



TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION

Since 1927, our mission is to advocate for and provide superior service to veterans that will significantly improve the quality of life for all Texas veterans, their families, and survivors.

Find out what TVC can do for you!

CONTACT AND FOLLOW US...



1-800-252-VETS (8387)



info@tvc.texas.gov



www.tvc.texas.gov



[@texasveterans](https://twitter.com/texasveterans)



[texasveteranscommission](https://www.facebook.com/texasveteranscommission)



[txveteranscommission](https://www.instagram.com/txveteranscommission)



veterans.portal.texas.gov



www.youtube.com/user/txveteranscommission

Texas Veterans Commission
1700 N. Congress Ave., Suite 800
P.O. Box 12277
Austin, TX 78711-2277
512-463-6564



TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION

Helping Veterans Starts Here

2017

Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) Programs

We hold ourselves personally and professionally accountable to provide superior customer service to veterans, their families and survivors through our core values: **Professionalism, Integrity, Compassion, Commitment, and Teamwork**

CLAIMS REPRESENTATION AND COUNSELING



- Assists with service connected and non-service connected claims
- Prepares VA appeals
- Files VA pensions and survivors benefits
- Death and Burial Benefits

HEALTH CARE ADVOCACY PROGRAM

- Assist veterans in obtaining access to healthcare services, including non-VA healthcare
- Advocates for veterans in resolving issues at VA health care facilities
- Insures that veterans understand their rights and responsibilities



VETERANS EDUCATION PROGRAM



- G.I. Bill benefits information
- Administers Hazlewood Tuition Exemption Act
- Approves programs of study at colleges, universities and career schools, flight schools, apprenticeships and on the job training
- Program Education Coordinators

FUND FOR VETERANS' ASSISTANCE

- Awards monetary grants to nonprofit organizations and units of local government that directly assist veterans and their families in the following ways:
 - General Assistance
 - Housing for Texas Heroes
 - Veterans Mental Health
 - Veterans Treatment Courts



VETERANS EMPLOYMENT SERVICES



- Job matching and referrals
- Resume and interview preparation
- Statewide career fairs
- Translate military experience into civilian skills
- Local network of veteran resources and referrals

VETERANS MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM

- Assists Texas veterans and their family members in accessing mental health care
- Connects veterans with the Military Veteran Peer Network (MVPN)
- Trains clinical mental health providers
- Connects veterans and family members with community and faith based organizations
- Facilitates justice-involved veteran services



VETERAN ENTREPRENEUR PROGRAM



- Assists veterans with starting a new business or expanding a current one
- Assists with business plans and marketing strategies
- Directs veterans to funding sources
- Provides one-on-one business consultation

WOMEN VETERANS PROGRAM

- Ensures that Texas women veterans have equitable access to federal and state veteran's benefits and services
- Identifies existing women veterans' resources
- Collaborates with government and private agencies to improve/create needed services
- Elevate public awareness of the vital roles women veterans have played in our national defense



Kaufman County

Veterans Services

<http://www.kaufmancounty.net/va.html>

Robert Hunter

Veterans Service Officer


rhunter@kaufmancounty.net

Kaufman County Annex

100 N. Wahington

Kaufman, TX 75142

972-932-4331 ext 1222 Fax: 972-932-1415



Are you a veteran living
in Texas who needs assistance
accessing your military
benefits and services?



TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION

Advocating for and providing
superior service to improve the
quality of life for all Texas veterans,
their families, and survivors

Are you a military spouse or family
member looking for benefits and services
for you and your family?



TEXAS VETERANS
COMMISSION



SERVICES & BENEFITS

- Claims Representation & Counseling
- Veterans Employment Services
- Veterans Education Program
- Fund for Veterans' Assistance

- 
- Veteran Entrepreneur Program
 - Women Veterans Program
 - Veterans Mental Health Program
 - Health Care Advocacy Program

CONNECT

1-800-252-VETS (8387) 📞

@texasveterans 🐦

info@tvc.texas.gov ✉️

www.tvc.texas.gov 🌐

facebook.com/texasveteranscommission 📘

instagram.com/txveteranscommission 📷




STATE BENEFITS

- Specialty License Plates
- Parking Placards
- Driver Licenses
- Home Loans
- Land Loans
- Cemeteries
- Free Recording of Discharges

- 
- Military Service Credit
 - Veterans' Employment Preference
 - Fishing & Hunting Licenses
 - Medical Record Obtainment
 - State Park Admission
 - Property Tax Exemption

CONNECT


 texas.gov/veterans

 [@texasveterans](https://twitter.com/texasveterans)

 facebook.com/texasveteranscommission

 instagram.com/txveteranscommission

 1-800-252-VETS (8387)



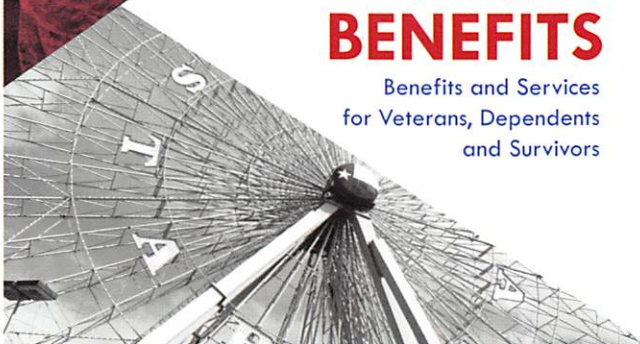


Have you served in the military
and are a Texas resident?



STATE OF TEXAS BENEFITS

Benefits and Services
for Veterans, Dependents
and Survivors



Are you interested in accessing the free
services and benefits that the
State of Texas provides?



**TEXAS VETERANS
COMMISSION**

Free Services for Texas
Veterans and their families

CLAIMS REPRESENTATION & COUNSELING

Assisting Veterans and
their Families with Disability
Benefits Since 1927

VA Compensation and
Pension Guidance

Appeals and Burial Benefits
Assistance



TEXAS VETERANS
COMMISSION

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



Member ID

234567890

Member ID (80840)

234 567 890

Member

MIANE D SA



Card Expires: 6

EXPERT COUNSELORS

• More than 90 counselors
located across Texas, accredited by the
U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) to
represent Texas Veterans.

DISABILITY BENEFITS

- State and Federal Veteran Benefits
- Service-Connected Compensation
- Non-Service Connected Pension
- Survivor and Dependent Benefits
- VA Disability Claims
- Burial Benefits

CONNECT

 claims@tvc.texas.gov

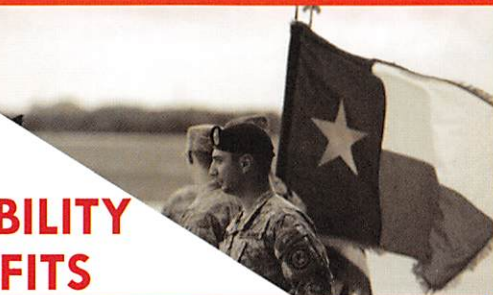
 tvc.texas.gov/Claims.aspx

 [@texasveterans](https://twitter.com/texasveterans)

 facebook.com/texasveteranscommission

 instagram.com/txveteranscommission

 1-800-252-VETS (8387)



Are you a female Veteran
seeking assistance?

WOMEN VETERANS PROGRAM

Connecting Women Veterans
to Local, State and Federal
Resources

Would you like to
network with other Women
Veterans?



Would you like to stay informed of
news that affects women
Veterans?



**TEXAS VETERANS
COMMISSION**



BENEFITS & SERVICES

- Service-Connected Compensation
- Non-Service Pension



EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

- Referrals to Veteran Employment Representatives, Workshops and Employer Outreach



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

- Stay Informed

CONNECT

info@tvc.texas.gov ✉

tvc.texas.gov/Women-Veterans.aspx 🌐

facebook.com/tvcwomenveteransprogram f

instagram.com/txveteranscommission 📷

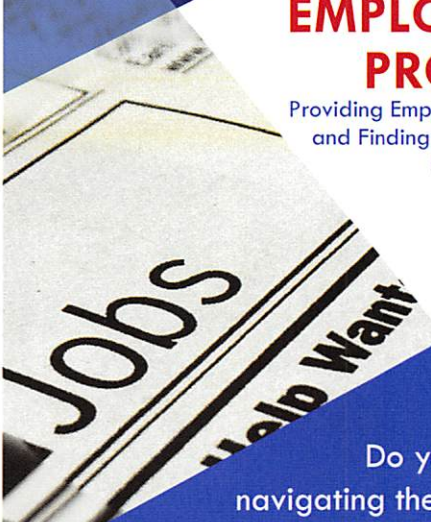
[@TVCWomenVets](https://twitter.com/TVCWomenVets) 🐦

tvc.texas.gov/Women-Veterans-Professional-Network.aspx 🗣️


Are you a Veteran that needs
assistance in finding a job?

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Providing Employment Assistance
and Finding Job Opportunities
for Texas Veterans



Do you need help
navigating the job market?



Do you need help with your resume
or job applications?



TEXAS VETERANS
COMMISSION



VETERANS CAREER RESOURCES

Do you need to
explore new career options?



Is it time to update
your job searching skills?

Connect with us online and find
out how the Texas Veterans
Commission can help you!

CONNECT

 tvc.texas.gov/Employment.aspx

 @texasveterans

 1-800-252-VETS

 facebook.com/texasveteranscommission

 linkedin.com/company/texas-veterans-commission

Need assistance scheduling
your VA appointments?

HEALTH CARE ADVOCACY PROGRAM

Assisting veterans and
their families with navigating
Veterans Health Administration
related services

Interested in obtaining
outside referrals for
health related issues?



Free services to veterans
and their families



TEXAS VETERANS
COMMISSION



EXPERT ASSISTANCE

- Advocates working in regional VHA facilities throughout the state of Texas



HEALTH CARE ADVOCACY SERVICES

- Doctor appointments
- Healthcare related testing or lab testing
- Pharmacy assistance
- Attaining outside referrals
- VA healthcare related billing
- “Fee Basis” referrals

CONNECT

1-800-252-VETS (8387) 📞

@texasveterans 🐦

healthcare@tvc.texas.gov ✉️

tvc.texas.gov/HCAP.aspx 🌐

facebook.com/texasveteranscommission 📘

instagram.com/txveteranscommission 📷

Is your organization interested
in grant funding to
serve veterans?

FUND FOR VETERANS' ASSISTANCE

Coordinating funding to
support veterans and their
families across Texas

Are you a veteran
seeking assistance in your
local community?

Do you know a veteran who is
looking for assistance?



TEXAS VETERANS
COMMISSION



GRANT SUPPORTED SERVICES

- Transportation
- Financial assistance
- Homelessness and housing
- Family services



GRANT PROGRAMS

- General Assistance
- Housing For Texas Heroes
- Veterans Treatment Court
- Veterans Mental Health

CONNECT

512-463-1157 📞

1-800-252-VETS (8387) 📞

@texasveterans 🐦

grants@tvc.texas.gov ✉

tvc.texas.gov/Fund-for-Veterans-Assistance.aspx 🌐

facebook.com/texasveteranscommission 📘

instagram.com/txveteranscommission 📷

Are you looking to
build a business?

VETERAN ENTREPRENEUR PROGRAM

Purposing military skills
and training for veteran
business owners

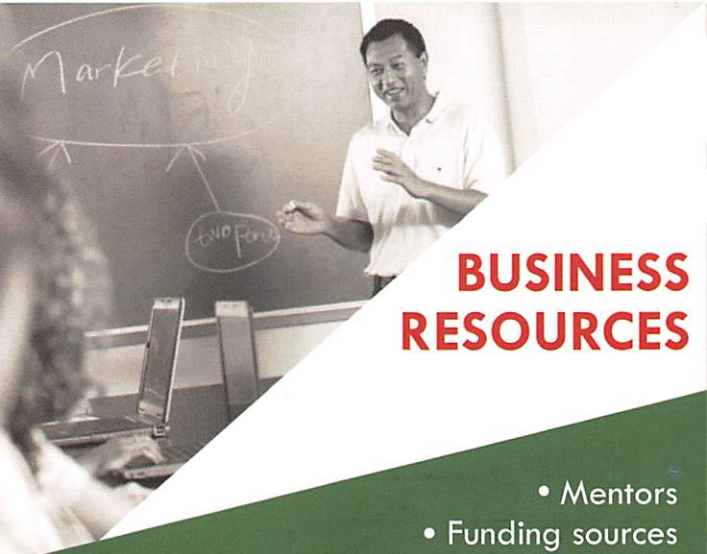
Do you want to
create a competitive
advantage for your business?



Do you want to start
doing what you enjoy?



TEXAS VETERANS
COMMISSION



BUSINESS RESOURCES

- Mentors
- Funding sources
- Education programs
- Business growth strategies
- Business planning development



ENTREPRENEUR ACADEMY

- Learn from experienced entrepreneurs
- Leverage your military skills
- Expand your network

CONNECT

1-800-252-VETS (8387) 

@texasveterans 

entrepreneur@tvc.texas.gov 

tvc.texas.gov/Entrepreneur-Program.aspx 

facebook.com/texasveteranscommission 

instagram.com/txveteranscommission 

Are you a Veteran
seeking higher education?

VETERANS EDUCATION PROGRAM

Connecting Texas Veterans
to Higher Education
and Technical Training
Opportunities

Are you interested in
on-the-job training?

Do you know your
educational
goals or options?



**TEXAS VETERANS
COMMISSION**



STATE BENEFITS

Hazlewood Act:

- Up to 150 hours of tuition at state-supported colleges or universities
- Up-to-date education information



FEDERAL BENEFITS

- Post 9/11 GI Bill
- Montgomery GI Bill
- Fry Scholarship
- Veterans Educational Assistance Program
- On-the-Job Training

CONNECT

 education@tvc.texas.gov

 1-800-252-VETS (8387)

 @texasveterans

 facebook.com/texasveteranscommission

 instagram.com/txveteranscommission

 tvc.texas.gov/Education.aspx



2018
Edition

**TEXAS VETERANS
COMMISSION**



**STATE
VETERANS
BENEFITS**

Our Mission

Since 1927, the mission of the Texas Veterans Commission is to advocate for and provide superior service to veterans that will significantly improve the quality of life for all Texas veterans, their families, and survivors.

Our Philosophy

The Texas Veterans Commission will advocate for Texas veterans, their families, and survivors.

The Texas Veterans Commission will:

- Provide superior service through nine programs: Claims Representation and Counseling, Veterans Employment Services, Veterans Education, Communications and Outreach, Veteran Entrepreneur, Health Care Advocacy, Veterans Mental Health, Women Veterans, and the Fund for Veterans' Assistance.
- Provide superior service through a dedicated, professional, and well-trained workforce.
- Connect with all veterans, their families, and survivors across the state, and tailor its services to meet their needs.
- Take the lead in coordinating efforts between its nine programs and with federal, state, and local governmental offices and private organizations that provide services and assistance to veterans.
- Ensure that Texas veterans maintain the highest quality of life and well-being through its advocacy and dedication to veterans' services.

The Texas Veterans Commission holds its employees personally and professionally accountable to provide superior customer service to veterans, their families, and survivors through its core values:

- **Professionalism** - Perform duties to the highest standard and provide superior customer service in every program.
- **Integrity** - Provide fair, honest, and objective advocacy in an ethical manner while displaying the highest standard of conduct, on and off duty.
- **Compassion** - Demonstrate care, concern, and understanding in every encounter with veterans, their family members, and survivors.
- **Commitment** - Uphold and be dedicated to carrying out the mission of the agency.
- **Teamwork** - Work together in a positive and productive manner to accomplish the mission of the agency.



TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION



<u>NAME</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>Hometown</u>
Eliseo Cantu, Jr.	Commission Chair	Corpus Christi, TX
Rev. Richard A. McLeon, IV	Commission Vice Chair	Henderson, TX
J.K. "Jake" Ellzey	Commission Secretary	Midlothian, TX
Kevin Barber	Commission Member	Houston, TX
Daniel P. Moran	Commission Member	Cypress, TX
Thomas Palladino	TVC Executive Director	Round Rock, TX

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About the Texas Veterans Commission	1
Texas Veterans Commission: Claims Representation & Counseling.....	1
Compensation and Pension	1
Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)	3
Death Pension	4
Burial Benefits	4
Vocational Rehabilitation	6
1151 Claim	7
Assistance with Appeals	7
Medical Care Eligibility	8
Health Registries	8
Texas Veterans Commission: Veterans Employment Services.....	9
Veterans Recruitment Division.....	10
Veterans Preference.....	10
Re-employment after Military Service.....	10
Texas Veterans Commission: Veterans Education Program.....	11
The Hazlewood Act.....	12
Hazlewood Legacy Program.....	12
GI Bill and Post 9/11 GI Bill.....	13
Texas Veterans Commission: Veterans Entrepreneur Program.....	19
Texas Veterans Commission: Fund for Veterans' Assistance.....	19
Texas Veterans Commission: Health Care Advocacy Program.....	20
Texas Veterans Commission: Veterans Mental Health Program.....	20
Texas Veterans Commission: Women Veterans Program.....	21
Texas Veterans Land Board (VLB).....	21
Veterans Housing Assistance & Home Improvement Program.....	21
Veterans Housing Assistance Purchase Program.....	21
Veterans Home Improvement Loan Program.....	22
Veterans State Benefits.....	22
Specialty/Disabled License Plates and Permits.....	22
Hunting & Fishing Licenses.....	22

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Property Tax Exemption.....	23
No Cost Medical Records.....	23
State Park Admission.....	23
Insurance.....	23
Free Recording of Discharges.....	23
Contract Preferences.....	24
Texas Veterans Commission Office Locations.....	29
State Government Agencies.....	34
Military Installations in Texas.....	36

TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION - AUSTIN HEADQUARTERS

Stephen F. Austin Building
1700 North Congress, Suite 800
Austin, TX 78701

Mailing Address:

Texas Veterans Commission
P.O. Box 12277
Austin, TX 78711-2277

Office Hours: 8:00 am - 5:00 pm
Email: info@tvc.texas.gov

Phone: 512-463-6564
Web: www.tvc.texas.gov

Veterans' HOTLINE: 1-800-252-VETS (8387) (In-State Only)

ABOUT THE TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION

The Texas Veterans Commission is the state agency that advocates for Texas veterans, their families, and survivors. The agency takes great pride in providing the highest level of quality service possible. The fundamental ingredient to quality service is a dedicated, professional, and well-trained workforce. More than 80% of the agency's employees are veterans, every employee is dedicated to ensuring veterans receive the benefits and services they have earned.

The services provided by the Texas Veterans Commission are tailored to the unique needs of veterans, their families, and survivors. The Texas Veterans Commission coordinates the efforts of service providers, facilitates the sharing of resources, provides innovative and effective training, awards grants to organizations addressing a broad range of veterans' needs, and creates partnerships with other levels of government to achieve the highest level of service for veterans, their families, and survivors.

CLAIMS REPRESENTATION AND COUNSELING

The Claims Representation and Counseling Program helps veterans file claims with the VA for benefits and compensation. This includes service-connected disability compensation, dependency indemnity compensation, and non service-connected pension.

Claims counselors provide one-on-one personalized assistance to Texas veterans, their families, and survivors in obtaining all local, state, and federal benefits and services they are eligible to receive. This is accomplished through counseling, State Strike Force Teams, fully-developed claims teams and robust training programs. Claims counselors are accredited to represent veterans throughout the benefit application process, must be proficient in the medical field and in VA administrative law.

Service-Connected Compensation

The Texas Veterans Commission serves veterans, their families, and survivors, in matters pertaining to VA disability benefits and rights. The agency represents veterans in VA disability claims and during the VA appeals process, and assists dependents with survivor benefits.

Service-Connected Disability compensation is a tax-free benefit paid to a veteran for certain qualifying disabilities. Veterans may be eligible for disability compensation if they have a service-related disability and were not discharged under less than honorable conditions. Many veterans do not realize they may qualify for monthly payments due to health conditions that can be traced back to their military service. The VA calls these health conditions service-connected disabilities.

- Combat deployment is not required for a service-connected disability rating or compensation.
- Service-connected disabilities are rated from 0% to 100%. Compensation amounts are based on the rating and number of veteran's dependents.
- VA compensation is not subject to Federal or State taxes.
- VA will consider all disabilities when they are included within the claim.
- If service-connected disabilities rated at 60%-90% cause unemployability, the veteran may be paid at the 100% rate by VA.
- Filing a claim and establishing service-connected disabilities provides certain priorities in obtaining medical care at VA expense.
- Texas and many other states have special programs and benefits for veterans with service-connected disabilities.
- Most claim payments start to accrue within a month from the day you file, no matter how long it takes to get the claim settled. Start the process today.

**For the most Current VA Disability Compensation Rates,
visit www.benefits.va.gov**

** 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.*

Non Service-Connected Pension

Non service-connected pension is a monthly benefit paid to wartime veterans who have limited or no income.

Who qualifies?

Veterans who:

- Are 65 or older, or permanently and totally disabled;
- Were not discharged from service under less than honorable conditions;
- Meet active duty service requirements with at least 1 day during a period of war time; (combat experience is not required)
- Have a family income lower than the limit (depends on spouse/dependents)

These eligibility requirements are general and there are additional factors that affect eligibility.

**For the most current VA Improved Disability Pension Rates,
visit www.benefits.va.gov**

Treatment for Service-Connected and Non Service-Connected Disabilities

Eligibility for treatment of non service-connected disabilities on a space-available basis at VA hospitals and clinics (a co-payment may be required):

- Treatment of all disabilities without charge if rated 50% or more.
- VA may pay for emergency hospitalization in private facilities for service-connected disabilities if VA facilities are not available. The VA medical facility that has jurisdiction must be notified within 72 hours of admission to the private facility.
- If the veteran resides in an area that is a long distance from a VA medical facility, VA may pay for outpatient medical treatment from private doctors for any service-connected disability and for all disabilities except dental if the veteran is rated 50% or more for service-connected disabilities.
- VA furnishes, free of charge, medicines required for treatment of service-connected disabilities and for all disabilities if the veteran is rated 50% or more for service-connected disabilities.
- Prosthetic appliances and services are available at VA expense for eligible veterans.
- If a veteran is hospitalized in excess of 21 days or convalescent for one month or more for service-connected disabilities, he/she may be entitled to a temporary 100% rating during that period.
- VA pays an annual clothing allowance to veterans whose prosthetic devices for service-connected disabilities tend to wear or tear their clothing. Also the allowance is available to any veteran whose service-connected skin condition requires prescribed medication that irreparably damages the veteran's outer garments.
- A service-connected disability rating provides preference points for Federal employment under certain conditions. Educational benefits are available to the spouse and other dependents of permanent 100% service-connected veterans, of veterans who die from service-connected disabilities and of members whose active duty deaths are incurred in the line of duty.

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)

VA may provide a monthly benefit to the surviving spouse or parent(s) upon a veteran's death

Who qualifies?

To be eligible, the veteran's death must have resulted from one of these causes:

- A disease or injury incurred or aggravated in the line of duty.
- An injury, heart attack/cardiac arrest, or stroke incurred or aggravated in the line of duty or while on inactive duty for training.
- A service-connected condition that affects a vital organ or bodily process.

Death Pension

VA provides pensions to low-income surviving spouses and unmarried children of deceased veterans with wartime service (combat experience is not required). The death pension provides a monthly payment to bring an eligible person's income to a level established by law.

Who qualifies?

- To be eligible, spouses must not have remarried and children must be under age 18, or under age 23 if attending a VA-approved school, or have become permanently incapable of self-support because of disability before age 18.
- The veteran must have been discharged under conditions other than dishonorable and must have qualifying service.
- A surviving spouse may be entitled to a higher income limit if living in a nursing home, in need of the aid and attendance of another person, or permanently housebound.

These eligibility requirements are general and there may be additional factors that affect eligibility.

Burial Benefits

Veterans, spouses, and dependents may be eligible for VA burial and memorial benefits including reimbursement of burial expenses, military funeral honors, VA headstones and markers, presidential memorial certificates, burial flags, burial in VA National Cemeteries or other veterans' cemeteries.

Military Funeral Honors

Upon request, the Department of Defense will provide military funeral honors consisting of folding and presentation of the U.S. flag and the sounding of "Taps".

Who qualifies?

Active duty personnel who served a minimum of 24 consecutive months or the full period of active duty, and reservists or National Guard members called to active duty for a limited duration. Eligibility is not established by active duty training in the Reserves or National Guard.

How to get it?

Family members should inform their funeral directors if they want military honors.

VA Headstones & Markers

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

Who qualifies?

Active duty personnel who served a minimum of 24 consecutive months or the full period of active duty, and reservists or National Guard members called to active duty for a limited duration. Eligibility is not established by active duty training in the Reserves or National Guard.

How to get it?

- When burial or memorialization is in a national, military post, or state veterans cemetery, cemetery staff will order a headstone or marker.
- When burial is in a private cemetery, VA form 40-1330, Application for Standard Government Headstone or Marker, must be submitted with a copy of the veteran's DD214.

Burial Flags

A U.S. flag is provided, at no cost, to drape the casket or accompany the urn of a deceased veteran who served honorably in the U.S. Armed Forces. It is furnished to honor the memory of the veteran's military service to his/her country.

Who qualifies?

Veterans who:

- Served on active duty a minimum of 24 consecutive months or the full period of active duty, and reservists or National Guard members called to active duty for a limited duration. Eligibility is not established by active duty training in the Reserves or National Guard.
- Served during wartime,
- Died on active duty after May 27, 1941,
- Served after January 31, 1955,
- Served during peacetime and were discharged before June 27, 1950,
- Served in the organized military forces of the Commonwealth of the Phillippines while in service of the U.S. Armed Forces and who died on or after April 25, 1951.
- Certain former members of the Selected Reserves

How to get it?

- Complete VA Form 21-2008, Application for U.S. Flag for Burial Purposes.

Burial in National Cemetery

Families are encouraged to prepare in advance by discussing cemetery options, collecting the veteran's military information including discharge papers, and by contacting the cemetery where burial is desired.

Gravesites in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) national cemeteries cannot be reserved in advanced; and reservations made prior to 1962 will be honored.

Who qualifies?

- Veterans discharged under other than dishonorable conditions.
- Members of Armed Forces who die on active duty.
- Members of Reserve Components & Reserve Officer Training Corps,
- Commissioned Officers,
- National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration,
- Public Health Service,
- World War II Merchant Marines, and
- Philippine Armed Forces.
- Eligible spouses and dependents (burial of dependent children is limited to unmarried children under 21 years old or 23 years old if a full-time student at an approved educational institution).

How to get it?

No special forms are required when requesting burial in a VA national cemetery. The person making burial arrangements should have their funeral home contact the national cemetery in which burial is desired at the time of need. Scheduling can be done seven days a week for internments on Mondays through Fridays.

Texas State Veterans Cemetery (TSVC) Program

Eligibility rules and burial benefits for TSVCs are the same as for national cemeteries. Texas State Veterans Cemeteries are currently operating in Central Texas in Killeen, South Texas in Mission, and West Central Texas in Abilene. A new site is under development in the Coastal Bend area near Corpus Christi. Please contact the Veteran Land Board at 1-800-252-8387 for information.

Who qualifies? Any member of the Armed Forces of the United States who dies on active duty. Any veteran who was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable or with certain exceptions, service beginning after September 7, 1980, as an enlisted person, and service after October 16, 1981, as an officer. Service must be for a minimum of 24 continuous months or the full period for which the person was called to active duty (as in the case of a Reservist called to active duty for a limited duration). Undesirable, bad conduct, and any other type of discharge less than honorable might not qualify the individual for veteran's benefits, depending upon a determination made by a VA Regional Office.

Vocational Rehabilitation

The Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) program provides educational and vocational counseling to servicemembers, veterans, and certain dependents at no charge. These counseling services are designed to help an individual choose a vocational direction, determine the course needed to achieve the chosen goal, and evaluate the career possibilities open to them.

Services that may be provided include comprehensive rehabilitation evaluation to determine abilities, skills, and interests for employment, vocational counseling, and rehabilitation planning for employment services.

Other services may include:

- Job-training, job-seeking skills, resume development, and other work readiness assistance.
- Assistance finding and keeping a job, including the use of special employer incentives and job accommodations.
- On-the-Job Training (OJT), apprenticeships, and non-paid work experiences, post-secondary training at a college, vocational, technical, or business school.
- Supportive rehabilitation services including case management, counseling, and medical referrals, and independent living services for veterans unable to work due to the severity of their disabilities.

Who qualifies?

Veterans who:

- Receive a discharge that is not other than honorable;
- The basic period of eligibility which VR&E services may be used is 12 years from the date of separation from active military service, or the date the veteran was first notified by VA of any new service-connected disability.
- Have a service-connected disability rating of at least 10%.

There may be additional factors that affect eligibility.

1151 Claim

Compensation is available for veterans who are injured while undergoing treatment or vocational rehabilitation under VA care.

Who qualifies?

Someone who had a qualifying additional disability or death that was not the result of the veteran's willful misconduct, and at least one of the following:

- Was caused by hospital care, medical or surgical treatment, or examination furnished by the VA and the proximate cause of the disability or death was carelessness, negligence, lack of proper skill, error in judgement, or similar instance of fault on the part of the VA in furnishing the hospital care, medical or surgical treatment, or examination; or event not reasonably foreseeable.
- The disability or death was proximately caused by the provision of training and rehabilitation services by the Department of Veterans Affairs as part of an approved rehabilitation program.

These eligibility requirements are general and there may be additional factors that affect eligibility.

How to get it?

Meet with your local Texas Veterans Commission representative or Veterans County Service Officer who will guide you through the process and identify any paperwork required.

Assistance with Appeals

You have the right to appeal decisions the VA makes. Our experts will talk you through the process and represent you.

Medical Care Eligibility

The VA operates the nation's largest integrated healthcare system with more than 1,400 sites of care, including hospitals, community clinics, community living centers, domiciliaries, readjustment counseling centers, and various other facilities.

Who qualifies?

Veterans may qualify for VA healthcare benefits and are not required to have a service-connected disability.

How to get it?

Complete VA Form 10-10EZ, Application for Medical Benefits.

Health Registries

Free medical exams and health related information is available for veterans of the Gulf War, OEF/OIF, Vietnam War and exposed to ionizing radiation.

Agent Orange Registry for Vietnam Era Veterans

Any Vietnam era veteran who:

- Served at least one day in the Republic of Vietnam between 1962 and 1975 regardless of length of service,
- Served aboard smaller river patrol and swift boats that operated on the inland waterways of Vietnam (also known as "Brown Water Veterans")
- Served in Korea from April 1, 1968 to August 31, 1971, in a unit stationed near the DMZ, or
- May have been exposed to dioxin or other toxic substance. For more information visit the Public Health section of the VA website.

Gulf War, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation New Dawn

Any veteran who served on active military duty in southwest Asia during the Gulf War which began in 1990 and continues to the present, including Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation New Dawn.

Burn Pit Registry

The use of burn pits was a common waste disposal practice at military sites in Iraq and Afghanistan. Smoke from these pits contained substances that may have short and long-term health effects. VA has created the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry for veterans and service members.

<https://veteran.mobilehealth.va.gov/AHBurnPitRegistry/#page/home>

Exposure to Depleted Uranium

Veterans who served in the 1991 Gulf War, Bosnia, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, or Operation New Dawn.

Ionizing Radiation Exposure

- Veterans who participated in the occupation of Hiroshima or Nagasaki from August 6, 1945 through July 1, 1946, or
- Internment as a Prisoner of War (POW) in Japan (or service on active duty in Japan immediately following such internment) during World War II which the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines.

These eligibility requirements are general and there may be additional factors that affect eligibility. Meet with your local Texas Veterans Commission or Veterans County Service Officer to guide you through the process.

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Veterans Employment Services helps veterans find meaningful employment by conducting job searches and job matches, resumé assistance, coaching, intensive services, and working with employers, and other employment services. Veterans Employment provides one-on-one personalized assistance to eligible veterans, their family members, and survivors. In conjunction with The Texas Workforce Commission, this work is accomplished by Veterans Career Advisors provides intensive services through job coaching and career guidance to eligible Veterans facing significant barriers to employment in Texas Workforce Solution Centers across the state. The Veterans Employer Liaisons works within the community providing a variety of services to local businesses and organizations that promote and enhance the recruitment, hiring, and retention of Veterans. Family Career Advisors help veteran spouses and family members.

Family Employment Division (FED)

The FED consists of state-level funded positions and provides job coaching to qualified spouses, family members, and caregivers of Wounded Warriors assigned to Wounded Warrior facilities.

- Job search techniques training
- Resume and application assistance
- Job clubs
- Job posting referrals
- Supportive service referrals
- Post-employment follow up

Veterans Career Resource Division (VCRD)

Tasked with providing individualized career services and creating a supply of job-ready veterans. Emphasis and priority is given to disabled veterans and other significant barriers to employment categories as determined by the Department of Labor.

- Job coaching
- Supportive service referrals
- Transition assistance
- Resume/Application assistance
- Job searching techniques training
- Job posting referrals
- Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) Pre-Certification
- Job clubs
- Post-employment follow up
- VA Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR&E) Orientations
- Warrior transition unit briefings

Veterans Recruitment Division (VRD)

Tasked with facilitating employment, training, and placement services for veterans in the State of Texas. VRD staff promote the benefits of hiring veterans to employers, employer associations, and business groups.

- Plan/attend career fairs
- Plan/attend hiring events
- Assist with training opportunities
- Assist employers with job posting development
- TVC Employment Services liaison
- Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) Pre-Certification

Veterans' Employment Preference

- ***Federal-Title 5, United States Code, Section 2108***

Veterans' Preference gives eligible veterans preference in appointment over many other applicants. Veterans' preference applies, to virtually all new appointments in both the competitive and excepted service. Veterans' preference does not guarantee veterans a job and it does not apply to internal agency actions such as promotions, transfers, reassignments and reinstatements.

<https://www.fedshirevets.gov/job/vetpref/>

- ***State-Government Code, Chapter 657***

An individual who qualifies for a veteran's employment preference is entitled to a preference in employment with or appointment to a state agency over other applicants for the same position who do not have a greater qualification.

<http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/GV/htm/GV.657.htm>

Uniformed Services Employment and Re-Employment Rights Act

You have the right to be reemployed in your civilian job if you leave that job to perform service in the uniformed service and:

- You ensure that your employer receives advance written or verbal notice of your service;
- You have five years or less of cumulative service in the uniformed services while with that particular employer;
- You return to work or apply for reemployment in a timely manner after conclusion of service; and
- You have not been separated from service with a disqualifying discharge or under other than honorable conditions. If you are eligible to be reemployed, you must be restored to the job and benefits you would have attained if you had not been absent due to military service or, in some cases, a comparable job.

VETERANS EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Veterans Education Program administers two programs with complimentary missions - the federal program and the state program:

- Under the federal program, Veterans Education functions as the State Approving Agency (SAA) for schools and determines those programs of education and training within the state which may be approved for G.I. Bill education benefits.
- Under the state program, Veterans Education oversees the administration of the Hazlewood Act Exemption Program and reimburses certain expenses at public institutions of higher education. The state program also manages the statewide Education Coordinator Program.

The Hazlewood Act

The Hazlewood Act is a state of Texas benefit that provides qualified veterans, spouses, and dependent children with an education benefit of up to 150 hours of tuition exemption, including most fee charges, at public institutions of higher education in Texas. This does NOT include living expenses, books, or supply fees.

Who qualifies? Veterans who:

- Entered active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces and stated Texas as Home of Record; entered the service in Texas; or was a Texas resident;
- Received an honorable discharge or separation or a general discharge under honorable conditions as indicated on the Veteran's Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty (DD Form 214);
- Have served at least 181 days of active duty service (excluding training) and does not have federal veteran's education benefits or federal veteran's education benefits dedicated to the payment of tuition and fees only (such as Chapter 33 or 31). This is for the term or semester enrolled that does not exceed the value of Hazlewood benefits;
- Are not in default on a student loan made or guaranteed by the state of Texas;
- Enrolled in classes for which the college receives tax support (i.e., a course that does not depend solely on student tuition and fees to cover its cost), unless the college's governing board has ruled to let veterans receive the benefit while taking non-funded courses; and
- Meet the GPA and excessive hour requirement of the institution's satisfactory academic progress policy in a degree or certificate program as determined by the institution's financial aid policy.

Veterans who are granted their first Hazlewood Act exemption beginning fall, 2011 must reside in Texas during the semester or term for which the exemption is claimed. This requirement does not apply to the veterans who either received the exemption prior to the 2011-2012 academic year, have re-enlisted into active duty, or reside with a spouse who is on active duty.

Legacy Act (Child)

Eligible veterans may assign unused hours of exemption eligibility to a child under certain conditions.

Who qualifies? A child (legacy recipient) who:

- Is classified by the institution as a Texas resident;
- Is the biological child, stepchild, adopted child, or can be claimed as a dependent in the current or previous tax year;
- Is 25 years old or younger on the first day of the semester or term for which the exemption is claimed (unless granted an extension due to a qualifying illness or debilitating condition); and
- Meets the GPA and excessive hour requirements of the institution's satisfactory academic progress policy in a degree or certificate program as determined by the institution's financial aid policy.

Legacy recipients will receive an exemption for the number of degree certified hours reported by the institution for that term/semester. Maximum degree certified hours awarded to the Legacy recipient will be dependent upon the degree or certificate program in which the student is enrolled for that term or semester and shall be consistent with the program length as defined within the school catalog as approved by the regional accreditation commission. *If a child to whom hours have been delegated fails to use all of the assigned hours, a veteran may re-assign the unused hours that are available to another child. Only one child will use Hazlewood Legacy benefits at a time.

Hazlewood Act for Spouse/Child

Spouses and dependent children of eligible Active Duty, Reserve, and Texas National Guard who died in the line of duty or as a result of injury or illness directly related to military service, are missing in action, or who became totally disabled for purposes of employability as a result of a service-related injury or illness are entitled to receive a 150 credit hours exemption.

Who qualifies? A spouse/child who:

- Is a spouse/child of a veteran who, at the time of entry into the U.S. Armed Forces, be classified by the institution as a Texas resident, designated Texas as Home of Record, or entered the service in Texas;
- Is a spouse/child of a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces or Texas National Guard who died as a result of service-related injuries or illness, is missing in action, or became totally disabled (100%) as a result of service-related injury or illness or is entitled to receive compensation at the 100% rate due to individual unemployability (IU) due to a service connected injury or illness;

- Has no federal veteran's education benefits, or have no federal veteran's education benefits dedicated to the payment of tuition and fees only (such as Chapter 33 or 31) for term or semester enrolled that do not exceed the value of Hazlewood benefits;
- Is classified by the institution as a Texas resident; and
- Meets the GPA and excessive hour requirements of the institution's satisfactory academic progress policy in a degree or certificate program as determined by the institution's financial aid policy. This requirement does not apply to the spouse of a MIA, KIA, or service-connected deceased veteran.

Post 9/11 G.I. Bill

The Post- 9/11 GI Bill is an education benefit program for individuals who served on active duty after September 10, 2001.

Who qualifies?

You may be eligible if you served at least 90 aggregate days on active duty* after September 10, 2001, or were honorably discharged from active duty for a service-connected disability after serving 30 continuous days following September 10, 2001.

Benefits

You may receive a percentage of the following payments:

- A Tuition and Fee payment that is paid to your school on your behalf.
- A Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA)** that is equal to:
 1. The basic allowance for housing (BAH) payable for the zip code of your school to a military E-5 with dependents for students.
 2. One-half the BAH national average for students training solely by distance learning.
 3. The national average BAH for students pursuing training at foreign schools
- A Books and Supplies Stipend.

* includes active service as a National Guard member under title 32 U.S.C. for the purpose of organizing, administering, recruiting, instructing, or training and active service under section 502(f) of title 32 for the purpose of responding to a national emergency.

** The MHA is not payable to individuals on active duty or those enrolled at half time or less.

Generally, you may receive up to 36 months of entitlement under the Post-9/11 GI Bill. You will be eligible for benefits for 15 years from your last period of active duty of at least 90 consecutive days.

Approved Programs

You can use the Post-9/11 GI Bill at colleges, universities, trade schools, and for on-the-job training, apprenticeships, and flight schools. To see what programs are currently approved for VA benefits, visit: <http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/>
You can use the Post-9/11 GI Bill for tutorial assistance, licensing (attorney license, cosmetology license, etc.) and certification tests (SAT, LSAT, etc.)

Transferring Entitlement

You must be a member of the uniformed services to transfer your unused benefits to your spouse or dependent(s). Generally, you must agree to serve four more years when transferring benefits.

Yellow Ribbon

The Post-9/11 GI Bill can cover all in-state tuition and fees at public degree granting schools, but may not cover all private degree granting schools and out-of-state tuition. The Yellow Ribbon Program provides additional support in those situations.

Montgomery G.I. Bill

The MGIB-AD program, sometimes known as Chapter 30, provides education benefits to veterans and service members who have at least two years of active duty.

Type of Assistance

Assistance may be used for college degree and certificate programs, technical or vocational courses, flight training, apprenticeships or on-the-job training, high-tech training, licensing and certification tests, entrepreneurship training, certain entrance examinations, and correspondence courses. Remedial, deficiency, and refresher courses may be approved under certain circumstances. Benefits are generally payable for 10 years following your release from honorable active service.

Who Qualifies?

Eligible service members may receive up to 36 months of education benefits. The monthly benefit paid to you is based on the type of training you take, length of your service, your category, any college fund eligibility, and if you contributed to the \$600 buy-up program. You usually have 10 years to use your MGIB benefits, but the time limit can be fewer or more years depending on the situation.

You may be eligible if you have an honorable discharge; AND you have a high school diploma or GED or in some cases 12 hours of college credit; AND you meet the requirements of one of the categories below:

CATEGORY I

- Entered active duty for the first time after June 30, 1985
- Had military pay reduced by \$100 a month for first 12 months
- Continuously served for three years or two years, if that is what you first enlisted for or if you entered the Selected Reserve within a year of leaving active duty and served four years (the 2 by 4 program)

CATEGORY II

- Entered active duty before January 1, 1977
- Served at least one day between 10/19/84 and 6/30/85, and stayed on active duty through 6/30/88, (or through 6/30/87 if you entered the Selected Reserve within one year of leaving active duty and served four years)
- On 12/31/89, you had entitlement left from Vietnam-era GI Bill

CATEGORY III

- Not eligible for MGIB under Category I or II
- On active duty on 9/30/90 AND separated involuntarily after 2/2/91
- OR involuntarily separated on or after 11/30/93
- OR voluntarily separated under either the Voluntary Separation Incentive (VSI) or Special Separation Benefit (SSB) program
- Before separation, you had military pay reduced by \$1,200

CATEGORY IV

- On active duty on 10/9/96 AND you had money remaining in a VEAP account on that date AND you elected MGIB by 10/9/97
- OR you entered full-time National Guard duty under title 32, USC, between 7/1/85, and 11/28/89, AND you elected MGIB during the period 10/9/96 - 7/08/97
- Had military pay reduced by \$100 a month for 12 months or made a \$1,200 lump-sum contribution

Montgomery GI Selected Reserve (MGIB-SR)

MGIB-SR program provides education and training benefits to eligible members of the Selected Reserve, including 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. Eligibility for this program is determined by the Selected Reserve components and VA makes the payments.

Types of Training

Assistance may be used for college degree and certificate programs, co-op training, technical or vocational courses, flight training, apprenticeships or on-the-job training, high-tech training, licensing and certification tests, entrepreneurship training, certain entrance examinations, and correspondence courses. Remedial, deficiency, and refresher courses may be approved under certain circumstances.

Who Qualifies?

You may be entitled to receive up to 36 months of education benefits.

To qualify, you must meet the following requirements:

- Served a six-year obligation to serve in the Selected Reserve signed after June 30, 1985. If you are an officer, you must have agreed to serve six years in addition to your original obligation. For some types of training it is necessary to have a six-year commitment that begins after Sept. 30, 1990.
- Completed your initial active duty for training (IADT).
- Met the requirement to receive a high school diploma or equivalency certificate before completing IADT. You may not use 12 hours toward a college degree to meet this requirement.
- Remained in good standing while serving in an active Selected Reserve unit. You will also retain MGIB-SR eligibility if you were discharged from Selected Reserve service due to a disability that was not caused by misconduct. Your eligibility period may be extended if you are ordered to active duty.

Veterans Educational Assistance Program (VEAP)

VEAP is available if you elected to make contributions from your military pay to participate in this education benefit program. The government matches your contributions on a 2-for-1 basis.

Types of Training

Assistance may be used for college degree and certificate programs, technical or vocational courses, flight training, apprenticeships or on-the-job training, high-tech training, licensing and certification tests, entrepreneurship training, certain entrance examinations, and correspondence courses. You may use these benefits for degree, certificate, correspondence, apprenticeship/on-the-job training programs, and vocational flight training programs.

Benefit entitlement is for one to 36 months depending on the number of monthly contributions. You have 10 years from your release from active duty to use VEAP benefits. If the entitlement is not used after the 10-year period, your portion remaining in the fund will be automatically refunded.

Who Qualifies?

You must meet the following requirements to qualify:

- Entered service for the first time between Jan. 1, 1977, and June 30, 1985
- Opened a contribution account before April 1, 1987
- Voluntarily contributed from \$25 to \$2,700;
- Completed your first period of service and were discharged or released from service under conditions other than dishonorable.
- If you are currently on active duty and wish to receive VEAP benefits, you must have at least three months of contributions available.

How to Get it?

To apply, take these steps depending on your situation:

- Make sure that your selected program is approved for VA training. VA can inform you and the school or company about the requirements.
- Obtain and complete VA Form 22-1990, Application for Education Benefits. Send it to the VA regional office with jurisdiction over the state where you will pursue education and training. If you are not on active duty, send copy 4 (Member Copy) of your DD Form 214, Certificate of Release or Discharge From Active Duty.
- If you are on active duty, you must have your enrollment approved by your base Education Services Officer, and you must have your service verified by your Commanding Officer.
- If you have started training, take your application and Member Copy of DD Form 214 to your school or employer. Ask them to complete VA Form 22-1999, Enrollment Certification, and send all the forms to VA.
- If you wish to withdraw your contributions from VEAP, obtain and complete VA Form 22-5281, Application for Refund of Educational Contributions, and send it to your nearest VA regional office.

Survivors and Dependents Assistance

There are two main GI Bill programs offering education assistance to survivors and dependents of Veterans:

- The Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship (Fry Scholarship)
- The Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA) Program

You may be eligible for more than one of these programs. In most situations, you will be required to make an irrevocable election between the DEA program and Fry Scholarship when you apply. Beneficiaries are not able to use the same qualifying event for more than one benefit unless you are a child of a service member that died in the line of duty prior to August 1, 2011.

Fry Scholarship

The Fry Scholarship provides Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to the children and surviving spouses of Servicemembers who died in the line of duty while on active duty after September 10, 2001. Eligible beneficiaries attending school may receive up to 36 months of benefits at the 100% level.

Who Qualifies?

Children and surviving spouses of an active duty member of the Armed Forces who died in the line of duty on or after September 11, 2001 are eligible for this benefit. Children are eligible as of their 18th birthday (unless they have already graduated high school). A child may be married or over 23 and still be eligible, although their eligibility ends on their 33rd birthday. A spouse will lose eligibility to this benefit upon remarriage. A spouse has 15 years from the date of death of the Servicemember to use the benefit.

If you are eligible for both Fry Scholarship and DEA, you will be required to make an irrevocable election between the two programs when you apply. Dependents are not eligible to receive both DEA and the Fry Scholarship based on the same event (like a service member dying in the line of duty) unless he or she is a child whose parent died prior to August 1, 2011. A child of a parent who died prior to August 1, 2011 may still be eligible for both benefits but he/she may only use one program at a time and combined benefits are capped at a total of 81 months of full-time training. In this situation the two benefit programs cannot be used concurrently.

Dependents Education Assistance Program (DEA)

The DEA program offers education and training opportunities to eligible dependents of veterans who are permanently and totally disabled due to a service-related condition or of veterans who died while on active duty or a result of a service-related condition.

Type of Assistance

Benefits may be used for degree and certificate programs, apprenticeship, and on-the-job training. If you are a spouse, you may take a correspondence course. Remedial, deficiency, and refresher courses may be approved under certain circumstances. Get the DEA pamphlet.

If you are eligible for both Fry Scholarship and DEA, you will be required to make an irrevocable election between the two programs when you apply. Dependents are not eligible to receive both DEA and Fry Scholarship based on the same event (like a Servicemember dying in the line of duty) unless he or she is a child whose parent died prior to August 1, 2011. A child whose parent died before August 1, 2011, may be eligible for both benefits but he/she may only use one program at a time and combined benefits are capped at a total of 81 months of full-time training. In this situation, the two benefit programs cannot be used concurrently.

Who Qualifies? You 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.
- Who died from any cause while such permanent and total service-connected disability was in existence.
- Missing in action or captured in line of duty by a hostile force.
- Forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power.
- Who is hospitalized or receiving outpatient treatment for a service connected permanent and total disability and is likely to be discharged for that disability. This change is effective Dec. 23, 2006.

VETERAN ENTREPRENEUR PROGRAM

The Veteran Entrepreneur Program assists veterans with starting businesses and growing existing veteran-owned businesses through business planning, securing of capital, and development of business fundamentals.

The Veteran Entrepreneur Program provides veterans with business tools, resources, and direct support that can be leveraged towards business success. The program continuously observes the Texas market landscape to create programs that enhance the scope of services it delivers to veterans. Veteran Business Consultants travel across the state to conduct and facilitate training and informational seminars.

- **Franchise Tax and Certain Filing Fees**

Qualifying new veteran-owned businesses that are formed in Texas between January 1, 2016 and January 1, 2020 may be eligible for an exemption from certain filing fees and the Texas franchise tax for the first five years of operation.

FUND FOR VETERANS' ASSISTANCE

Since 2009, the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) has awarded over \$91M in 467 grants to non-profit and local government entities. As of December 2016, grantees have served over 244,000 Texas Veterans and dependents.

- **General Assistance Grants**

General Assistance grants offer funding to eligible organizations that provide direct services to Texas veterans and their families. Grants address a broad range of needs.

- **Housing 4 Texas Heroes (H4TXH)**

The H4TXH category awards grants to eligible organizations that assist Texas veterans and their families in obtaining, maintaining, or improving housing.

- **Veterans Mental Health (VMH)**

Veterans Mental Health grant program provides funding to eligible organizations that provide counseling, peer-delivered, and support service.

- **Veterans Treatment Courts (VTC)**

Veterans Treatment Courts grants offer funding to local governments to create, expand, or maintain a VTC program.

- **Highly Rural Transportation Grants (HRTG)**

The Highly Rural Transportation Grant Program helps address the lack of transportation resources veterans face when trying to access medical care.

HEALTH CARE ADVOCACY PROGRAM

The Texas Veterans Commission Health Care Advocacy Program was established in collaboration with Veteran Integrated Service Network (VISN) 17 and VISN 16 in 2015 to act as advocates for Texas Veterans in addressing issues involving Veterans Health Administration services related to health care. The TVC Health Care Advocacy Program advocates are strategically positioned within Veterans Health Administration (VHA) facilities, across the state of Texas, working in partnership with VHA staff to provide channels through which patients can seek solutions to problems, concerns, and unmet needs by working with health care providers and support staff to prevent and resolve patient complaints.

Health Care Advocacy Program advocates interpret Veterans Health Administration medical center policies and procedures while presenting veteran concerns to appropriate personnel. Advocates assist veterans in understanding his or her rights and responsibilities and work with veterans, their families, and Veterans Health Administration facility personnel in overcoming barriers to veteran's health care.

The Health Care Advocacy Program assists veterans and their families in gaining access to VA health care facilities and resolving patient concerns and issues. In cooperation with VA health care providers and support staff, TVC advocates identifies existing and potential problems, and suggest solutions or alternatives. Advocates assist with congressional inquiries and public relations to increase community awareness and veteran awareness of VHA health care resources and other veteran services within their local communities.

Direct Services Provided

- Access to internal or external (non-VA facility) appointments
- Assist veterans with complaints and grievances
- Resolve VA health care related billing
- Pharmacy / medication assistance
- Health care related testing and/or lab testing
- "Fee Basis" referrals such as outside referrals for health care services that the VA does not perform at VA facilities
- Referrals to veteran service providers within the local community

VETERANS MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM

The Veterans Mental Health Program assists transitioning service members, veterans, their family members, and survivors in accessing mental health care and support. Mental health care and support includes the Military Veteran Peer Network (MVPN), licensed mental health providers, community organizations, faith-based organizations, and justice-involved veteran services.

By educating, training, and working with community organizations, the Veterans Mental Health program increases awareness of military-related traumas impacting services available to military veterans.

WOMEN VETERANS PROGRAM

The Women Veterans Program bridges the gap between women veterans and the services and benefits they have earned. The program ensures that women veterans have equitable access to local, federal, and state benefits and services. The Women Veterans Program empowers women veterans to expect equitable treatment in care and services, and elevates public awareness of the vital roles women veterans have played in our national defense.

The Women Veterans Professional Network is a closed social media network that provides a safe environment for women veterans to connect with each other on the topics of employment, women's health, and entrepreneurship.

Texas Veterans Land Board (VLB)

The VLB will finance the tract of land in which a veteran is interested. The VLB is self-supportive, funded by bonds and the fees submitted by each veteran.

Who qualifies? Veterans who have applied for a land loan on or after 12/01/2007.

Veterans Housing Assistance and Home Improvement Program

The Veterans Housing Assistance and Home Improvement Program offers an interest rate reduction to qualifying veterans with disabilities.

Who qualifies? The veteran must have a compensable service-connected disability of 30% or greater as verified by an Award Letter from the VA. The veteran must also meet all other eligibility requirements. All Texas Veterans Land Board loans are subject to credit approval.

Veterans Housing Assistance Purchase Program

The Veterans Housing Assistance Program provides financing toward the purchase of a home to qualified Texas veterans. Loans may be originated through the Texas Veterans Land Board. There is no maximum sales price with the VHAP. The VHAP is not a refinancing program. If you have an existing home loan, you cannot use the VHAP to lower your interest rate, nor can the VHAP be used as a down payment. It can only be used as a first lien on your primary residence. The term of the loan can be 15, 20, 25 or 30 years.

The VHAP must be originated in conjunction with Federal Housing Administration (FHA), Veterans Administration (VA), or conventional financing. All VLB loans require an escrow account for taxes and insurance.

Veterans Home Improvement Loan Program

The Texas Veterans Land Board (VLB) will lend to eligible Texas veterans on a fixed-rate note for substantial repairs to their existing primary residence. No down payment is required. All loans are FHA-insured.

The veteran cannot advance any funds to the contractor or purchase materials prior to receipt of loan proceeds from the VLB. The VLB must be in a first or second lien position. All property improvements should be completed within six months from the date of disbursement of loan proceeds. If the veteran is required to vacate the home while the improvements are being made, the veteran must re-occupy it within 60 days after completion of the construction.

STATE VETERANS BENEFITS

<https://texas.gov>

Special/Disabled Vehicle License Plates and Permits

A Texas driver's license or ID card may be provided free-of-charge to a veteran who is honorably discharged, with a service-connected disability of at least 60% or more. Disabled Veterans, Former Prisoners of War, Pearl Harbor Survivors, Purple Heart, and Medal of Honor plates are among the special license plates available to eligible veterans and their survivors for personal use on their vehicles. Disabled veterans must have a service-connected disability rating of 50% or greater or 40% due to amputation of a lower extremity. Applicants must have been honorably discharged if no longer a member of the service. The surviving spouse of a person who would be eligible for military or veteran plates is entitled to continue to register one vehicle with the specialty license plate as long as the spouse remains unmarried. **For more information on specialty/disabled plates and permits, visit <http://www.dmv.org/tx-texas/special-license-plates.php>**

Hunting and Fishing Licenses

Disabled Veteran Super Combo Hunting and All-Water Fishing packages available to disabled veterans for free.

Who qualifies? A disabled veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces is one who has a service-connected disability, as defined by the Department of Veterans Affairs, with a disability rating of 50% or greater, and who is receiving compensation from the VA for the disability. **For more information visit <http://tpwd.texas.gov/regulations/outdoor-annual/licenses>**

Property Tax Exemption for Veterans

Texas law provides partial property tax exemptions for any property owned by disabled veterans, surviving spouses, and children of deceased disabled veterans. It also provides a partial exemption for residence homesteads donated to disabled veterans by charitable organizations that also extend to surviving spouses who have not remarried. The amount of exemption is determined according to the percentage of service-connected disability.

No Cost Medical Records

Texas veterans are eligible for no cost medical records. The health care provider or health care facility is not required to provide more than one complete record for the patient or former patient without charge. Also, it should be noted, that some medical facilities will charge a small administrative fee for obtaining the records.

State Park Admission

The State Parklands Passport provides free admission to Texas State Parks for any veteran who has a service-connected disability rating of 60% or greater, or a service-connected disability that resulted in the loss of use of a lower extremity. Applications for the State Parklands Passport can be made at the headquarters office of any Texas State Park by providing evidence of the disability rating. The State Parklands Passport is available to any veteran who meets the requirements, whether or not the veteran resides in Texas. Veterans will only receive free admission to state parks; the Passport does not exempt veterans from payment of other charges, such as parking or camping fees. For more information, visit the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department website www.tpwd.state.tx.us

Insurance

Veterans Group Life Insurance (VGLI) is a program of post-separation insurance which allows service members to convert their SGLI coverage to renewable term insurance. All service members with full-time SGLI coverage are eligible for VGLI upon release from service.

How to get it?

Veterans leaving the service must elect to convert their SGLI coverage to VGLI.

- You must apply within one year and 120 days from discharge.
- Service members who submit their application within 120 days of discharge do not need to submit evidence of good health.
- Service members who apply after the 120 day period must submit evidence of good health.

Free Recording of Discharges

Under Texas State law, Local Government Code Sec. 0192.002, the County Clerk in each County is required to record, free of charge, the official discharge of each veteran who served in the U.S. Armed Forces. This free service is very important as it provides veterans with a ready source from which they can obtain a certified copy of their discharge whenever it is needed. It's the veteran's responsibility to have the DD214 or Discharge recorded. Please also note that if you do record your DD214 with the County Clerk, it then becomes a public record.

Contract Preferences

All state agencies, when purchasing goods, including agricultural goods, shall give preference to goods produced or offered by a Texas bidder. A Texas bidder that is owned by a service-disabled veteran who is a Texas resident shall be given a first preference and goods produced in this state or offered by other Texas bidders shall be given second preference if the cost to the state and quality are equal.

TCCVS AGENCY INFORMATION & SERVICES

Texas Military Department

The Texas Military Department (TMD) is the executive portion of the Texas Military and consists of all staff directorates and component headquarters exercising control of military forces, facilities, installations, activities and functions under the supervision of The Adjutant General. The Adjutant General is the governing officer, policy maker, head of the department and Commander of the Texas Military Forces. TMD is the state agency charged with administrative activities in support of the Texas Military Forces.

The Texas Military Forces consist of the Texas Army National Guard, Texas Air National Guard, the Texas State Guard, the Domestic Operations Task Force, and any other military force organized under state law. Through the Family Support Services Office, the TMD has a number of programs and partnerships with services available to Texas Service Members, Veterans, and families such as: Family Assistance, Transition Assistance, Mental Health & Counseling Services, Employment and Financial Assistance, Retirement Services, and TRICARE Services. <https://tmd.texas.gov/>

Health and Human Services Commission

The Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) mission is to maintain and improve the health and human services system in Texas and to administer its programs in accordance with the highest standards of customer service and accountability for the effective use of funds. HHSC oversees the operations of the health and human services system, provides administrative oversight of Texas health and human services programs, and provides direct administration of some programs. HHSC's Veterans Service Division initiative is responsible for reviewing programs and benefits available for Veterans and recommends ways to improve and better coordinate those services. The initiative will work with staff at all five health and human services agencies as well as other state agencies and community-based organizations that serve Veterans. <http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us>

The Health and Human Services Commission, Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) are a key point of access for person-centered long-term services and supports (LTSS) specialized information, referral, and assistance. ADRCs promote linkages to existing military and veteran services programs and benefits, as well as other local and state level LTSS. Programs and services available vary by region and may include: transportation, benefits and system navigation assistance, care coordination, benefits application assistance, and veteran-directed home and community-based services. The local ADRC may be contacted by calling 855-YES-ADRC (855-937-2372).

Department of State Health Services

Programs implemented by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) are based on recommendations included in the 2008 DSHS report Behavioral Health Services for Returning Veterans and Their Families: Service Gaps and Recommendations and a 2011 update. The programs use funds appropriated by the Legislature. The primary objective is to provide Peer-to-Peer support for servicemembers, Veterans, and family members by organizing activities to identify individuals who can benefit from support services provided by trained Veterans. The activities include one-on-one mentoring, and support group discussions. The aim is to develop trust relationships built on shared life experiences in developing skills and access to resources useful in adapting to post-traumatic stress and traumatic brain injuries. <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us>

Department of Aging and Disability Services

The Department of Aging and Disability Services, Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) are a key point of access for person-centered long-term services and supports (LTSS) specialized information, referral, and assistance. ADRCs promote linkages to existing military and veteran services programs and benefits, as well as other local and state level LTSS. Programs and services available vary by region and may include: transportation, benefits and system navigation assistance, care coordination, benefits application assistance, and veteran-directed home and community-based services. <http://www.dads.state.tx.us/>

Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services

The Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) is engaged in a memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs-Veterans Rehabilitation and Employment (VA-VRE) to expand employment and rehabilitation services to Veterans with disabilities in geographic areas beyond the reach of VA-VRE. DARS counselors work directly with VA employment counselors to address the unique needs in each of DARS five regions. DARS cultivates business partnerships with major employers to create employment opportunities for people with disabilities. One particular effort is the partnership with the second largest home improvement store chain designed specifically for eligible Veterans with disabilities. The program is being replicated statewide to serve more Veterans with disabilities. <http://www.dars.state.tx.us>

Department of Family and Protective Services

The Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) works with communities to protect children, the elderly, and people with disabilities from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. It also works to protect the health and safety of children in daycare, foster care and other types of 24-hour care. We do this through investigations, services and referrals, regulation, and prevention programs. <http://www.dfps.state.tx.us>

State Bar of Texas

The State Bar of Texas administers the Texas Lawyers for Texas Veterans program to develop and assist pro bono legal clinics throughout the state for military veterans who otherwise cannot afford or do not have access to the legal services they need. <http://www.texasbar.com>

Texas Workforce Commission

Although the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) provides employment assistance as well as education and training to the general public who are seeking employment. Along with specific federal and state statute to provide priority of service to Veterans, TWC has a long tradition of supporting Texas Veterans because we believe Veterans are equipped with the technical skills, education, professionalism, and leadership experience sought by Texas employers. The TWC Veterans program includes: <http://www.twc.state.tx.us>

- College Credit for Heroes:
- Texas Veterans Leadership Program
- State of Texas Soldier Employment Initiative
- Red, White, and You Veteran Job Fair
- Veterans Workforce Outreach Initiative
- Skills for Veterans
- Apprenticeship for Veterans
- Texas Wide Open for Veterans
- Operation Welcome Home
- Military Family Support Pilot Program

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board provides leadership and coordination for the Texas higher education system. Since being created by the Texas Legislature in 1965, the Board has worked to achieve excellence for the college education of Texas students. The Board meets four times a year. Meetings occur in Austin but are usually also broadcast on the Web.

<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/>

Texas Workforce Investment Council

The Texas Workforce Investment Council assists the Governor and the legislature with strategic planning for and evaluation of the Texas workforce system, which is comprised of eight state agencies, their local program providers, and over 20 diverse and dynamic programs. The Council assists with the coordination of determining employer workforce needs and satisfaction with programs and services. The Council's partner agencies, including TVC, gather data from employer customers at appropriate intervals to determine employer needs and satisfaction. TVC's efforts to determine and respond to employer needs, thereby enhancing employment opportunities for Veterans, was initiated under the previous system strategic plan and continues under the recently approved Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan FY 2016–FY 2023. TVC's work to gather information and data by surveying employer continues, and results demonstrate a high response rate and a very high satisfaction level among employers who used the agency's employment services. <http://governor.state.tx.us/twic>

Texas Department of Public Safety

The Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) proactively protects the citizens of Texas in an ever changing threat environment while always remaining faithful to the U.S. and State Constitution. DPS offers a designation of "VETERAN" on driver's licenses issued to Texas Veterans so they can easily prove their eligibility when applying for various benefits in addition to free and discounted licenses.

<http://www.txdps.state.tx.us>

as Department of Licensing and Regulation

Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) is committed to providing expedited services to Veterans and military spouses and is proud to be a member of the Texas Coordinating Council for Veterans Services.
[p://www.tdlr.texas.gov](http://www.tdlr.texas.gov)

TDLR provides expedited licensing for military spouses and veterans transitioning to civilian occupations regulated by TDLR.

Veterans are allowed to credit verified military experience, training, or education toward fulfilling licensing requirements. Currently, six TDLR programs have a corresponding MOS allowing for this credit.

TDLR license application fees are waived for veterans if the applicant's military service, training, or education substantially meets all of the requirements of the license.

Commission on Jail Standards

The Texas Commission on Jail Standards is the regulatory agency over Texas county jails. While the agency does not provide direct services to Veterans, the agency actively engages with sheriffs, county officials, and jail administrators about available resources for justice-involved Veterans.

Our activities include disseminating technical assistance memos to counties about Veterans' services found at the local, state, and federal level, writing articles on Veterans' resources in our agency newsletter, and inviting Veterans groups to speak during our agency presentations at training conferences.

As part of its regulatory requirements, the Commission mandates county jails utilize the Department of Veteran Affairs' Veteran Reentry Search Service (VRSS) to identify veterans. The VRSS provides real-time identification of veterans to county corrections officers. After justice-involved Veterans are identified, our goal is that counties can link Veterans to available services and resources.

<http://www.tcjs.state.tx.us>

Texas Commission on Law Enforcement

The Texas Commission on Law Enforcement has been committed for several years now to assist and expedite the ability of Veterans to re-enter the Texas workforce in the field of law enforcement. We have had in place since 2009 a process through which Veterans with military law enforcement experience can become Texas peace officers without having to participate in redundant training.

<http://www.tcole.texas.gov/>

Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs

The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) is the state agency responsible for promoting and preserving affordable home ownership, financing the development of affordable rental housing, ensuring long-term stability and habitability of housing for low-income households, supporting community and energy assistance programs, and providing housing activities in the colonias. TDHCA is also responsible for the regulation of the state's manufactured housing industry. <http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us>

Texas Department of Transportation

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is organized by administrative districts, divisions and offices. Four regional support centers provide operational and project delivery support for the agency's 25 geographical districts. TxDOT's workforce is made up of engineers, administrators, financial experts, designers, architects, sign makers, accountants, purchasers, maintenance workers, travel counselors and many other professions. All of our employees work together to realize the TxDOT mission: providing safe and reliable transportation solutions for Texas. TxDOT provides funding and assistance for transportation services and programs that can be used to serve and support Veterans. <http://www.txdot.gov>

Department of Motor Vehicles

The Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (TxDMV) offers a number of license plates specifically for military Veterans and military medal honorees at no fee and/or reduced fee. There are three categories of military license plates: Meritorious Service, Recognition Award, and Military Service.

Meritorious Service category license plates are issued at no fee (plate or registration) for the first set. Recognition Award category license plates require the payment of a \$3 plate fee; however, there is no requirement for the payment of annual registration fees. Military Service category license plates require the payment of the annual registration fee; however, there no plate fee. This applies to first and additional sets. <http://www.txdmv.gov>

Texas Department of Criminal Justice

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) manages offenders in state prisons, state jails and private correctional facilities that contract with TDCJ. TDCJ honors and supports Veterans by granting them employment preferences, and fully recognizes, honors, and enforces the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, a law which protects the civilian job rights and benefits of United States military service personnel.

TDCJ has a history of successful recruiting at military bases and continues to actively recruit personnel who are about to be honorably discharged. Military Veterans and staff have a great number of skills and quality training, along with experience handling a variety of responsibilities. <http://www.tdcj.state.tx.us>

Office of Public Utility Counsel The Office of Public Utility Counsel (OPUC) was created in 1983 in response to legislative and consumer groups concerns that residential and small commercial utility consumers were not adequately represented in utility proceedings. OPUC is charged with representing residential and small commercial consumers, as a class, in proceedings affecting utility rates and services. OPUC represents consumers' interests before the Public Utility Commission (PUC), the Texas Reliability Entity, the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT), and state and federal courts. The agency also provides information to servicemembers, veterans and their families and provides presentations, upon request, to military groups and organizations representing servicemembers and their families. <http://www.opuc.texas.gov>

TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION (TVC) OFFICE LOCATIONS

VC Claims Representation & Counseling Office Locations

NORTHWEST DISTRICT

VA Regional Office

701 Clay Ave., Waco, TX 76799-0001

(Phone) 254-299-9950; (FAX) 254-299-9910

Email: WACO@tvc.texas.gov

NORTHEAST DISTRICT

Central Texas Veterans Health Care System

1901 Veterans Memorial Dr., Bldg. 208, Rm 119

Temple, TX 76504-7451

(Phone) 254-743-0549; (FAX) 254-743-1699

SOUTHWEST DISTRICT

Frank M. Tejada VA Outpatient Clinic

5788 Eckhert Rd, Rm. 2A122, San Antonio, TX 78240-3900

(Phone) 210-699-5308

SOUTHEAST DISTRICT

VA Regional Office

6900 Almeda Rd., Houston, TX 77030-4200

(Phone) 713-383-2756; (FAX) 713-383-2746

Email: HOUSTON@tvc.texas.gov

AUSTIN OFFICE

Austin VA Regional Clinic

7901 Metropolis Dr. Rm. 1-G113, Austin, TX 78744

(Phone) 512/ 823-4080; (FAX) 512/ 823-4466

TVC Veterans Education Program Office

AUSTIN HEADQUARTERS
1700 N. Congress, Ste. 800, P.O. Box 12277
Austin, TX 78711-2277

Phone: 512-463-3517
512-463-8128
512-463-6696

DALLAS REGION

Phone: 972-768-0442

HOUSTON REGION

Phone: 281-229-3175

SAN ANTONIO REGION

Phone: 210-557-3606

SOUTH TEXAS REGION

Phone: 361-443-1262

TVC Hazlewood Benefit Program

Phone: 512-463-8189
512-463-6834

Email: charles.bryant@tvc.texas.gov
dwina.bridgemohan@tvc.texas.gov

TVC Fund for Veterans' Assistance

AUSTIN HEADQUARTERS

Phone: 512-463-1157

Email: grants@tvc.texas.gov

www.tvc.texas.gov/Fund-for-Veterans-Assistance.aspx

TVC Women Veterans Program

AUSTIN HEADQUARTERS

Phone: 512-463-2333

Email: texaswomenvets@tvc.texas.gov

www.tvc.texas.gov/Women-Veterans.aspx

TVC Veteran Entrepreneur Program

AUSTIN HEADQUARTERS

Phone: 512-463-5173

Email: vep@tvc.texas.gov

www.tvc.state.tx.us/Entrepreneur-Program.aspx

TVC Veterans Mental Health Program

AUSTIN HEADQUARTERS

Phone: 512-463-6091

Email: info@tvc.texas.gov

TVC Health Care Advocacy Program Office Locations

AMARILLO REGION

Thomas E. Creek VA Medical Center

6010 Amarillo Blvd. West, Amarillo, TX 79106

(Phone) 806/355-9703; (FAX) 800/252-8387

AUSTIN REGION

Austin VA Outpatient Clinic

7901 Metropolis Dr., Rm 1-G113 Austin, TX 78744

(Phone) 512/ 823-4080; (FAX) 512/ 823-4466

BIG SPRING REGION

George H. O'Brian, Jr. VA Medical Center

300 Veterans Blvd., Room 147B, Big Spring, TX 79720

(Phone) 432-263-7361, ext. 5372

CORPUS CHRISTI REGION

Corpus Christi VA Specialty OPC

205 S. Enterprise Pkwy., Corpus Christi, TX 78405-4118

(Phone) 361-939-6669, ext. 62757 (FAX) 361-939-6511

DALLAS REGION

Dallas VA Medical Center

4500 S. Lancaster Rd., Bldg. 2, Rm 1C 423-A-G, Dallas, TX 75216-7167

(Phone) 214-857-0454; (FAX) 214-857-0443

EL PASO REGION

VA Health Care Center
5001 N. Piedras, Rm. B-209-210, El Paso, TX 79930-4211
(Phone) 915-564-7852 / 800-672-3782, ext. 7852; (FAX) 915-564-7843

FORT WORTH REGION

Fort Worth VA Outpatient Clinic
2201 S.E. Loop 820, Fort Worth, TX 76119-5863
(Phone) 817-730-0077; (FAX) 817-882-6586

HOUSTON REGION

Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center
2002 Holcombe Blvd., Rm. 2A-112, Houston, TX 77566-5789
(Phone) 713-791-1414, ext. 23728 / 800-553-2278, ext. 7785

McALLEN REGION

McAllen VA Outpatient Clinic
901 E. Hackberry Ave, Rm. 400E, McAllen, TX 78503-1991
(Phone) 956-618-7100, ext. 67193

TEMPLE REGION

Central Texas Veterans Health Care System Olin E. Teague Veterans' Center
1901 Veterans Memorial Dr, Bldg. 2048, Rm. 1J05, Temple, TX 76504
(Phone) 254-899-7726 / 800-423-2111, ext. 57726; (FAX) 254-743-1699

TYLER REGION

Tyler VA CBOC Specialty Clinic
3414 Golden Rd., Tyler, TX 75701-8336
(Phone) 903-266-5900, ext. 33063 or 33906; (FAX) 903-590-3065

SAN ANTONIO REGION

Audie L. Murphy Memorial VAMC
7400 Merton Minter Dr., Ste. 105, San Antonio, TX 78229-5789
(Phone) 210-617-5300, ext. 15901; (FAX) 210-949-3437

TVC Employment Program Office Locations

WEST TEXAS REGION

500 Chestnut St., Suite 1200
Abilene, TX 79602
(Phone) 325-795-4333

GULF COAST REGION

3555 Timmons Ln. 4th Floor
Houston, TX 77027
(Phone) 713-993-2416

CENTRAL TEXAS REGION

300 Cheyenne Dr.
Killeen, TX 76542
(Phone) 254-200-2212

SOUTH TEXAS REGION

183 S. IH 35
New Braunfels, TX 78130
(Phone) 830-629-2010 ext. 2607

NORTH TEXAS REGION

500 N. Akard, Suite 3030
Dallas, TX 75201
(Phone) 214-290-1009

STATE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Texas Veterans Commission (TVC)

<http://www.tvc.texas.gov>

Texas Veterans Land Board (VLB)

<http://www.glo.texas.gov/vlb>

Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)

<http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us>

The State Bar of Texas

<http://www.texasbar.com>

The Texas Workforce Commission

<http://www.twc.state.tx.us>

Texas Military Department

The Texas Military Forces consist of the Texas Army National Guard, Texas Air National Guard, the Texas State Guard, the Domestic Operations Task Force, and any other military force organized under state law. <https://tmd.texas.gov/>

Department of State Health Services

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us>

Department of Aging and Disability Services

The local ADRC may be contacted by calling 855-YES-ADRC (855-937-2372).

<http://www.dads.state.tx.us/>

Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)

<http://www.dars.state.tx.us>

Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)

<http://www.dfps.state.tx.us>

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us>

Texas Workforce Investment Council

<http://governor.state.tx.us/twic>

Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation

<http://www.tdlr.texas.gov>

Texas Commission on Jail Standards

<http://www.fcjs.state.tx.us>

Texas Department of Public Safety

<http://www.dps.state.tx.us>

Texas Commission on Law Enforcement

<http://www.tcole.texas.gov>

Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs

<http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us>

Texas Department of Transportation

<http://www.txdot.gov>

Texas Department of Motor Vehicles

<http://www.txdmv.gov>

Texas Department of Criminal Justice

<http://www.tdcj.state.tx.us>

Office of Public Utility Counsel

<http://www.opuc.texas.gov>

Texas Veterans Mobile App

The Texas Veterans Mobile App gives Texas Veterans quick access to the Veterans Crisis Line, the Hotline for Women Veterans, the Military Veteran Peer Network, and the Texas Veterans Portal. The app, which can be downloaded from both Google Play and the App Store, works on most iPhones and Android mobile phones.

Texas Online: Texas Veterans Portal

The Texas Veterans Portal provides information from federal and state agencies in a comprehensive collection of links about Veteran's benefit information. The website contains information to assist you and your family in buying a home or land, receiving education benefits, finding a job, health care resources and more. veterans.portal.texas.gov

MILITARY INSTALLATIONS IN TEXAS

Dyess AFB

Arnold Boulevard and S. 7th., Dyess AFB, TX 79607

Fort Bliss

Buffalo Soldier Building, 5400 Buffalo Soldier, Fort Bliss, TX 79916

Fort Hood

T.J. Mills Boulevard & Battalion, Bldg 18010, 3rd Floor - Rm A308,
Ft. Hood, TX 76544

Goodfellow AFB

3005 Kearney Blvd., GAFB, TX 76908-4304

Joint Base San Antonio (Lackland Randolph Sam Houston)

Hwy 90 and SW Military Rd., Lackland AFB, TX 78236-5113

Laughlin AFB

548 Laughlin Dr, Bldg. 468, Laughlin AFB, TX 78843

Naval Air Station Corpus Christi

10651 E St., Bldg. H-100 5th Deck, Corpus Christi, TX 78419-5021

Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth

1510 Chenault Ave., NAS JRB Ft. Worth, Ft. Worth, TX 76127-1021

Naval Air Station Kingsville

554 McCain St., Bldg. 2740, NAS Kingsville, Kingsville, TX 78363

Red River Army Depot

100 James Carlow Dr., Red River Army Depot, Texarkana, TX 75507

Sheppard AFB

210 Missile Rd., Sheppard AFB, TX 76311-2540



**TEXAS VETERANS
COMMISSION**

2018

Texas Veterans Commission
P.O. Box 12277
Austin, Texas 78711-2277
(512) 463-6564

Federal & State of Texas
BURIAL BENEFITS
for Veterans, Dependents & Survivors



Compiled by the
**TEXAS VETERANS
COMMISSION**

Rev. June 2017

P.O. Box 12277 Austin, Texas 78711-2277
512/ 463-6564; (FAX) 512/463-0571
www.tvc.texas.gov info@tvc.texas.gov



FOREWORD

Federal & State of Texas
BURIAL BENEFITS
for Veterans, Dependents & Survivors

The Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) is aware that one of the most difficult responsibilities a survivor faces after the death of a veteran is completing the numerous Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) forms for survivor and/or burial benefits. The TVC can be a source of assistance during this time.

To help ease this burden and to ensure that you have the details of where and how to get assistance, this brochure outlines some of the basic information you will need at this time.

Provided inside the back cover of this booklet is list of the TVC Claims Representation & Counseling Headquarters and District Offices along with a link to our website for detailed contact information for TVC claims offices and the Veterans County Service Offices. Please contact them for assistance in filing a claim for survivor and/or burial benefits or any other veterans' benefits. You may call the Veterans HOTLINE at **1-800-252-VETS (8387)** for the location and phone number or visit our website at www.tvc.texas.gov.

"A Sacred Trust: The Story of the National Cemetery Administration"

The National Cemetery honors veterans with a final resting place and lasting memorials that commemorate their service to our nation.

This is the inspiring story of the National Cemetery Administration and its service to our nation's veterans. Through personal interviews with dedicated NCA representatives, viewers learn of the many benefits available to them and their families at our nation's veterans' cemeteries. Through interviews with family members, viewers experience personal stories of the honorable and dignified process of their veteran's burial – from application to interment and beyond. Stirring photography accompanies informative narration as viewers gain familiarity with the National Cemetery Administration and its efforts to provide burial benefits to those who gave so much for their country. To the National Cemetery Administration, this is more than a mission. It is - "A Sacred Trust." Produced by the Employee Education System for the National Cemetery Administration, you can view this online at www.cem.va.gov/sacred.asp.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Eligibility for Federal Burial Benefits	1
Reimbursement of Burial Expenses	2
Military Funeral Honors	3
VA Headstones and Markers	3
Presidential Memorial Certificates	12
Burial Flags	13
Burial in VA National Cemeteries	14
Veterans' Cemeteries Administered by Other Agencies	22
Texas State Veterans' Cemetery Program	22
Students Sounding "TAPS" at Military Funerals	25
Additional Information	26

Federal & State of Texas
BURIAL BENEFITS
for Veterans, Dependents & Survivors

**Eligibility for
Federal Burial Benefits**

Veterans discharged from active duty under conditions other than dishonorable and service members who die while on active duty, as well as spouses and dependent children of veterans and active duty service members may, be eligible for U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) burial and memorial benefits. The veteran does not have to pre-decease a spouse or dependent child for them to be eligible. See VA Headstone and Markers on page 2 and Burial in VA National Cemeteries on page 10 for information pertaining to spouses, dependent children and active duty service persons.

With certain exceptions, active duty service beginning after September 7, 1980, as an enlisted person, and after October 16, 1981, as an officer, must be for a minimum of 24 consecutive months or the full period of active duty (as in the case of reservists or National Guard members called to active duty for a limited duration). Eligibility is not established by active duty for training in the Reserves or National Guard. Generally, the minimum 24-month service requirements apply to entitlement to headstones and markers, burial in a National Cemetery and a Presidential Memorial Certificate.

Burial and memorial benefits are available for Filipino veterans of World War II who have been receiving service-connected disability compensation, or are eligible for non service-connected disability pension (PL 106-419, Section 332). American Merchant Marines in oceangoing service during the period of armed conflict, December 7, 1941 to December 31, 1946, who meet general eligibility criteria are entitled to burial and memorial benefits.

Under Section 2411 of Title 38 of the United States Code, certain otherwise eligible individuals found to have committed federal or state

capital crimes are barred from burial or memorialization in a VA National Cemetery, and from receipt of government furnished headstones, markers, burial flags and Presidential Memorial Certificates.

Reimbursement of Burial Expenses

VA will pay a burial allowance up to \$2,000 if the veteran's death is service-connected. In some instances, VA also will pay the cost of transporting the remains of a service-disabled veteran to the national cemetery nearest the home of the deceased that has available grave sites. In such cases, the person who bore the veteran's burial expenses may claim reimbursement from VA. There is no time limit for filing reimbursement claims in service-connected death cases.

VA will pay a \$300 burial and funeral expense allowance for veterans who, at time of death, were entitled to receive pension or compensation or would have been entitled to compensation but for receipt of military retirement pay. Eligibility also may be established when death occurs in a VA facility, a nursing home under VA contract or a state veterans nursing home. Additional costs of transportation of the remains may be paid. In non service-connected death cases, claims must be filed within two years after permanent burial or cremation.

VA will pay up to \$749 plot allowance when a veteran is not buried in a cemetery that is under U.S. government jurisdiction under the following circumstances:

- The veteran was discharged from active duty because of disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty; or
- The veteran was in receipt of compensation or pension or would have been except for receiving military retired pay;
- The veteran died in a VA facility.

The \$749 plot allowance may be paid to the state if a veteran is buried without charge for the cost of a plot or interment in a state-owned

cemetery reserved solely for veteran burials. Burial expenses paid by the deceased's employer or a state agency will not be reimbursed.

Military

Funeral Honors

Upon request, the Department of Defense (DoD) will provide military funeral honors consisting of folding and presentation of the United States flag and the sounding of "Taps." A funeral honors detail consists of two or more uniformed members of the armed forces, with a least one member from the deceased's branch of service.

Family members should inform their funeral directors if they want military honors. DoD maintains a toll-free number, 1-877-MILHONR (1-877-645-4667) for use by funeral directors only to request honors. VA can help arrange honors for burials at VA national cemeteries. Veterans' service organizations or volunteer groups may help provide honors. For more information, visit www.dmdc.osd.mil/mfh/.

VA Headstones & Markers

Eligibility: The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) 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. VA may also furnish a headstone or marker for graves marked with a private headstone or marker, for veterans who died on or after November 1, 1990.

Any deceased veteran discharged under conditions other than dishonorable and any member of the Armed Forces of the United States who dies on active duty may be eligible. Service after September 7, 1980 must be for a minimum of 24 months' continuous active duty or be completed under special circumstances (e.g., death on active duty). Persons who have only limited active duty service for training while in the National Guard or Reserves are not eligible unless there are special circumstances (e.g., death while on active duty or as a result of training). Reservists and National Guard members who, at the time of death, were entitled to retired pay, or would have been entitled, but for being

under the age of 60 are eligible. Reservists called to active duty other than training and National Guard members who Federalized and who serve for the period are called are eligible. Service prior to World War I require detailed documentation (e.g., muster rolls, extracts from State files, military or State organization where served, pension or land warrant, etc.).

Spouses and dependents are not eligible for a Government-furnished headstone or marker unless they are buried in a national, state veterans', or military post/base cemetery. For further details, please visit: www.cem.va.gov/cem/hmm/eligibility.asp.

Medallion: The Department of Veterans Affairs provides a medallion, by request, to be affixed to an existing, privately purchased headstone or marker to signify the deceased's status as a veteran.

This device is furnished in lieu of a traditional Government headstone or grave marker for those veterans who served on or after April 6, 1917 and whose grave in a private cemetery is marked with a privately purchased headstone or marker.

Sizes: The medallion is available in three sizes: Large (6-3/8" W x 4-3/4"H x 1/2" D), Medium (3-3/4" W x 2-7/8"H x 1/4"D) and Small (2" W x 1-1/2"H x 1/3" D). Each medallion is inscribed with the word "VETERAN" across the top and the branch of service at the bottom.

Important: This benefit is only applicable if the grave is marked with a privately purchased headstone or marker. In these instances, eligible veterans are entitled to either a traditional Government-furnished headstone or marker, or the new medallion, but not both. Spouses and dependents are not eligible for a medallion.



Large



Medium



Small

Who Can Apply for a Medallion?

Federal regulation defines “applicant” as a member of the decedent’s family, which includes the decedent’s spouse or individual who was in a legal union as defined in 38 CFR 3.1702(b)(1)(ii) with the decedent; a child, parent, or sibling of the decedent, whether biological, adopted, or step relation; and any lineal or collateral descendant of the decedent.

For family members of eligible veterans interested in submitting a claim for the medallion, instructions on how to apply for a medallion are available. Please use: VA Form 40-1330M, Claim for Government Medallion for Placement in a Private Cemetery.

How to Submit a Claim: FAX claims and supporting documents to:
1-800-455-7143.

Important: If faxing more than one claim - fax each claim package (claim plus supporting documents) individually (disconnect the call and redial for each submission).

Mail claims to:

Memorial Programs Service (41B)
Department of Veterans Affairs
5109 Russell Road
Quantico, VA 22134-3903

Once a claim for a medallion is received and approved, VA will mail the medallion along with a kit that will allow the family or the staff of a private cemetery to affix the device to a headstone, grave marker, mausoleum or columbarium niche cover. For the form, visit www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-1330M.pdf.

Upright Types: These headstones are 42 inches long, 13 inches wide and 4 inches thick. Weight is approximately 230 pounds. Variations may occur in stone color, and the marble may contain light to moderate veining.



Upright Marble or Granite

Flat Types: The flat bronze grave marker is 24 inches long, 12 inches wide, with 3/4-inch rise. Weight is approximately 18 pounds. Anchor bolts, nuts and washers for fastening to a base are furnished with the marker. The government does not furnish a base. The flat granite and flat marble grave marker is 24 inches long, 12 inches wide, and 4 inches thick. Weight is approximately 130 pounds. Variations may occur in stone color and the marble may contain light to moderate veining.



Flat-Bronze



Flat Marble or Granite

Bronze Niche: This niche marker is 8 1/2 inches long, 5 1/2 inches wide, with 7/16-inch rise. Weight is approximately 3 pounds; mounting bolts and washers are furnished with the marker.



Bronze Niche

Memorial Headstones & Markers: VA provides memorial headstones and markers, bearing the inscription “In Memory Of” as the first line, to memorialize those whose remains were not recovered or identified, were buried at sea, donated to science or cremated and scattered. Eligibility is the same as for regular headstones and markers. There is no fee when the “In Memory Of” marker is placed in a national cemetery. VA will not reimburse any fees associated with placement in another cemetery.

Memorial headstones and markers may also be furnished in national, military post/base or state veterans’ cemeteries to eligible spouses whose remains are unavailable for interment, whether or not they predecease the eligible veteran. Memorial headstones and markers for spouses and other dependents are not available for placement in private cemeteries.

The style chosen must be permitted by the officials in charge of the private cemetery where it will be placed. For further details, please visit: www.cem.va.gov/cem/hmm/index.asp.

Pre-World War I Era Headstones & Markers: Civil War Union Soldiers and Spanish-American War. There are specific styles of upright marble headstones to mark the graves of Civil War Union soldiers and Spanish-American War dead. These historical styles were reintroduced recently and are inscribed in raised lettering inside a recessed shield. These recessed-shield headstones are available in three marble (X) sizes or one granite (Y) size. “A” is 12” wide, 3” thick, and 42” high, “B” is 13” wide, 3” thick and 42” high, and “C” is 10” wide, 3” thick and 39” high. To

request a historical upright marble headstone, check the Upright Marble in block 11 and write “XA”, “XB”, or “XC” above it or to request the granite recessed-shield headstone, check the Upright Granite in block 11 and write “YA” above it.

Inscriptions Civil War Union Soldiers and Spanish-American War

The inscription on the recessed-shield headstone is limited. For Civil War Union and Spanish American War, a shield is inscribed which encompasses the arched name and abbreviated military organization. Because of the special design and historical uniform significance, no emblem of belief or additional inscription may be inscribed. The dates of birth and death are inscribed below the shield.

Confederate War

A special style is also available to mark the graves of Confederate war dead. These special styles are available in upright marble or granite. To request this special style, select the appropriate box in block 11 for upright marble (U) or upright granite (V) and write the words “special style - confederate” in block 11.

Inscriptions for Confederate War

The inscription on the special style for Civil War Confederate is also limited. The Southern Cross of Honor is automatically inscribed at the top. The name is arched, followed by abbreviated military organization and dates of birth and death. No additional items can be inscribed. If a flat marker is desired for a Confederate soldier, the Southern Cross of Honor can be inscribed if requested, or any of the other approved emblems may be inscribed if requested.

For periods of war other than the Civil War or Spanish American War, traditional styles of headstones and markers can also be requested. Traditional styles include upright marble or granite headstones and flat bronze, granite, or marble markers.

Proof of military service prior to World War I requires detailed primary documentation, such as Compiled Military Service Records (CMSR), extracts from official State files, Federal pension documents or land warrants, to be considered for a Government-furnished headstone or marker. Copies of CMSRs and Federal pension records are available through National

Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Washington, D.C. If the applicant is unable to visit NARA, copies of these documents can be ordered via telephone, mail and Internet. CMSRs can be ordered from NARA by the applicant for a fee of \$25; the documentation usually ships in 60-90 days.

For more detailed information regarding markers and headstones for pre-World War I era, please visit www.cem.va.gov/cem/hmm/pre_WWI_era.asp or contact VA toll-free at 1-800-697-6947 or 615-736 2841, Ext. 104 between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday (ET). Telephone customer service representatives do not have access to information about other VA benefits. To inquire about other VA benefits, call 1-800-827-1000. Inscriptions for a veteran's spouse or dependent are provided at no expense when they are buried in a national, military post or a state veterans' cemetery.

Emblems of Belief: Headstones and markers also may be inscribed with an approved "emblem of belief" such as a cross or Star of David. A listing of the emblems that may be inscribed is on the back of the application form and online at www.cem.va.gov/cem/hmm/emblems.asp.

How to Order a Government Headstone or Marker: Headstone, Marker and Medallion Application Process The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 38.632 "Headstone and Marker Application Process" became effective on July 1, 2009. This regulation describes the processes required to apply for a Government headstone and marker, as well as request a new emblem of belief be added to the list of emblems available for inscription on headstones and markers.

Who Can Apply for a Headstone or Marker? Under 38 CFR 38.600(a) (1) only the following individuals may apply for a burial headstone or marker:

1. A decedent's family member;
2. A personal representative;
3. A representative of a Congressionally-chartered Veterans' Service Organization;

4. An employee of a state or local government whose official responsibilities include serving veterans;
5. Any individual who is responsible, under the laws of a state or locality, for the disposition of unclaimed remains or matters related to the decedent's interment or memorialization; or
6. any individual, if the dates of service of the veteran ended prior to April 6, 1917.

Note: For a memorial headstones and markers that commemorate the memory of an eligible individual, the applicant must be a member of the decedent's family, 38 CFR 38.600(a)(2).

Burial in a Private Cemetery

For a Government-furnished burial or memorial headstone or marker to be placed in a private cemetery, a VA Form 40-1330, Claim for Standard Government Headstone or Marker, must be submitted by an individual as defined above. To expedite the processing of the claim, please submit the veteran's military discharge documents and death certificate. Do not send original documents, as they will not be returned.

Note: VA is not authorized to furnish a Government headstone or marker for dependents buried in a private cemetery

Ordering a Headstone or Marker in National, Post, or State Veterans' Cemetery

When burial or memorialization is in a national, post, or state veterans' cemetery, a headstone or marker will be ordered by the cemetery officials based on inscription information provided by the next of kin.

Usually, funeral directors will obtain headstones or markers as part of their services. Applications and additional information may be obtained at any VA national cemetery or regional office or by calling **1-800-827-1000**. This form, **VA Form 40-1330**, is also available on VA's website at www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-1330M.pdf, however, it cannot be submitted electronically. Completed applications may be faxed toll-free to **1-800-455-7143** or mailed to:

**Memorial Programs Service (41B)
Department of Veterans Affairs
5109 Russell Road
Quantico, VA 22134-3903**

Checking Your Headstone or Marker Order Status: To obtain the status of headstones or markers ordered for national or state cemeteries, please contact the cemetery directly.

To obtain the status of headstones or markers ordered for private cemeteries, please use the following instructions: If more than 30 days have passed since your claim was submitted to the VA in Washington, D.C. by you, or someone assisting you, please call our Applicant Assistance Unit to verify we are in receipt of your claim.

If more than 60 days have passed since submitting your claim and the grave is still not marked, you should contact the cemetery, funeral home, or other party responsible for accepting delivery of the headstone, marker or medallion to see if they have received it. If they have not received it, you may call our Applicant Assistance Unit between the hours of **8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. (ET), Monday through Friday, at 1-800-697-6947**. You may also click on the "Contact Us" link to check the status of your order at www.cem.va.gov/cem/hmm/index.asp.

Note: The above telephone number is for questions related to headstones, markers and medallions only ordered for private cemeteries.

Shipping Government Headstones and Markers: Government-furnished headstones and markers are shipped free of charge to the cemetery or nearest local civilian monument business.

Setting Government Headstones and Markers: Cemetery staff in national, military post and military base cemeteries is responsible for setting the headstone or marker at no cost to the applicant. Some state veterans' cemeteries may charge the applicant a nominal fee for setting a Government-furnished headstone or marker.

Arrangements for setting a Government-furnished headstone or marker in a private cemetery are the applicant's responsibility and all placement costs are at private expense. For further details, please visit: www.cem.va.gov/cem/hmm/index.asp.

Replacement of Headstones and Markers: Headstones and markers previously furnished by the Government may be replaced at Government expense if badly deteriorated, illegible, stolen or vandalized. We may also replace the new (or modern) headstone or marker if the inscription is incorrect, if it was damaged during shipping, or if the material or workmanship does not meet contract specifications. In cases where the primary-source documentation indicates that it is "more likely than not" that an existing inscription (e.g., name, date of birth, date of death, branch of service, etc.) on a historic headstone or marker (those greater than 50 years of age) is inaccurate, we will correct the inscription error and replace the marker "in kind," that is, with one that has the same type, style, and inscription elements that were used or available at the time of the decedent's death.

If a Government headstone or marker in a private cemetery is damaged by cemetery personnel, the cemetery should pay all replacement costs.

Marble and granite headstones or markers that are permanently removed from a grave must be destroyed, ensuring that the inscription is no longer legible. Bronze markers must be returned to the contractor.

For guidance on obtaining a replacement headstone or marker, you may call the Memorial Products Service Applicant Assistance Unit between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. (ET), Monday through Friday, at the toll-free number below: 1-800-697-6947. For further details, please visit: www.cem.va.gov/cem/hmm/replacements.asp.

Presidential Memorial Certificates

A Presidential Memorial Certificate (PMC) is an engraved paper certificate, signed by the current President, to honor the memory of honorably discharged deceased veterans. Certificates are issued upon request to recognize the military service of honorably discharged

deceased veterans. Next of kin, other relatives and friends may request the certificate(s) by completing **Form 40-0247, Presidential Memorial Certificate Request**, and providing a copy (originals cannot be returned) of the deceased veteran's discharge document and death certificate. The form is available online at www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-0247.pdf. Requests can be made in person at any VA regional office, by toll-free fax to **1-800-455-7143** or by mail to:

Presidential Memorial Certificates (41A1C)
Department of Veterans Affairs
5109 Russell Rd., Quantico, VA 22134-3903

If you do not receive your PMC request within (16) weeks, please call **1-202-565-4964** or email pmc@va.gov to find out the status of your request. Please do not send a second application unless requested to do so. A sample certificate and additional information can be found on the Internet at www.cem.va.gov/cem/pmc.asp.

Burial Flags

A United States flag is provided, at no cost, to drape the casket or accompany the urn of a deceased veteran who served honorably in the U.S. Armed Forces. It is furnished to honor the memory of a veteran's military service to his or her country. VA will furnish a burial flag for memorialization for each listed below unless dishonorably discharged:

- Veteran who served during wartime
- Veteran who died on active duty after May 27, 1941
- Veteran who served after January 31, 1955
- Peacetime veteran who was discharged or released before June 27, 1950
- Certain persons who served in the organized military forces of the Commonwealth of the Philippines while in service of the U.S. Armed Forces and who died on or after April 25, 1951
- Certain former members of the Selected Reserves

Generally, the flag is given to the next-of-kin, as a keepsake, after its use during the funeral service. When there is no next-of-kin, VA will furnish the flag to a friend making request for it. For those VA national cemeteries with an Avenue of Flags, families of veterans buried in these national cemeteries may donate the burial flags of their loved ones to be flown on patriotic holidays.

To apply, complete VA Form 21-2008, Application for United States Flag for Burial Purposes. Flag can be obtained at any VA regional office or U.S. Post Office. Generally, the funeral director will help you obtain the flag.

Burial in VA National Cemeteries

Persons eligible for burial in a VA National Cemetery: The National Cemetery Scheduling Office the primary responsibility for verifying eligibility for burial in VA national cemeteries. A determination of eligibility is usually made in response to a request for burial in a VA national cemetery. VA Regional Offices will also assist in determining eligibility for burial in a VA national cemetery. The toll-free number for the nearest VA Regional Office is 1-800-827-1000.

A. Veterans and Members of the Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard)

- (1) Any member of the Armed Forces of the United States who dies on active duty.
- (2) Any veteran who was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable. With certain exceptions, service beginning after September 7, 1980, as an enlisted person, and service after October 16, 1981, as an officer, must be for a minimum of 24 continuous months or the full period for which the person was called to active duty (as in the case of a Reservist called to active duty for a limited duration). Undesirable, bad conduct, and any other type of discharge other than honorable may or may not qualify the individual for veterans' benefits, depending upon a determination made by a VA Regional Office. Cases presenting multiple discharges of varying character are also referred for adjudication to a VA Regional Office.

- (3) Any citizen of the United States who, during any war in which the United States has or may be engaged, served in the Armed Forces of any Government allied with the United States during that war, whose last active service was terminated honorably by death or otherwise, and who was a citizen of the United States at the time of entry into such service and at the time of death.

Members of Reserve Components and Reserve Officers' Training Corps

- (1) Reservists and National Guard members who, at time of death, were entitled to retired pay under Chapter 1223, Title 10, United States Code, or would have been entitled, but for being under the age of 60. Specific categories of individuals eligible for retired pay are delineated in section 12731 of Chapter 1223, Title 10, United States Code.
- (2) Members of reserve components, and members of the Army National Guard or the Air National Guard, who die while hospitalized or undergoing treatment at the expense of the United States for injury or disease contracted or incurred under honorable conditions while performing active duty for training or inactive duty training, or undergoing such hospitalization or treatment.
- (3) Members of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps of the Army, Navy, or Air Force who die under honorable conditions while attending an authorized training camp or on an authorized cruise, while performing authorized travel to or from that camp or cruise, or while hospitalized or undergoing treatment at the expense of the United States for injury or disease contracted or incurred under honorable conditions while engaged in one of those activities.
- (4) Members of reserve components who, during a period of active duty for training, were disabled or died from a disease or injury incurred or aggravated in line of duty or, during a period of inactive duty training, were disabled or died from an injury or certain cardiovascular disorders incurred or aggravated in line of duty.
- (5) Members of reserve and Guard components who have met minimum active duty service requirements, as applicable by law, and who were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable are also eligible provided they were called to active duty and served the full term of service.

C. Commissioned Officers, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

- (1) A Commissioned Officer of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (formerly titled the Coast and Geodetic Survey and the Environmental Science Services Administration) with full-time duty on or after July 29, 1945.
- (2) A Commissioned Officer who served before July 29, 1945; and,
 - (a) Was assigned to an area of immediate military hazard as determined by the Secretary of Defense while in time of war, or in a Presidentially declared national emergency; or,
 - (b) Served in the Philippine Islands on December 7, 1941, and continuously in such islands thereafter.

D. Public Health Service

- (1) A Commissioned Officer of the Regular or Reserve Corps of the Public Health Service who served on full-time duty on or after July 29, 1945. If the service of the particular Public Health Service Officer falls within the meaning of active duty for training, as defined in section 101(22), Title 38, United States Code, he or she must have been disabled or died from a disease or injury incurred or aggravated in the line of duty.
- (2) A Commissioned Officer of the Regular or Reserve Corps of the Public Health Service who performed full-time duty prior to July 29, 1945:
 - (a) In time of war;
 - (b) On detail for duty with the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard; or
 - (c) While the Service was part of the military forces of the United States pursuant to Executive Order of the President.
- (3) A Commissioned Officer serving on inactive duty training as defined in Section 101(23), Title 38, United States Code, whose death resulted from an injury incurred or aggravated in the line of duty.

E. World War II Merchant Mariners

- (1) United States Merchant Mariners with oceangoing service during the period of armed conflict, December 7, 1941, to December 31,

1946. Prior to the enactment of Public Law 105-368, United States Merchant Mariners with oceangoing service during the period of armed conflict of December 7, 1941, to August 15, 1945, were eligible. With enactment of Public Law 105-368, the service period is extended to December 31, 1946, for those dying on or after November 11, 1998. A DD-214 documenting this service may be obtained by submitting an application to Commandant (G-MVP-6), United States Coast Guard, 2100 2nd Street, SW, Washington, DC 20593. Notwithstanding, the Mariner's death must have occurred on or after the enactment of Public Law 105-368.

- (2) United States Merchant Mariners who served on blockships in support of Operation Mulberry during World War II.

F. The Philippine Armed Forces

- (1) Any Philippine veteran who was a citizen of the United States or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the United States at the time of their death; and resided in the United States at the time of their death; and,
 - (a) Was a person who served before July 1, 1946, in the organized military forces of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Philippines, while such forces were in the service of the Armed Forces of the United States pursuant to the military order of the President dated July 26, 1941, including organized guerrilla forces under commanders appointed, designated, or subsequently recognized by the Commander in Chief, Southwest Pacific Area, or other competent authority in the Army of the United States, and who died on or after November 1, 2000; or,
 - (b) Was a person who enlisted between October 6, 1945, and June 30, 1947, with the Armed Forces of the United States with the consent of the Philippine government, pursuant to section 14 of the Armed Forces Voluntary Recruitment Act of 1945, and who died on or after December 16, 2003.

G. Spouses and Dependents

- (1) The spouse, surviving spouse or dependent of an eligible Veteran or member of the Armed Forces may be eligible for interment in a national cemetery even if that veteran is not buried or memorialized in a national cemetery.

- (2) The surviving spouse of an eligible veteran who had a subsequent remarriage to a non-veteran and whose death occurred on or after January 1, 2000, is eligible for burial in a national cemetery, based on his or her marriage to the eligible veteran.
- (3) The minor children of an eligible veteran. For purpose of burial in a national cemetery, a minor child is a child who is unmarried and:
 - (a) Who is under 21 years of age; or,
 - (b) Who is under 23 years of age and pursuing a full-time course of instruction at an approved educational institution.
- (4) The unmarried adult child of an eligible veteran. For purpose of burial in a national cemetery, an unmarried adult child is: Of any age but became permanently physically or mentally disabled and incapable of self-support before reaching 21 years of age, or before reaching 23 years of age if pursuing a full-time course of instruction at an approved educational institution. Proper supporting documentation must be provided.

H. Parents

- (1) Biological or adoptive parents, who died after October 13, 2010, and whose biological or adoptive child was a service-member:
 - (a) whose death occurred on or after October 7, 2001, and
 - (b) whose death was the result of a hostile casualty or a training-related injury, and
 - (c) who is interred in a national cemetery, in a grave-site with available space for subsequent interment, and
 - (d) at the time of the parent's death, had no spouse, surviving spouse, or child who is buried, or who, upon death, may be eligible for burial in a national cemetery.
- (2) The term "hostile casualty" means a person who, as a member of the Armed Forces, dies as the direct result of hostile action with the enemy, while in combat, while going to or returning from a combat mission if the cause of death was directly related to hostile action, or while hospitalized or undergoing treatment at the expense of the United States for injury incurred during combat, and includes a person killed mistakenly or accidentally by friendly fire directed at a hostile force or what is thought to be a hostile force. The term "hostile casualty" does not include a person who dies due to the elements, a self-inflicted wound, combat fatigue, or a friendly force while the person was absent-without-leave, deserter, or dropped-

from-rolls status or was voluntarily absent from a place of duty.

(3) The term “training-related injury” means an injury incurred by a member of the Armed Forces while performing authorized training activities in preparation for a combat mission.

- i. Others: Such other persons or classes of persons as designated by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (38 U.S.C. § 2402(6)) or the Secretary of Defense (Public Law 95-202, § 401, and 38 CFR § 3.7(x)).

Persons NOT eligible for burial in a VA National Cemetery:

a. Former Spouses: A former spouse of an eligible individual whose marriage to that individual has been terminated by annulment or divorce, if not otherwise eligible.

b. Other Family Members: Family members of an eligible person except those defined as eligible in Section III, paragraph g (Spouses and Dependents).

c. Disqualifying Characters of Discharge: A person whose only separation from the Armed Forces was under dishonorable conditions or whose character of service results in a bar to veteran’s benefits.

d. Discharge from Draft: A person who was ordered to report to an induction station, but was not actually inducted into military service.

e. Persons Found Guilty of a Capital Crime: Under 38 U.S.C. § 2411, interment or memorialization in a VA national cemetery or in Arlington National Cemetery is prohibited if a person is convicted of a Federal or State capital crime, for which a sentence of imprisonment for life or the death penalty may be imposed and the conviction is final. Federal officials may not inter in veterans’ cemeteries persons who are shown by clear and convincing evidence to have committed a Federal or State capital crime but were unavailable for trial due to death or flight to avoid prosecution. Federally funded State veterans’ cemeteries must also adhere to this law. This prohibition is also extended to furnishing a Presidential Memorial Certificate, a burial flag, and a headstone or marker.

f. Persons convicted of Certain Sex Offenses: Under 38 U.S.C. § 2411, interment or memorialization in a VA national cemetery or in Arlington National Cemetery is prohibited if a person is convicted of a Tier III sex offense, who was sentenced to a minimum of life imprisonment

and whose conviction is final. Federally funded State and Tribal Organization veterans' cemeteries must also adhere to this law. This prohibition also applies to Presidential Memorial Certificate, burial flag, and headstone and marker benefits.

- g. **Subversive Activities:** Any person convicted of subversive activities after September 1, 1959, shall have no right to burial in a national cemetery from and after the date of commission of such offense, based on periods of active military service commencing before the date of the commission of such offense, nor shall another person be entitled to burial on account of such an individual. Eligibility will be reinstated if the President of the United States grants a pardon.
- h. **Active or Inactive Duty for Training:** A person whose only service is active duty for training or inactive duty training in the National Guard or Reserve Component, unless the individual meets the eligibility criteria listed in Section III.1.b. of this information sheet.
- i. **Other Groups:** Members of groups whose service has been determined by the Secretary of the Air Force under the provisions of Public Law 95-202 as not warranting entitlement to benefits administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

Pre-Need Burial Determination: Grave-sites in VA national cemeteries cannot be reserved. However, VA implemented the pre-need burial eligibility determination program to assist anyone who would like to know if they are eligible for burial in a VA national cemetery.

Interested individuals may submit **VA Form 40-10007**, Application for Pre-Need Determination of Eligibility for Burial in a VA National Cemetery, along with a copy of supporting documentation of military service such as a **DD214**, if readily available, by: toll-free fax at **1-855-840-8299**; or mail to:

National Cemetery Scheduling Office
P.O. Box 510543
St. Louis, MO 63151

Further details regarding pre-need determination can be found online at the National Cemetery Administration website at www.cem.va.gov/pre-need.

Additional Information: Veterans and their families are encouraged to prepare in advance by discussing cemetery options and setting aside copies of any discharge documents. See “Important Documents to Safeguard” on page 27.

VA will provide—at no cost to the veteran’s family—a grave-site, headstone or marker, Presidential Memorial Certificate, U.S. flag, perpetual care of the grave site and will open and close the grave. The veteran’s family must pay for services and other related costs provided by funeral directors.

To establish eligibility for burial in a VA national cemetery, the family should provide: The same procedures should be followed to determine the eligibility of a veteran’s spouse or dependent. In most cases, one grave-site is provided for the burial of all eligible family members, marked by a single headstone or marker. When both spouses are veterans, two grave-sites and two headstones or markers may be provided, if requested.

Formal funeral services are not held at national cemeteries, but final committal services may be performed at the cemetery. For safety reasons, these services are held in committal shelters located away from the grave-site. Burial will take place following the committal service. Immediate family members may be allowed to view the actual burial only if arrangement has been made in advance with the cemetery director. National cemeteries do not usually conduct burials on weekends or federal holidays, However, weekend callers may schedule burials for the upcoming week. Floral arrangements may accompany the casket or urn and will be placed on the grave after burial.

National cemeteries in Texas are located at: Cemetery closed for new interments. San Antonio National Cemetery is open for cremations only. For information on these cemeteries, contact the National Cemetery on Fort Sam Houston at 210/ 820-3891.

**Veterans' Cemeteries
Administered by Other Agencies**

Arlington National Cemetery: The Department of the Army administers Arlington National Cemetery. Eligibility for burial is more restrictive than at VA national cemeteries. For information, contact:

**Superintendent
Arlington National Cemetery
Arlington, VA 22211
(703) 607-8000
www.arlingtoncemetery.org**

Department of the Interior: The Department of the Interior administers two active national cemeteries: Andersonville National Cemetery in Georgia and Andrew Johnson National Cemetery in Tennessee. Eligibility for burial is similar to VA cemetery eligibility.

State Veterans' Cemeteries: Individual states operate cemeteries for veterans. Eligibility requirements may differ from those for national cemeteries. Contact the state cemetery or state veterans' affairs office for additional information. To locate a state veteran's cemetery, please visit www.cem.va.gov/cem/grants/veterans_cemeteries.asp. Information on the Texas State Cemetery Program follows.

**Texas State Veterans'
Cemetery Program**

Currently the State of Texas has four veterans' cemeteries - in central Texas in Killeen, in south Texas in Mission, in west-central Texas in Abilene and Coastal Bend Area of Texas in Corpus Christi. They are managed by the Texas Veterans Land Board. Contact them at (512) 463-5977 or 1-800-252-VETS (8387) or visit their website at www.glo.texas.gov/vlb/cemeteries/index.html.

KILLEEN

The Central Texas State Veterans Cemetery opened January 3, 2006. The initial phase of development contains 31 acres with 7,620 grave-sites. The cemetery will be expanded as needed and will eventually be capable of providing a final resting place to more than 50,000 veterans and family members.

Central Texas State Veterans Cemetery
11463 State Highway 195
Killeen, Texas 76542-4945
Office: 254/ 616-1770; Fax: 254/ 616-1769
Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday - Friday

MISSION

The Rio Grande Valley State Veterans Cemetery opened December 1, 2006. The initial phase of development contains 31 acres, and 6,190 grave-sites. The cemetery will be expanded as needed and will eventually be capable of providing a final resting place for more than 25,000 veterans and family members.

To honor the deceased, you may purchase engraved memorial pavers which are placed in the assembly area of the Rio Grande Valley State Veterans Cemetery. Each paver costs \$100, with proceeds going toward operations of the cemetery. Please contact the cemetery staff to learn more.

Rio Grande Valley State Veterans Cemetery
2520 South Inspiration Rd
Mission, Texas 78572-9897
Office: 956/ 583-7227; Fax: 956/ 583-7887
Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday - Friday

ABILENE

The Texas State Veterans Cemetery at Abilene opened June 1, 2009. The initial phase of development contains 31 acres, and 3,524 grave-sites. The cemetery will be expanded as needed and will eventually be capable of providing a final resting place for approximately 35,000 veterans and family members.

To honor the deceased, you may purchase engraved memorial pavers which are placed in the assembly area of the Texas State Veterans Cemetery at Abilene. Each paver costs \$150, with proceeds going toward operations of the cemetery. Please contact the cemetery staff to learn more.

Texas State Veterans Cemetery at Abilene

7457 West Lake Rd

Abilene, Texas 79601-8278

Office: 325/673-4446; Fax: 325/673-4448

Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday - Friday

CORPUS CHRISTI

The initial phase of development contains 30 acres, and 4,800 gravesites. The cemetery will be expanded as needed and will eventually be capable of providing a final resting place for more than 31,000 veterans and family members. The first interment took place on December 13, 2011.

The cemetery includes a covered, open-air structure for committal services; a visitor's center; a computer kiosk for locating specific graves; an assembly area for special occasions, such as Memorial Day observances; an avenue of flags; and a memorial walkway for future monuments

Coastal Bend State Veterans Cemetery

9974 IH 37 Access Rd

Corpus Christi, Texas 78410-1408

Office: 361/ 248-4830; Fax: 361/ 248-4965

Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday - Friday

State of Texas Eligibility and Burial Benefits: The rules for eligibility for burial in the TSVC are the same as for national cemeteries. Overall eligibility for burial in a veterans' cemetery (national or state) is determined by a VA regulation based on a variety of qualifying criteria, many of which may apply to your periods of service on active duty or while in the Guard or Reserves. To ascertain your eligibility or for assistance in applying for VA burial benefits, contact the nearest TVC Claims Representative or your local Veterans County Service Officer. You may also contact the VLB toll-free at **1-800-252-VETS (8387)**. Further details and updates regarding the State Veterans' Cemetery Program, including Interment Application and Pre-registration forms, are available at www.glo.texas.gov/vlb/cemeteries/index.html.

Charges for Interment: Burial at a Texas State Veterans' Cemetery is a benefit earned by veterans, their spouses, and eligible dependents for their dedicated service to our country. There is no charge for the interment of veterans, their spouses and eligible dependents. The burial benefit includes military honors for veterans, the grave plot, the opening and closing of the grave, a concrete grave liner for casketed burials, a headstone or marker, presentation of the burial flag to the next of kin, a Presidential certificate, playing of Taps, a gun salute, and perpetual care of the grave. The funeral home will obtain a burial flag to accompany the veteran's casket or urn and will assist with requesting military honors.

The burial benefit for veterans, their spouses and eligible dependents does not cover funeral home charges such as the cost of a casket, cremation, viewing, flower cars, or transportation of the remains and family. However, if the veteran dies of a service connected cause of death, the family may be eligible for reimbursement from the VA for some of the funeral home costs up to \$2,000.

Students Sounding "TAPS" At Military Funerals

In 2007, the 80th Texas Legislature passed what is known as the "TAPS" for Tuition Program, with the Texas Veterans Commission as the administrator of the Program. The Program is designed to encourage students in grades 6 through 12, or at post-secondary educational institutions, to sound "Taps" on a bugle, trumpet or coronet as part of the military honors funerals held in Texas for deceased veterans. A student, in exchange for sounding "Taps" at a military funeral, are issued a voucher in the amount of \$25 to be exchanged for an exemption from the payment of tuition and required fees in that amount at a State of Texas public institution of higher education. Echo Taps is also included with both students receiving a voucher. Unfortunately, this program does not cover the ceremonial sounding of Taps, such as during Memorial Day celebrations. There is no limit to the number of vouchers a student can accumulate. These vouchers may be used by the student at any time for tuition and fees and are not transferable. It is important that the students and parents be informed that the voucher also serves as an excused absence from public schools in the State of Texas if the funeral is conducted during regular school hours. It's also important for them to know that it is the student's responsibility to maintain a record of vouchers earned through the Taps Tuition Voucher

Program. Here's how the program works: Students contact local licensed funeral home(s) to make arrangements to provide Taps during funerals honoring military veterans. The funeral director has the TVC TAPS "Taps Certification" form that will be completed and signed by both the student (or parent or legal guardian if student is under the age of 18) and the licensed funeral director following the sounding of Taps at a funeral honoring a military veteran. The form is submitted by the student, or the student's parent or guardian, to the address printed on the bottom of the form. The PDF form is available on the TVC website at www.tvc.texas.gov/documents/TVCTAPS_Form_Aug_2014.pdf. Visit TVC's website at www.tvc.texas.gov; email us at info@tvc.texas.gov or call us at (512) 463-6564.

Additional Information

There is a variety of important information that needs to be provided when applying for survivor/burial benefits. In addition, certain veterans may have various benefit plans or insurance coverage available to survivors.

Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP): If the veteran was a military retiree, the widow and/or children may be entitled to payments from the Survivor Benefit Plan. Survivors should contact the nearest Personnel Affairs Office of the service department of the veteran to determine if the veteran made necessary provision for SBP coverage.

Insurance & Additional Benefits: A TVC Claims Representative or a Veterans County Service Officer may offer assistance in supplying and completing forms for G.I. Insurance. If life insurance is carried with another commercial company, contact an agent of that company. In addition to insurance, TVC can assist in applying for other VA and State benefits to which the veteran's survivors may be entitled.

These include:

- Widow's or children's compensation
- Widow's or children's pension
- Parent's compensation
- Education benefits

- Medical benefits

Important Documents To Safeguard: Below is a list of important documents and other relevant information to have available when applying for VA survivor and/or burial benefits:

- Veteran's discharge certificate (DD Form 214)
- Veteran's VA claim number or Social Security Number
- Veteran's death certificate
- Veteran's Government Life Insurance Policy information
- Copy of all marriage certificates and divorce decrees (if any)
- Copy of each child's birth certificate or adoption papers

Provided inside the back cover of this booklet is a list of Texas Veterans Commission Claims Representation & Counseling District offices. For a complete list of TVC Claims offices and all Veterans County Service Officers, please see our TVC Directory on our website at www.tvc.texas.gov/documents/tvc_directory.pdf or call the Veterans' HOTLINE at 1-800-VETS (8387) for locations and contact numbers.

For assistance with burial benefits or any other veterans' benefits, please contact a TVC Claims Representative or a Veterans County Service Officer near you for assistance. Office location details for TVC and Veterans County Service Officer can be found on our website at www.tvc.texas.gov/documents/tvc_directory.pdf.

CLAIMS REPRESENTATION AND COUNSELING (CR&C)

The Texas Veterans Commission serves Veterans, their dependents and survivors, in all matters pertaining to Veterans' state and federal disability benefits and entitlements. It is the designated agency of the State of Texas to represent the State and its Veterans before the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The agency represents Veterans in filing VA disability claims and during VA appeals processes, and assists dependents with survivor benefits and entitlements. TVC is nationally recognized for its expertise in helping Veterans get the most benefits they are entitled to.

CR&C HEADQUARTERS

Victor Polanco, IV, Director
1700 N. Congress Ave., Ste 800;
PO Box 12277; Austin, Texas 78711-2277
Tel. 512/ 463-6564; (FAX) 512/ 463-0571

DISTRICT OFFICES

NORTHWEST DISTRICT

Northwest District Manager
VA Regional Office
701 Clay Ave.
Waco, TX 76799-0001
Tel. 254/ 299-9950
(FAX) 254/ 299-9910
Office Hours: 7:45 - 4:30

NORTHEAST DISTRICT

Northeast District Manager
Central Texas Veterans Health Care System
1901 Veterans Memorial Dr.
Bldg. 208, Rm 119
Temple, TX 76504-7451
Tel. 254/743-0549; (FAX) 254/743-1699
Office Hours: 7:45 - 4:30

SOUTHWEST DISTRICT

Southwest District Manager
Frank M. Tejada VA Outpatient Clinic
5788 Eckhart Rd, Rm. 2A122
San Antonio, TX 78240-3900
210/ 699-5308 (Office)
210/303-4490 (Cell)
Office Hours: 7:30 - 4:00

SOUTHEAST DISTRICT

Southeast District Manager
VA Regional Office
6900 Alameda Rd
Houston, TX 77030-4200
Tel. 713/ 383-2756
(FAX) 713/ 383-2746
Office Hours: 7:30 - 4:00



The Texas Veterans Commission does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex religion, age or disability in employment or providing services.

Comments concerning Veterans' programs or delivery of service may be addressed to:

**Texas Veterans Commission
P.O. Box 12277
Austin, Texas 78711-2277
(512) 463-6564**



RESOURCES FOR VETERANS SEEKING HELP



RESOURCES FOR
VETERANS
SEEKING HELP



BE AN UNCOMMON LEADER.®

Texas Young Lawyers Association
Community Education and Consumer Affairs Committee
P.O. Box 12487, Capitol Station
Austin, TX 78711-2487
(800) 204-2222 Ext. 1800
Produced as a public service by the
Texas Young Lawyers Association.

Please note that this brochure is intended solely to provide general information and is not a substitute for legal counsel. Any laws described in the brochure are subject to change at any time. If you have a specific legal problem, we suggest that you consult an attorney.

INTRODUCTION

Veterans face the same issues that all Texans face: going to school, finding a job, obtaining a loan, and getting health care. Veterans also deal with issues unique to those who have served our country in uniform. This pamphlet, a publication of the Texas Young Lawyers Association and Texas Lawyers for Texas Veterans, is intended to identify and describe resources related to the following areas:

- Legal Assistance
- VA Benefits
- Disabilities
- Education Benefits
- Employment
- Financial Assistance
- Home and Land Loans
- Health Care
- Mental Health Issues

If you are a servicemember, some of these resources listed may prove helpful for you as well. In particular, the enclosed summary of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) provides an overview of legislation meant to protect your interests.

Texas Lawyers for Texas Veterans is a State Bar of Texas program developed to assist free legal clinics throughout the state for military veterans. You can find links to a number of resources on the State Bar of Texas website: www.texasbar.com/veterans.

Other websites that include good general information and links to resources that are helpful to veterans include:

- *Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents & Survivors*: This booklet contains a summary of the federal benefits for which veterans may be eligible.
www1.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book.asp
- Texas Veterans Commission: A comprehensive source for all state benefits, plus claims representation and counseling.
www.texas-veterans.com
- Texas C-BAR (Community Building with Attorney Resources)
www.texasbar.org/legal_library/veterans
- Programs for servicemembers Returning from Afghanistan and Iraq
www.oefoif.va.gov
- TexVet: Partners Across Texas
www.texvet.com

WHY YOU NEED AN ATTORNEY

You should seek the advice of an attorney to navigate the sometimes complicated procedures and systems that provide benefits for veterans. An attorney can also assist with various legal issues, including disputes related to housing (such as eviction suits), as well as applications for benefits related to public health, family members, and education.

The legal system contains many complexities and nuances, and assistance from a trained attorney can provide you with a tremendous advantage.

Protecting your rights

The first step in this process is educating yourself about your rights. An attorney or a nonprofit agency focused on veterans' rights can guide you through the process. The laws have changed over the past few years, and Congress passed legislation to make it easier for attorneys to assist you. Prior restrictions against having representation no longer exist, so taking the time to talk with a lawyer may make the difference between obtaining your much-needed benefits and getting denied again. The effort required to obtain documentary evidence that is necessary to succeed on your claim is a detailed process that can be overwhelming. However, with assistance from trained professionals and agencies specifically dedicated to helping veterans, you can take an important first step toward protecting your rights and privileges.

As one example of an area in which it is often helpful to have an attorney assisting you, the laws that govern VA compensation and pension claims are extremely complex and many times difficult to understand. Attorneys can assist you in various ways such as assisting on your appeal of benefits, correcting military records, helping you get your disability rating, and obtaining much needed disability benefits.

There are attorneys who want to help you. You may qualify for *pro bono* services, free of charge, if you meet certain eligibility criteria. Resources are listed below to help with obtaining these services.

Making your case

An advocate who can dedicate the time needed to succeed on your claim can be invaluable. It is common to hear a pro se veteran (one who represents himself or herself) say that they just don't have the time "to put up a fight." Having an advocate on your side can help alleviate this problem and put your best foot forward when protecting your rights.

An attorney will not only make the time to advocate on your behalf, but he or she also has access to countless resources you may otherwise be unfamiliar with. An attorney can help obtain evidence that is critical to your claim, and can be creative in maneuvering through obstacles such as the past destruction of records at the St. Louis records repository, which housed numerous military records that were destroyed in a fire. Counsel can help you find the support you need to prove your case, whether through documentary evidence or witness testimony. An advocate can also help you to look at your claim more objectively, to determine where your strengths (and your weaknesses) are, and assist you in emphasizing those strengths during the process.

So, once you have decided you want to seek assistance, where do you go to find an attorney?

HOW TO FIND AN ATTORNEY

A number of agencies can assist you in finding the representation you need to secure benefits if you have been denied, as well as represent you in other legal issues that may affect you.

Do you qualify for assistance or free services?

If you are unsure whether you qualify for specific services, it is important that you apply for assistance. If the agency you contact is unable to assist you, they may be able to direct you to another resource. Help is out there, but you have to take the important first step in reaching out for assistance.

Free Texas Veterans' Legal Clinics

If you need legal advice for basic civil legal services, check for a Veterans' Legal Clinic in your area. Civil practice areas covered in Veterans' Legal Clinics include bankruptcy, child support, consumer/contracts, divorce or custody/guardianship/probate, landlord/tenant, wills/estate planning, employment, housing, and tax. Assistance in other areas may also be available.

Please note that most clinics require an appointment to attend. Contact the individual clinics for more information or to sign up. For a list of Veterans' Legal Clinics around the state, please visit www.texasbar.com/veterans.

Income guidelines may apply for free legal representation. Income guidelines generally use a percentage of the federal poverty income amount. Please contact each Veterans' Legal Clinic for its policy.

If you do not qualify for free legal services, contact the Lawyer Referral Information Service at **(800) 252-9690**. Through the Lawyer Referral Information Service, a person may have a 30-minute consultation with an attorney for \$20. At the end of the consultation, the attorney and individual may discuss possible representation and price structure. Please understand that the Lawyer Referral Information Service is not a *pro bono* or reduced-fee program. More information is available at www.texasbar.com/LRIS.

RESOURCES FOR VETERANS SEEKING HELP

There are a number of federal, state, and local organizations that provide resources to veterans seeking help. Below is a brief overview of resources designed to provide a starting point to find answers to common questions regarding issues affecting veterans.

Texas Veterans Commission

The Texas Veterans Commission serves veterans, dependents, and survivors in all matters relating to veteran employment and disability benefits and rights, and represents veterans during the claims and appeal process. It is the designated agency of the State of Texas to represent the state and its veterans before the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The agency serves veterans with VA claims from 32 offices located in 29 cities throughout the state. The agency represents veterans in filing VA disability claims and during VA appeals processes, and it assists dependents with survivor benefits. Veterans seeking employment assistance can find help in the 80 employment offices located throughout the state. Eighty percent of the Texas Veterans Commission staff are veterans and all employment staff are veterans. Their comprehensive website provides answers to frequently asked questions about education and employment outreach, compensation, pension, insurance, medical assistance, burial and surviving spouse benefits, special claims, and tax benefits. **(800) 252-VETS (8387)**, www.texas-veterans.com

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

National Veterans Legal Services Program

The National Veterans Legal Services Program is an independent nonprofit organization aimed at providing representation for veterans and active duty personnel seeking entitlement to federal benefits. The organization empowers veterans and their families through informative publications such as the *Veteran's Benefit Manual* and *The American Veterans and Servicemembers Survival Guide*. A free copy of the *Survival Guide* is provided online at www.nvlsp.org/images/Survival%20Guide-102309.pdf. It covers essential topics such as qualification for benefits, explanation of the VA appeals

process, need-based pension for low-income veterans or survivors, educational assistance, housing programs, medical services, employment issues, and more. www.nvlsp.org

Lawyers Serving Warriors

The National Veterans Legal Services Program created a project called Lawyers Serving Warriors. The program networks with volunteer attorneys to provide free legal representation in disability, discharge, and veterans benefits cases to veterans who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom. Veterans and their families can request legal help for free by filling out a brief online questionnaire describing their concerns. www.lawyerservingwarriors.com

Texas RioGrande Legal Aid

Texas RioGrande Legal Aid has a Veteran's Benefits Team, as well as a Housing Team and a Public Benefits Team, all of which can assist any veteran that qualifies financially. (888) 988-9996, www.trla.org

Legal Assistance for Low-Income Veterans

If you meet certain low income guidelines, you may qualify for *pro bono* civil legal assistance. To view contact information of regional organizations offering free legal aid, visit www.usattorneylegalservices.com/Texas-free-legal-aid.html.

Immigration Assistance

Under Presidential order, non-citizen veterans may qualify for U.S. citizenship. The American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) Military Assistance Program provides free legal assistance to immigrant soldiers and their families. A client information form available at www.aila.org/content/default.aspx?bc=24109 must be filled out by a veteran and emailed to probono@aila.org. The organization will then match the veteran with a volunteer immigration attorney at no charge. AILA is affiliated with the American Bar Association.

VA BENEFITS

Benefits from the VA include disability benefits, certain education assistance benefits, burial benefits, widow benefits, certain types of pension benefits, certain types of life insurance benefits, and a long list of other miscellaneous benefits. However, the majority of benefit cases denied by the VA and the legal practice surrounding those denials focus on veterans' disability claims. Veterans who suffer from certain service-connected disabilities can, in some instances, be entitled to disability benefit payments.

Three basic elements are necessary for a veteran to be entitled to VA disability benefits. First, the veteran must suffer from a current recognizable disability. Second, the veteran must have suffered from an injury or disease that was “incurred” or “aggravated” during a period of active duty service. Third, there must be a “nexus” connecting the current disability to the event that took place while the veteran was serving in an active duty capacity.

All VA claims start when a veteran files a claim at his or her local VA Regional Office (VARO), where the claim is initially processed by an individual employee of the VA. If the veteran is not successful at this point, the claim can be reviewed by another employee of the VARO called a Decision Review Officer (DRO). In general, if the claim is denied at the VARO level, the veteran has the right to appeal his or her claim to the Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA), and ultimately if not successful there, the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC) in Washington D.C.

VA claims can make their way up and down the different levels of the VA hierarchy a multitude of times. It is not uncommon for a VA claim to make its way up to the BVA and be remanded back to the VARO two or three times. It is also possible for a previously denied claim to be applied for and re-opened by the VA many times. There are few limitations to this right, and it happens on a regular basis many years after a previous VA denial.

You should consider asking an attorney to assist you with VA claims and appeals.

DISABILITIES

Texas provides free driver’s licenses to qualifying disabled veterans, parking privileges for vehicles with disabled veteran license plates, free admission to Texas parks, no cost for obtaining medical records, special hunting and fishing licenses, and certain property tax exemptions.

www.tcdps.state.tx.us/driverlicense/VetServices.html

A comprehensive *Wounded Warrior Entitlement Handbook* discussing hardship duty pay, hostile fire pay, combat zone tax exclusion, rehabilitation pay, basic allowance for subsistence, Traumatic Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance, and other benefits can be found online at *www.dfas.mil/militarymembers/woundedwarrior/woundedwarriorpay.html*.

EDUCATION BENEFITS

Federal GI Bills

The Post-9/11 GI Bill provides financial support for education and housing to individuals with at least 90 days of aggregate service on or after September 11, 2001, or individuals discharged with a service-connected disability after 30 days. You must have received an honorable discharge to be eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

Approved training under the Post-9/11 GI Bill includes graduate and undergraduate degrees and vocational/technical training. All training programs must be offered by an institution of higher learning and approved for GI Bill benefits. Additionally, tutorial assistance and licensing and certification test reimbursement are approved under the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

The Post-9/11 GI does not replace the other existing GI Bills. The Montgomery GI Bill for active duty members, Montgomery GI Bill for Reserves, and the Reserve Educational Assistance remain in effect. The benefits of each bill should be compared. Qualified veterans must generally use their 9/11 GI Bill benefits within 10 years of separation for active duty.

For more information, visit www.gibill.va.gov/benefits/post_911_gibill/index.html. To compare benefits under the Post-9/11 GI Bill versus existing GI Bills, visit www.gibill.va.gov/resources/benefits_resources/benefit_comparison_tools.html. General information and eligibility requirements for all GI Bills can be found at www.gibill.va.gov.

The Hazlewood Act

The Hazlewood Act provides financial assistance to Texas veterans who had at least 181 days of active duty (excluding training), and their spouses and children, with an education benefit of up to 150 hours of tuition and fee exemptions at state supported colleges or universities. Specifically, the Act provides an exemption from the payment of any tuition, dues, fees, and charges, including fees for correspondence courses. However, it excludes sums for property deposit fees, student service fees, and any fees or charges for lodging, board, or clothing. Any person claiming this benefit must have exhausted all federal educational benefits and be a legal resident of Texas at the time of application, which should be made through the registrar of the school of attendance. www.tvc.state.tx.gov/Hazlewood-Act.aspx

Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance

The Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program provides 45 months of education benefits for the son, daughter, or spouse of a veteran who died or is permanently and totally disabled as a result of a service-connected disability; is missing in action or captured in the line of duty by a hostile force; or is hospitalized or receiving outpatient treatment for a service-connected, permanent, and total disability and is likely to be discharged for that disability. Sons and daughters must be between 18 and 26 years of age, and marriage is not a bar to this benefit. The current monthly benefit is \$987. www.gibill.va.gov/benefits/other_programs/dea.html

EMPLOYMENT

Finding a Job

The Texas Veterans Commission offers employment services to Texas veterans and helps employers find qualified veteran applicants. More than 90 Texas Veterans Commission employment representatives provide a full range of employment services. They are located in more than 75 cities throughout Texas and offer one-on-one assistance to veterans with job applications, resume preparation, job matching, and other intensive services. Additionally, veterans can chat with veterans' employment representatives, post resumes and applications, conduct job searches, and locate information on local job fairs. www.tvc.state.tx.us/Employment.aspx

On-the-Job Training Program

The On-the-Job Training Program offers an alternate way to use GI Bill benefits for military veterans and eligible family members. While training for a new job, you can receive monthly benefits from the VA in addition to your regular salary. To be eligible, your job must be salaried and must require at least six months of training. www.tvc.state.tx.us/on-the-job-training.aspx

Texas Veterans Leadership Program

The Texas Veterans Leadership Program is a Texas Workforce Commission resource and referral network that connects returning veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan with the resources and tools they need to seek employment and educational opportunities. An all-veterans team, called the Veterans Resource and Referral Specialists, works to find ancillary services in local communities. These specialists seek out veterans in need of services; act as a resource for referral agents; coordinate with various programs ranging from employment and training to medical care, mental health counseling,

and benefits to better care for each veteran; and organize volunteers and mentors to assist returning veterans. There are 28 local Texas workforce development offices. www.twc.state.tx.us/tvlp/tvlp.html

Transition Assistance Program

The Transition Assistance Program helps servicemembers and their spouses make the initial transition from military service to the civilian workplace. The program consists of comprehensive three-day workshops at selected military installations. Attendees focus on job searches, career decisions, and current occupational and labor market conditions. They also receive assistance in resume and cover-letter writing and interview techniques. www.tvc.state.tx.us/calendar

Troops to Teachers

Troops to Teachers assists veterans with transitioning into new careers as public school teachers in “high-needs” schools and districts. Eligible veterans can receive up to \$5,000 in stipends or bonuses of \$10,000 upon agreement to teach for three years in school locations that meet U.S. Department of Education criteria. (800) 810-5484, www.texastroopstoteachers.org

Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA)

Under USERRA, servicemembers who give their employer oral or written notice of leave have the right to timely return to the civilian jobs they left when performing their service or training. The cumulative period of service cannot exceed five years. The Act applies to most employers in the United States regardless of size (including the government), except for religious institutions, Indian tribes, embassies and consulates for foreign governments, and international organizations. USERRA protects employee benefits as well. www.esgr.mil/USERRA/What-is-USERRA.aspx

Veterans' Preference

Wartime veterans have preference in employment with Texas agencies or offices, as do widows and orphans of those killed on active duty. Texas agencies must practice veterans' preference until they have reached 40 percent veteran employment. Veterans entitled to preference include honorably discharged veterans, otherwise competent for the position, who served in the military for not less than 90 consecutive days during a national emergency declared in accordance with federal law or those discharged from service for an established service-connected disability. www.tvc.state.tx.us/Veterans-Reference.aspx

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Texas Veterans Commission Funds for Veterans' Assistance

The Texas Veterans Commission Funds for Veterans' Assistance was created to provide aid to veterans and their families in their time of need. Veterans can fill out an application at www.tvc.state.tx.us/Grant-Application.aspx to obtain financial assistance, including funds for mortgage or rent payments, childcare, food, clothing, and prescription medication. Additionally, the fund provides grants to qualified charitable organizations and local government agencies to provide direct assistance to local veterans. To view a complete list of grant recipients visit www.tvc.state.tx.us/Grants-Awarded.aspx

Operation First Response

Operation First Response provides financial assistance to wounded warriors and their families. Applications can be filled out online. www.operationfirstresponse.org/?page_id=3600

Comprehensive Energy Assistance Program

The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs created the Comprehensive Energy Assistance Program designed to assist low-income households with their energy needs. Apply by calling (877) 399-8939 after reviewing a list of participating providers located at www.tdhca.state.tx.us/community-affaiceapl/index.htm.

HOME AND LAND LOANS

Veterans can access home loan programs through the VA (www.valoans.com), as well as through the Texas Veterans Land Board, which administers three veterans' loan programs. The Veterans Housing Assistance Purchase Program provides purchase money financing up to \$325,000 for the purchase of a qualified primary home to qualified Texas veterans. Interest rates are low and are updated frequently on the Texas Veterans Land Board website. Additional interest rate discounts are available for disabled veterans. Qualified homes include single-family homes, townhomes, condominiums, and two-to-four family units that were constructed at least five years prior to the closing date of the loan. Manufactured and modular homes may also be purchased using these funds if they meet certain Texas Veterans Land Board guidelines. The home must remain the primary residence of the veteran for at least three years.

Under the Veterans Home Improvement Program, eligible Texas veterans may be loaned up to \$25,000 for up to 20 years on a fixed-rate note to enable them to make substantial alterations, improvements, or repairs to existing property. No down payments are required, and all loans are FHA-insured. Funds must be used to substantially protect or improve the basic livability or energy efficiency of the property, correct damage resulting from a natural disaster, or correct conditions that are hazardous to health or safety. While the home improvement program will help veterans with carpet, fencing, room additions, patios, driveways, and garages, asking for spas, saunas, pools, and satellite dishes might not bode well. Applications can be requested by calling **(800) 252-VETS**, or by completing an online form at www.glo.state.tx.us/vlb/veterans-benefits/veterans-loans/home-improvement/index.html.

The Land Loan Program provides financing up to \$80,000 for land within Texas that contains at least one acre (excluding portions dedicated to public roadways or navigable waterways), has legal access to a public road, and has not been owned by the veteran or his or her spouse within the past three years. Eligible land cannot be used for commercial purposes. Closing on the loans take approximately 45 days, and a 5 percent down payment is required upon closing. www.glo.state.tx.us/vlb

HEALTH CARE

General VA Health Care

Federal benefits for veterans, their dependents, and survivors are extensive. The VA operates the nation's largest integrated health care system with more than 1,400 sites of care, including more than 60 facilities in Texas. Health care services for veterans include:

- Hospital, outpatient medical, dental, pharmacy, and prosthetic services
- Domiciliary and community-based residential care
- Sexual trauma counseling
- Specialized health care for women veterans
- Health and rehabilitation programs for homeless veterans
- Readjustment counseling
- Alcohol and drug dependency treatment
- Medical evaluation for disorders associated with military service in the Global War on Terrorism

www.va.gov/health

My HealtheVet

My HealtheVet is the VA's e-health website, which offers veterans, active duty soldiers, their dependents, and caregivers access to VA health care information and services. You can access current health and benefits information, as well as record and store important health and military history information. www.myhealth.va.gov

Medical Records

Under the Health and Safety Code, Chapter 161, Subchapter M, Texas veterans are eligible for no cost medical or mental health records when they file a claim for a disability against the VA. The health care provider or health care facility is not required to provide more than one complete record for the patient or former patient without charge. Some medical facilities will charge a small administrative fee for obtaining the records.

National Resource Directory

The National Resource Directory is a website for wounded, ill, and injured servicemembers, veterans, and their families. It provides access to services and resources at the national, state, and local levels to support recovery, rehabilitation, and community reintegration. You can find information on a variety of topics including benefits and compensation, education and training, employment, family and caregiver support, health, homeless assistance, housing, transportation and travel, and other services and resources. www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov

Women Veterans' Health Care

This website provides information on health care services available to women veterans, including comprehensive primary care as well as specialty care such as reproductive services, rehabilitation, mental health, and treatment for military sexual trauma. You can also find answers to some of the most frequently asked questions about women veterans' health care. www.publichealth.va.gov/womenshealth

Nursing Homes

The David A. Gloier Texas State Veterans Home Program offers skilled nursing home care exclusively for Texas veterans, their spouses, and Gold Star Parents (surviving parents of a deceased servicemember) at daily rates well below market average. Most medications are provided at no cost. Occupational, physical, and

speech therapies are available. Certified Alzheimer's disease care beds are available in secured wings with separate facilities located in each home. The homes contain libraries, beauty shops, barbershops, and meditation areas. Currently, the program has homes in Amarillo, Big Spring, Bonham, El Paso, Floresville, McAllen, and Temple. www.glo.state.tx.us/vlb/vethomes/index.html

TexVet

TexVet is a collaborative effort of federal, state, and local organizations that focuses on providing health care resources to veterans. www.texvet.com/about/contact.html

Special Health Issues Helpline

This call center is specifically dedicated to issues related to health care arising from service in the Gulf War, exposure to Agent Orange, and participation in Project 112/Shad. (800) 749-8387

MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Many veterans experienced extremely stressful events during their time serving the country. As a result, a significant number of them suffer from various mental health conditions, including depression, addiction, anxiety, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Among troops who served in Iraq between 2005 and 2007, it has been estimated that as many as 20 percent of soldiers and 15 percent of Marines screened positive for a mental health problem. The Rand Corporation found that one-third of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans suffer from PTSD, traumatic brain injury (TBI), or major depression, perhaps due to long deployments and a high rate of exposure to combat. You should know that recent changes in rules have eased the burden of proof for receiving disabilities benefits for PTSD.

The following pages list some of the organizations that offer information and assistance for these and other conditions that affect mental health.

Texas Council of Community MHMR Centers

The Texas Council of Community MHMR Centers supports 39 Community Centers in their public mission to serve as an effective system of care for Texans with mental illness and substance use disorders. The Centers cover all 254 counties in Texas. The Council manages, delivers, and improves services in local communities, coordinating with other systems of care, securing additional resources to meet needs, and ensuring accountability with local, state, and federal partners.

In 2009, the Community Centers touched the lives of more than 275,000 people with mental illness and provided substance use disorder services to more than 30,000 people. With more funds recently allocated to them, the Centers are expanding mental health treatment and support programs by helping veterans find access to treatment, providing trauma therapy services, and promoting peer support for veterans and their families. Contact Joe Lovelace (jlovelace@txcouncil.com) at the Council for more information about the Center that serves your community. (512) 799-6294, www.txcouncil.com

Department of Veterans Affairs

The VA offers a number of mental health services to veterans. Each VA medical center has mental health specialists. The department's website offers a searchable directory of facilities around the country. In addition, the website contains substantive articles that provide basic information about common mental health conditions such as depression and PTSD, as well as information and resources designed to help specific groups of veterans such as women, those who have recently been discharged from active duty, and those who are looking for job training and housing assistance. www.mentalhealth.va.gov

Vet Centers

In addition to the services provided at VA medical centers, Vet Centers provide readjustment counseling and outreach services to veterans who have served in combat zones. The Vet Centers are staffed by small multidisciplinary teams of dedicated providers, many of whom are combat veterans themselves, whose goal is to assist veterans as they transition into civilian life. www.vetcenter.va.gov

National Center for PTSD

The Center aims to help veterans and other trauma survivors through research, education, and training on trauma and PTSD. The site offers comprehensive resources for those who want to learn more about PTSD. www.ptsd.va.gov

Veteran Suicide Prevention Lifeline

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at (800) 273-TALK (8255) is a 24-hour confidential suicide prevention hotline available to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. Calls are routed to the nearest crisis center in a national network of more than 140 crisis centers.

National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD) Hope Line

NCADD advocates prevention, intervention, and treatment through a nationwide network of affiliates. It operates a toll-free Hope Line at *(800) NCA-CALL (622-2255)* for information and 24-hour referral.

National Veterans Foundation Chatline Counseling

The National Veterans Foundation (NVF) operates a toll-free helpline for veterans and their families, raises public awareness about veteran issues, and performs outreach to veterans and their families. Call the NVF helpline at *(888) 777-4443* (9 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily).

National Call Center for Homeless Veterans

The National Call Center for Homeless Veterans hotline gives homeless veterans, or veterans at risk for homelessness, free 24-hour access to trained counselors. *(877) 4AID-VET (424-3838)*

2-1-1 Texas

The Texas Information and Referral Network, 2-1-1 Texas, also is a part of the TexVet initiative. 2-1-1 is a non-emergency confidential telephone service linking callers to local services in Texas. Anyone can dial 2-1-1 to speak directly with a person who is trained to help find needed services. *www.211texas.org*

SERVICEMEMBERS CIVIL RELIEF ACT

The Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) protects the legal rights of members of the armed services who cannot sue or defend a lawsuit while they are on active duty. Specifically, the SCRA provides protection in the following areas:

Residential and Commercial Leases

The SCRA prohibits landlords from evicting a servicemember or any of his or her dependents from a residence where the rent does not exceed \$2,400 per month. A servicemember may also choose to terminate a residential lease or a lease for professional, business, or agricultural purposes at any time after he or she enters into military service.

Foreclosure

The SCRA allows foreclosures on servicemembers' mortgages to be postponed while they are on active duty or within 90 days of return from active duty. Courts may adjust mortgage payments to preserve the interest of a servicemember and his or her dependents.

Auto Leases

The SCRA allows servicemembers who have been on active duty for 180 days or who have received permanent change of station orders out of the United States to terminate an automobile lease agreement.

Health Insurance

The SCRA allows servicemembers to have their health insurance policies fully reinstated immediately after they return from a period of active duty and without exclusions.

Voting Rights

The SCRA protects servicemembers' right to vote in their home state elections regardless of their absence from the state due to military duty.

Civil Deadlines

The SCRA helps servicemembers with civil lawsuits by not counting periods of active duty when computing deadlines, by not allowing judgments to be entered against a defendant on active duty, and by allowing judgments entered during periods of military service or within 60 days after military service to be set aside.

Taxes

The SCRA assists servicemembers with taxes. A servicemember's military pay is not income for purposes of taxation at an active duty station if the servicemember is not normally a resident of the state he or she is stationed in. Additionally, payment of income taxes can be deferred up to 180 days after the termination of military service if the servicemember's ability to pay was materially affected by military service and

the servicemember has given notice to the IRS, state, or local taxing authority; no interest or penalties will accrue on unpaid taxes during the period of deferral.

To view the full text of the SCRA visit
www.uscg.mil/legal/la/Legal_Assistance_SCRA.asp

To view a pamphlet published by the Texas Young Lawyers Association that summarizes the SCRA, visit
www.tyla.org/tasks/sites/default/assets/File/08ServicememberCivilReliefActBro.pdf

*The Texas Young Lawyers Association
and Texas Lawyers for Texas Veterans
are proud to provide this publication as a service
to Texas veterans, who have sacrificed much
for our state and our country.
We hope you find it to be a valuable resource.*

Prepared as a Public Service by the
Texas Young Lawyers Association and distributed by the State Bar of Texas

For Additional Copies, Please Contact:

Public Information Department

State Bar of Texas

P.O. Box 12487

Austin, Texas 78711-2487

(800) 204-2222, Ext. 1800

www.tyla.org

www.texasbar.com/veterans

