or symptoms that have existed for six months or more, such as:

- » Chronic fatigue syndrome
- » Fibromyalgia
- » Functional gastrointestinal disorders
- » Any diagnosed or undiagnosed illness that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines warrants a presumption of service connection.

Signs or symptoms of an undiagnosed illness include: fatigue, skin symptoms, headaches, muscle pain, joint pain, neurological symptoms, respiratory symptoms, sleep disturbance, GI symptoms, cardiovascular symptoms, weight loss, and menstrual disorders.

USDVA also has regulations concerning presumptive service connection for certain diseases among service in Southwest Asia beginning on or after the start of the first Gulf War on August 2, 1990, through the conflict in Iraq and on or after September 19, 2001, in Afghanistan.

The area defined in Persian Gulf Service encompasses Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the neutral zone between Iraq and Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, the Gulf of Aden, the Gulf of Oman, the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Sea, the Red Sea, and the airspace above these locations.

There are nine specific infectious diseases associated with military service during this period that are prevalent in Southwest Asia, have been diagnosed among U.S. troops

servicing there, and are known to cause long-term adverse health effects:

- » Brucellosis
- » Nontyphoid Salmonella
- » *Campylobacter jejuni*
- » Shigella
- » *Coxiella burnetii* (Q fever)
- » Visceral leishmaniasis
- » Malaria
- » West Nile virus
- » *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*

Veterans who have been diagnosed with any of the above conditions or were exposed to any herbicides throughout their military service should contact the local County Veterans Service Office (page 182) for assistance.

DEPLETED URANIUM

What Is Depleted Uranium?

Depleted Uranium (DU) is a byproduct of the uranium enrichment process that makes nuclear fuel. Depleted Uranium has approximately 60 percent of the radioactivity and the same chemical toxicity as natural uranium, which is present in small amounts in our environment and to which we are all exposed through our food and water. In the early 1960s, the U.S. began testing DU for projectile use because of its ability to penetrate armor made with less dense metals.

When Is Depleted Uranium Hazardous?

Depleted Uranium is a chemical and radiation health hazard primarily if internalized, such as through embedded fragments, contaminated wounds, and inhalation or ingestion. When a projectile made with DU penetrates a vehicle, small pieces of DU are created that can scatter and become embedded in muscle and soft tissue. In addition to DU wounds, service members exposed to DU in struck vehicles may inhale or swallow small airborne DU particles. Simply riding in a vehicle with DU weapons or DU shielding will not expose a service member to significant amounts of DU or external radiation.

What are the Health Effects of Depleted Uranium

The potential for health effects from internal exposure is related to the amount of

DU that enters a person's body. If DU enters the body, it may remain in the body. Studies show high doses may especially affect the kidneys. Researchers and clinicians continue to monitor the health of these Veterans. To learn more about results of medical and scientific research and other DU topics, visit the Department of Defense Depleted Uranium Library at fhp.osd.mil/du.

Who May Be At Risk?

Veterans who served in a combat zone on or after August 1990 or in an area that DU was used may have been exposed. DU exposure has been divided into three categories:

1. **Level 1:** Personnel who were in, on, or near combat vehicles when they were struck by DU rounds or who entered immediately after to attempt rescue;
2. **Level 2:** Personnel who routinely entered DU-damaged vehicles or fought fires involving DU munitions;
3. **Level 3:** Personnel involved in all other DU exposures.

Depleted Uranium Follow-Up Program

USDVA's Depleted Uranium Follow-up Program was established at the Baltimore USDVA Medical Center to study health effects of DU exposure and to provide recommendations for treatment, including surgical removal of embedded fragments. The program for Veterans exposed to DU from embedded fragments involves detailed physical exams and clinical tests of organ system function.

In addition, a screening program for other Veterans concerned about DU exposure during combat involves an exposure questionnaire and a mail-in, 24-hour urine test for DU.

Veterans who believe they were exposed to harmful Depleted Uranium conditions, such as being in a vehicle when it was struck by friendly fire or in a vehicle or building after it had been struck by friendly fire, and would like to be screened for DU exposure, contact the nearest USDVA Medical Center (page 103). They may be eligible to be awarded a service-connected disability. For information on the DU Follow-Up Program, visit www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/depleted_uranium/followup_program.asp.

HEARING LOSS AND TINNITUS

What is Hearing Loss?

Hearing loss is damage to the ear(s) that impairs an individual's ability to perceive sound. The impairment ranges from mild hearing loss to total hearing loss and can either be temporary or permanent depending on the cause.

What are the Different Forms of Hearing Loss?

There are three main forms of hearing loss: conductive hearing loss, sensorineural hearing loss and mixed hearing loss. Conductive hearing loss is caused by damage to the outer or middle ear and can usually be repaired or will heal over time, making it unlikely to result in total hearing loss. Sensorineural hearing loss is caused by damage to the inner ear (cochlea) or the retrocochlea nerves (nerves that connect the ear to the brain). Unlike conductive hearing loss, sensorineural hearing loss is often total and irreparable. Mixed hearing loss is a combination of conductive and sensorineural hearing loss. It can either be caused at once, or be caused by a buildup of ailments to the ear.

How are the Types of Hearing Loss Different?

Conductive hearing loss is usually caused by temporary factors. Many illnesses or some drugs, such as aspirin, can cause partial hearing loss as a symptom or a side-effect. Other causes can be foreign objects caught in the ear, malformation of the outer ear from birth or accident, tumors growing within the ear or even something as simple as a buildup of ear wax. Sensorineural hearing loss can be caused by the same things as conductive hearing loss. It can also be suffered after noise exposure, head trauma or simply the natural aging process. Mixed hearing loss is simply a combination of conductive and sensorineural hearing loss and can be caused by anything that would inflict both forms of hearing loss or be a compound of different sources.

What Can Cause Military Hearing Loss?

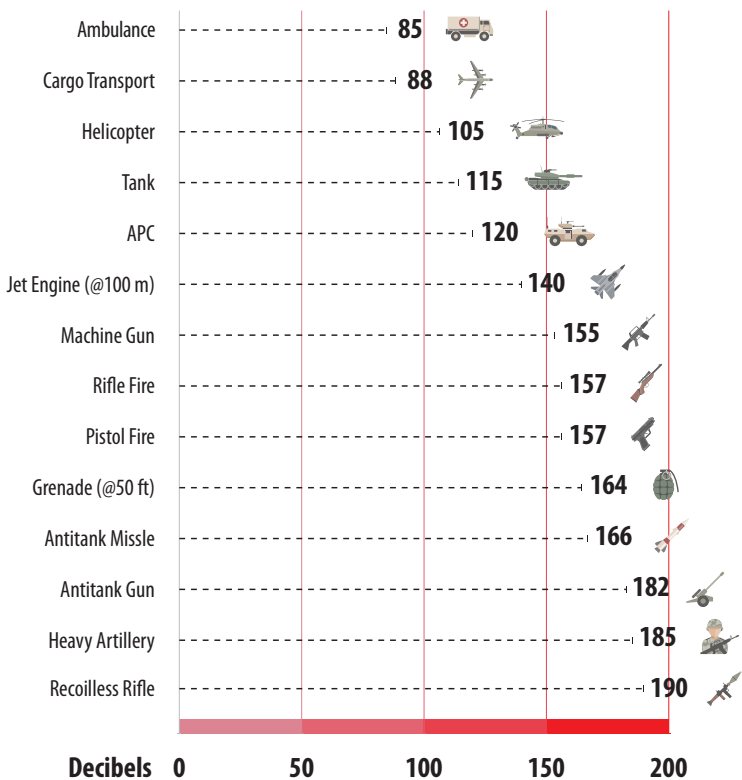
Two of the main causes of sensorineural hearing loss can be encountered commonly in the military. The first, head trauma, is the more unpredictable of the two because it is all but impossible to tell how the body will react. A single blow to the head can damage the ear, while multiple blows may cause no immediate damage to a person's hearing. The second cause, noise-induced hearing loss, is caused by sustained

exposure to dangerous levels of sound. Anything at or above 85 decibels will eventually cause damage to the ear.

What is a Decibel?

A decibel is a measurement that determines the noise level of a sound. Decibels are measured by studying the amount of pressure a sound places on the ear drum, which then transmits them through the ear. In higher decibels, the amount of pressure placed upon the ear can damage the sensitive hair cells of the inner ear. Once damaged, these cells cannot regrow or repair, so any damage incurred is permanent. It is important to note that the further an individual is from the noise source the lower a sound will be when it reaches the ear, so decibels are not exact measurements.

The following are decibel levels associated with common military noises. These are averages and will vary with distance, conditions and types of equipment.



What Are the Symptoms of Hearing Loss?

Symptoms of hearing loss will vary depending on its cause. If an individual is suffering from hearing loss as a symptom of a disease, other symptoms may help determine its cause. A Veteran who is using medication to treat a disease and notices a hearing loss should consult a doctor to determine whether changing to another medication or a lower dosage is appropriate. The main symptom of noise-induced hearing loss is tinnitus or a sudden decrease in sound perception. With head trauma, the symptoms can be the same as noise-induced hearing loss or a faint popping noise which signals damage to the ear drum.

What is Tinnitus?

Tinnitus is usually a symptom of noise-induced hearing loss. It typically manifests itself as a ringing in the ear, although it can sound like clicking, popping, snapping or whistling. One of the causes of tinnitus is damage to the nerves of the inner ear. If damaged enough, the nerves can become bent and constantly register sound input as they will be making continuous contact with the other hairs of the ear. In other cases, tinnitus can be caused by a tumor in the ear which allows the ear to hear the blood passing through the tumor.

How is Hearing Loss Treated?

Sadly, most cases of hearing loss cannot be treated. When it is a symptom of a larger ailment, hearing loss can be recovered when the disease is treated. With noise-induced hearing loss or head trauma, the damage is usually permanent; however, technology has made it possible to compensate for hearing loss. A hearing aid can be used to mimic the outer and middle ear if they are damaged. For the cochlea (inner ear), a cochlear implant can mimic the nerves that are damaged and relay sound to the brain.

What Can I Do if I Suffer From Hearing Loss?

Veterans who have experienced hearing loss or suffer from tinnitus should contact their local County Veteran Service Office (page 182) to file a claim for compensation. If awarded a disability rating, the Veteran may be eligible for monthly compensation and hearing aids, repairs, and future batteries could all be provided at no charge.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mental health is essential to overall health. Everyone has had some experience with feeling depressed, anxious, or overwhelmed emotionally, but if these feelings persist they can be a sign of a deteriorating mental health. Left untreated, mental health problems can interfere with daily life, relationships, work, normal functioning, and cause pain for both the person with the disorder and those who care about them.

Before, during, or after deployment, some service members may experience mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury, or suicidal thoughts.

The good news is that most mental health problems, even severe cases, are treatable. Mental health services are available for anyone who has mental health concerns or just needs to talk with someone.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Mental Health Services

USDVA places a priority on early detection and intervention of mental health needs and provides a broad range of services for those who need assistance. To locate USDVA mental health services, visit www.mentalhealth.va.gov/index.asp.

California Department of Health Care Services

The Department of Health Care Services' Veterans enhancement project helps Veterans who are receiving Medi-Cal services obtain the Veteran benefits they are entitled to. Veterans receiving Medi-Cal services may also qualify for federal benefits for themselves and their families. For more information visit www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/medi-cal/pages/veterans.aspx.

California County Adult Mental Health Services

California's public mental health system offers services ranging from traditional mental health treatment, including crisis intervention, medications, and a variety of rehabilitation services, to specifically address the recovery needs of adults with serious and persistent mental illnesses and children with serious emotional disturbances. Each county has an access telephone number, which can be called any time, day or night, for information on local mental health services. For more

information on California County Adult Mental Health Services, visit www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/mh/pages/default.aspx.

Network of Care for Veterans

The Network of Care web site provides a comprehensive listing of mental health and other resources for service members, Veterans and their families. Visit Network of Care at www.networkofcare.org and click on 'Service Members, Veterans & Their Families in California.' Choose the county of residence, and click on 'Service Directory' to find the services needed.

NOT-FOR-PROFIT MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES FOR VETERANS, SERVICE MEMBERS, AND FAMILIES

Courage to Call

Courage to Call is dedicated to helping current and former service members, including Veterans who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. This dedication extends to military families and loved ones. All Courage to Call staff have been in the military or have been military family members. They have firsthand knowledge of the rigors of the military and military family life, constant deployments and transitioning out of the military. They are dedicated to helping Veterans and their loved ones get the services and assistance they need and deserve. They can help Veterans find supportive information, access and referrals throughout San Diego County. For more information, visit www.211sandiego.org/courage-to-call.

Give an Hour

Give an Hour is a nationwide nonprofit organization that connects U.S. military personnel and loved ones affected by the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan with a range of free mental health services in their communities. Visit www.giveanhour.org to find an area provider.

National Veteran Foundation

The National Veteran Foundation (NVF) is staffed by a team of Veterans (from Vietnam, the Cold War, Iraq, and Afghanistan) who are specially trained in the delivery of crisis information and referral services, as well as a team of licensed

volunteer counselors to whom all crisis calls are routed. More than 350,000 Veterans in need of medical treatment, substance abuse or posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) counseling, USDVA benefits advocacy, food, shelter, employment training, legal aid, or suicide intervention, have now been served by this one-of-a-kind resource. Also, as a recognized leader within the community of organizations that specialize in providing human service programs to Veterans and their families, NVF frequently plays a key role as advisor, partner, and collaborator. For more information, visit www.nvf.org.

Soldier's Project

The Soldier's Project is a statewide network of licensed mental health professionals who offer free psychological treatment to military service members (active duty, National Guard, Reserves and Veterans) who have served or who expect to serve in the conflicts in Iraq or Afghanistan. To find a therapist in your area, visit www.thesoldiersproject.org or call (818) 761-7498 or (877) 576-5343 toll free.

Swords to Plowshares

Swords to Plowshares is a community-based, not-for-profit Veteran service organization that provides wrap-around care to more than 2,000 Veterans in the San Francisco Bay Area each year. The organization is committed to helping Veterans break through the cultural, educational, psychological and economic barriers they often face in their transition to the civilian world. For more information, visit www.swords-to-plowshares.org.

Vet to Vet

Vet to Vet is dedicated to helping Veterans and others who have psychiatric conditions establish meaningful lives in the community. The group works to improve and increase mental health services through community education and service and is based on the concept of mutual help. Vet to Vet is made up of people with mental illness or psychiatric conditions who happen to be Veterans. The organization provides training on how to establish ongoing peer support, and materials are free. For more information, visit vet2vetusa.org/home/tabid/37/default.aspx.

SUICIDE PREVENTION

Suicide is a major public health issue in the United States. Historically, active duty service members had lower rates of suicide than the general population. However, since 2005 the rates of military and Veteran suicide have increased dramatically. From 2005 to 2014, more than 2,500 members of the Armed Forces completed suicide: an average of one suicide every 36 hours. Although as many as 22 Veterans per day die by suicide, it is important to recognize that suicide is a preventable tragedy. With help comes hope.

When to Seek Help for Yourself or Another Person

Learn the signs of suicide risk, and seek help immediately if you notice any of the following warning signs:

- » Threatening to hurt or kill oneself
- » Looking for ways to kill oneself
- » Trying to get pills, guns, or other means to harm oneself
- » Talking or writing about death, dying or suicide
- » Feeling hopeless
- » Experiencing rage, uncontrolled anger or seeking revenge
- » Acting reckless or engaging in risky activities
- » Feeling trapped, like there is no way out
- » Abusing drugs or alcohol
- » Withdrawing from friends or family
- » Having dramatic changes in mood
- » Feeling like there is no reason for living, no sense of purpose in life
- » Sleeping too much or too little
- » Giving away possessions

How to Talk with Someone About Suicide

- » **Ask Directly** - Are you considering suicide/having thoughts of killing yourself?
- » **DO** - ask the question if you've identified warning signs or symptoms
- » **DO** - ask the question in such a way that is natural and flows with the conversation

- » **DON'T** - ask the question as though you are looking for a “no” answer; “You aren’t thinking of killing yourself are you?”
- » **DON'T** - wait to ask the question when he/she is halfway out the door

What Should You Do If You Think Someone is Suicidal?

- » **Don’t keep the suicidal behavior a secret.** Talk with the person about it first and, if you can, get help from a family member, close friend, or even employer of the person and work together to address it.
- » **Don’t leave him or her alone if you are concerned.** Try to get the person to seek immediate help from his or her doctor or the nearest hospital emergency room, or call the **Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255, Press 1.**
- » **Never negotiate with someone who has a gun.** Get to safety and call 911.
- » If the Veteran has taken pills, cut himself or herself or done harm to himself or herself in some way **call 911 immediately.**

What Factors Help Protect People From Suicide?

- » Family, friends, social support, close relationships, battle buddy
- » Coping/problem solving skills
- » Ongoing health and mental health care relationships
- » Reasons for living – goals and activities/involvement
- » Cultural and religious beliefs that discourage suicide

Myths and Realities about Suicide

- » **Myth:** Asking about suicide will plant the idea in a person’s head.
- » **Reality:** Asking about suicide does not create suicidal thoughts any more than asking about chest pain causes a heart attack. The act of asking the question simply gives the Veteran permission to talk about his or her thoughts or feelings.

- » **Myth:** There are talkers and there are doers.
- » **Reality:** Most people who die by suicide have communicated some intent, wish, or desire to kill themselves. Willingness to talk about suicide offers an opportunity to intervene before suicidal behaviors occur.
- » **Myth:** If somebody really wants to die by suicide, there is nothing that can be done about it.
- » **Reality:** Most suicidal ideas are associated with underlying conditions that are highly treatable, such as depression, anxiety, or health problems. Providing treatment for these underlying conditions can save a life.

The acute risk for suicide is often time-limited. It is vital to be able to help someone find a safe environment to survive the immediate crisis.

- » **Myth:** He/she really wouldn't commit suicide because . . .
 - just made plans for a vacation
 - has young children at home
 - made a verbal or written promise
 - knows how dearly their family loves them
- » **Reality:** Suicidal thinking can overwhelm even the most rational person. Anyone experiencing significant suicidal thoughts must be taken seriously and referred to a health care provider who can evaluate their condition and provide treatment as appropriate.

WHERE TO GET HELP

Veterans Suicide Prevention Hotline

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a free, 24-hour hotline available to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. Veterans can call the Lifeline number, (800) 273-TALK (8255), and press "1" to be routed to the Veterans Suicide Prevention Hotline. If an individual prefers not to talk to a USDVA counselor, the Lifeline number will route the caller to one of the nine crisis centers in California that are accredited to operate a suicide prevention hotline. Individuals may also visit the website www.veteranscrisisline.net and chat confidentially online with a representative or send a text to 838255 to receive confidential support.

Veterans Chat

Veterans Chat allows Veterans, their families, and friends to anonymously chat with a trained USDVA counselor. If, during the online chat, it is determined that the person is in crisis, the counselor can take immediate steps to transfer the person to USDVA's Suicide Prevention Hotline, where further crisis intervention, counseling and referral services are provided. To access online chat services, visit www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

USDVA Suicide Prevention Coordinators

Each USDVA Medical Center has a Suicide Prevention Coordinator to make sure Veterans receive needed counseling and services. To locate a Suicide Prevention Coordinator, visit www.veteranscrisisline.net.

POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) can occur after you have been through a traumatic event. A traumatic event is something terrible and scary that you see, hear about, or that happens to you, like:

- » Combat exposure
- » Child sexual or physical abuse
- » Terrorist attack
- » Sexual or physical assault
- » Serious accidents, like a car wreck
- » Natural disasters, like a fire, tornado, hurricane, flood, or earthquake

During a traumatic event, you think that your life or others' lives are in danger. You may feel afraid or feel that you have no control over what is happening around you. Most people have some stress-related reactions after a traumatic event; but, not everyone gets PTSD. If your reactions don't go away over time and they disrupt your life, you may have PTSD.

After a trauma, it is normal to have painful memories and to become upset when reminded of what happened. For most, these reactions lessen over time and thinking returns to normal. For some, however, reactions continue and are severe; they disrupt living, and beliefs remain negative and intense. How people respond to these early, normal reactions, in part, can determine if PTSD develops. For example, because memories and reminders of the trauma are painful, it makes sense to want to avoid them. However, too much avoidance can prevent a person from adequately dealing with the memories and reminders and making sense of what happened. This may lead normal trauma reactions to become more lasting PTSD symptoms.

Although most people recover after a trauma, it is not uncommon for people to develop PTSD. About 7% of the general US population will have PTSD in their lifetime, with women being more than twice as likely to develop it as men. Following a trauma, it can be expected that around 20% of women and 8% of men will develop PTSD. Certain types of trauma, such as sexual assault and combat, can cause even higher rates.

PTSD symptoms usually appear very soon after experiencing a trauma. Other problems also commonly accompany PTSD. These include depression, other anxiety disorders, and alcohol and substance abuse. In fact, more than half of men with PTSD have alcohol problems and nearly half of women with PTSD have depression. PTSD can also reduce one's ability to function in relationships, at work and school, and in leisure activities. In addition, people with PTSD may suffer physical symptoms and may be at increased risk of medical problems.

Developing PTSD is not a sign of weakness; anyone can develop PTSD, but it can be treated with talk therapy or medication, or a combination of both. USDVA provides nearly 200 specialized PTSD treatment programs and each USDVA Medical Center has PTSD specialists who can assist in providing treatment for Veterans.

A referral is usually needed to access the specialty programs. To locate a specialized program in the area, visit www2.va.gov/directory/guide/ptsd_flash.asp not all USDVA facilities offer the same programs. A Veteran's doctor may help to decide which program is most appropriate.

For individuals in mental health crisis, here are important contacts:

- » If there is an emergency, call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room.

- » To speak with a trained USDVA counselor, call the Veterans Crisis Line at (800) 273-8255, and then press 1 if you are a Veteran or service member. This free USDVA service is open 24/7.
- » To speak with a combat Veteran, call USDVA's Veteran Combat Call Center at (800) 927-8387.

For more information about available mental health services, see the Mental Health Services section (page 91).

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) is a severe or moderate trauma to the head, where physical portions of the brain are damaged and functioning is impaired. The trauma can be mild, causing limited functional impairments, such as a concussion or headaches. However, on many occasions, the trauma can be much more severe and cause balance problems, mood changes and memory loss.

TBI and PTSD have been called the signature wound of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan due to the frequent and powerful blasts experienced in the field; an injury not commonly seen before.

Long and short-term effects of a TBI include:

- » Memory loss
- » Poor judgment and reasoning
- » Difficulty understanding others
- » Seizures
- » Loss of self-control
- » Inappropriate sexual behavior
- » Physical aggression
- » Physical disabilities
- » Flash anger
- » Impaired social skills
- » Difficulty expressing thoughts
- » Inability to recognize or accept limitations
- » Apathy

Veterans who believe they may have suffered a TBI during their military service should visit www.dvbic.org/audience/service-members-veterans for more information.

Veterans who sustained any injuries during a deployment or at home that resulted in an alteration of consciousness may have sustained a mild Traumatic Brain Injury (mTBI) or concussion and should be evaluated. Please note that the mTBI screen alone does not provide diagnosis of mTBI; a clinical interview is required. USDVA offers TBI screening to all Veterans and active duty service members who have deployed to a war zone.

MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA

Military Sexual Trauma (MST) is the term used to refer to sexual assault or sexual harassment that occurred while the Veteran was in the military. Some Veterans, both men and women, suffered personal or physical assault while on active duty and they may still struggle with fear, anxiety, embarrassment, or profound anger as a result of these experiences. Examples of this can be but are not limited to rape, physical assault, domestic battering, and stalking.

Some difficulties that can be experienced by survivors of MST include:

- » Disturbing memories or nightmares;
- » Feelings of numbness;
- » Trouble sleeping;
- » Depression, anger and irritability;
- » Relationship difficulties;
- » Problems with drugs and alcohol; **and**
- » Physical health problems.

USDVA provides free, confidential counseling and treatment for mental and physical health conditions related to experiences of MST. Veterans do not need to have a service-connected disability to receive treatment. This benefit is available even if the Veteran is not eligible for other USDVA care. Incidents need not have been reported or documented when they occurred.

Every USDVA medical facility has a designated MST Coordinator who serves as a contact person for MST-related issues. This person is the Veteran's advocate and can help the Veteran find and access USDVA services and programs, state and federal

benefits, and community resources. To locate the local MST Coordinator, see the “Healthcare” section of this book (page 103).

Every USDVA facility has providers knowledgeable about treatment for the after-effects of MST. Many have specialized outpatient mental health services focusing on sexual trauma. To accommodate Veterans who do not feel comfortable in mixed-gender treatment settings, some USDVA facilities have separate programs for men and women. All residential and inpatient MST programs have separate sleeping areas for men and women.

For more information or support, contact a local USDVA medical facility (page 103).

Additionally, Vet Centers have specially trained sexual trauma counselors and all conversations and records are kept confidential and are not accessible by USDVA. The Soldier’s Project and Give an Hour also offer resources for Veterans who wish not to be seen by USDVA. For more information on Vet Centers, see page 103. For more information on the Give an Hour and Soldier’s Project, see page 92, 93.

SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

Treatment and recovery services are available throughout California for Veterans who have a problem with alcohol, drugs, or misuse of prescription drugs. Services range from emergency counseling and initial assessment to detoxification services and residential or long-term outpatient treatment.

Confidential programs and services are available to Veterans who find alcohol, illicit drugs or prescription drugs are impacting their relationships or their ability to maintain employment, housing or family relationships. In addition to services provided by the USDVA healthcare system, county and community-based resources may be available.

DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOL AND DRUG PROGRAMS IS NOW WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Effective with the passage of the 2013-2014 Budget Act and associated legislation, the Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs (ADP) no longer exists as of

July 1, 2013. All ADP programs and staff, except the Office of Problem Gambling, have been transferred to the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS).

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES

The Substance Use Disorder Services Divisions lead the effort to reduce alcoholism and drug addiction in California by developing, administering, and supporting prevention, treatment and recovery programs. They endeavor to help Californians understand that alcoholism and drug addiction are chronic conditions that can be successfully prevented and treated.

If you, or someone you know, has a problem with alcohol or drugs, treatment services are available throughout California to help you get on the road to recovery. These range from emergency counseling and initial assessment to detoxification services and residential or long-term outpatient treatment. Please contact your local County Alcohol and Other Drugs Programs at www.dhcs.ca.gov/individuals/pages/dmc-countynumbersdirectory.aspx.

CONFIDENTIAL ON-LINE SELF-ASSESSMENT SCREENING TOOLS

Veterans concerned about whether drugs or alcohol are harming their health and putting them at risk for other problems, can assess their consumption patterns using a free, confidential online tool. By answering a few short questions about past and present use of various drugs, such as marijuana, cocaine, tobacco, inhalants or alcohol users can get confidential feedback about the likely risks of drug and alcohol use and advice about when and where to seek more information, evaluation, and help. The assessment only takes a few minutes to complete and gives personalized confidential results based on age, gender, and use patterns so the user can take positive action. For free, confidential on-line alcohol screening, visit www.alcoholscreening.org. For free, confidential on-line drug screening, visit www.drugscreening.org.

USDVA MEDICAL FACILITIES

USDVA SIERRA NEVADA HEALTHCARE SYSTEM (888) 838-6256

Medical Center

Sierra Nevada Medical Center
975 Kirman Avenue
Reno, NV 89502
(775) 786-7200

Outpatient Clinic

Sierra Foothills Outpatient Clinic
11985 Heritage Oaks Place
Auburn, CA 95603
(530) 889-0872

Carson Valley Outpatient Clinic
925 Ironwood Drive, Suite 2102
Minden, NV 89423
(775) 782-5265

Diamond View
Outpatient Clinic
110 Bella Way
Susanville, CA 96130
(530) 251-4550 or (877) 816-8572

Lahontan Valley Outpatient Clinic
345 West A Street
Fallon, NV 89406
(775) 428-6161
(775) 428-6171 (Fax)

MST Coordinator

Nicole Guyette
(775) 326-5720, ext. 5848

USDVA NORTHERN CALIFORNIA HEALTHCARE SYSTEM (800) 382-8387

Medical Center

Sacramento Medical Center
10535 Hospital Way
Mather, CA 95655
(916) 843-7000

Outpatient Clinic

McClellan Outpatient Clinic
5342 Dudley Boulevard
Sacramento, CA 95652
(916) 561-7400 or (800) 382-8387

Redding Outpatient Clinic
351 Hartnell Avenue
Redding, CA 96002
(530) 226-7555

Chico Outpatient Clinic
280 Cohasset Road
Chico, CA 95926
(530) 879-5000

Martinez Outpatient Clinic
150 Muir Road
Martinez, CA 94553
(925) 372-2000

Oakland Outpatient Clinic
2221 Martin Luther King Jr. Way
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 267-7800

Fairfield Outpatient Clinic
103 Bodin Circle, Travis AFB
Fairfield, CA 94535
(707) 437-1800

Mare Island Outpatient Clinic
201 Walnut Avenue
Vallejo, CA 94592
(707) 562-8200

Yreka Rural Outpatient Clinic
101 E. Oberlin Drive
Yreka, CA 96097
(530) 841-8500
(530) 842-9640 (Fax)

Yuba City Outpatient Clinic
425 Plumas Street
Yuba City, CA 95991
(530) 751-4500
(530) 673-3735 (Fax)

Vet Clinics

Oakland Behavioral Health Clinic
525 21st Street
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 587-3400

McClellan Dental Clinic
5401 Arnold Avenue
McClellan, CA 95652
(916) 561-7800

Sacramento Mental Health
Clinic at Mather
10535 Hospital Way, Building 649
Sacramento, CA 95655
(916) 366-5420

Vet Center

Sacramento Vet Center
1111 Howe Avenue, Suite 390
Sacramento, CA 95825
(916) 566-7430
(916) 566-7433 (Fax)

Citrus Heights Vet Center
5650 Sunrise Boulevard, Suite 150
Citrus Heights, CA 95610
(916) 535-0420
(916) 535-0419 (Fax)

Chico Vet Center
250 Cohasset Road, Suite 40
Chico, CA 95926
(530) 899-6300
(530) 891-0102 (Fax)

Oakland Vet Center
2221 Martin Luther King Jr. Way
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 763-3904
(510) 763-5631 (Fax)

4B Pacific Western Regional Office
420 Executive Court North, Suite A
Fairfield, CA 94534
(707) 646-2988
(707) 646-2960 (Fax)

Concord Vet Center
1333 Willow Pass Road, Suite 106
Concord, CA 94520
(925) 680-4526

Homeless Coordinator

Northern California Homeless
Coordinator
(916) 843-9090

MST Coordinator

Dr. Catherine Novotny
(925) 372-2554

USDVA CENTRAL CALIFORNIA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM (888) 826-2838

Medical Center

Fresno Medical Center
2615 E. Clinton Avenue
Fresno, CA 93703
(559) 225-6100

Outpatient Clinic

South Valley Outpatient Clinic
1050 N. Cherry Street
Tulare, CA 93274
(559) 684-8703

VA Merced Outpatient Clinic
340 E. Yosemite Avenue
Merced, CA 95340
(209) 381-0105

Vet Center

Fresno Vet Center
1320 E. Shaw Avenue, Suite 125
Fresno, CA 93710
(559) 487-5660
(559) 487-5399 (Fax)

Fresno Mobile Vet Center
3515 West Dakota Avenue
Fresno, CA 93722
(559) 487-5660

Homeless Coordinator

Fresno Homeless Coordinator
(559) 225-6100, ext. 5674

MST Coordinator

Darcy Evans
(559) 225-6100, ext. 4409

USDVA PALO ALTO HEALTH CARE SYSTEM (800) 455-0057

Medical Center

Medical Center Palo Alto
3801 Miranda Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94304
(650) 493-5000

Livermore Division
4951 Arroyo Road
Livermore, CA 94550
(925) 373-4700

Menlo Park Division
795 Willow Road
Menlo Park, CA 94025
(650) 614-9997

Outpatient Clinic

Capitola Outpatient Clinic
1350 N. 41st Street, Suite 102
Capitola, CA 95010-3906
(831) 464-5519

Fremont Clinic
39199 Liberty Street
Fremont, CA 94538
(510) 791-4000
(510)-791-4036 (Fax)

Modesto Clinic
1225 Oakdale Road
Modesto, CA 95355
(209) 557-6200

Monterey Clinic
3401 Engineer Lane
Seaside, CA 93955
(831) 883-3800

San Jose Clinic
80 Great Oaks Boulevard
San Jose, CA 95119
(408) 363-3000

Sonora Clinic
13663 Mono Way
Sonora, CA 95370
(209) 588-2600
(209) 946-9458 (Fax)

Stockton Clinic
7777 South Freedom Drive
French Camp, CA 95231
(209) 946-3400
(209) 946-9458 (Fax)

Vet Center

Santa Cruz County Vet Center
1350 41st Avenue, Suite 102
Capitola, CA 95010
(831) 464-4575
(831) 464-6597 (Fax)

Modesto Vet Center
1219 N. Carpenter Road, Suite 12
Modesto, CA 95351
(209) 569-0713
(209) 569-0718 (Fax)

Peninsula Vet Center
2946 Broadway Street
Redwood City, CA 94062
(650) 299-0672
(650)-299-0677 (Fax)

San Jose Vet Center
278 North 2nd Street
San Jose, CA 95112
(408) 993-0729
(408) 993-0829 (Fax)

Homeless Coordinator

Menlo Park Division
(650) 493-5000, ext. 22751
(800) 455-0057

MST Coordinator

Ann Lefevre
(650) 493-5000, ext. 2-25000

**SAN FRANCISCO
USDVA MEDICAL
CENTER
(877) 487-2838**

Medical Center

San Francisco Medical Center
4150 Clement Street
San Francisco, CA 94121
(415) 221-4810

Outpatient Clinic

Clearlake Outpatient Clinic
15145 Lakeshore Drive
Clearlake, CA 95422
(707) 995-7200

SFVAMC Downtown Clinic
401 3rd Street
San Francisco, CA 94107
(415) 281-5100

Eureka Veterans Clinic
930 W. Harris Street
Eureka, CA 95503
(707) 269-7500

San Bruno Outpatient Clinic
1001 Sneath Lane, Suite 300, 3rd Floor
San Bruno, CA 94066
(650) 615-6000

Santa Rosa Clinic
3841 Brickway Boulevard
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
(707) 569-2300

Ukiah Community Based
Outpatient Clinic
630 Kings Court
Ukiah, CA 95482
(707) 468-7700

Vet Center

San Francisco Vet Center
505 Polk Street
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 441-5051
(415) 441-5051 (Fax)

Eureka Vet Center
2830 G Street, Suite A
Eureka, CA 95501
(707) 444-8271
(707) 444-8391 (Fax)

North Bay Vet Center
6225 State Farm Drive, Suite J
Rohnert Park, CA 94928
(707) 586-3295
(707) 586-9055 (Fax)

Homeless Coordinator

San Francisco
Homeless Coordinator
Health Care-Homeless Vets
(415) 281-5100
(800) 733-0502

MST Coordinator

Nancy Herzoff
(415) 221-4810, ext. 3907

**USDVA GREATER
LOS ANGELES
HEALTHCARE SYSTEM
(800) 952-4852**

Medical Center

West Los Angeles Medical Center
11301 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90073
(310) 478-3711

Sepulveda Ambulatory
Care Center
16111 Plummer Street
Los Angeles, CA 91343
(818) 891-7711

Los Angeles Ambulatory
Care Center
351 E. Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 253-2677

Outpatient Clinic

Bakersfield Community Based
Outpatient Clinic
1801 Westwind Drive
Bakersfield, CA 93301
(661) 632-1800
(661) 632-1888 (Fax)

East Los Angeles Outpatient Clinic
5426 East Olympic Boulevard, Suite 150
Commerce, CA 90040
(323) 725-7372

Gardena Outpatient Clinic
1251 Redondo Beach Boulevard,
3rd Floor
Gardena, CA 90247
(310) 851-4705

Lancaster Community Based
Outpatient Clinic
547 West Lancaster Boulevard
Lancaster, CA 93534
(661) 729-8655

Oxnard Outpatient Clinic
2000 Outlet Center Drive, Suite 225
Oxnard, CA 93033
(805) 604-6960

Pasadena
420 W. Las Tunas Drive
San Gabriel, CA 91776
(713) 473-6300

San Luis Obispo - Pacific
Medical Plaza
1288 Morro Street, Suite 200
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
(805) 543-1233
(805) 547-1179 (Fax)

Santa Barbara Community Based
Outpatient Clinic
4440 Calle Real
Santa Barbara, CA 93110
(805) 683-1491

Santa Maria Community Based
Outpatient Clinic
1550 East Main Street
Santa Maria, CA 93454
(805) 354-6000

Sepulveda Outpatient Clinic
and Nursing Home
16111 Plummer Street
North Hills, CA 91343
(818) 891-7711

Ventura Community Based
Outpatient Clinic
120 N. Ashwood Avenue
Ventura, CA 93003
(805) 658-5800

Vet Center

Antelope Valley Vet Center
38925 Trade Center Drive, Suite J
Palmdale, CA 93551
(661) 267-1026

East Los Angeles Vet Center
5400 E. Olympic Boulevard, Suite 140
Commerce, CA 90022
(323) 728-9966
(323) 887-1082 (Fax)

West Los Angeles Vet Center
5730 Uplander Way, Suite 100
Culver City, CA 90230
(310) 641-0326
(310) 641-2653 (Fax)

Los Angeles Veterans
Resource Center
1045 W. Redondo Beach Boulevard,
Suite 150
Gardena, CA 90247
(310) 767-1221
(310) 767-1403 (Fax)

Sepulveda Vet Center
9737 Haskell Avenue
Sepulveda, CA 91343
(818) 892-9227

Ventura Vet Center
790 E. Santa Clara Street, Suite 100
Ventura, CA 93001
(805) 585-1860
(805) 585-1864 (Fax)

Homeless Coordinator

Los Angeles
Homeless Coordinator
(213) 253-2677, ext. 4766

MST Coordinator

Dr. Carole Goguen
(213) 253-2677, ext. 4716

USDVA LOMA LINDA HEALTHCARE SYSTEM (800) 741-8387

Medical Center

Loma Linda Medical Center
11201 Benton Street
Loma Linda, CA 92357
(909) 825-7084

Outpatient Clinic

Blythe rural Health Clinic
1273 Hobson Way
Blythe, CA 92225
(760) 921-1224

Corona Health Clinic
800 Magnolia Avenue, Suite 101
Corona, CA 92879
(951) 817-8820

Murrieta Clinic
28078 Baxter Road, Suite 540
Murrieta, CA 92563
(951) 290-6500

Palm Desert Clinic
41-990 Cook Street,
Building F, Suite 1004
Palm Desert, CA 92211
(760) 341-5570

Rancho Cucamonga Clinic
8599 Haven Avenue, Suite 102
Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730
(909) 946-5348

Redland Blvd Outpatient Clinic
25828 Redlands Boulevard
Redlands, CA 92374
(909) 825-7084, ext. 6930

Victorville Clinic
12138 Industrial Boulevard, Suite 120
Victorville, CA 92395
(760) 951-2599

Vet Center

Corona Vet Center
800 Magnolia Avenue, Suite 110
Corona, CA 92879
(951) 734-0525
(951) 734-0063 (Fax)

High Desert Vet Center
15095 Amargosa Road, Suite 107
Victorville, CA 92394
(760) 261-5925
(760) 241-7828 (Fax)

San Bernardino Vet Center
1325 E. Cooley Drive, Suite 101
Colton, CA 92324
(909) 801-5762
(909) 801-5767 (Fax)

Temecula Vet Center
40935 County Center Drive, Suite A
Temecula, CA 92591
(951) 302-4849
(951) 296-0598 (Fax)

Homeless Coordinator

Loma Linda Homeless Coordinator
(909) 825-7084, ext. 2388

MST Coordinator

Angie Tremmel
(909) 825-7084, ext. 2595

**USDVA LONG BEACH
HEALTHCARE SYSTEM
(888) 769-8387**

Medical Center

Long Beach Medical Center
5901 East 7th Street
Long Beach, CA 90822
(562) 826-8000

Outpatient Clinic

Anaheim
2569 W. Woodland Drive
Anaheim, CA 92801
(714) 780-5400

Santa Ana Outpatient Clinic
1506 Brookhollow Drive
Santa Ana, CA 92704
(714) 434-4600

Villages at Cabrillo Health Clinic
2001 River Avenue, Building 28
Long Beach, CA 90806
(562) 826-8000, ext. 8414

Laguna Hills Health Clinic
25292 McIntyre Street
Laguna Hills, CA 92653
(949) 269-0700

Whittier/Santa Fe Springs Clinic
10210 Orr and Day Road
Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670
(562) 466-6080

Vet Center

North Orange County Vet Center
12453 Lewis Street, Suite 101
Garden Grove, CA 92840
(714) 776-0161

Homeless Coordinator

Long Beach Homeless Coordinator
(562) 826-8000, ext. 5753

**USDVA SAN DIEGO
HEALTHCARE SYSTEM
(800) 331-8387**

Medical Center

San Diego Medical Center
3350 La Jolla Village Drive
San Diego, CA 92161
(858) 552-8585

Outpatient Clinic

Chula Vista (South Bay)
835 3rd Avenue
Chula Vista, CA 91910
(619) 409-1600

Escondido
815 E. Pennsylvania Avenue
Escondido, CA 92025
(760) 466-7020

Imperial Valley
1600 South Imperial Avenue
El Centro, CA 92243
(760) 352-1506

Mission Valley
8810 Rio San Diego Drive
San Diego, CA 92108
(619) 400-5000

Oceanside
1300 Rancho del Oro Road
Oceanside, CA 92056
(760) 643-2000

Vet Center

San Diego Vet Center
2790 Truxton Road, Suite 130
San Diego, CA 92106
(858) 642-1500
(619)294-2535 (Fax)

San Marcos Vet Center
One Civic Center Drive, Suite 140
San Marcos, CA 92069
(760) 744-6914
(760) 744-6919 (Fax)

Chula Vista Vet Center
180 Otay Lakes Road, Suite 108
Chula Vista, CA 91902
(877) 618-6534
(619) 479-8539 (Fax)

South Orange County Vet Center
26431 Crown Valley Parkway, Suite 100
Mission Viejo, CA 92691
(949) 348-6700
(949) 348-6719 (Fax)

Homeless Coordinator

San Diego Homeless Clinic
(619) 400-5157

MST Coordinator

Carolyn Allard
(619) 400-5189

USDVA NETWORK HOMELESS COORDINATORS

Northern California

Roberta L. Rosenthal
VISN 21 Network Homeless Coordinator
901 Market Street, Suite 380
San Francisco, CA 94103
(415) 489-3311
roberta.rosenthal@va.gov

Southern California

Jennifer Gerrib
VISN 22 Network Homeless Coordinator
300 Oceangate, Suite 700
Long Beach, CA 90802
(562) 826-5219
jennifer.gerrib@va.gov

COVERED CALIFORNIA

Veterans who do not qualify for VA health care, or who need health care coverage for their families, can get health insurance through the state-run health insurance marketplace, Covered California. It's the only place to get federal premium assistance to help you buy private insurance.

To find out more, visit www.coveredca.com and enter some basic information such as your income and number of dependents and you will get a quick estimate of what you would pay for health insurance. The lower your income, the more financial assistance you may receive in paying for your family's health insurance coverage. Covered California can also help you access health insurance through the Medi-Cal program if you qualify.

The Covered California website offers a handy comparison tool that enables you to make choices regarding the type of coverage you want and shows how each of the companies offering that level of coverage compares in service and cost. You can also call (800) 300-1506 for assistance, or visit a certified enrollment counselor, insurance agent, or county services agency.

All Californians can sign up during the annual open-enrollment period, which begins in the fall. If you have a life-changing event, such as losing your employer health insurance coverage, getting married, having a child or moving, you may be eligible to sign up at any time during the year. Medi-Cal enrollment is year-round.

CHAPTER
04



EDUCATION



CALIFORNIA VETERANS EDUCATION BENEFITS

CALIFORNIA STATE APPROVING AGENCY FOR VETERANS EDUCATION

The California State Approving Agency for Veterans Education (CSAAVE) operates under contract with USDVA based on laws under Title 38 of the U.S. Code. A unit within CalVet, CSAAVE takes very seriously our duty to ensure our California Veterans and other eligible beneficiaries receive the education and training they are paying for with their earned GI Bill® benefits.

CSAAVE approves or disapproves education and training programs, prevents abuses, and promotes quality in education by evaluating and monitoring education and training programs at institutions where Veterans and beneficiaries are using the GI Bill®.

The programs that can be approved by CSAAVE are institutions of higher learning (colleges and universities), non-degree institutions (vocational and technical schools), apprenticeship or on-the-job training, flight schools, and licensing and certification exams.

CSAAVE reviews the applications of institutions and entities seeking approval to offer training and educational programs to eligible recipients of GI Bill® benefits administered by USDVA. As a condition of approval, CSAAVE conducts on-site and technical visits to monitor compliance with approval standards and the requirements of applicable laws and regulations. CSAAVE also conducts liaison activities designed to provide information, interpretation, or assistance with understanding USDVA programs and compliance with Title 38.

CSAAVE participates in outreach activities to promote and encourage eligible Veterans and beneficiaries to use the GI Bill®. As a liaison, CSAAVE connects with each institution's certifying official, military education officials, training establishment, and business officials to provide training in order to better serve and support enrolled students.

In the event CSAAVE suspends or withdraws the approval of an institution or program based on a violation of Title 38, formal notification is provided to the institution. Notification may also be sent to Veterans or beneficiaries using GI Bill® benefits. This includes corresponding directly with impacted students and posting information on our CalVet website. CSAAVE reports to USDVA on the status of each institution in California approved for the training and education of Veterans and beneficiaries using GI Bill® benefits.

For more information about CSAAVE, please visit www.calvet.ca.gov/csaave.

COLLEGE TUITION FEE WAIVER FOR VETERANS DEPENDENTS

The College Tuition Fee Waiver for Veterans Dependents waives mandatory system-wide tuition and fees at a State of California Community College (CCC), California State University (CSU), or University of California (UC) campus. If eligibility criteria are met, use of the California College Fee Waiver for Veterans Dependents may be applied to state-supported programs in the CCC, CSU, and UC systems.

Some programs at a CCC, CSU, and UC campus are considered self-supported, commonly referred to as extension courses or extended education, and they are not covered under the Fee Waiver.

The College Tuition Fee Waiver program does not cover the expense of books, parking, room and board, or any other school specific fees. All applicants must meet California residency requirements.

There are four different Tuition Fee Waiver plans:

Plan A

- » The child of a Veteran who is totally disabled due to service-connected disabilities or whose death was officially rated as service-connected is eligible, based on a rating by USDVA. The child must be over 14 years old and under 27 years old to be eligible. If the child is a Veteran, then the age limit is extended to age 30;
- » The spouse or Registered Domestic Partner (RDP) of a wartime Veteran rated as service-connected and totally disabled by USDVA is eligible. There are no age limit restrictions;

- » The unmarried surviving spouse or RDP of a wartime Veteran whose death has been rated as service-connected by USDVA is eligible. There are no age limit restrictions;
- » Any dependent of any Veteran who has been declared missing in action, captured in the line of duty by hostile forces, or forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by a foreign government or power by the U.S. Department of Defense is eligible.

The Veteran must have served at least one day of active duty during a period of war defined by law, or during any time in which the Veteran was awarded a campaign or expeditionary medal. Concurrent receipt of benefits under Plan A and USDVA Chapter 35 benefits is prohibited. To receive benefits under Plan A, a dependent must sign an “Election to Receive College Fee Waiver Benefits” statement acknowledging this fact. There are no income restrictions under Plan A. To be eligible, the event which caused basic entitlement to benefits (i.e., the date the Veteran died of service-connected causes or the date USDVA rated the Veteran as totally disabled as a result of service-connected disabilities) must have occurred prior to the child’s 21st birthday.

The definition of “wartime Veteran” can be found at (page 70).

Plan B

The child of a Veteran with a service-connected disability, or had a service-connected disability at the time of death, or died of service-related causes based on a USDVA rating, is eligible. The child’s annual income, which includes the child’s adjusted gross income, plus the value of support provided by a parent, may not exceed the annual income limit. The current academic year entitlement is based upon the previous calendar year’s annual income. To view this year’s income limit, visit www.calvet.ca.gov/vetservices/pages/college-fee-waiver.aspx.

Under Plan B, wartime service is not required and there are no specific age requirements. Children are the only dependents eligible under this plan. There is no prohibition against receiving concurrent USDVA Chapter 35 benefits.

Plan C

Any dependent of any member of the California National Guard, who in the line of duty while on active service to the state, was killed, died of a disability resulting from an event that occurred while in active service to the state, or is permanently disabled

as a result of an event that occurred while in the service to the state is eligible. Surviving spouses or RDPs who have not remarried are also eligible.

“Active service to the state,” for the purpose of this benefit, means a member of the California National Guard activated pursuant to Section 146 of the Military and Veterans Code. A copy of those orders pursuant to Section 146, not Section 143, must be furnished to establish eligibility.

Plan D

Medal of Honor recipients and children of Medal of Honor recipients under the age of 27 and who meet income requirements may qualify. Benefits under Plan D are limited to undergraduate studies only. There is no prohibition against receiving concurrent USDVA Chapter 35 benefits.

How to Apply

To get more information and to apply, contact your local County Veterans Service Office (page 182) or the Admissions Office of any California college system campus. You may download an application by visiting www.cacvso.org.

NON-RESIDENT COLLEGE FEE WAIVER

The Non-Resident College Fee Waiver waives non-resident fees at all State of California Community Colleges, California State University, or University of California campuses.

Who is Eligible?

A student who is a Veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces stationed in this state on active duty for more than one year immediately prior to being discharged is entitled to resident classification. This classification is valid for the length of time the Veteran lives in this state after being discharged up to the minimum time necessary to become a resident.

An undergraduate student who is a member of the U.S. Armed Forces stationed in this state on active duty is eligible, except a member of the armed forces assigned for educational purposes to a state-supported institution of higher education.

An undergraduate student who is a natural or adopted child, stepchild, or spouse who is a dependent of a member of the armed forces stationed in this state on active duty is eligible.

A student seeking a graduate degree who is a member of the U.S. Armed Forces stationed in this state on active duty except a member of the armed forces assigned for educational purposes to a state-supported institution of higher education, is eligible. There is a two-year limit for graduate-level studies.

A student seeking a graduate degree who is a natural or adopted child, stepchild, or spouse who is a dependent of a member of the U.S. Armed Forces stationed in this state on active duty is eligible. There is a one-year limit for graduate level studies.

How to Apply

Visit www.calvet.ca.gov/vetservices/pages/college-fee-waiver.aspx to complete an application. Veterans or dependents may also contact the Admissions Office of any State of California Community College, California State University, or University of California campus or a local County Veterans Service Office (page 182).

TROOPS TO COLLEGE

The California State University system offers unlimited opportunities to help Veterans, active-duty service members, and their families meet their personal and professional goals. With 23 campuses and more than 1,800 degree programs, the CSU system is committed to providing:

- » Supportive institutional values and administration
- » Academic support programs and services, such as Veteran-focused advising, mentoring and counseling
- » Financial support and advice specifically for Veterans
- » Priority registration for classes
- » Academic credit granted in General Education Area E for completion of Basic Training
- » Extensive opportunities in student leadership
- » More than 2.5 million students have graduated from the CSU and have

helped to shape the future of California and the nation. That's why a CSU education is more than just a learning experience – it's an opportunity to make a difference.

If you are on active duty, a Veteran, a military spouse, or a family member with questions about completing your degree at the CSU, find out more at www.calstate.edu/veterans.

CALIFORNIA NATIONAL GUARD EDUCATION ASSISTANCE AWARD PROGRAM

The California National Guard Education Assistance Award Program (CNG EAAP) issues financial awards to qualifying members of the California National Guard (CNG) and State Military Reserve (SMR). This financial education benefit can pay for up to 100 percent of fees at a State of California Community College, California State University, or University of California campus. It can also be used for eligible California proprietary and public institutions. With combined military training and a civilian education in areas such as engineering, nursing, communications and information technology, California's National Guard members will be able to serve on two fronts.

Who is Eligible to Qualify for an Award?

- » An active member of, and has served two (2) years in, the CNG or the SMR;
- » Agree to remain an active member in the CNG or the SMR throughout the participation period in the CNG EAAP;
- » Agree to use the award to obtain a certificate, degree, or diploma that is currently not held;
- » Have been accepted to, registered at, or enrolled in a qualifying institution as defined by section 69432.7(l) of the California Education Code;
- » Maintain enrollment in at least three (3) academic units per term;
- » Agree to maintain at least a 2.0 cumulative grade point average (GPA) annually;
- » California resident as determined by the institution (based on resident and non-resident tuition); **and**
- » Not receiving a Cal Grant award check for the same academic year.

How to Apply

- » Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) found at www.fafsa.ed.gov.
- » Complete the CNGEAAP application found at nationalguard.csac.ca.gov/disclaimer.aspx.
- » Download and print the Statement of Understanding found at www.calguard.ca.gov/education and have it signed by the Veteran's Commander.

Note: Discretionary summers will not be covered by the CNGEAAP. Only participants attending mandatory summers will be eligible for an award check.

For additional information visit the Commission's website at nationalguard.csac.ca.gov.

USDVA EDUCATION BENEFITS

EDUCATION BENEFITS AND PROGRAMS FOR VETERANS

There are several education programs Veterans can use for a wide variety of approved education and training programs administered by USDVA. The programs include: apprenticeship and on-the-job training, college degree and certificate programs, flight training, and correspondence courses. Each program provides different benefits to different groups of individuals and usually offers a specific number of benefit "months."

Typically, most education benefits can be collected for 36 months; however, the maximum that can be collected under any combination of USDVA education programs is 48 months. Please note that Veterans can only use one USDVA education benefit for training at a time. For more detailed information regarding USDVA education benefits, visit www.gibill.va.gov or call (888) GIBILL-1 (442-4551).

Please note that the following list of education programs is not all inclusive, as each individual's benefit eligibility is different. Pay careful attention when choosing an education program. If a Veteran gives up one education benefit in favor of another, it is

an irrevocable choice. Veterans are encouraged to check with the school's certifying official to determine which benefit best meets their educational goals.

POST-9/11 GI BILL®

The Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008, also known as Chapter 33, offers the most comprehensive education benefits package since the original GI Bill® was signed into law in 1944. Chapter 33 provides financial support for education, housing plus other benefits to eligible individuals.

Who is Eligible?

A Veteran may be eligible if they have at least 90 days of aggregate service on or after September 11, 2001, or were discharged with a USDVA service-connected disability after 30 days. Veterans must also have received an honorable or medical discharge to be eligible.

Based upon the length of aggregate active service, Veterans are eligible for a percentage of tuition and housing benefits under Chapter 33 that range from 40 percent to 100 percent. The following depicts the percentage of benefit ranges:

- » **100% of benefit** - 36 months of active duty service, or discharged for a service-connected disability after 30 days of continuous service
- » **90% of benefit** - 30 total months of active service
- » **80% of benefit** - 24 total months of active service
- » **70% of benefit** - 18 total months of active service
- » **60% of benefit** - 12 total months of active service
- » **50% of benefit** - 6 total months of active service
- » **40% of benefit** - 90 or more days of active service

Note: Qualifying service time excludes service on active duty in entry level and skill training; however, active service performed by National Guardsmen under Title 32 USC for the purpose of organizing, administering, recruiting, instructing, or training the National Guard or under section 502(f) for the purpose of responding to a national emergency now counts towards eligibility.

What Benefits do Students Receive Under the Post-9/11 GI Bill®?

This new education benefit goes well beyond only helping to pay for tuition. Depending on each individual's "rate of pursuit" (full- or part-time study) and situation, Veterans may qualify for:

- » **Tuition and Fees:** These payments are issued directly to the school on behalf of the individual at the time the certificate of enrollment is processed.
- » **On Active Duty:** Individuals on active duty may be allotted the total amount of tuition and fees for all public schools. The amount is not limited to the state maximum; however, effective August 1, 2015, private and foreign school costs are capped at \$21,084.89 annually. Students on active duty may receive a books-and-supplies stipend.

Not On Active Duty: The amount allotted is prorated according to length of service. The amount is limited to the highest amount of tuition and fees charged for full-time, undergraduate training at a public institution of higher learning in the state in which the student is enrolled. Effective August 1, 2015, private and foreign school costs are capped at \$21,084.89 annually. The Yellow Ribbon Program still exists for out-of-state fees and costs above the cap.

- » **Monthly Housing Allowance:** This payment is issued directly to the student at the beginning of each month for education and training pursued the previous month. The amount is prorated based upon rate of pursuit, rounded to the nearest multiple of 10. If a student is training at a rate of pursuit of 75 percent, he/she would receive 80 percent of the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) rate. In prior years, students enrolled exclusively in online training were not eligible for the housing allowance; however, it is now payable to students (other than those on active duty). The housing allowance payable is equal to ½ the national average BAH for an E-5 with dependents. Effective August 1, 2015, the payable rate for a full-time student online is \$783. Break or interval pay is not payable under any USDVA education benefit program unless under an Executive Order of the President or due to an emergency, such as a natural disaster or strike. That means that if the semester ends December 15th, the housing allowance is paid for the first 15 days of December only. If the next semester begins January 10th, payment will be made for the remaining days of January.

Note: Students using other USDVA education programs are included in this change. Monthly benefits will be pro-rated in the same manner.

- » **Books and Supplies Stipend:** This payment is issued directly to the student when the school certifies and USDVA processes the enrollment. This benefit is prorated based on length of service. The books and supplies stipend can also be paid to students attending school while on active duty.
- » **Yellow Ribbon Payments:** This program allows degree-granting institutions to enter into a voluntary agreement with USDVA to fund tuition expenses that exceed the highest public in-state undergraduate tuition rate for individuals eligible for the 100 percent payment tier. The institution can contribute up to 50 percent of those expenses and USDVA will match the same amount as the institution. This payment is issued to the school when the school certifies and USDVA processes the student's enrollment.
- » **College Fund or "Kicker":** These payments are issued directly to the student based on "rate of pursuit" and the education benefits program under which the kicker is payable. These payments are now made on a monthly basis. In the past they were made through a lump sum.
- » **Rural Benefit Payments:** This one-time, lump-sum payment of \$500 is issued directly to a student who resides in a county with six persons or fewer per square mile (as determined by the most recent decennial census), and who either:
 - physically relocates at least 500 miles to attend an educational institution, **or**
 - travels by air (any distance) to physically attend an educational institution, if no other land-based transportation exists.

What Kind of Education and Training Does the Post-9/11 GI Bill® Cover?

- » **Graduate and Undergraduate Degrees:** Courses must be offered by a degree-granting institution of higher learning and approved for GI Bill® benefits.
- » **Tutorial Assistance and Reimbursement:** Available when essential to correct a deficiency and received for a course in progress.
- » **National Entrance and Certification Exams:** Reimbursement of fees paid to take national admissions tests (e.g., SAT, ACT, GMAT, LSAT) and licensing exams (e.g. CPA Exam, Bar Exam, NCLEX Exam for nursing, etc.).

- » **Non-College Degree (NCD) Programs:** Pays actual net cost for in-state tuition and fees at public NCD institutions. At private and foreign institutions, pays the actual net costs for in-state tuition and fees or \$21,084.89, whichever is less. Also pays up to \$83 per month for books and supplies.
- » **On-The-Job and Apprenticeship Training:** Pays a monthly benefit amount prorated based on time in program and up to \$83 per month for books and supplies.
- » **Vocational Flight Programs:** Per academic year, pays the actual net costs for in-state tuition and fees assessed by the school or \$12,048.50, whichever is less.
- » **Correspondence Training:** Per academic year, pays the actual net costs for in-state tuition and fees assessed by the school or \$10,241.22, whichever is less.

What is the Eligibility Period?

The period of eligibility for the Post-9/11 GI Bill® ends 15 years from the date of the last discharge or release from active duty.

Transfer of Post-9/11 GI Bill® Benefits to a Dependent

The Post-9/11 GI Bill® also offers some service members the opportunity to transfer their GI Bill® to their spouse or children. Any member of the Armed Forces (active duty or Selected Reserve, officer or enlisted) on or after August 1, 2009, who is eligible for the Post 9/11 GI Bill®, and:

- » Has at least 6 years of service in the Armed Forces on the date of election and agrees to serve 4 additional years in the Armed Forces from the date of election; **or**
- » Has at least 10 years of service in the Armed Forces (active duty and/or selected reserve) on the date of election, is precluded by either standard policy (service or DoD) or statute from committing to 4 additional years, and agrees to serve for the maximum amount of time allowed by such policy or statute; **or**
- » Is or becomes retirement-eligible and agrees to serve an additional four years of service on or after August 1, 2012. A service member is considered to be retirement eligible if he or she has completed 20 years of active duty or 20 qualifying years of reserve service.

An individual approved to transfer an entitlement to educational assistance under this section may transfer the individual's entitlement to:

- » The individual's spouse;
- » One or more of the individual's children; **or**
- » Any combination of spouse and child.

A family member must be enrolled in the Defense Eligibility Enrollment Reporting System (DEERS) and be eligible for benefits at the time of transfer to receive transferred educational benefits.

Note: After an individual has designated a child as a transferee under this section, the individual retains the right to revoke or modify the transfer at any time.

To apply for the Post-9/11 GI Bill® education benefit, complete USDVA Form 22-1990 found at www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/vba-22-1990-are.pdf or apply online at www.gibill.va.gov.

MONTGOMERY GI BILL®

The Montgomery GI Bill® (MGIB) program, commonly known as Chapter 30, provides up to 36 months of education benefits. Generally, eligibility is for 10 years following a Veteran's release from active duty. This benefit may be used for degree and certificate programs, flight training, apprenticeship/on-the-job training and correspondence courses. The monthly benefit paid is based on the type of training taken, length of service, and whether the DoD put extra money in the Veteran's MGIB Fund (called "kickers").

Who is Eligible?

To be eligible, a Veteran must have an honorable discharge, a high school diploma or GED or, in some cases, 12 hours of college credit, and meet the requirements of one of the categories below:

- » **Category I:** Entered active duty for the first time after June 30, 1985; paid \$1,200 into the MGIB program; and continuously served for 3 years, or 2 years if that is what the Veteran first enlisted for, or 2 years if the Veteran entered the Selected Reserve within a year of leaving active duty and served 4 years ("2 by 4" Program);

- » **Category II:** Entered active duty before January 1, 1977; served at least 1 day between October 19, 1984, and June 30, 1985, and stayed on active duty through June 30, 1988 (or June 30, 1987 if the Veteran entered the Selected Reserve within 1 year of leaving active duty and served 4 years); and on December 31, 1989, the Veteran had entitlement left from Vietnam-Era GI Bill®;
- » **Category III:** Not eligible for MGIB under Category I or II; on active duty on September 30, 1990, and separated involuntarily after February 2, 1991; or involuntarily separated on or after November 30, 1993; or voluntarily separated under either the Voluntary Separation Incentive or Special Separation Benefit program; before separation, had military pay reduced by \$1,200;
- » **Category IV:** On active duty on October 9, 1996, had money remaining in a VEAP account on that date, and elected MGIB by October 9, 1997; or entered full-time National Guard duty under Title 32, U.S.C., between July 1, 1985 and November 29, 1989, and elected MGIB during the period of October 9, 1996, through July 8, 1997; had military pay reduced \$100 a month for 12 months or made a \$1,200 lump-sum contribution.

APPRENTICESHIP AND ON-THE-JOB TRAINING PROGRAMS

There are GI Bill® benefits available for programs in addition college. GI Bill® benefits may also be available to eligible Veterans and dependents who are employed and learning a new skill.

For example, there are on-the-job training (OJT) programs for professions such as a cook, machine tool operator, medical secretary, pharmacist assistant, police officer, or paramedic lasting six months to two years. In another example, there are apprenticeship programs for occupations such as aircraft mechanic, automotive technician, electrician, and welder lasting from two to five years. Approved programs involve a combination of theoretical instruction and skill training.

How do On-the-Job Training and Apprenticeship Programs Work?

- » The employer and the Veteran agree on a training plan of at least 6 months long, leading to new skills and new pay;
- » The employer contacts the California State Approving Agency for Veterans Education (CSAAVE) for assistance (csaaveinfo@calvet.ca.gov);

- » The Veteran applies to USDVA for monthly educational benefits (www.gibill.va.gov);
- » The employer maintains work and training records, evaluates the trainee's progress, agrees to at least one wage increase during the training period, and certifies the trainee's hours to USDVA each month.

Who is Eligible?

Veterans and service members eligible for the MGIB (Chapter 30), Post-Vietnam Era Veterans' Education Assistance Program (Chapter 32), Post-9/11 GI Bill® (Chapter 33), Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program (Chapter 35), and MGIB - Selected Reserve Program (Chapter 1606) are eligible for OJT and Apprenticeship Training programs.

For more information about eligibility, contact USDVA at www.gibill.va.gov or call (888) 442-4551. For more information about OJT and Apprenticeship Programs, contact the CSAAVE at csaaveinfo@calvet.ca.gov or call (916) 503-8317.

To apply for the MGIB education benefit, complete USDVA Form 22-1990 found at www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/vba-22-1990-are.pdf or apply online at www.gibill.va.gov.

MONTGOMERY GI BILL®: SELECTED RESERVE

The Montgomery GI Bill® - Selected Reserve (MGIB-SR) Program, Chapter 1606, may be available to a Veteran who is a member of the Selected Reserve. The Selected Reserve includes the Army Reserve, Navy Reserve, Air Force Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve and Coast Guard Reserve, and the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard. Members of the Selected Reserve may use this education assistance program for up to 36 months on a degree program, certificate or correspondence courses, cooperative training, independent study programs, apprenticeship/on-the-job training, and vocational flight training programs. Remedial, refresher and deficiency training are available under certain circumstances.

Who is Eligible?

To qualify, Reservists and National Guardsmen must meet the following requirements:

- » Have a six-year obligation to serve in the Selected Reserve signed after

June 30, 1985. Officers must have agreed to serve six years in addition to the Veteran's original obligation. For some types of training, it is necessary to have a six-year commitment that begins after September 30, 1990;

- » Complete initial active duty for training (IADT);
- » Meet the requirement to receive a high school diploma or equivalency certificate before completing IADT. Veterans may not use 12 hours toward a college degree to meet this requirement;
- » Remain in good standing while serving in an active Selected Reserve unit. Veterans who were discharged from Selected Reserve service due to a disability that was not caused by misconduct retain MGIB-SR eligibility. The eligibility period may be extended if a Veteran is ordered to active duty.

Eligibility for this program is determined by the Selected Reserve components. USDVA makes the payments under this program. Generally, a Reservist has 10 years from the date they first become eligible under this program to use the benefits, provided he/she remains in the Selected Reserve during this time. The 10-year period may be extended if the Reservist is unable to train because of a disability caused by service in the Selected Reserve. If the Reservist is called to active duty, the period of eligibility will be extended by the length of the period of active duty service plus four months.

How Do I Apply?

Ask your Selected Reserve unit for a DD Form 2384-1, Notice of Basic Eligibility. The Selected Reserve unit enters the service member's eligibility into the Department of Defense personnel system so USDVA can verify eligibility. Complete USDVA Form 22-1990, Application for Education Benefits, and send it to the nearest USDVA regional office (page 34). Service members who started training should take their application and Notice of Basic Eligibility to the school or employer, ask them to complete USDVA Form 22-1999, Enrollment Certification (not available online), and send all the forms to USDVA.

To apply for the MGIB-SR education benefit, complete USDVA Form 22-1990 found at www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/vba-22-1990-are.pdf or apply online at www.gibill.va.gov.

RESERVE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP) chapter 1607 provides educational assistance to members of the Reserve components called or ordered to active duty in response to a war or national emergency declared by the President or Congress.

Change in REAP Eligibility

The National Defense Authorization Act of 2016 ended REAP on November 25, 2015. Some individuals will remain eligible for REAP benefits until November 25, 2019, while others are no longer eligible.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill® in many ways has replaced REAP because it also provides educational assistance benefits for Reserve and National Guard members called to active duty on or after September 11, 2001, and in many cases provides a greater benefit than REAP.

USDVA is committed to ensuring that Reservists, National Guard members, and Veterans understand this change, and we are working to identify individuals who no longer have eligibility for REAP and inform them of potential eligibility to other benefit programs.

This change affects beneficiaries differently:

- » **Current REAP beneficiaries** – Veterans who were attending an educational institution on November 24, 2015, or during the last semester, quarter, or term ending prior to that date, are eligible to continue to receive REAP benefits until November 25, 2019.
- » **REAP beneficiaries not attending school** – Veterans who applied for REAP but were not attending an educational institution on November 24, 2015, or during the last semester, quarter, or term ending prior to that date are no longer eligible to receive REAP benefits. You may be eligible to receive benefits under the Post-9/11 GI Bill®.
- » **New REAP applicants** – Veterans who have not enrolled in school and applied for REAP benefits prior to November 25, 2015, are no longer eligible for REAP benefits. However, in most cases, you will be eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill®.

You may be eligible for Post-9/11 GI Bill® benefits depending on the dates of your periods of service. If we receive a new application for REAP on or after November 25, 2015, we will evaluate your eligibility for all programs, including Post-9/11 GI Bill®, and may award you benefits under a different program.

If you're using REAP but would like to make an irrevocable election to use the Post-9/11 GI Bill® instead, please call us at 1-888-GIBILL-1 (7 a.m. - 6 p.m. CST Monday - Friday) to speak with an Education Call Center Agent.

For more information please visit www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/reap.asp.

POST-VIETNAM ERA VETERANS' EDUCATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Post-Vietnam Era Veterans' Education Assistance Program (VEAP), Chapter 32, is available if a Veteran elected to make contributions from military pay to participate in this education benefit program. Contributions are matched on a \$2 for \$1 basis by the government. A Veteran may use these benefits for degree, certificate, correspondence, apprenticeship/on-the-job training programs, and vocational flight training programs. In certain circumstances, remedial, deficiency, and refresher training may also be available.

Benefit entitlement is 1 to 36 months depending on the number of monthly contributions. A Veteran has 10 years from the Veteran's release from active duty to use VEAP benefits. If there is unused entitlement after the 10-year period, the Veteran's portion remaining in the fund will be automatically refunded.

Who is Eligible?

To be eligible for VEAP, a Veteran must meet the following requirements:

- » Entered service for the first time between January 1, 1977, and June 30, 1985;
- » Opened a contribution account before April 1, 1987;
- » Voluntarily contributed from \$25 to \$2,700;
- » Completed the first period of service; **and**
- » Was discharged or released from service under conditions other than dishonorable.

- » If a Veteran is currently on active duty and wishes to receive VEAP benefits, they must have at least 3 months of contributions available.

Contributions may be withdrawn if the Veteran does not meet the basic eligibility requirements, or if the Veteran formally requests a refund of the contributions withheld.

To apply for the VEAP education benefits, complete USDVA Form 22-1990 found at www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/vba-22-1990-are.pdf apply online at www.gibill.va.gov.

SURVIVORS' AND DEPENDENTS' EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program (DEA), Chapter 35, provides education and training opportunities to dependents of Veterans who are permanently and totally disabled with a USDVA rating of 100 percent due to a service-related condition, or who died while on Active Duty or as a result of a service related condition. The program offers dependents up to 45 months of education benefits, which may be used for degree and certificate programs, apprenticeship, and on-the-job training. In addition, spouses may take a correspondence course. Remedial, deficiency, and refresher courses may be approved under certain circumstances.

Who is Eligible?

To be eligible for DEA, an individual must be the son, daughter, or spouse of:

- » A Veteran who died or is permanently and totally disabled as the result of a service-connected disability. The disability must arise out of active service in the Armed Forces;
- » A Veteran who died from any cause while such permanent and total service-connected disability was in existence;
- » A service member missing in action or captured in line of duty by a hostile force;
- » A service member forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power;

- » A service member who is hospitalized or receiving outpatient treatment for a service connected permanent and total disability and is likely to be discharged for that disability.

How Long Am I Eligible For?

- » Children of a Veteran who wish to receive benefits for attending school or job training must be between the ages of 18 and 26. In certain instances, it is possible to begin before age 18 and to continue after age 26. Marriage is not a bar to this benefit, but benefits may not be used while a Veteran child is on active duty. To pursue training after military service, discharge must not be under dishonorable conditions. USDVA can extend the period of eligibility by the number of months and days equal to the time spent on active duty. This extension cannot generally go beyond the 31st birthday; however, there are some exceptions.
- » For a Veteran spouse, benefits end 10 years from the date USDVA determines eligibility or from the date of death of the Veteran. If USDVA rated the Veteran permanently and totally disabled with an effective date of 3 years from discharge, a spouse will remain eligible for 20 years from the effective date of the rating. This change is effective October 10, 2008, and no benefits may be paid for any training taken prior to that date.
- » For surviving spouses (spouses of service members who died on active duty) benefits end 20 years from the date of death.

To apply for DEA, complete USDVA Form 22-5490 found at www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/vba-22-5490-are.pdf or apply for DEA online at www.gibill.va.gov.

Surviving spouses and dependents of Veterans who are service-connected disabled should see the College Tuition Fee Waiver for Dependents (page 117).

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

The Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program (VR&E) is also called the Chapter 31 program. The mission of VR&E is to help Veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 20 percent or higher by USDVA prepare for, find, and keep suitable jobs. For Veterans with service-connected disabilities so severe they cannot immediately consider work, VR&E offers services to improve their ability to live as independently as possible.

The VR&E Program is designed to help a service-connected disabled Veteran overcome employment handicaps imposed by such disability, so that the Veteran is able to find and keep suitable employment as well as achieve maximum independence in daily living. The primary goal of the program is to train disabled Veterans for appropriate employment. Education benefits for school attendance may be authorized if that is determined to be the best way to prepare a particular Veteran for entry or re-entry into the labor force. Services generally last up to 48 months, but they can be extended in certain instances.

Who is Eligible?

Usually, a Veteran must first be awarded USDVA disability compensation to be eligible for the VR&E Program. In some cases, a Veteran who is awaiting discharge from the service because of a disability may be eligible. Veterans must also meet the following conditions:

- » Served on or after September 16, 1940; **and**
- » Service-connected disabilities are rated at least 20 percent disabling by USDVA; **and**
- » Need vocational rehabilitation to overcome barriers to employment; **and**
- » Less than 12 years since USDVA notified the Veteran of qualified service-connected disabilities.

How Does VR&E Work?

- » An individualized, written agreement of services, resources, and criteria used to achieve successful rehabilitation is outlined.
- » Once the Rehabilitation Plan/Agreement is developed and signed, a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) or case manager will work with the Veteran to implement the plan to achieve suitable employment or independent living.
- » The VRC coordinates services such as tutorial assistance, training in job-seeking skills, medical and dental referrals, adjustment counseling, payment of training allowance, if applicable, and other services as required to achieve rehabilitation.

- » Depending on their circumstances, Veterans will work with VRCs to select one of the following five tracks of services:
 - Reemployment (with a former employer);
 - Rapid employment services for new employment;
 - Self-employment;
 - Employment through long term services; **or**
 - Independent living services.

- » The Rehabilitation Plan/Agreement is reviewed annually to determine whether any changes may be needed to better serve the Veteran.

Recent legislation now allows those who are eligible for both VR&E benefits and Post-9/11 GI Bill® benefits to choose the Post-9/11 GI Bill's® monthly housing allowance instead of the VR&E subsistence allowance.

To apply for VR&E benefits, complete USDVA Form 28-1900 found at www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/vba-28-1900-are.pdf or apply online at www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre.

USDVA WORK-STUDY PROGRAM

The Work-Study Program operated by USDVA is available to any eligible Veteran or dependent receiving USDVA education benefits and attending school three-quarter time or more. An individual working under this program may work at a school's Veterans office, USDVA Regional Office, USDVA Medical Facility, CalVet, or other approved State employment office. Work-study students are paid at either the State or Federal minimum wage, whichever is greater.

How does it Work?

To apply for a Work-Study position with an approved State Office, the student must obtain an enrollment certification USDVA Form 22-1999-6 from their school's Veterans office. The Veteran will earn an hourly wage equal to the federal minimum wage or the state minimum wage, whichever is greater, for work completed during or between periods of enrollment. If a Veteran is in a work-study job at a college or university, the school may pay the Veteran the difference between the amount

USDVA pays and the amount the school normally pays other work-study students doing the same job as the Veteran. A Veteran may arrange with USDVA to work any number of hours during enrollment, but the total number of hours worked cannot be more than 25 times the number of weeks in the enrollment period.

USDVA's Work-Study allowance is available to persons training on a full-time or three-quarter time basis under the following programs:

- » Post-9/11 GI Bill® (38 U.S.C. Chapter 33)
(Veterans and transfer-of-entitlement recipients)
- » Montgomery GI Bill® -Active Duty (38 U.S.C. Chapter 30)
- » REAP Participants
- » Montgomery GI Bill® -Selected Reserve (10 U.S.C. Chapter 1606)
- » Post-Vietnam Era Veterans' Educational Assistance Program
(38 U.S.C. Chapter 32)
- » Dependents' Educational Assistance Program (38 U.S.C. Chapter 35)
- » Eligible dependents under 38 U.S.C. Chapter 35 may use work study only while training in a State.
- » National Call to Service Participants
- » Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment Program (38 U.S.C. Chapter 31)

USDVA selects students for the work-study program based on different factors. Such factors include:

- » Ability of the student to complete the work-study contract before the end of his or her eligibility to education benefits
- » Job availability within normal commuting distance to the student

The number of applicants selected will depend on the availability of USDVA-related work at your school or at USDVA facilities in your area. Veterans with service-connected disabilities of at least 30 percent may be given priority consideration.

What are Some Examples of Acceptable Work?

- » Processing USDVA paperwork at schools or USDVA offices.
- » Performing outreach services under the supervision of USDVA staff.
- » Performing services at USDVA medical facilities, at USDVA Regional Offices, or at USDVA's National Cemetery Administration.

The work the Veteran actually does depends on the Veteran's interests and the type of work available. However, it must be related to USDVA. To apply, complete USDVA Form 22-8691. For more information about education benefits, contact your local County Veterans Service Office (page 182).

OTHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR VETERANS

TROOPS TO TEACHERS PROGRAM

Troops to Teachers (TTT) is a U.S. Department of Education and Department of Defense program that helps eligible military personnel begin a new career as teachers in public schools where their skills, knowledge and experience are most needed. The TTT program enriches the quality of American education by placing mature, motivated, experienced, and dedicated personnel in our nation's classrooms. Thousands of military retirees, separating active duty personnel, and currently drilling members of the reserve components are discovering new and rewarding careers in teaching our nation's children.

The primary objective of TTT is to help recruit quality teachers for schools that serve low-income families throughout America. TTT helps relieve teacher shortages, especially in math, science, special education and other high-needs subject areas, and assists military personnel in making successful transitions to second careers in teaching.

Pending availability of funds, financial assistance may be provided to eligible individuals as stipends up to \$5,000 to help pay for teacher certification costs or as bonuses of \$10,000 to teach in schools serving a high percentage of students from low-income families. Participants who accept the stipend or bonus must agree to teach for three years in schools that serve students from low-income families in accordance with the authorizing legislation.

For more information on the California Troops to Teachers Program, visit www.troopstoteachers.net or write to:

California Troops to Teachers, College of Education

San Diego State University

5500 Campanile Drive

San Diego, CA 92182-1100

(619) 594-6326

CHAPTER
05



HOUSING



CALVET HOME LOANS

CalVet offers a great home loan benefit for Veterans living in California who are purchasing a home in California. A CalVet home loan saves borrowers money and provides home protection that is typically less expensive than that available elsewhere. CalVet expanded eligibility so most honorably discharged Veterans and active duty service members wanting to buy a home in California are eligible.

CalVet's Home Loan program is not the federal loan guarantee program provided by USDVA. Rather, CalVet is a lender of home loan funds. Like a commercial bank, CalVet has a variety of loan options available, one of which is the federal USDVA guarantee program. Unlike commercial lenders, CalVet offers a robust program that includes low cost home insurance, which covers fire/hazard, earthquake, and flood.

CalVet offers loans on:

- » Single Family Homes, Condos, and Mobile Homes on land for up to 125 percent of Fannie Mae maximum loan limits (up to \$781,875 in some counties)
- » Mobile homes in a park for up to \$175,000 (interest rate is an additional 1%)
- » Farm loans for up to 150% of Fannie Mae maximum loan limits (\$938,250 in some counties)
- » Home Improvements for up to \$150,000
- » Rehabilitation loans may be an option for houses not up to USDVA standards
- » Construction take-out or construction for building a new home.

Veterans benefit from this great loan program from day one! It is the State of California's way of thanking Veterans for their service to this country. This program is available to Veterans at no cost to California taxpayers. CalVet Home Loan program features include:

- » Low or no down payment

- » Low fees/closing costs
- » Competitive interest rates
- » Low cost group home insurance - fire/hazard and earthquake and flood only
- » Low home insurance deductibles
- » Fast and friendly service by a state agency dedicated to assisting our Veterans and families

Low Down Payment

CalVet home loans are available with no down payment for those who are eligible for a loan guaranty from USDVA or with a down payment of just three percent of the purchase price for the CalVet 97 loan program.

Low Fees and Closing Costs

CalVet obtains a loan guaranty on loans that qualify for USDVA program. On non-Federal USDVA loans, CalVet provides lender-managed loan guaranty. In all cases, a loan guaranty fee of between 1.25 and 3.30 percent of the loan amount will be charged. Under certain circumstances, the fee may be added to the loan amount. This is a one-time fee, and will not affect the interest rate or monthly installment unless it is financed in the loan. A loan origination fee (common with most loans) of one percent of the loan amount is also charged. This fee must be paid in escrow.

CalVet does not charge many of the closing costs charged by others, e.g., underwriting fee, processing fee, tax service fee, flood certification fee, document fee.

Interest Rates

Interest rates for new loans are reviewed frequently to ensure the rates CalVet offers are competitive in the market. Interest rates are subject to change without notice. Current rates are posted on the CalVet website, www.calvet.ca.gov/homeloans. A borrower's rate is "locked in" when a fully executed purchase agreement is received. If rates are reduced while the loan is being processed, the borrower will receive the benefit of the lower rate.

Free Pre-Approval

In the current real estate market, borrowers need to be pre-approved before placing an offer on a property. CalVet offers pre-approvals at no cost. By completing an application and providing military documents, income and asset verification, CalVet will determine the Veteran's eligibility, credit worthiness and loan amount and CalVet will extend a pre-approval letter to those who meet the guidelines. A preapproval application can be filled out on line at www.calvet.ca.gov/home loans or call (866) 653-2510 toll free to have a pre-approval package sent.

Reusable Loans

A Veteran may obtain a new CalVet loan each time they decide to change residences. Once the previous loan has been paid off, a Veteran may obtain a new loan with the current features, subject to eligibility and financial qualification.

Home and Loan Protection Plans

To ensure that the investment is safe and sound, CalVet provides comprehensive protection for the Veteran and Veteran's family. CalVet loan holders get the most comprehensive structural coverage available in California against flood and earthquake damage. CalVet offers Guaranteed Replacement Cost for these perils, and the deductible is a low \$500 on flood claims, and \$500 or five percent of the coverable loss (whichever is greater) on earthquake and mudslide claims. Should disaster strike, the homeowner will be on the way to recovery in days and at a considerable savings over the costs associated with private policies. Most loans also include Guaranteed Replacement Cost Fire and Hazard coverage, with low premiums and a low \$250 deductible.

If you are a property owner with a CalVet Home loan and you experienced property loss or were required to evacuate your home, please contact our Claims Adjuster, Carl Warren & Company, at their 24-hour hotline at (800) 626-1613. If questions about your homeowner insurance, please call the CalVet Home Protection Unit, Monday – Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at (866) 421-6978.

CalVet loan holders under the age of 62 at the time of loan funding have the option to purchase life insurance, at competitive group rates, to pay off the full balance of the home loan in the event of death while insured. Both the Veteran and Veteran's spouse have the opportunity to apply, and there is no disqualification for an existing military disability. In most cases, the insurance premium will be included in the monthly loan

payment, so there is no separate bill to pay. CalVet's easy application process usually requires completion of only one form. Coverage ends when the Veteran pays the loan in full or the insured reaches the age of 70, whichever occurs first. Veterans can enjoy peace of mind knowing their family home is protected.

Eligibility

Nearly all of our Veterans purchasing homes in California are now eligible, including Veterans who served during peacetime. Only 90 days of active duty and a discharge classified as "Honorable" or "Under Honorable Conditions" are required. Information to confirm the Veteran's eligibility is on the DD Form 214. Service members currently on active duty are eligible after meeting the 90 days of active duty requirement. A statement of service from the service member's current command is required. Current members of the National Guard and the U.S. Military Reserves who qualify as first-time home buyers or purchase in certain targeted areas are eligible as well. Former members of the National Guard and or Reserves whose only active duty was for training purposes are not eligible; however, if during service, the Veteran was ordered to active duty by Presidential Executive Order, the Veteran may be eligible. For information about eligibility, call CalVet at or (916) 503-8359 or (866) 653-2510 toll free. More information is available at www.calvet.ca.gov/homeloans.

HAVING TROUBLE MAKING CALVET HOME LOAN PAYMENTS?

CalVet loan holders who have suffered a hardship and are unable to afford their monthly CalVet home loan payment may qualify for a loan term extension that will reduce the loan payment. In addition, distressed loan holders may be eligible for temporary financial assistance from Keep Your Home California, a program available to CalVet loan holders through 2017. For details, call the CalVet Collection Unit at (916) 503-8356 or (800) 952-5626 toll free. You can also visit www.calvet.ca.gov/homeloans/pages/current-customers.aspx and click the "Financial Difficulties?" tab.

Certain state and federal laws may protect service members who are struggling financially because of activation and deployment. The Service Members Civil Relief Act of 2003 (SCRA), formerly known as the Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act of 1940 (SSCRA), is a federal law that gives all military members some important rights as they enter active duty or are called to deployment. One benefit of the SCRA is the ability to reduce loan interest rates to 6% under certain circumstances.

Additionally, the California Military Families Financial Relief Act allows for the deferral of loan payments for members of the Reserves or National Guard who are called to active duty. Homeowners may call the CalVet Loan Servicing Unit at (916) 503-8362 or (800) 952-5626 toll free or send an e-mail to loanserv@calvet.ca.gov.

USDVA HOME LOAN GUARANTY

USDVA provides a home loan guaranty benefit and other housing-related programs to help service members and Veterans buy, build, repair, retain, or adapt a home for personal occupancy. USDVA Home Loans are provided by private lenders, such as banks, mortgage companies, and CalVet Home Loans (a State Agency). USDVA guarantees a portion of the loan, enabling the lender to provide more favorable terms.

USDVA home loans can be used to:

- » Buy a home, or a condominium unit in a USDVA-approved project;
- » Build a home;
- » Simultaneously purchase and improve a home;
- » Improve a home by installing energy-related features or making energy efficient improvements; **and**
- » Buy a manufactured home and/or lot.

The guarantee USDVA provides to lenders allows them to provide Veterans with more favorable terms, including:

- » No down payment as long as the sales price does not exceed the appraised value;
- » No private mortgage insurance premium requirement;
- » A limit to the amount that can be charged for closing costs;
- » Closing costs may be paid by the seller;
- » No penalty for paying off the loan early; **and**
- » Possible USDVA assistance for those who run into difficulty making payments.

Veterans do not have to be a first-time homebuyer to use a USDVA Home Loan Guaranty. The benefit may be used more than once so long as the prior USDVA loan has been sold and the loan paid in full, or a qualified Veteran-transferee (buyer) agrees to assume the USDVA loan and substitute his or her entitlement for the same amount of the entitlement originally used by the Veteran seller.

To be eligible, a service member or Veteran must have suitable credit, sufficient income, and a valid Certificate of Eligibility. The home must be for the Veteran's personal occupancy.

The spouse of a Veteran can also apply for home loan eligibility under one of the following conditions:

- » Un-remarried spouse of a Veteran who died while in service or from a service connected disability;
- » Spouse of a Service member missing in action or a prisoner of war; **or**
- » Surviving spouse who remarries on or after age 57 and on or after December 16, 2003
(Note: a surviving spouse who remarried before December 16, 2003, and on or after attaining age 57, must have applied no later than December 15, 2004, to establish home loan eligibility. USDVA must deny applications from surviving spouses who remarried before December 6, 2003, that are received after December 15 2004.);
- » Surviving spouses of certain totally disabled Veterans whose disability may not have been the cause of death.

Certain U.S. citizens who served in the armed forces of a government allied with the United States in World War II may be eligible. Individuals with service as members in certain organizations, such as public health service officers, cadets at the United States Military, Air Force, or Coast Guard Academy, midshipmen at the United States Naval Academy, officers of National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, merchant seaman with World War II service, and others may also apply for eligibility.

After establishing eligibility, the Veteran will need a Certificate of Eligibility (COE). The COE verifies to the lender that the Veteran qualifies for a USDVA-backed loan.

Veterans may apply for a COE through the lender, online at the eBenefits portal, www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits-portal/ebenefits.portal, or by completing USDVA Form 26-1880 (Request for Certificate of Eligibility) and mailing it to:

USDVA Loan Eligibility Center

Attn: COE (262)

P.O. Box 100034

Decatur, GA 30031

If you are unable to print the form you may call (888) 768-2132 and follow the prompts for Eligibility. USDVA will mail the form. Contact the local County Veterans Service Office (page 182) for assistance in completing the application.

VETERANS HOMES OF CALIFORNIA

The first Veterans Home of California (VHC) was established in 1884 for Civil War Veterans. Today, CalVet operates eight Veterans Homes. Our VHC provide residential and long-term care services in a home-like environment that promotes dignity and features individualized care. Our Homes assist residents to ensure they have coverage to meet their health care needs. Residents enjoy enriched activity opportunities including social events, dances, patriotic programs, volunteer activities, arts and crafts, computer access, shopping trips, and other on/off-site activities.

Our VHCs range in size from 60 residents on 20-acre campuses to a 1,000 residents on a 500-acre campus. Each Home is distinctive within its region and offers its own unique environment, levels of care combinations, and social and recreational activities. The levels of care include skilled nursing facility (SNF), intermediate care facility (ICF), and residential care facility for the elderly or assisted living (RCFE), domiciliary or independent living (DOM), and SNF Memory Care for our Veterans with symptoms of dementia or Alzheimer's disease.

LEVELS OF CARE DEFINITIONS

Independent Living—Domiciliary

Domiciliary (DOM) is for residents who may have some functional limitations, but who are able to perform activities of daily living with no assistance. Non-nursing staff provide supervision. DOM residents have access to the Home's other levels of care and medical services. DOM services are available at Barstow, Chula Vista and Yountville. At the West Los Angeles Home they have implemented a Transitional Housing Program for the homeless. This is a domiciliary program geared specifically to transition the homeless from the Veterans Home into the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program or other permanent community placement options.

Assisted Living—Residential Care Facility for the Elderly

Residential Care Facility for the Elderly (RCFE) is available for residents who require assistance and supervision with some activities of daily living. RCFE services may include care by licensed nurses. RCFE is available at Chula Vista, Fresno, Lancaster, Redding, Ventura, West Los Angeles, and Yountville.

Intermediate Nursing Care

Residents in an Intermediate Care Facility (ICF) require intermittent licensed nursing assistance with medications and treatments, and they generally require unlicensed nursing assistance with some daily living activities. ICF differs from skilled nursing care by the degree of need for the services of licensed nurses. ICF is available at Barstow and Yountville.

Skilled Nursing Care

Skilled Nursing Care (SNF) provides the 24-hour services of licensed nurses. It is more comprehensive than intermediate care, but less comprehensive than acute care. SNF patients may receive rehabilitation therapy, nursing, pharmaceutical, activity, and dietary services. A Memory Care program within the SNF level of care provides a supervised environment for Veterans with symptoms of moderate-to-severe confusion or memory loss, or for Veterans who have difficulty making decisions, solving problems or participating in conversation. SNF is available at Barstow, Chula Vista, Fresno, Redding, West Los Angeles, and Yountville. SNF Memory Care is available at Fresno, Redding, West Los Angeles, and Yountville.



VETERANS HOME OF CALIFORNIA – BARSTOW

100 East Veterans Parkway
Barstow, CA 92311
(800) 746-0606

Resident Capacity: 400

Levels of Care: DOM, ICF, SNF



VETERANS HOME OF CALIFORNIA – CHULA VISTA

700 East Naples Court
Chula Vista, CA 91911
(888) 857-2146

Resident Capacity: 400

Levels of Care: DOM, RCFE, SNF



VETERANS HOME OF CALIFORNIA – FRESNO

2811 West California Avenue
Fresno, CA 93706
(855) 769-5792

Resident Capacity: 300

Levels of Care: RCFE, SNF,
SNF Memory Care



VETERANS HOME OF CALIFORNIA – LANCASTER

45221 30th Street West
Lancaster, CA 93536
(888) 272-6030

Resident Capacity: 60

Levels of Care: RCFE



VETERANS HOME OF CALIFORNIA – REDDING

3400 Knighton Road
Redding, CA 96002
(855) 769-5791

Resident Capacity: 150

Levels of Care: RCFE, SNF,
SNF Memory Care



VETERANS HOME OF CALIFORNIA – VENTURA

10900 Telephone Road
Ventura, CA 93004
(888) 272-2104

Resident Capacity: 60

Levels of Care: RCFE



VETERANS HOME OF CALIFORNIA – WEST LOS ANGELES

11500 Nimitz Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90049
(877) 605-1332

Resident Capacity: 396

Levels of Care: RCFE, SNF,
SNF Memory Care



VETERANS HOME OF CALIFORNIA – YOUNTVILLE

260 California Drive
Yountville, CA 94599
(800) 404-8387

Resident Capacity: 1,023

Levels of Care: DOM, RCFE, ICF, SNF,
SNF Memory Care

CalVet

Headquarters for the Veterans Homes Division

1227 O Street, Suite 324

Sacramento, CA 95814

(800) 952-5626

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS

Outpatient Clinic

The outpatient clinic at each VHC is established to serve residents who live in the residential care for the elderly or the domiciliary neighborhoods. These clinics provide primary care and multidisciplinary assessments. The clinics address routine care needs and will arrange visits with medical specialties as needed.

Basic Admission Requirements

All eligible Veterans are encouraged to apply for admission to VHC. Numerous federal and state laws, regulations, and licensing requirements govern basic admission requirements. California state laws concerning the VHC are contained in the Military and Veterans Code, Sections 1010 through 1050. State regulations concerning VHC are contained in the California Code of Regulations, Title 12, Chapter 4, Sections 500 through 505.

To be admitted to the VHC, Veterans must meet the following requirements:

- 1.** Age 55 or over and/or have a significant disability or are homeless;
- 2.** Served on active duty in the U.S. military and were discharged honorably or under honorable conditions;
- 3.** Still able to live independently or qualify for a higher level of care offered at one of the VHC (contact the individual home for clarification on qualifying for a higher level of care);
- 4.** California resident;

5. Enrolled in a qualified federal, state or private health service plan, or have an application for such a plan pending. These plans include Medicare, Medi-Cal, USDVA, Tricare, and private insurance coverage. Veterans eligible for Medicare and Medi-Cal, USDVA, and Tricare must enroll and maintain coverage or self-pay for medical care; **and**
6. Able to live with and get along with other people in a structured communal environment.

Applications for the VHC can be obtained through the local County Veterans Services Office (page 182), or online at www.calvet.ca.gov/vethomes/documents/vhcapp.pdf.

HOMELESS VETERANS PROGRAMS

Although accurate counts of the homeless Veterans population presents a difficulty due to the transient nature of the homeless populations, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) estimate in 2014 that 49,933 Veterans are homeless on any given night nationwide.

Approximately 12,700 Veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation New Dawn were homeless in 2010. The number of young homeless Veterans is increasing, but only constitutes 8.8% of the overall homeless Veteran population.

Veterans often suffer from conditions that make it difficult to find and maintain gainful employment and pay for housing. Along with the high rates of posttraumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury, USDVA has found that approximately 55 percent of homeless Veterans suffer from mental health issues, 70 percent are affected by substance abuse issues, and 40 percent of women homeless Veterans report experience severe forms of mental illness, mostly due to higher rates of military sexual trauma.

CalVet is addressing Veteran homelessness by working with various government and non-government agencies and organizations throughout California to provide advocacy and services needed by the homeless population and Veterans dealing with the threat of homelessness. To find housing assistance programs available in the area, call (800) 952-5626 or (800) 221-8998 (Outside California) or visit www.va.gov/homeless.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HOMELESS PROGRAMS

Every USDVA Medical Center has a Homeless Veterans Coordinator responsible for helping homeless Veterans access USDVA and community-based care, conducting outreach, case management, referrals to benefits counselors, linkage to healthcare, and housing assistance. For a complete list of USDVA Healthcare Facilities and Homeless Veterans Coordinators' contact information (page 103).

HUD-VASH

Through a cooperative partnership, the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Veterans Affairs Supported Housing (HUD-VASH) program provides long-term case management, supportive services, and permanent housing support. HUD provides "Housing Choice" Section 8 vouchers designated for HUD-VASH to participating public housing authorities to assist with rent payment.

To be eligible for this program, Veterans must be eligible for USDVA healthcare, homeless, and participate in case management services to obtain and sustain permanent independent community housing. For eligibility criteria, contact the county's Continuum of Care Coordinator (page 156), the nearest USDVA Homeless Veterans Coordinator (page 103), or visit www.va.gov/homeless/hud-vash_eligibility.asp.

Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program

The Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) is funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. HUD has awarded funds to eligible cities, counties, and states (HUD does not provide funding directly to

individuals). Individuals needing assistance can access services from an organization in their local community once HPRP funds have been distributed. Contact the Veteran's city, county, or state grantee to find out if HPRP funds are available now, whether the Veteran is eligible to receive this assistance, and how to access it. For a list of participating agencies, visit www.hudhre.info/documents/hprp_granteecontactinfo.pdf.

Supportive Services for Veteran Families

The Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program provides grants and technical assistance to community-based, nonprofit organizations to help very low-income Veterans and their families living in or transitioning to permanent housing. Grantees provide eligible Veteran families with outreach, case management and assistance in obtaining USDVA and other benefits. Grantees may also provide time-limited payments to third parties (e.g., landlords, utility companies, moving companies, and licensed child care providers) if these payments help Veteran families stay in or acquire permanent housing on a sustainable basis. For more information on the SSVF program and providers, visit www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf.asp.

Domiciliary Care

Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans is designed to provide state-of-the-art, high-quality residential rehabilitation and treatment services for Veterans with multiple and severe medical conditions, mental illness, addiction, or psychosocial deficits. For additional information regarding USDVA homeless prevention programs, visit www1.va.gov/homeless/index.asp.

Homeless Patient Aligned Care Teams

The Homeless Patient Aligned Care Teams program provides a coordinated "medical home" specifically tailored to the needs of homeless Veterans that integrates clinical care with delivery of social services with enhanced access and community coordination. Implementation of this model is expected to address many of the health disparity and equity issues facing the homeless Veteran population and result in reduced emergency department use and hospitalizations, improved chronic disease management, improved "housing readiness" with fewer Veterans returning to homelessness once housed. For more information visit www.va.gov/homeless/h_pact.asp.

Homeless Veterans Dental Program

The Homeless Veterans Dental Program provides dental treatment for eligible Veterans in a number of programs: Domiciliary, Residential Rehabilitation Treatment, USDVA Grant and Per Diem, Compensated Work Therapy/Transitional Residence, Healthcare for Homeless Veterans (contract bed), and Community Residential Care. USDVA is working to expand dental care to all eligible Veterans within this program. For more information, visit www.va.gov/homeless/dental.asp.

Homeless Veteran Supported Employment Program

The Homeless Veteran Supported Employment Program provides vocational assistance, job development and placement, and ongoing support to improve employment outcomes among homeless Veterans and Veterans at-risk of homelessness. Formerly homeless Veterans who have been trained as Vocational Rehabilitation Specialists provide these services.

Compensated Work Therapy

The Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) program is comprised of three unique programs which assist homeless Veterans in returning to competitive employment: Sheltered Workshop, Transitional Work, and Supported Employment. Veterans in CWT are paid at least the federal or state minimum wage, whichever is the higher.

STATEWIDE SERVICES AND OFFICES

California is home to many nonprofit and community based organizations that provide a variety of statewide services to homeless and potentially homeless Veterans. For a statewide directory of California homeless service organizations, visit www.calvet.ca.gov/vetservices/documents/homeless%20resources.pdf.

Continuum of Care

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) allocates HUD homeless assistance grants to organizations that participate in local homeless assistance program planning networks. Each of these networks is called a Continuum of Care (CoC). CoC committees at the city, county and state level coordinate their efforts to identify the needs of local homeless populations, the resources currently available

in the community to address those needs, and additional resources needed to fill identified gaps. The CoC process is a community-based approach that encourages the creation of collaborative and comprehensive systems to meet the diverse needs of local homeless populations.

To find contact information for homeless assistance coordinators in Northern California, visit www.hud.gov/local/ca/homeless/continuumcare/ncalcoc.cfm. To view contact information for homeless assistance coordinators in Southern California, visit www.hud.gov/local/ca/homeless/continuumcare/scalcoc.cfm.

Stand Downs

Stand Downs are typically one- to three-day events organized by community-based Veterans services organizations and nonprofit organizations, with cooperation from a variety of state, federal, and private agencies. Stand Downs provide vital services for Veterans, such as food, shelter, clothing, health screenings, benefits counseling, and referrals to a variety of other necessary services like housing, employment, and substance abuse treatment. In addition, Veterans have access to Homeless Courts where they are able to resolve minor violations and warrants.

CalVet allocates discretionary funds in support of statewide Stand Down events annually. Any Veteran service provider desiring to conduct a homeless Veteran Stand Down may be eligible for funding from CalVet. For more information call (800) 952-5626.

To volunteer and/or find a list of all California Stand Down events, visit www.calvet.ca.gov/vetservices/pages/stand-downs.aspx.

CALL CENTERS FOR HOMELESS VETERANS

Trained call center counselors are available 24/7 to offer homeless Veterans and Veterans at risk of becoming homeless free referrals to local homeless shelters.

- » The **National Call Center for Homeless Veterans Hotline** was founded by USDVA to ensure that homeless Veterans or Veterans at risk of homelessness have free, 24/7 access to trained counselors. The hotline is intended to assist homeless Veterans and their families, USDVA Medical Centers, federal, state and local partners, community agencies, service providers and others in the community. To be connected with a trained USDVA staff member, call (877) 4AID-VET ((877) 424-3838).

- » **National Coalition for Homeless Veterans** is the resource and technical assistance center for a national network of community-based service providers and local, state and federal agencies that provide emergency and supportive housing, food, health services, job training and placement assistance, legal aid and case management support for hundreds of thousands of homeless Veterans each year. To find a local shelter, call (800) VET-HELP (838-4357) or visit www.nchv.org.
- » **2-1-1 Information and Referral Search** provides free and confidential information and referral for help with food, housing, employment, healthcare, counseling and more. For more information, call 2-1-1 or visit www.211.org.

National Resource Directory provides access to services and resources at the national, state and local levels that support recovery, rehabilitation and community reintegration. Wounded warriors, service members, Veterans, or family members may visit www.nrd.gov to connect with a caregiver who supports the local area.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE WITH UTILITIES

Several organizations throughout California provide financial utility bill assistance for Veterans and their family members.

- » California Alternative Rates for Energy Program (CARE) offers low-income consumers a 20 percent discount on energy bills. For more information, visit www.cpuc.ca.gov/puc/energy/low+income/care.htm.
- » The California Public Utilities Commission provides assistance in negotiating a more affordable payment to utility companies if a customer has trouble paying his/her energy, telephone, or water bill. For more information, visit www.cpuc.ca.gov/puc/cec/b_paymentplan.htm.
- » Family Electric Rate Assistance (FERA) Program provides assistance to families with slightly higher incomes. FERA is available for customers of Southern California Edison, San Diego Gas and Electric Company, and Pacific Gas and Electric Company. For more information, visit www.cpuc.ca.gov/puc/energy/low+income/fera.htm.
- » The Energy Savings Assistance Program provides no-cost weatherization for low-income households who meet the CARE income guidelines. For more information, visit www.cpuc.ca.gov/puc/energy/low+income/liee.htm.

- » The Department of Community Services and Development can connect people to home energy assistance, energy crisis intervention, and low-income weatherization programs. For more information, visit www.csd.ca.gov.
- » Lifeline Telecommunications Program provides a discount for landline service with unlimited local incoming and outgoing calls. For more information, visit www.cpuc.ca.gov/puc/telco/public+programs/ults.htm.
- » Additionally, some utilities have emergency payment assistance programs for their customers. For more information, visit www.cpuc.ca.gov/puc/energy/electric+rates/billassist.htm.

ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING FOOD

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program is the name for the federal food stamp program. The name reflects the changes made to meet the needs of clients, including a focus on nutrition and an increase in benefit amounts. State programs may have different names. The online application system allows individuals to apply for the program through a secured site. For more information, call (877) 847-FOOD (3663) or apply online at www.c4yourself.com.

Emergency Food and Shelter Program

The Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) expands the work of local social service agencies (nonprofit and government) in assisting people with economic emergencies. United Way serves as the fiscal agent for the EFSP, and EFSP staff is housed in United Way's headquarters. For more information about United Way, visit www.efsp.unitedway.org.

Emergency Food Assistance Program

Food banks solicit and warehouse donated food and other products. This food is then distributed to a variety of community agencies which serve people in need. Many food banks provide food to hundreds of organizations that would likely not be able to obtain a steady supply of food or store enough food to meet the needs of

the people they serve. Some food banks also operate programs that distribute food directly to individuals. To locate a nearby food bank, visit www.cafoodbanks.org or call (866) 321-4435.

USDVA JUSTICE OUTREACH INITIATIVE

Each USDVA Medical Center employs a designated facility-based Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) Specialist responsible for direct outreach, assessment, and case management for justice-involved Veterans in local courts and jails, and liaison with local justice system partners. For more information on the VJO Initiative and to find a VJO Specialist in the area, visit www.va.gov/homeless/vjo.asp.

Homeless Courts

Homeless courts are special court sessions held in local shelters or other community sites designed for homeless citizens to resolve outstanding misdemeanor warrants. Homeless defendants sometimes fail to appear in traditional courts, not because of disregard for the court system, but because of the status of their condition. Many homeless people are reluctant to attend court given the uncertainty of court proceedings and the threat of custody. Unresolved legal issues can ultimately preclude homeless people from accessing desperately needed services such as employment, housing, public assistance, and treatment programs.

The American Bar Association (ABA) has also developed and approved policies related to homeless courts, including basic principles for homeless court programs, which can be found at www.americanbar.org/groups/public_services/homelessness_poverty/initiatives/homeless_courts.html.

The ABA Commission on Homelessness and Poverty offers technical support. For information, contact Amy Horton-Newell at the ABA Washington Office at (202) 662-1693 or at homeless@abanet.org.

Homeless Courts are presently operating in the following California counties:

- » Alameda
- » Contra Costa
- » Fresno
- » Humboldt
- » Kern
- » Los Angeles

- » Orange
- » Sacramento
- » San Bernardino
- » San Diego
- » San Joaquin
- » Santa Clara
- » Sonoma
- » Ventura

For more information on Homeless Courts, visit www.calvet.ca.gov/vetservices/pages/homeless-courts.aspx.

Veteran Treatment Courts

Veteran Treatment Courts (VTC) are specialty courts for Veterans at the County level. The VTC offer alternatives to case proceedings that address underlying problems that may have contributed to minor offenses other than court involvement. Veteran treatment courts lead to the placement of many Veterans into USDVA mental health and physical health treatment programs, including Veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, military sexual trauma, substance abuse, or mental health condition. In many cases, counseling and other medical appointments are required and incorporated into the treatment programs designed to treat the underlying medical conditions.

Participating Veterans are ordered to complete the recommended treatment plan and comply with any other terms and conditions of probation imposed by the court. Participating Veterans also receive assistance with housing and disability claims filed with USDVA.

For information on local Veteran treatment courts and statutes in place to assist you as you circumvent the criminal justice system, a Veteran's attorney should contact a Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist at www.va.gov/homeless/vjo.asp.

For more information on Veteran treatment courts located across the country, visit the National Clearinghouse for Veterans Treatment Courts website at www.justiceforvets.org.

Healthcare for Re-entry Veterans

Healthcare for Re-entry Veterans (HCRV) addresses the community re-entry needs of incarcerated Veterans. HCRV works to prevent homelessness, reduce the impact of medical, psychiatric, and substance abuse problems upon community readjustment, and decrease the likelihood of re-incarceration for members leaving prison. For more information, visit www.va.gov/homeless/reentry.asp.

COMMUNITY BASED VETERANS SERVICE PROVIDERS

VETERANS VILLAGE OF SAN DIEGO

4141 Pacific Highway

San Diego, CA 92110

(619) 497-0142

(619) 497-0263 (Fax)

info@vvsd.net

www.vvsd.net

Veterans Village of San Diego (VVSD), also known as Vietnam Veterans of San Diego, is dedicated to extending assistance to needy and homeless Veterans of all wars and eras and their families by providing housing, food, clothing, substance abuse recovery and mental health counseling, job training, and job search assistance. VVSD operates a residential treatment program that offers Veterans up to one year of treatment with case management, classroom instruction, individual therapy, job readiness counseling, and posttraumatic stress disorder therapy, if needed. VVSD also operates sober-living programs and programs that serve Veterans with children. They are a nonprofit agency working closely with USDVA and providing benefits assistance and referrals. The Warrior Traditions Program provides peer-to-peer, post-combat experience support for any service member who has served in Iraq or Afghanistan.

NEW DIRECTIONS

11303 Wilshire Boulevard, USDVA Building 116

Los Angeles, CA 90073

(310) 914-4045

(310) 914-5495 (Fax)

(310) 914-5966 (24-Hour Assistance)

www.newdirectionsinc.org

New Directions assists Veterans in becoming healthy, sober, and self-sufficient by offering a wide array of services, including treatment for co-occurring disorders, job training and placement, parenting and money management classes, legal and financial assistance, counseling, remedial education, and resources for alumni. Clients leave New Directions with a job, housing, a savings account, computer skills, renewed self-confidence, and the support of mentors and peers.

U.S. VETERANS INITIATIVE

(213) 542-2600

www.usvetsinc.org

U.S. Veterans Initiative (U.S. VETS) is the largest nonprofit organization in the country that works to reintegrate homeless and at-risk Veterans. U.S. VETS offers assistance in Inglewood, Long Beach and Riverside, California through transitional and affordable housing, case management, employment assistance, mental health counseling and substance abuse treatment.

U.S. VETS INITIATIVE - INGLEWOOD

733 S. Hindry Avenue

Inglewood, CA 90301

(310) 348-7600

(310) 645-2605 (Fax)

www.usvetsinc.org/inglewood

U.S. VETS - Inglewood offers homeless Veterans over 500 beds of transitional and permanent housing and a host of support services. Special needs programs include a Non-Custodial Fathers' Program, which offers parenting classes and reunites fathers with their children. The High Barriers Program is designed to address additional barriers some Veterans face (such as older workers) in getting back to work.

U.S. VETS INITIATIVE - LONG BEACH

2001 River Avenue
Long Beach, CA 90810
(562) 200-7300
(562) 388-7991 (Fax)

www.usvetsinc.org/longbeach

U.S. VETS - Long Beach is located at the Villages at Cabrillo, the former 26-acre Cabrillo/Savannah Naval housing site. The site provides a seamless and comprehensive array of services to homeless and at-risk Veterans.

U.S. VETS INITIATIVE – INLAND EMPIRE

15105 6th Street
March Air Reserve Base, CA 92518
(951) 656-6892
(951) 656-6890 (Fax)

www.usvetsinc.org/inland-empire

U.S. VETS – Inland Empire at the March Air Reserve Base provides stable housing and a variety of support services that gives homeless Veterans the skills to become self-sufficient.

The project offers services to homeless Veterans from both Riverside and San Bernardino counties and hope to the more than 7,000 Veterans living on the streets of the Inland Empire. Services include: Outreach and Assessment, Residential Substance Abuse Treatment, Residential Employment Program, Career Center, Senior and Disabled Housing, and Food Services.

SWORDS TO PLOWSHARES

1060 Howard Street
San Francisco, CA 94103
(415) 252-4788
(415) 552-6267 (Fax)

www.swords-to-plowshares.org

Swords to Plowshares works to heal the wounds, to restore dignity, hope, and self-sufficiency to all Veterans in need, and to prevent and end homelessness and poverty among Veterans. Founded in 1974, Swords to Plowshares is a community-based, not-for-profit organization that provides counseling and case management, employment and training, housing and legal assistance to Veterans in the San Francisco Bay Area.

VIETNAM VETERANS OF CALIFORNIA

www.vietvets.org

The Vietnam Veterans of California (VVC) offers community based services for Veterans and their families. VVC has several programs located in Sacramento, Eureka, Santa Rosa and Menlo Park. Their focus is on employment and training support, transitional housing, and alcohol and drug recovery. VVC serves Veterans of all eras.

SACRAMENTO VETERANS RESOURCE CENTER

7270 E. Southgate Drive

Sacramento, CA 95823

(916) 393-8387

(916) 393-8389 (Fax)

www.vietvets.org/svrc.htm

The Sacramento Veterans Resource Center (SVRC) is a multi-function campus with the most comprehensive mix of services for Veterans in Northern California.

Employment Counseling & Training: The SVRC helps Veterans obtain career training and self-sustaining employment opportunities.

Supportive Housing: The SVRC offers fifty-two onsite and eight offsite beds for homeless Veterans, including female Veterans with children. Their supportive housing programs offer up to 24 months of stable living, combined with comprehensive supportive services to effectively end the cycle of homelessness and assist Veterans in the acquisition of permanent housing and sustainable-wage jobs. The Jon Oberg Center is a state-licensed, 22-bed transitional housing program for Veterans and non-Veterans in need of drug/alcohol recovery services.

The Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC) is a Small Business Administration-funded business center for Veterans who own or are interested in starting a small business. In addition to comprehensive consulting provided by industry experts, VBOC also conducts statewide Town Hall workshops in California, Nevada, and Colorado. These workshops bring both private and public agencies together to provide resources for Veterans with small business needs.

NORTH COAST VETERANS RESOURCE CENTER

109 4th Street

Eureka, CA 95501

(707) 442-5852

(707) 442-4113 (Fax)

www.vietvets.org/ncvrc.htm

Employment Counseling & Training: The North Coast Veterans Resource Center offers career training and self-sustaining employment opportunities, career assessment, counseling, and support services. Eligible Veterans who are homeless have access to stable housing.

Supportive Housing: The 12-bed Victorian “Eureka House” provides transitional housing to Veterans in Eureka. The Veterans residing in the house work toward training, employment and permanent housing goals.

NORTH BAY VETERANS RESOURCE CENTER

2455 Bennett Valley Road, C-105

Santa Rosa, CA 95402

(707) 578-8387

(707) 578-2788 (Fax)

www.vietvets.org/nbvrc.htm

The North Bay Veterans Resource Center offers career development and job search workshops, with resume preparation instruction, winning the Employment Game workshop, and transitional housing and training assistance.

INTERFAITH

The Betty & Melvin Cohn Center

550 West Washington Avenue, Suite B

Escondido, CA 92025

(760) 489-6380

(760) 740-0837 (Fax)

www.interfaithservices.org

COASTAL SERVICE CENTER

2195 Oceanside Boulevard
Oceanside, CA 92054
(760) 721-2117
(760) 721-0351 (Fax)

Interfaith's programs are designed to overlap, to be comprehensive, and to offer wrap-around services that assist clients in finding long-term solutions that enable them to become self-sufficient. Interfaith provides food, showers, and a roof over their head, clothing, counseling, employment, and ongoing support.

VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA

Volunteers of America Northern California and Northern Nevada

Veronica Williams, Intake Coordinator
10636 Schirra Avenue
Mather, CA 95655
(916) 228-3119
(916) 442-1861 (Fax)

Volunteers of America's (VOA) Mather location provides temporary assistance to prevent homelessness, case management, housing counseling, and supportive services to prevent homelessness amongst the Veteran population. This program is funded using the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) grant.

Volunteers of America Greater Los Angeles

Jim Zenner
Hollywood Veterans Center
4969 Sunset Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90027
(213) 286-0324

The Volunteers of America Greater Los Angeles has several programs to meet the needs of Veterans and their families. Like their colleagues in northern California, they too provide services under the SSVF grant, and supportive services for women Veterans, transitional housing, residential facilities for Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans, employment assistance, re-entry services, and low-income housing.

VETERANS TRANSITION CENTER OF MONTEREY

The Veterans Transition Center offers transitional housing on the property formerly known as Fort Ord. The Center's "Coming Home to Patton Park" program offers homeless Veterans the tools they need to successfully reintegrate and become self-sufficient. In a clean and sober environment, Veterans can access case management services, life skills workshops, substance abuse counseling, and temporary living quarters while they seek employment and permanent housing. The program is tailored to meet the needs of each individual and provides Veterans and their families' transitional housing for up to 24 months. For more information, visit www.vtcmonterey.org or call (831) 883-8387.

my
CALVET

CalVet is committed to providing affordable housing for all our Veterans.

WWW.CALVET.CA.GOV | (800) 952-5626



Education Employment Housing Health

CHAPTER
06



EMPLOYMENT



STATE EMPLOYMENT

Most jobs with the State of California can be applied for only after successfully completing a civil service examination.

Special provisions allow Veterans to receive preference points when testing for open and open non-promotional examinations requiring college graduation and less than two years of experience. The examination announcement will state whether Veterans' preference credits will be granted.

In open examinations and open non-promotional examinations, eligible Veterans, widows/widowers of Veterans, and spouses of 100 percent disabled Veterans receive 10 points. Eligible disabled Veterans receive 15 points. Eligible widows/widowers of National Guard Veterans and spouses of 100 percent disabled National Guard Veterans will receive 5 points. The points are added to the final score only after the candidate has successfully passed all parts of the examination.

When promotional examinations are given by more than one department for the same classification, the Veteran can only compete in one examination at a time. Once this selection is made, it cannot be changed for the duration of the promotional list eligibility established for the examination in which the Veteran participated. Employees may request a transfer of list eligibility between departments in the same manner as provided for civil service employees.

To be eligible for Veterans' preference credits, an individual must be qualified as a Veteran. "Veteran" means any person who has served full time for 30 days or more in the Armed Forces in time of war or in time of peace in a campaign or expedition for service in which a medal has been authorized by the government of the United States, or during the period of September 16, 1940, to January 31, 1995, or who has served at least 181 consecutive days since January 31, 1995, and who has been discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable but does not include any person who served only in auxiliary or reserved components of the Armed Forces whose service therein did not exempt him or her from the operation of the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940.

“Disabled Veteran” means any Veteran as defined herein who is currently declared by USDVA to be 10 percent or more disabled as a result of his or her service; and “100 percent Disabled Veteran” means any Veteran as defined herein who is currently declared by USDVA to be 100 percent disabled as a result of his or her service. Proof of disability shall be deemed conclusive if it is of USDVA record.

To apply for Veteran’s preference credits, obtain from any State department testing office a copy of CalHR Form 1093 (09/12), “Application for Veterans Preference for California State Civil Service Examinations” or print a copy found at jobs.ca.gov/pdf/spb1093.pdf. This form, along with a copy of military discharge papers (Member 4 copy of the DD Form 214), should be mailed to:

California Department of Human Resources

Attn: Exam Services

1515 “S” Street, North Building, Suite 400

Sacramento, CA 95811

www.calhr.ca.gov/pages/home.aspx

For more information about Veterans’ preference points, contact the California Department of Human Resources at (866) 844-8671.

STEPS TO GETTING A STATE JOB

To apply for state employment, create an account online. Visit jobs.ca.gov and, under “Sign In to My Profile, User I.D.,” select “Create a New Profile.” After completing the registration process and safely stored the user ID and password for future use, an individual may complete an application or save the profile and return to it later. To find job vacancy listings, visit jobs.spb.ca.gov/vvpos/index.cfm.

PROGRAMS FOR VETERANS

The Employment Development Department (EDD) is California’s designated state workforce agency. The Veterans’ Program is a grant-funded program administered by the EDD Workforce Services Branch. The EDD Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and Local Veterans’ Employment Representatives (LVER) staff are located at the America’s Job Centers of California (AJCC) to coordinate, along with partner agencies, a wide array of services, including but not limited to, employment services, job training, vocational education, supportive services, and participation in community college programs.

DVOP Specialists and Intensive Services to Eligible Veterans and Spouses

The DVOP specialists must provide intensive services to eligible Veterans and eligible spouses to meet their employment needs, prioritizing service to special disabled and other disabled Veterans, and to other eligible Veterans. Statute requires that DVOP specialists place maximum emphasis on assisting Veterans who are economically or educationally disadvantaged.

Priority of service must continue to be provided to special disabled and other disabled Veterans as well as to the eligible Veterans based on the priorities determined by the Secretary of Labor. To ensure that DVOP staff is able to fulfill their statutory responsibilities to provide intensive services, DOL-VETS has developed specific guidance in order to realign the DVOP specialist role with their core mission.

The DVOP specialist must limit their activities to providing services to eligible Veterans and eligible spouses who meet the definition of an individual with a Significant Barrier to Employment (SBE) if that individual attests to belonging to at least one of the six groups listed below:

1. A special disabled and disabled Veteran who:
 - » is entitled to compensation (or who but for the receipt of military retired pay would be entitled to compensation) under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans' Affairs; **or**
 - » was discharged or released from active duty because of a service connected disability;
2. Homeless;
3. A recently-separated service member, who at any point in the previous 12 months has been unemployed for 27 or more consecutive weeks;
4. An offender, who has been released from incarceration within the last 12 months;
5. Lacks a high school diploma or equivalent certificate; **or**
6. Low-income.

LVER Staff and Employer Outreach/Facilitation

The LVER staff must perform specific duties which are related to outreach to the employer community to assist Veterans in gaining employment. Therefore, LVER staff must be assigned duties that promote to employers, employer associations, and business groups the advantages of hiring Veterans. The LVER staff advocates for all Veterans served by the AJCC with business, industry, and other community-based organizations by participating in appropriate employer outreach activities such as:

- » Planning and participating in job and career fairs;
- » Conducting employer outreach;
- » In conjunction with employers, participating in job searches and workshops, and establishing job search groups;
- » Coordinating with unions, apprenticeship programs and businesses or business organizations to promote and secure employment and training programs for Veterans;
- » Promoting credentialing and licensing opportunities for Veterans; and
- » Coordinating and participating with other business outreach efforts.

The LVER staff plays an important role in assisting with the development of the service delivery strategies for Veterans in their assigned AJCC, as well as educating all AJCC partner staff about current employment initiatives and programs for Veterans.

Special assistance is available for Veterans with service connected disabilities. To locate the nearest AJCC, call the America's Service Locator at (877) US-2JOBS toll free or visit www.americasjobcenter.ca.gov.

CALJOBS

CalJOBS provides online access to California's workforce resources, including employment and labor market information for the State of California. The system allows both employers seeking to fill job openings and individuals seeking employment to easily search for jobs, build résumés, access career resources, and gather information on education and training programs. CalJOBS can be accessed 24/7 using any computer with internet access. It has the largest database of job seekers in California, and provides information about jobs throughout the State.

Veterans receive a 24-hour priority on job listings, can view job opportunities anywhere in California, and can submit applications directly to employers for consideration. For more information, visit www.caljobs.ca.gov.

APPRENTICESHIP

Apprenticeships combine classroom instruction with paid, supervised, on-the-job training by experts in the field. The California Department of Industrial Relations Division of Apprenticeship Standards maintains a database of available apprenticeships by craft and geographic region and ensures that apprenticeships are not exploited. Candidates must meet minimum qualifications, including physical ability and willingness to work under the required job conditions, and apply with an employer in the field, the appropriate union, or EDD. Aptitude and other tests may be required and there may be a waiting list. For a list of local or regional apprenticeship opportunities, visit www.dir.ca.gov/databases/das/aigstart.asp. Interested employers can find information on how apprenticeships work and how to contact the Division of Apprenticeship Standards by visiting www.dir.ca.gov/das/employers.htm or www.dir.ca.gov/das/veterans.html.

UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

The Unemployment Insurance (UI) program operates under federal and state law to provide benefit payments to eligible workers who have become unemployed through no fault of their own or are working less than full-time at the time they file their claim. The program is financed by contributions from employers who pay a tax based on a percentage of wages of workers covered by the program. Members who have served in the military for the last 18 months and become unemployed should call the EDD immediately to file for UI benefits. When filing for UI benefits, recently discharged Veterans must provide information from their Certificate of Release or Discharge Form Active Duty, DD Form 214 or NOAA Form 56-16 (or when not available, Orders to Report, or Orders of Release may be used). If you do not have this documentation, EDD can help Veterans obtain the necessary information to file a claim. The eApply4UI application is available online at www.edd.ca.gov or by calling at (800) 300-5616.

FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT

The federal government has laws providing Veterans' preference and special appointing authorities for Veterans and recognizes that hiring Veterans is just good business.

By law (Title 5 USC, Section 2108), Veterans who are disabled or who serve on active duty in the Armed Forces during certain specified time periods or in military campaigns are entitled to preference over non-Veterans both in federal hiring practices and in retention during reductions in force.

Furthermore, the National Defense Authorization Act of 2006 (Public Law 109-163) extends Veterans' preference to individuals who served on active duty for a period of more than 180 consecutive days, any part of which occurred during the period beginning on September 11, 2001, and ending on a future date prescribed by Presidential proclamation or by law as the last date of Operation Iraqi Freedom; and, who were discharged or released from active duty in the armed forces under honorable conditions.

Preference does not have as its goal the placement of a Veteran in every vacant federal job; this would be incompatible with the merit principle of public employment. It does not apply to promotions or other in-service actions either. However, preference does provide a uniform method by which special consideration is given to qualified Veterans seeking federal employment.

Preference applies in hiring from civil service examinations, for most excepted service jobs, and when agencies make temporary appointments or use direct hire and delegated examining authorities from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM). OPM's Vet Guide can be viewed at www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/veterans-services/vet-guide. This Guide explains the special rights and privileges that Veterans enjoy in federal civil service employment and how Veteran's preference and the special appointing authorities for Veterans operate within the system.

When applying for federal jobs, eligible Veterans should claim preference on their application or resume. Applicants claiming 10-point preference due to a service-connected disability must complete Standard Form (SF) 15, Application for 10-Point Veteran Preference.

The Department of Labor's Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy and Veterans' Employment and Training Service helps Veterans determine the type of preference to which they are entitled, the benefits associated with the preference and the steps necessary to file a complaint due to the failure of a federal agency to provide those benefits.

For more information, visit the United States Office of Personnel Management website at www.usajobs.gov or www.fedshirevets.gov.

VIETNAM ERA VETERANS READJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE ACT

Vietnam era Veterans, special disabled Veterans, and Veterans who served on active duty during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized are protected in employment by the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, as amended, 38 USC 4212.

The law requires that employers with federal contracts or subcontracts of \$25,000 or more provide equal opportunity and affirmative action for Vietnam era Veterans, special disabled Veterans, and Veterans who served on active duty during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized.

A Vietnam-era Veteran is a person who (1) served on active duty for a period of more than 180 days, any part of which occurred between August 5, 1964, and May 7, 1975, and was discharged or released with other than a dishonorable discharge; (2) was discharged or released from active duty for a service connected disability if any part of such active duty was performed between August 5, 1964 and May 7, 1975; or (3) served on active duty for more than 180 days and served in the Republic of Vietnam between February 28, 1961, and May 7, 1975.

A special disabled Veteran is a person who is entitled to compensation under laws administered by USDVA for a disability rated at 30 percent or more; or rated at 10 or 20 percent, if it has been determined that the individual has a serious employment disability; or a person who was discharged or released from active duty because of a service-connected disability.

As a part of affirmative action, federal contractors and subcontractors are required to list with the local state employment service all employment openings except for executive and top management jobs; jobs which the contractor expects to fill from within; and jobs lasting 3 days or less.

If a covered Veteran believes he/she has been discriminated against by a federal contractor or subcontractor, he or she may file a complaint. Complaints may be filed with the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) or through the local Veteran's Employment Representative at a local state employment service office.

If any covered Veteran believes a contractor of the United States has failed to comply or refuses to comply with contract provisions relating to the employment of Veterans, the Veteran may file a complaint with the OFCCP.

For more information about VEVRAA, visit www.dol.gov/compliance/laws/comp-vevraa.htm or call (866) 487-2365 or (800) 397-6251. To locate the district or area office, visit www.dol.gov/vets/aboutvets/contacts/main.htm.

CHAPTER
07



ADVOCACY
AND
ASSISTANCE



68th Annual
Native American Day 2015



Guest of Honor
Honorable Chief
John F. Smith

CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOP
ON NATURAL RESOURCES

EVERY DAY IS NATURAL DAY

CALIFORNIA COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS

The California Association of County Veterans Service Officers (CACVSO) is an organization of trained professional Veterans' advocates. In California, the County Veterans Service Officer (CVSO) plays a critical role in the Veteran's advocacy system and is often the initial contact in the community for Veterans' services. Through the CVSO, the CACVSO is committed to providing a vital and efficient system of services and advocacy to Veterans, their dependents and survivors.

CACVSO:

- » Promotes the welfare and rights of Veterans statewide through legislative advocacy;
- » Provides training and education to CVSOs and their employees;
- » Promotes the mission of CVSOs throughout the state; **and**
- » Provides members of the Association with a collaborative network of resources, information and ideas.

CACVSO recognizes the importance and merit of the congressionally-chartered Veterans' service organizations, and is committed to fostering a mutually beneficial relationship with them for the common good of all Veterans. It is the intent of CACVSO that every Veteran residing in California receives the benefits and services in which they are entitled to by law.

SERVICES PROVIDED BY MEMBER COUNTIES

A Veteran Service Office can assist:

- » Veterans
- » Widows and widowers of deceased Veterans
- » Children of a deceased or disabled Veterans
- » Parents who lost a child in military service

Who have questions about:

- » Compensation
- » Pension
- » Education benefits
- » Life insurance
- » Healthcare benefits
- » Home loans
- » California Veterans state benefits
- » Burial benefits
- » Discharge upgrade

Or need a referral for:

- » Posttraumatic Stress Disorder treatment
- » Hospitalization
- » Outpatient medical and dental treatment
- » Alcohol and drug dependency treatment
- » Home loans
- » Small Business Administration

Services offered include:

- » Claims assistance
- » Client advocacy
- » Case maintenance
- » Information and referral

Program liaison with:

- » USDVA healthcare services
- » USDVA vet centers
- » USDVA regional offices
- » Veterans service organizations
- » CalVet Farm and Home Loan assistance
- » Outreach to the elderly, disabled, Vietnam era Veterans, the incarcerated, minorities, and women

DIRECTORY OF COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS

ALAMEDA

6955 Foothill Boulevard, Suite 300
Oakland, CA 94605
(510) 577-1926
(510) 577-1947 (Fax)

Monday - Friday:

8:30 a.m. - 12 p.m. / 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.

24100 Amador Street, 3rd Floor
Hayward, CA 94544
(510) 265-8271

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday:

9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

USDVA Hospital Livermore
Building 64, Room 275
4951 Arroyo Road
Livermore, CA 94550
(510) 577-3546

Monday by appointment only:

9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Oakland Vet Center
Alameda Veterans Memorial Building
2203 Central Avenue
Alameda, CA 95550
(510) 577-1942

Wednesday by appointment only:

9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Fremont Family Resource Center
39155 Liberty Street, Suite F620
Freemont, CA 94538
(510) 795-2686

Tuesday, Thursday: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

AMADOR

11401 American Legion Way
ALL MAIL TO: 810 Court Street
Jackson, CA 95642
(209) 267-5764

(209) 267-0419 (Fax)

Monday - Friday: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

BUTTE

2445 Carmichael Drive
Chico, CA 95928
(530) 891-2759
(530) 895-6508 (Fax)

Monday, Wednesday by appointment only:

8 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. / 12:30 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Tuesday, Thursday:

8 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. - Appointment only

12:30 p.m. - 4 p.m. - Walk-ins

Friday by appointment only:

8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

CALAVERAS

509 East Saint Charles Street
San Andreas, CA 95249
(209) 754-6624
(209) 754-9049 (Fax)

*Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday:
9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Tuesday, Walk-ins only: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.*

COLUSA

251 East Weber Street
Colusa, CA 95932
(530) 458-0388
(530) 458-2664 (Fax)

Monday - Friday: 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

CONTRA COSTA

10 Douglas Drive, Suite 100
Martinez, CA 94533-4078
(925) 313-1481
(925) 313-1490 (Fax)

*Monday - Friday:
9 a.m. - 12 p.m. / 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.*

2101 Vale Road #302
San Pablo, CA 94806
(510) 374-3241

Tuesday: 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. / 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.

400 Hartz Avenue #208

Danville, CA 94526

*Wednesday by appointment only:
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.*

Brentwood Outstation
3361 Walnut Boulevard # 140
Brentwood, CA 94513

*Thursday by appointment only:
9 a.m. - 12 p.m. / 12:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.*

DEL NORTE

810 H Street
Crescent City, CA 95531
(707) 464-2154
(707) 465-0409 (Fax)

*Monday - Friday:
8 a.m. - 12 p.m. / 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.*

EL DORADO

130 Placerville Drive, Suite B
Placerville, CA 95667
(530) 621-5892
(530) 621-2218 (Fax)

Monday - Friday: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Senior Center
3050 Lake Tahoe Boulevard
South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150
(530) 573-7955, ext. 5892
(530) 621-2218 (Fax)

*Tuesday by appointment only:
8 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. / 1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.*

FRESNO

1320 East Shaw Avenue, Suite 105
Fresno, CA 93710
(559) 600-5436
(559) 600-4080 (Fax)

*Monday - Thursday: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Friday: 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.*

GLENN

525 West Sycamore Street, Suite A5
Willows, CA 95988
(530) 934-6524
(530) 934-6355 (Fax)

Monday - Friday: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

HUMBOLDT

825 5th Street, Suite 310
Eureka, CA 95501-1172
(707) 445-7611
(707) 476-2487 (Fax)

Monday - Friday:

8:30 a.m. - 12 p.m. / 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Imperial

217 South 10th Street
El Centro, CA 92243
(442) 265-3200
(442) 265-3208 (Fax)

Monday - Thursday: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

INYO/MONO

County Services Building
207 West South Street
Bishop, CA 93514
(760) 873-7850
(760) 873-7851 (Fax)

Monday - Thursday: 7 a.m. - 5 p.m.

KERN

1120 Golden State Avenue
Bakersfield, CA 93301
(661) 868-7300
(661) 631-0519 (Fax)

Monday - Thursday:

8 a.m. - 12 p.m. / 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Friday: 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.

400 North China Lake Boulevard
Ridgecrest, CA 93555
(760) 375-1564, ext. 226

Wednesday: 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

750 Lake Isabella Boulevard
Lake Isabella, CA 93240

1st and 3rd Thursday: 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

KINGS

Kings County Government Center
1400 West Lacey Boulevard,
Law Building #4
Hanford, CA 93230
(559) 852-2659
(559) 584-0438 (Fax)

Monday - Friday: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

LAKE

255 North Forbes Street
Lakeport, CA 95453
(707) 263-2384
(707) 262-1861 (Fax)

Monday - Friday:

8 a.m. - 12 p.m. / 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.

V.A. Clinic

15145 Lakeshore Drive
Clearlake, CA 95422
(707) 995-7200

Monday - Wednesday: 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

LASSEN

Veterans Memorial Building
1205 Main Street
Susanville, CA 96130
(530) 251-8192
(530) 251-4901 (Fax)

Monday - Friday: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

LOS ANGELES

Bob Hope Patriotic Hall
1816 South Figueroa Street
Los Angeles, CA 90015
(213) 744-4825

USDVA Los Angeles Ambulatory
Care Center
351 East Temple Street, Room B-307
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 253-2677
(213) 253-5123 (Fax)

11301 Wilshire Boulevard
Building 500
Los Angeles, CA 90073
(310) 478-3711, ext. 48659
By appointment only

5730 Uplander Way, Suite 100
Culver City, CA 90230
(310) 641-0326
(310) 641-2653 (Fax)

1427 West Covina Parkway, Suite 100-A
West Covina, CA 91790
(626) 813-3402
(626) 338-4481 (Fax)
By appointment only

17600 "B" Santa Fe Avenue
Rancho Dominguez, CA 90221
(310) 761-2221
(310) 635-7024 (Fax)
Monday Only

Sepulveda Veterans Center
9737 Haskell
Sepulveda, CA 91343
(818) 892-9227
Thursday and Friday

Sepulveda USDVA
16111 Plummer Street, Building 22,
Room 218
Sepulveda, CA 91343
(818) 891-7711, ext. 9146
(818) 895-9493

5901 East 7th Street, Room 217
Long Beach, CA 90822
(562) 826-8000, ext. 4657
(562) 826-5284 (Fax)

Gardena Veterans Center
1045 W Redondo Beach Boulevard, #150
Gardena, CA 90247
(310) 767-1211
Friday Only

Liberty Community Plaza Veterans
Service Office
1481 Telegraph Road
Whittier, CA 90604
(562) 273-0786
Friday Only

MADERA

200 West Fourth Street
Madera, CA 93637
(559) 675-7766
(559) 675-7911 (Fax)
Monday - Friday: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Oakhurst CBOC
40597 West Lake Drive
Oakhurst, CA 93644
(559) 683-5300
(559) 683-5303 (Fax)
3rd Thursday of the month

MARIN

10 North San Pedro Road, Suite 1010
San Rafael, CA 94903
(415) 473-6193
Monday - Thursday: 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

MARIPOSA

5085 Bullion Street
ALL MAIL TO: P.O. Box 774
Mariposa, CA 95338
(209) 966-3696
(209) 966-3293 (Fax)
Tuesday, Wednesday: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

MENDOCINO

405 Observatory Avenue, P.O. Box 839
Ukiah, CA 95482
(707) 463-4226
(707) 463-4637 (Fax)
*Monday - Thursday:
8 a.m. - 12 p.m. / 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.*

360 North Harrison Street
Fort Bragg, CA 95437
(707) 964-5823
*Monday - Thursday:
8 a.m. - 12 p.m. / 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.*

189 North Main Street
Willits, CA 95490
(707) 456-3792
By Appointment Only

MERCED

3376 North Highway 59, Suite D
ALL MAIL TO: P.O. Box 112
Merced, CA 95341
(209) 385-7588, ext. 5417
(209) 725-3848 (Fax)
Monday - Friday: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

MODOC

202 West 4th Street, Suite F
Alturas, CA 96101
(530) 233-6209
(530) 233-3866 (Fax)
Monday - Thursday: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

MONTEREY

1200 Aguajito Road, Room #003
Monterey, CA 93940
(831) 647-7613
(831) 647-7618 (Fax)
*Monday - Friday:
8 a.m. - 11 a.m. / 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.*

Seaside-Ft. Ord

3401 Engineer Lane
Seaside, CA 93955
(831) 647-7613

Monday - Thursday:

8 a.m. - 12 p.m. / 1 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Friday: 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Salinas

1000 South Main Street, Suite 209A
Salinas, CA 93901
(831) 647-7613

Monday - Thursday:

8 a.m. - 12 p.m. / 1 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Friday: 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.

King City

522 North 2nd Street
King City, CA 93930
(831) 647-7613

Call for hours

NAPA

650 Imperial Way
Napa, CA 94558
(707) 253-6072

(707) 299-1489 (Fax)

Monday - Friday: 7 a.m. - 4 p.m.

NEVADA

988 McCourtney Road, Suite 101
Grass Valley, CA 95949
(530) 273-3396/3397

(530) 272-3182 (Fax)

Monday - Friday: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

ORANGE

County Operations Center
1300 South Grand Avenue, Building B
Santa Ana, CA 92705

(714) 480-6555

(714) 567-7674 (Fax)

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday:

8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Tuesday: 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

PLACER

1000 Sunset Boulevard, Suite 115
Rocklin, CA 95765
(916) 780-3290

(916) 780-3299 (Fax)

Monday - Friday:

8 a.m. - 12 p.m. / 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.

PLUMAS/SIERRA

Health & Human Services Center
270 County Hospital Road, Suite #206
Quincy, CA 95971-9216

(530) 283-6275 or (800) 801-6330

(530) 283-6425 (Fax)

Monday - Friday: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

RIVERSIDE

4360 Orange Street
Riverside, CA 92501
(951) 955-3060

(951) 955-3063 (Fax)

Monday - Thursday: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

44-199B Monroe Street
Indio, CA 92201
(760) 863-8266
Monday - Thursday:
8 a.m. - 12 p.m. / 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Hemet Outreach Center
749 North State Street
Hemet, CA 92543
(951) 766-2566
(955) 766-2567 (Fax)
Monday - Thursday:
8 a.m. - 12 p.m. / 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.

SACRAMENTO

2007 19th Street
Sacramento, CA 95818
(916) 874-6811
Monday - Friday: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

SAN BENITO

649 San Benito Street
Hollister, CA 95023
(831) 647-7613
(831) 647-7618 (Fax)
Monday - Tuesday:
8 a.m. - 12 p.m. / 1 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Friday: 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.

SAN BERNARDINO

175 West 5th Street, 2nd Floor
San Bernardino, CA 92415/0470
(909) 387-5516
(909) 387-6090 (Fax)
Monday - Friday: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Hesperia Outreach Center
15900 Smoke Tree Street
Hesperia, CA 92345
(760) 995-8010
(760) 947-2627 (Fax)
Monday - Thursday: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Every other Friday: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Rancho Cucamonga Outreach Center
8575 Haven Avenue
Rancho Cucamonga, CA 92311
(909) 948-6420
(909) 465-5245
Monday - Thursday: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Village Center Building 1551
MCAGCC
29 Palms, CA 92277
Wednesday and Thursday: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

73629 Sun Valley Drive
Twenty-Nine Palms, CA 92277
Wednesday: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

SAN DIEGO

5560 Overland Drive, Suite 310
San Diego, CA 92123
(858) 694-3222
(858) 505-6961 (Fax)
Monday - Friday: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Oceanside USDVA Clinic
1300 Rancho Del Oro Road, Room 138
Oceanside, CA 92056
(760) 643-2049/4682
Monday - Friday: 8 a.m. - 3 p.m.

La Jolla USDVA Medical Center
VA Transition Center
3350 La Jolla Village Drive
San Diego, CA 92161
(858) 552-8585, ext. 1813

Chula Vista Vet Center
180 Otay Lake Road, Street 108
Bonita, CA 91902
(877) 618-6534
Friday: 7 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Escondido Veterans Services
247 S. Kalmia Street
Escondido, CA 92025
(460) 480-1657
(760) 480-1124 (Fax)
Monday - Friday: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

SAN FRANCISCO

2 Gough Street
San Francisco, CA 94103
(800) 807-5799
(415) 934-4200
(415) 934-4240 (Fax)
*Monday - Thursday:
9 a.m. - 12 p.m. / 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.*

SAN JOAQUIN

105 South San Joaquin Street
Stockton, CA 95202
(209) 468-2916
(209) 468-2918 (Fax)
Monday - Friday: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

SAN LUIS OBISPO

801 Grand Avenue
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
(805) 781-5766
(805) 781-5769 (Fax)
Monday - Friday: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

SAN MATEO

400 Harbor Boulevard, Building B
Belmont, CA 94002
(650) 802-6598
(650) 595-2419
Monday - Friday: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

SANTA BARBARA

511 East Lakeside Parkway, Room 47
Santa Maria, CA 93455
(805) 346-7160
(805) 346-7158 (Fax)
Monday - Friday: 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Santa Barbara Outreach Center
315 Camino Del Remedio
Building 2, Room 251
Santa Barbara, CA 93110
(805) 681-4500
(805) 681-4501 (Fax)
Monday - Friday: 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Lompoc Outreach Center
401 East Cypress Avenue, Room 101
Lompoc, CA 93436
(805) 737-7900
(805) 737-7901 (Fax)
*Tuesday - Friday:
8 a.m. - 12 p.m. / 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.*

SANTA CLARA

68 North Winchester Boulevard
Santa Clara, CA 95050
(408) 918-4980
(408) 553-6016 (Fax)
Monday - Friday: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

SANTA CRUZ

842 Front Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
(831) 454-7276
(831) 454-7116 (Fax)
*Monday - Thursday by appointment only:
8 a.m. - 12 p.m. / 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.
Wednesday, walk-ins only: 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.*

Watsonville Veterans Service Office
18 W. Beach Street
Watsonville, CA 95076
(831) 454-7276
(831) 458-7116 (Fax)
Monday & Tuesday by appointment only

SHASTA

1855 Shasta Street
Redding, CA 96001
(530) 225-5616
(530) 245-6454 (Fax)
*Monday - Friday:
8 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. / 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.*

SIERRA/PLUMAS

Health & Human Services Center
270 County Hospital Road, Suite #206
Quincy, CA 95971-9216
(530) 283-6275 or (800) 801-6330
(530) 283-6425 (Fax)
Monday - Friday: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

SISKIYOU

105 East Oberlin Road
Yreka, CA 96097
(530) 842-8010
(530) 841-4314 (Fax)
*Monday - Thursday:
8 a.m. - 12 p.m. / 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.*

SOLANO

675 Texas Street, Suite 4700
Fairfield, CA 94533-6340
(707) 784-6590
(707) 784-0927 (Fax)
*Monday - Friday:
9 a.m. - 12 p.m. / 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.*

SONOMA

3725 Westwind Boulevard, Suite 101
P.O. Box 4059
Santa Rosa, CA 95402
(707) 565-5960
(707) 565-5937/5980 (Fax)
Monday - Thursday: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

STANISLAUS

121 Downey Avenue, Suite 102
Modesto, CA 95354
(209) 558-7380
(209) 558-8648 (Fax)
Monday - Friday: 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

SUTTER/YUBA

5730 Packard Avenue, Suite 300
Marysville, CA 95901
(530) 749-6710

(530) 749-6711 (Fax)

Monday - Friday

Hours: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

TEHAMA

955 Main Street, #C
Red Bluff, CA 96080
(530) 529-3664/3039

(530) 529-3659 (Fax)

Monday, Thursday: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Tuesday, Wednesday: 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Friday by appointment only

TRINITY

100 Memorial Drive
ALL MAIL TO: P.O. Box 31
Weaverville, CA 96093

(530) 623-3975

Monday - Thursday: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

TULARE

205 North L Street
Tulare, CA 93274
(559) 684-4960

(559) 713-3747 (Fax)

Monday - Thursday: 7:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Friday: 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.

TUOLUMNE

105 Hospital Road
Sonora, CA 95370
(209) 533-6280

(209) 533-6282 or (209) 533-6284 (Fax)

*Monday and Friday by appointment only,
Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday
walk-ins*

VENTURA

Call for address
(805) 477-5155

(805) 477-5418 (Fax)

Monday - Friday: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Field Offices located in: Oxnard, Santa Paula, Simi Valley, Moorpark, Thousand Oaks, Camarillo and Ventura. Call (805) 477-5155 for directions, hours of operation and appointments.

YOLO

120 West Main Street, Suite A
ALL MAIL TO: P.O. Box 1195
Woodland, CA 95776

(530) 406-4850

(530) 666-7456 (Fax)

Monday - Friday:

7:30 a.m. 12 p.m. / 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.

YUBA/SUTTER

5730 Packard Avenue, Suite 300
Marysville, CA 95901
(530) 749-6710

(530) 749-6711 (Fax)

Monday - Friday

Hours: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.



CalVet operates eight Veterans Homes providing our aged or disabled Veterans with services in a home-like environment.

WWW.CALVET.CA.GOV | (800) 952-5626



Education Employment Housing Health

DIRECTORY OF VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

Congressional Medal of Honor Society

National Headquarters
40 Patriots Point Road
Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464
(843) 884-8862
www.cmohs.org

Veterans of Foreign Wars

1510 J Street, Suite 110
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 449-8850
(816) 756-3390
www.vfw.org

CA Association of County Veterans Service Officers, Inc.

5560 Overland Avenue, Suite 310
San Diego, CA 92123
(858) 694-3222
(858) 505-6961 (Fax)
www.cacvso.org

Pearl Harbor Survivors Association, Inc.

P.O. Box 1816
Carlsbad, CA 92018-1816
www.pearlharborsurvivorsonline.org

National League of Families of America POWs/MIAs

5673 Columbia Pike
Suite 100
Falls Church, VA 22041
(703) 465-7432
www.pow-miafamilies.org

Military Order of the Purple Heart

MOPH Room 1145N
VA Regional Office
1301 Clay Street
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 834-0612
(703) 642-5360
(510) 637-1239 (Fax)
www.purpleheart.org

The American Legion

401 Van Ness Avenue, Room 117
San Francisco, CA 94102-4587
(415) 431-2400
www.legion.org
www.calegion.org

Disabled American Veterans: Department of California

3725 Alexandria Pike
Cold Springs, KY 41076
(877) 426-2838
www.dav.org

National Guard Association of California

3336 Bradshaw Road, Suite 230
Sacramento, CA 95827
(916) 362-3411
(916) 362-3707 (Fax)
www.ngac.org

Vietnam Veterans of America

8719 Colesville Rd.
Suite 100
Silver Spring, MD 20910
(301) 585-4000
www.vva.org

AMVETS Department of California

4647 Forbes Blvd.
Lanham, MD 20706
(301) 459-9600
www.amvets.org

Paralyzed Veterans of America

National Headquarters
801 Eighteenth Street NW
Washington, DC 20006-3517
(800) 424-8200
www.pva.org

Bay Area & Western Paralyzed Vets of America

3801 Miranda Avenue
Building 7, Room E-118
Palo Alto, CA 94304
(650) 858-3936
(650) 855-9019 (Fax)
www.bawpva.org

Allied Council of the Veterans Home

Veterans Home of California—Yountville
260 California Drive
Yountville, CA 94599
(707) 944-4933

Non Commissioned Officers Association

9330 Corporate Drive, Suite 701
Selma, TX 78154
(800) 662-2620
(703) 549-0311 (Fax)
www.ncoausa.org

Veterans Village of San Diego

4141 Pacific Highway
San Diego, CA 92110
(619) 497-0142
(619) 497-0263 (Fax)
www.vvds.net

Jewish War Veterans

1811 R Street NW
Washington, DC 20009
(202) 265-6280
(202) 234-5662 (Fax)
www.jwv.org

Veterans Resource Center

P.O. Box 378
Santa Rosa, CA 95402
(707) 578-2785
www.vietvets.org

Blinded Veterans Association

125 N. West Street, 3rd Floor
Alexandria, WA 22314
(916) 843-7020
(800) 669-7079
www.bva.org

American GI Forum of California

19801 Sun Court
Tehachapi, CA 93561
(661) 557-1929
www.agif.org

VetFund Foundation

2001 N Street, Suite 210
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 213-7736
www.calvetfund.com

**Women's Army Corps Veterans
Association, Chapter 111**

P.O. Box 663
Weaver, AL 36277
(256) 820-6824
www.armywomen.org

American Ex-Prisoners of War

3201 E. Pioneer Parkway, Suite 40
Arlington, TX 76010
(817) 649-2979
www.axpow.org

Blue Star Mothers of America Inc.

5202 Pinedale St.
Hartsville, OH 44632
www.bluestarmothers.org

Society of Military Widows

www.militarywidows.org

**Military Officers Association
of America**

Cal-MOAA
www.cal-moaa.org

MINORITY VETERANS

The Minority Veterans Division is the CalVet model for inter-and intra-agency cooperation, to ensure all Veterans receive equal service regardless of race, origin, religion, gender, or sexual orientation. We are process improvement-oriented and both internal and external customer-centric. Dignity and an acceptable quality of life are the products we seek to deliver to all Veterans no matter what their circumstance. Of the nearly 1.85 million Veterans in California, approximately 633,128 are self-identified as an ethnic minority. While minority Veterans comprise approximately 34 percent of the total California Veteran population, as a group, they are less likely to access their Veteran benefits than non-minority Veterans.

CalVet's Minority Veterans Division promotes the use of USDVA benefits, programs, and services by minority and lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, and transgender (LGBT) Veterans. We advocate on behalf of minority and LGBT Veterans by identifying gaps in services as well as proudly supporting and initiating activities that educate and sensitize the public to the unique needs of minority and LGBT Veterans.

MINORITY VETERANS SUPPORT

Additional minority Veteran information and/or resources can be found on the following websites:

- » Center for Minority Veterans
www1.va.gov/centerforminorityveterans
- » USDVA Center for Veterans Enterprise & Business
www.vetbiz.gov
- » USDVA Benefits for Veterans of Enduring Freedom-Iraqi Freedom
www.oefoif.va.gov
- » Swords to Plowshares, Veterans Rights Organization
www.stp-sf.org
- » National Japanese-American Veterans Council
www.veteranscouncil.com
- » American G.I. Forum
www.agif.org

- » National Native American Veterans Association
www.manataka.org
- » Jewish War Veterans of the USA
www.jwv.org
- » National Association for Black Veterans, Inc.
www.nabvets.org
- » National Association of Black Military Women (NABMW)
www.nabmw.com

To view the comprehensive Directory of Veterans Service Organizations visit www.va.gov/vso/vso-directory_2013-2014.pdf. This is published as an informational service by the Office of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Inclusion of an organization in the directory does not constitute approval or endorsement by USDVA or the United States Government of the organization or its activities. Some Veteran service organizations are “chartered”, which means they are federally chartered and/or recognized or approved by USDVA for purposes of preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims under laws administered by USDVA. Inclusion of non-chartered organizations does not constitute or reflect USDVA recognition of said organization and its representatives for purposes of representation of USDVA claimants.

For more information, call the CalVet Minority Veterans Division at (916) 653-1402 or the analyst for Minority Veterans at (916) 503-8059. You can also visit the CalVet Minority Veterans page on Facebook.

LOCAL INDIAN HEALTH SERVICES

The primary goal of the California Area Indian Health Services is to raise the health status of American Indians to the highest possible level. To achieve this goal, the California Area Indian Health Services supports tribal governments and urban Indian communities in the development and administration of comprehensive healthcare delivery systems that meet the needs of Indian people. For more information about the California Area Indian Health Services, visit www.ihs.gov.

LESBIAN, GAY, BI-SEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER VETERANS

CalVet is committed to ensuring all Veterans have access to and receive the benefits they earned without regard to race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, age,

mental or physical disability, or sexual orientation. The Minority Veterans Division promotes the use of USDVA benefits, programs, and services by minority and LGBT Veterans. We advocate on behalf of minority and LGBT Veterans by identifying gaps in services and make recommendations to improve service. We support and initiate activities that educate and sensitize the public to the unique needs of minority and LGBT Veterans. The following phone numbers may provide further assistance for LGBT Veteran issues:

- » **Veterans Crisis Line:** 1 (800) 273-8255, press 1
- » **National LGBT Crisis Line:** 1 (888) 843-4564
- » **Veteran Care Line:** 1 (800) 455-0057

LGBT VETERAN ADVOCACY GROUPS

The following organizations are provided as an informational primer and do not include every LGBT Veteran Advocacy Group. You may call (916) 653-1402 or the analyst for Minority Veterans at (916) 503-8059 for additional information.

- » **AMPA – American Military Partner Association**
www.militarypartners.org
- » **AVER – American Veterans for Equal Rights**
www.aver.us
- » **SLDN – Servicemembers Legal Defense Network**
www.sldn.org
- » **American Legion Alexander Hamilton Post 448**
www.post448.org
- » **The Palm Center**
www.palmcenter.org
- » **Swords to Plowshares**
www.swords-to-plowshares.org
- » **Transgender Law Center**
www.transgenderlawcenter.org
- » **Sacramento Valley Veterans**
www.sacvalleyvets.com

WOMEN VETERANS

If you are a woman who served in the U.S. military, regardless of how long, where or when you served, you may be entitled to benefits and services from the federal government and from the State of California. Ten percent of our Veterans who reside in California are women and more women Veterans are making the Golden State their home.

CalVet provides information, advocacy, outreach and support to all women Veterans and their families in California.

For more information visit www.calvet.ca.gov/womenvets, call (916) 653-1402 or visit the CalVet Women Veterans page on Facebook.

California Women Veterans Roster

Sign up for the CalVet Women Veterans Roster to stay connected and to receive updated information about benefits, programs, services, events, and resources throughout California.

Women's Military History Week

Each year, the Governor may proclaim the third week of March as Women's Military History Week. During the entire month of March, we recognize the many achievements of women and we especially honor the contributions of women who served in the U.S. Armed Forces.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS WOMEN VETERAN SERVICES

Women Veterans Call Center: 1-855-VA-WOMEN (1-855-829-6636)

Veterans Health Administration

The Veterans' Health Care Act of 1992 authorized new and expanded services for women Veterans. These services include: counseling for trauma related to sexual assault on a priority basis; specific health care services such as Pap smears,

mammography, and general reproductive health care at many USDVA facilities; and mental services to include substance abuse counseling, evaluation, and treatment of sexual assault in the military and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder.

The Women Veterans Health program promotes the health, welfare, and dignity of women Veterans and their families by ensuring equitable access to timely, sensitive, and quality health care. There is a full time women Veteran’s program manager at every USDVA Medical Center, a women’s liaison at every community-based outpatient clinic, and a Women Veterans Coordinator at every regional office.

Veterans Benefits Administration

The Women Veterans Coordinator will assist women Veterans with the development of claims and assist in handling them for gender specific conditions, including trauma from sexual assault and harassment. Additionally, a special pocket guide is available and describes benefits and services for women Veterans titled “Women Veterans: 25 Frequently Asked Questions.” To view the pocket guide, please visit www.va.gov/womenvet/25faqs-march2011-final.pdf.

You may also call CalVet’s Women Veterans Division at (916) 653-1402, or you can contact the division via email at WomenVeterans@calvet.ca.gov.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

MILITARY ONESOURCE

Military OneSource is a free service provided by the Department of Defense to service members and their families to help with a broad range of concerns including money management, spouse employment and education, parenting and childcare, relocation, deployment, reunion, and the particular concerns of families with special-needs members. The organization can also address more complex issues, like relationships, stress, and grief. Services are available 24 hours a day—by telephone with professionally trained consultants and online. Many Military OneSource staff members have military experience (Veterans, spouses, Guardsmen, Reservists), and

all receive ongoing training on military matters and military lifestyle. The program can be especially helpful to service members and their families who live at a distance from installations.

Military OneSource is provided by the Department of Defense at no cost to active duty, Guard and Reserve (regardless of activation status) and their families. It is a virtual extension of installation services. For more information, visit www.militaryonesource.com or call (800) 342-9647.

ARMY ONESOURCE

Army OneSource (AOS) is an Army program under the Family and Morale, Welfare, and Recreation Command. While it is mainly an Army program, AOS supports military members and families of all branches, components, status, and locations throughout the world by connecting them with resources within their community. AOS strives to ensure military members and families not living in the immediate vicinity of an active duty installation still have adequate access to benefits and support they have earned. AOS consists of a workforce of Community Support Coordinators who proactively engage the community to develop these resources. To find the local Community Support Coordinators or to download a services locator application, visit www.myarmyonesource.com.

CHAPTER
08



**OTHER
BENEFITS
AND SERVICES**



MILITARY RECORDS

Veterans or their next of kin who need assistance in obtaining service records, a DD Form 214, or replacement awards and medals must formally request them through the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC). The NPRC is the records custodian for most discharged and retired members of all branches of service. The fastest way to obtain a copy is through their website, at www.archives.gov/veterans.

Records can also be requested by mailing or faxing a Standard Form (SF) 180, Request Pertaining to Military Records to:

The National Personnel Records Center

1 Archives Drive
St. Louis, MO 63138
(314) 801-9195 (Fax)

The SF-180 is also available at CalVet District Offices (page 15) or at the local County Veterans Service Office (page 182).

Records requests must contain certain basic information, including:

- » The Veteran's complete name used while in service;
- » Service number;
- » Social Security number;
- » Branch of service;
- » Dates of service;
- » Date and place of birth (especially if the service number is not known).

If the Veteran's records may have been involved in the 1973 fire, the following information must also be included:

- » Place of discharge;
- » Last unit of assignment;
- » Place of entry into the service, if known.

Call NPRC's customer service staff at (314) 801-0800 if you have questions or require same-day service. Due to the large number of calls received at this number, hold times are often long. However, once you reach a technician, he or she will be happy to assist you with an emergency service. Customer service lines are answered from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Central Standard Time. Please note that these requests are only for burial or medical emergencies. All requests must be signed and dated by the Veteran or next-of-kin.

CORRECTION OF MILITARY RECORDS

Individuals who served in the military may find an error or injustice in their military personnel records. In that case, the individual can apply for a correction through their military service's Board for the Correction of Military Records. The requests must be filed within three years of discovery of the error or injustice. This process may not be used to request an upgrade of a Veteran's discharge, as that is discussed in the following section.

Any person with military records, or his or her heirs or legal representative, may apply to the appropriate service's Board for the Correction of Military Records. The Army, Air Force, and Coast Guard have separate boards. The Navy operates the board for both Navy personnel and members of the United States Marine Corps.

Applying for a correction to military records is a simple process. However, it is highly recommend that the services of your County Veterans Service Office (CVSO) be used. Veterans who choose to do it for themselves must use DD Form 149, Application for Correction of Military Record, attach copies of statements or records that are relevant to the case, sign item 16, and mail the completed form to the appropriate address on the back side of the form.

The Board will correct the military records only if it can be proven that the Veteran was the victim of error or injustice by providing evidence, such as signed statements from the Veteran and other witnesses, or copies of records that support the case. The Board will not contact witnesses; but it will review their signed statements if submitted with a Veteran's request.

APPLYING FOR REVIEW OF DISCHARGE

Veterans must make their application for discharge upgrade within 15 years of discharge. If the Veteran's discharge is more than 15 years old, then the Veteran must apply for a change to military records using the process detailed in the previous

section. The County Veterans Service Office is available to help Veterans through this process. However, if Veterans choose to do this themselves, they must use a DD Form 293, Application for the Review of Discharge or Dismissal from the Armed Forces of the United States. The DD Form 293 is available online or from most DoD installations.

Attach copies of statements or records that are relevant to the case, sign item 9 of the form, and mail the completed form to the appropriate address on the back side of the form. The Board will upgrade the discharge only if the Veteran can prove that your discharge is inequitable or improper by providing evidence, such as signed statements from the Veteran and other witnesses or copies of records that support the case. It is not enough to provide the names of witnesses. The Board will not contact witnesses to obtain statements. The Veteran should contact witnesses to get their signed statements to submit with their request.

A Veteran's personal statement is important. It should be written clearly and concisely in Section 8 of DD Form 293. Carefully read the instructions on the back of the form concerning issues. Explain what happened and why it is improper or inequitable.

RE-ENTRY VETERANS BENEFITS

The Healthcare for Re-Entry Veterans (HCRV) Program at USDVA helps incarcerated Veterans successfully transition to the area they will be living when released. A Re-Entry Specialist from HCRV goes to each correctional facility several times each year to meet with Veterans six months before their release. With a little planning, many of the challenges commonly faced at release can be sorted out while Veterans are still incarcerated.

USDVA's Re-Entry Specialist helps with USDVA healthcare enrollment. If the Veteran is already enrolled, the Re-Entry Specialist will ensure their paperwork is up to date. Following enrollment with USDVA, the Re-Entry Specialist will meet individually with Veterans who are within six months of their earliest possible release date.

Note: To resume their award for compensation or pension benefits on the date they are released from incarceration, USDVA must receive notice of release within one year from the Veteran's release date. For questions and assistance with resuming USDVA compensation or pension benefits, contact a County Veterans Service Officer (page 182).

While incarcerated, CalVet recommends that Veterans utilize the counselors and teachers trained to assist them in their preparation in the transition back into society. For more information, visit www.va.gov/homeless/reentry.asp, or contact:

Health Care for Re-entry Veterans Program

Attn: Re-Entry Specialist
George.Kennedy@va.gov
795 Willow Road, Building 347 (180 D)
Menlo Park, CA 94025
(650) 493-5000

The compensation and pension benefits Veterans receive from USDVA change when they are incarcerated in a federal, state, or local penal institution. The amount the Veteran will be paid depends on the type of benefit and reason for incarceration.

Disability Compensation Pay

Veterans receiving monthly disability compensation benefits will have their payment reduced beginning with the 61st day of imprisonment for a felony. For example, if the payment before going to prison was \$243 or more, the new payment amount will be \$123 (10 percent rate). Veterans receiving \$123 before they were imprisoned will only receive a payment of \$61.50 (1/2 of the 10 percent rate).

Note: Compensation payments will not be reduced for Veterans who are released from incarceration, participated in a work release or half-way house program, paroled, and completed their sentence. For questions and assistance with resuming USDVA compensation or pension benefits, contact a County Veterans Service Officer (page 182).

Pension Pay

A Veteran's monthly pension benefits payments will be discontinued effective on the 61st day of imprisonment following conviction of a felony or misdemeanor.

USDVA Medical Care

Although incarcerated Veterans do not forfeit their eligibility for medical care, current regulations restrict USDVA from providing hospital and outpatient care to an incarcerated Veteran who is an inmate in an institution of another government agency when that agency has a duty to give the care or services.

Incarcerated Veterans Benefits for Dependents

If an incarcerated Veteran has dependents, then USDVA can take all or part of the amount of compensation that a Veteran does not receive and apportion it to their spouse, children, and dependent parents. For questions and assistance regarding the apportionment of USDVA compensation or pension benefits, contact a County Veterans Service Officer (page 182).

VOLUNTEER SERVICES

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES FOR VETERANS

Communities across the country are growing stronger because Veterans are finding ways to apply their skills and leadership at home. Whether you have one day to give, or you are looking for a long-term role of service, there is an opportunity for you to report for duty in your community.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS VOLUNTARY SERVICE

USDVA voluntary service is committed to engaging American citizens in service and providing lasting benefits to the Veterans and communities in which they live. To view volunteer projects in the area, volunteer, or donate, visit www.volunteer.va.gov/unitedweserve.asp.

TEAM RUBICON

Is it a disaster relief organization? A Veteran-focused enterprise? The truth is its both. Team Rubicon serves a dual mission. Team Rubicon sees its mission as twofold: using Veterans to improve disaster response while using disasters as an opportunity to serve again. Team Rubicon unites the skills and experiences of military Veterans with first responders to rapidly deploy emergency response teams. To view volunteer projects in the area, volunteer, or donate, visit www.teamrubiconusa.org.

THE MISSION CONTINUES

A Mission Continues fellowship involves 20 hours of service per week for 26 weeks at a local nonprofit organization. Fellows are encouraged to choose a nonprofit

organization to serve based on their own personal passions. Current and alumni fellows have worked at organizations addressing issues ranging from disaster preparedness to education for low-income youth to training service dogs for wounded Veterans. These host organizations include Habitat for Humanity, American Red Cross, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and Mothers Against Drunk Driving.

In 2013, the mission continues introduced a new way for Veterans to continue serving at home – the service platoon. A service platoon is a team of Veterans, active duty service members, guardsmen and reservists that mobilizes together to solve a specific challenge in their community. To view volunteer projects in the area, volunteer, or donate, visit www.missioncontinues.org.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES FOR VETERANS AND CIVILIANS

Our Veterans put everything on the line to protect our freedom. We may never be able to repay them for their sacrifice, but we can show them just how much we appreciate all that they've done.

Everyone can do something to show Veterans know how much we appreciate their service. What will you do?

THE MISSION CONTINUES

There is no better way to bring a community together than by enabling them to serve alongside one another. Service missions are single or multi-day projects that allow Veterans and civilians to serve together. Volunteers at a service mission may build a playground in an under-resourced community, plant a community garden or renovate a school that serves at-risk youth. To view volunteer projects in the area, volunteer, or donate, visit www.missioncontinues.org.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

Disabled American Veterans offers a wide range of opportunities for individuals who want to make good on the commitment we've given our nation's heroes. Volunteer at our nation's USDVA hospitals drive Veterans to appointments or provide specialized help based on individual needs. No matter whom you are, or what your level of experience, you can stand by our nation's Veterans. To view volunteer projects in the area, volunteer, or donate, visit www.dav.org/help-dav/volunteer/volunteer-locally-help-the-va.

PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA

Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) volunteers do invaluable work that makes a real difference to Veterans, their communities and paralyzed Veterans' chapters. Becoming a paralyzed Veteran's volunteer has never been easier. Each PVA chapter offers its own volunteer program with a variety of opportunities to contribute, plus you can commit to as many hours as you choose. Find the PVA chapter closest to you. To view volunteer projects in the area, volunteer, or donate, visit www.pva.org/site/c.ajirk9njlcj2e/b.7535477/k.7d0e/volunteer_opportunities.htm.

THE AMERICAN LEGION

The American Legion is dedicated to improving support for active duty service members and Veterans during their time of transition and rehabilitation and will continue to provide members with volunteer opportunities. To view volunteer projects in the area, volunteer, or donate, visit www.legion.org/volunteers.

VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA

Each year Volunteers of America touches the lives of more than 2 million people in over 400 communities in 46 states and the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico through programs that are staffed by full-time, paid professionals who have adopted this same ideal of service as their full-time mission. However, that does not mean that we do not also depend on an army of modern-day "volunteers" who offer their free time to support our volunteer programs nationwide. In fact, in 2013 more than 55,000 volunteers devoted more than one million hours to hundreds of Volunteers of America programs and activities nationwide – and we can always use more volunteers! To view volunteer projects in the area, volunteer, or donate, visit www.voa.org/get-help/national-network-of-services/veterans.

OPERATION GRATITUDE

Operation Gratitude annually sends 150,000+ care packages filled with snacks, entertainment, hygiene and hand-made items, plus personal letters of appreciation, to new recruits, Veterans, first responders, wounded warriors, care givers, and to individually named U.S. service members deployed overseas. Our mission is to lift the spirits and meet the evolving needs of our active duty and Veteran communities, and provide volunteer opportunities for all Americans to express their appreciation to members of our military. Each package contains

donated product valued at \$75-100 and costs the organization \$15 to assemble and ship. Since its inception in 2003, Operation Gratitude volunteers have shipped more than one million care packages. To view volunteer projects in the area, volunteer, or donate, visit www.operationgratitude.com.

CALIFORNIA VOLUNTEERS

California Volunteers is the state office that manages programs and initiatives aimed at increasing the number of Californians engaged in volunteer service. To learn more about volunteering in the State of California, visit www.californiavolunteers.org/index.php or call (888) 567-SERV.

STUDENT VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Student volunteers are an important part of USDVA medical centers' treatment team. They act as community liaisons and provide a valuable element of caring for Veterans in their area. Student volunteer opportunities may be available in the areas of audiology and speech pathology, outpatient and ambulatory care, physical therapy, medical administration, research, nursing, social work, and many others.

For a list of student volunteer opportunities, contact the local USDVA facility by calling (800) 827-1000 or visit the USDVA volunteer service website at www.volunteer.va.gov. To complete a volunteer application online, visit www.volunteer.va.gov/apps/volunteernow.

CALIFORNIA VETERANS MEMORIAL REGISTRY

The California Veterans Memorial Registry (CVMR) is a permanent record to honor California Veterans, past and present, who have served our nation since statehood was established in 1850. Whether a cook or fighter pilot, mechanic or chief of staff, this memorial honors all of our Veterans. The CVMR forever immortalizes the contributions that California Veterans have made to their nation.

Each California Veteran who received an honorable discharge is encouraged to register on the CVMR and is entitled to list name, rank, and branch of service.

To create a truly living memorial, California Veterans may expand on their basic information by making a donation to the enhanced registry.

The enhanced registry allows California Veterans to include a photograph (preferably in military uniform) for a donation of \$35. A 100-word statement may be included for a donation of \$15. These fees are deposited into the California Veterans Memorial Registry Fund, which is provided for maintenance and data entry into the registry. Additional donations are accepted and encouraged.

The 100-word statement is a Veteran's opportunity to describe their military experience, or that of a loved one. The written statement can include such information as medals awarded, duty stations, nicknames, anecdotes, hometown, or other relevant information. Visitors to the CVMR will be able to refer to this information forever and recall the military experience of a father or mother, grandfather or grandmother, sister or brother, cousin or friend.

A CVMR enrollment form can be downloaded at www.calvet.ca.gov/vetservices/documents/veteransmemorialform.pdf or complete online at www.calvet.ca.gov/vetservices/pages/cvrregister.aspx.

The names of Californians who served in the military can be found the by visiting the CVMR online at www.calvet.ca.gov/vetservices/pages/vet-registry.aspx.

For more information, call (916) 653-2573. To submit an enrollment form, mail it to:

California Veterans Memorial Registry

1227 O Street, Room 105
Sacramento, CA 95814

REGISTRY OF CALIFORNIA VETERANS MEMORIALS

There are memorials located throughout the golden state dedicated to our military service members and Veterans. These memorials range in size from a simple plaque on a wall in a public building or in a park, to large structures, such as buildings, bridges and even freeways. The California Veterans Memorial Registry is a central repository for information about these memorials. The California Veterans Memorial Registry is available on CalVet's website at www.calvet.ca.gov/vetservices/pages/registry-of-california-veterans-memorials.aspx.

Help Us Find California's Veterans Memorials

The work on the registry has been a journey, rather than a destination, and it is our sincere hope that we will be able to record information on most of the memorials in California over time, knowing that we may never identify and register them all. Our goal is to list the location, description and condition, and provide a map to of all known Veterans' memorials as a further tribute to those who served in the military. With the invaluable help provided by cities, counties, Veteran's organizations, and members of the public, CalVet continues compiling information and adding it to the registry.

If you know of a memorial that is not in the registry, you will find a link below to an easy-to-complete survey form for the purpose of providing information about additional memorials. We would greatly appreciate your taking the time to print, complete and send the survey to the address indicated. A separate survey form for each memorial is required. Please provide as much relevant information as possible. Thank you very much for your help.

To print the survey please visit www.calvet.ca.gov/vetservices/documents/memorialsurvey.pdf.

CALIFORNIA NATIONAL GUARD

The Army National Guard is the oldest component of the U.S. Armed Forces and has participated in every U.S. conflict since it was organized by the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1636. The Army National Guard, the Air National Guard, and the California State Military Reserve are part of the California State Military Department.

Many men and women choose to join the National Guard either directly or after they are discharged from active duty service and do so for a variety of reasons. The Guard offers a series of benefits ranging from competitive pay and education assistance, to insurance and retirement benefits. A broad range of skills are learned through schools and job training, and leadership opportunities are numerous. Beyond these tangible benefits, most Guard members agree that the greatest benefit is the continued opportunity to serve one's country, state, and community. For more information, visit www.calguard.ca.gov.

FAMILY ASSISTANCE NETWORK

The California National Guard's Family Assistance Network (FAN) maintains a database of civilian, government, and military agencies that provide assistance to families struggling with issues related to active duty. For assistance locating a FAN specialist, Child & Youth specialist, Family Readiness Assistance, or an Airman & Family Readiness Program manager, call (800) 449-9662 for immediate assistance or visit www.calguard.ca.gov/readyfamilies.

WE CARE MEETINGS

FAN also hosts monthly "We Care" meetings open to all branches of the service. These meetings give service members and their families, friends, and employers the opportunity to establish a local social support group, receive advice and support from people who understand what they are going through, and keep current on military news and benefits. To find a We Care meeting nearby, visit www.calguard.ca.gov/readyfamilies/pages/operationwecare.aspx.

NATIONAL GUARD FAMILY PROGRAM

The Joint Services Support Family Program (JSSFP), headquartered in Massachusetts, provides extensive nationwide support to service members and their families to help them deal with the stresses of deployment, mobilization, and reintegration. For more information on the services that JSSFP can provide, visit www.jointservicessupport.org/fp/default.aspx.

TRANSITION ASSISTANCE ADVISOR

The Transition Assistance Advisor serves as a statewide point of contact and coordinator providing technical support to managers, supervisors, Guard members and their family members regarding the benefits and entitlements available through USDVA. Transition Assistance Advisors also provide technical assistance in resolving entitlements to TRICARE. For more information visit www.jointservicessupport.org/WS/transitionsupport.aspx.

YELLOW RIBBON REINTEGRATION PROGRAM

The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP) is a DoD-wide effort to help National Guard and Reserve service members and their families connect with local resources before, during, and after deployments. Not to be confused with

the education benefit, the YRRP events bring together service providers that can assist Veterans and their families in accessing information on Veteran's benefits, healthcare, education/training opportunities, financial, and legal benefits. DoD works in conjunction with federal partners, including the Small Business Administration and Departments of Labor and Veterans Affairs, to provide up-to-date and relevant information to the members of the all-volunteer force and their families. In addition, CalVet gives comprehensive benefits presentations at most Yellow Ribbon events occurring within the state. For more information visit www.jointservicessupport.org/yrrp/default.aspx.

TRICARE

TRICARE Reserve Select is a premium-based health plan available worldwide to Selected Reserve members of the Ready Reserve (and their families) who are not eligible for or enrolled in the Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB) program (as defined in Chapter 89 of Title 5 USC) or currently covered under FEHB, either under their own eligibility or through a family member.

For information about enrollment, eligibility, benefits, authorizations, and claims, call (877) TRICARE (874-2273), or visit www.tricare.mil/contactus/callus.aspx.

EMPLOYER SUPPORT OF THE GUARD AND RESERVE

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) is a DoD agency that seeks to develop and promote a culture in which all American employers support and value the military service of their employees. It does so by recognizing outstanding support, increasing awareness of the law, and resolving conflicts through mediation.

Why is employer support important? Almost half of our military force resides in the Reserve Component which is comprised of the National Guard and Reserve. The men and women who serve in the Reserve Component are unique in that they also have civilian employers. Support of America's employers and the employees they share with the nation ensures the viability of the all-volunteer force, and strengthens our national security.

To reach the local ESGR Committee for information or assistance, visit www.esgr.org, call (800) 336-4590, call the local National Guard or Reserve unit, or visit www.calguard.ca.gov/j1/pages/esgr.aspx.

CALIFORNIA STATE MILITARY RESERVE

The California State Military Reserve (CSMR) is an all-volunteer state defense force authorized by law under the California Military and Veterans Code as sworn members of the California Military Department. The CSMR's primary mission is to support the Soldiers and Airmen of the California National Guard in its homeland defense and homeland security missions, and in its service to California during times of state emergencies.

The CSMR offers men and women who have left military service the opportunity to continue to serve their state and their communities.

To learn more about the CSMR, including eligibility requirements and application procedures, visit www.calguard.ca.gov/csmr.

UNIFORMS FOR RETIRED AND SEPARATED PERSONNEL

Retired or separated officers and enlisted personnel, who are not on active duty, may wear the uniform, insignia, and qualifications corresponding to the rank or rating at time of separation. The wear and appearance of the uniform will conform to the standards of the specific branch of service that the uniform represents.

Wearing a uniform is appropriate at ceremonies or official functions when the dignity of the occasion and good taste dictate such as: memorial services, weddings, funerals, balls, patriotic or military parades, ceremonies in which any active or reserve military unit is participating, and meetings or functions of military associations. This includes important holidays such as Memorial Day and Veterans Day.

Retired or separated personnel are prohibited from wearing the uniform in connection with personal enterprises, business activities, or while attending or participating in any demonstration, assembly or activity for the purpose of furthering personal or partisan views on political, social, economic, or religious issues.

Note: This is standard throughout the Army, Marines, Navy, and Coast Guard. The Air Force further allows wear of the uniform for social gatherings of a military nature.

CALIFORNIA STATE MILITARY RESERVE COMPONENT

The uniform for the CSMR will follow the above guidelines; however, the appearance of the uniform will adhere to the following changes:

1. Army Utility Uniforms

The "U.S. ARMY" nametape over the left breast pocket will be replaced with a nametape which will read "CALIFORNIA".

2. Army Service Uniform

- » The "U.S." insignia will be replaced with a "CA" insignia.
- » All authorized "U.S. Army buttons" will be replaced with California State "Eureka" buttons.
- » The black nameplate will be replaced with a red nameplate.

3. The "U.S. Army" headgear insignia will be replaced with the CSMR headgear insignia on the service cap.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CalVet thanks the many individuals and organizations who contributed to the production of our Veterans Resource Book. Thanks to you, we provide vital information to California's nearly two million Veterans and their families about the benefits they earned based on their military service.

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California offers many education and training programs available to assist our Veterans with planning their future.

WWW.CALVET.CA.GOV | (800) 952-5626



Education Employment Housing Health

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