

NDVA Guide To Veterans' Benefits



“The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional to how they perceive the veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their nation.”

President George Washington

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The benefit most familiar to Veterans is disability compensation, generally compensation paid to Veterans because of injuries or disease that happened during active duty. However, this is only one of many Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and State of Nebraska benefits available to Veterans. Additionally, there are some benefits earned by the Veteran which provide assistance to eligible spouse, dependents and in some cases, parents of the Veteran.

The Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs (NDVA) has created this guidebook to provide general information on the wide variety of benefits available. In nearly all cases, there are additional requirements or restrictions, above the minimums listed, in order for your claim to be approved by the VA. While you are able to submit a claim for benefits directly to the VA, we strongly encourage you to work with your County Veterans’ Service Officer or NDVA State Service Office.

A list of County Veterans Service Officers may be found on the Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs website at: veterans.nebraska.gov



Health Care

You may be eligible for VA health care benefits if you served in the active military, naval, or air service and didn't receive a dishonorable discharge.

- If you enlisted after September 7, 1980, or entered active duty after October 16, 1981, you must have served 24 continuous months or the full period for which you were called to active duty, unless any of the descriptions below are true for you:
 - Served prior to September 7, 1980 **or**
 - Were discharged for a disability that was caused -or made worse- by your active-duty service, **or**
 - Were discharged for a hardship or "early out,"
- If you're a current or former member of the Reserves or National Guard, you must have been called to active duty by a federal order and completed the full period for which you were called or ordered to active duty.
 - If you had or have active-duty status for training purposes only, you don't qualify for VA health care unless a disability has been shown to have been incurred or aggravated during Title 32 service.

When you apply for VA health care, the VA will assign you to 1 of 8 priority groups. This system is used to ensure that Veterans who need care right away can get signed up quickly.

Your priority group may affect:

- How soon you will be enrolled for health care benefits, **and**
- How much (if anything) you'll have to pay toward the cost of your care.

The factors the VA uses to assign a priority group are:

- Your military service history, **and**
- Your disability rating, **and**
- Your income level, **and**
- Whether or not you qualify for Medicaid, **and**
- Other benefits you may be receiving (like VA pension benefits)

Veterans with service-connected disabilities receive the highest priority. The lowest priority are given to Veterans who earn a higher income and who don't have any service-connected disabilities qualifying them for disability compensation (monthly payments).

If you qualify for more than one priority group, you will be assigned the highest one.

Priority group 1

- Have a service-connected disability that we've rated as 50% or more disabling, **or**
- Have a service-connected disability that we've concluded makes you unable to work (also called unemployable (IU)), **or**



- Received the Medal of Honor (MOH)

Priority group 2

- A service-connected disability that is rated as 30% or 40% disabling.

Priority group 3

- Are a former prisoner of war (POW), **or**
- Received the Purple Heart medal, **or**
- Were discharged for a disability that was caused by (or got worse because of) your active- duty service, **or**
- Have a service-connected disability rated as 10% or 20% disabling, **or**
- Were awarded special eligibility classification under Title 38, U.S.C § 1151, "benefits for individuals disabled by treatment or vocational rehabilitation"

Priority group 4

- Are receiving VA aid and attendance or housebound benefits, **or**
- Have received a VA determination of being catastrophically disabled.

Priority group 5

- No service-connected disability, or you have a non-compensable service-connected disability rated as 0% disabling, **and** you have an annual income level that's below the VA's adjusted income limits (based on your resident zip code), **or**
- Are receiving VA pension benefits, **or**
- Are eligible for Medicaid programs.

Priority group 6

- A compensable service-connected disability rated as 0% disabling, **or**
- Were exposed to ionizing radiation during atmospheric testing or during the occupation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, **or**
- Participated in Project 112/SHAD, **or**
- Served in the Republic of Vietnam between January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975, **or**
- Served in the Persian Gulf War between August 2, 1990, and November 11, 1998, **or**
- Served on active duty at Camp Lejeune for at least 30 days between August 1, 1953, and December 31, 1987

You may also be assigned to priority group 6 if you meet **all** of the requirements listed below.

- Are currently or newly enrolled in VA health care, **and**
- Served in a theater of combat operations after November 11, 1998, or were discharged from active duty on or after January 28, 2003, **and**
- Were discharged less than 5 years ago.

Returning combat Veterans are eligible for these enhanced benefits for 5 years after discharge. At the end of this enhanced enrollment period, you will be given the highest priority group you qualify for at that time.

Priority group 7

- Your gross household income is below the geographically adjusted income limits



- (GMT) for where you live, **and**
- You agree to pay copays

Copay information can be found at:
va.gov/health-care/copay-rates/

Priority group 8

- Your gross household income is above VA income limits and geographically adjusted income limits for where you live, **and**
- You agree to pay copays

If you're assigned to priority group 8, your eligibility for VA health care benefits will depend on which subpriority group you are placed in.

Subpriority group a

- Have a non-compensable service-connected condition rated as 0% disabling, **and**
- Enrolled in the VA health care program before January 16, 2003, **and**
- Have remained enrolled since that date and/or were placed in this subpriority group because your eligibility status changed

Subpriority group b

- Have a non-compensable service-connected condition rated as 0% disabling, **and**
- Enrolled in the VA health care program on or after June 15, 2009, **and**
- Have income that exceeds current VA or geographical limits by 10% or less

Subpriority group c

- Don't have a service-connected condition, **and**
- Enrolled in the VA health care program as of January 16, 2003, **and**
- Have remained enrolled since that date and/or were placed in this subpriority group because your eligibility status changed

Subpriority group d

- Don't have a service-connected condition, **and**
- Enrolled in the VA health care program on or after June 15, 2009, **and**
- Have income that exceeds current VA or geographical limits by 10% or less

If you are placed in one of these subpriority groups, you are not eligible for VA health care benefits

Subpriority group e (You are eligible for care for your service-connected condition only)

- Have a non-compensable service-connected condition that we've rated as 0% disabling, **and**



- Don't meet the criteria for subpriority group a or b above

Subpriority group g

- Don't have a service-connected condition, and
- Don't meet the criteria for subpriority group c or d above

Your priority group may change in some cases, such as your income changes or your service- connected disability gets worse and you receive a higher disability rating.

For more information on VA Healthcare benefits, please visit: <https://www.va.gov/health-care/>



Non-Health Care Benefits

VA Automobile Allowance and Adaptive Equipment

VA automobile allowance and adaptive equipment is a one-time payment of not more than \$21,058.69 to help you buy a specially equipped vehicle due to a disability related to military service which prevents you from driving. In some situations, this benefit may consist of one or more adaptive equipment grants to change a vehicle so it has features like power steering, brakes, seats, windows, or lift equipment to help you get into and out of the vehicle.

You may be able to qualify for this benefit if you have a service-connected disability and that includes at least one of the below conditions:

- Loss, or permanent loss of use, of 1 or both feet, **or**
- Loss, or permanent loss of use, of 1 or both hands, **or**
- Permanent decreased vision in both eyes: 20/200 vision or less in your better eye with glasses, or greater than 20/200 vision but with a visual field defect that has reduced your peripheral vision to 20 degrees or less in your better eye, **or**
- A severe burn injury, **or**
- Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), **or**
- Ankylosis in 1 or both knees or hips (Note: This qualifies you for an adaptive-equipment grant only)

Additional information on this benefit may be found at:

va.gov/disability/eligibility/special-claims/automobile-allowance-adaptive-equipment

VA home loan programs

VA home loan programs help Veterans become homeowners through a home loan guaranty benefit and other housing-related programs to help you buy, build, repair, retain, or adapt a home for your own personal occupancy.

VA Home Loans are provided by private lenders, such as banks and mortgage companies. VA guarantees a portion of the loan, enabling the lender to provide you with more favorable terms.

More information about the large number of available home loan programs may be found at: va.gov/housing-assistance/home-loans/



Free National Park Entrance for Veterans and Gold Star Families

The Military Veterans and Gold Star Family Free Access Program offers free access to 2,000 federal recreation areas including national parks, wildlife refuges, and forests. The free access program allows for free entrance into all federal recreation areas, but does not cover expanded amenities or user fees for activities such as camping, transportation, special recreation permits, reservation fees or special tours. The free access program, also referred to as the “Interagency Annual Military Pass”, is offered to Gold Star Families and those who have served in the US Armed Forces. National Guard and Reserve members qualify for this program. Annual Interagency Military passes must be renewed on an annual basis.

Veterans will need to present one of the following forms of identification in person to federal recreation park staff in order to receive a free Annual Interagency Military Pass: Department of Defense Identification Card (CAC Card), Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC), Veteran ID Card, Veterans designation on a state-issued U.S. driver’s license or identification card.

A Gold Star Family may gain free access to a national park by downloading and printing a voucher to present to park staff in exchange for an Annual Interagency Military Pass. At locations that are not staffed the voucher may be displayed in the vehicle dash. By downloading and signing the voucher, Gold Star Family members self-certify that they meet the required criteria of being an eligible next of kin of a member of the United States Armed Forces who lost his or her life in a qualifying situation. The definition of a Gold Star Family as well as the link to download the Gold Star Family Voucher can be found by visiting the following website:
store.usgs.gov/MilitaryPass

Lifetime Interagency Access Passes are free only for individuals who have a permanent disability. The lifetime Interagency Access Pass is also available to persons age 62 or older for a fee of \$80. These lifetime passes include up to 50% off amenities such as camping, transportation, or reservation fees. Lifetime passes may be purchased in person at a federal recreation site or online through the USGS Store.

The disability access pass application may be found by visiting the following link:
store.usgs.gov/access-pass

The \$80 senior lifetime pass application may be found by visiting the following link:
store.usgs.gov/lifetime-senior-pass

Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E)

The VR&E program helps Veterans with service-connected disabilities and an employment handicap prepare for, obtain, and keep suitable jobs. Services that may



be provided by the VR&E Program include:

- Comprehensive evaluation to determine abilities, skills, and interests for employment
- Vocational counseling and rehabilitation planning for employment services
- Employment services such as 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 workexperiences
- Post-secondary training at a college, vocational, technical or business school
- Supportive rehabilitation services including case management, counseling, and medical referrals
- Independent living services for Veterans unable to work due to the severity of their disabilities.

Veterans are eligible if they:

- Have received a discharge that is other than dishonorable
- Have a service-connected disability rating of at least 10% from VA
- Apply for VR&E services

The basic period of eligibility ends 12 years from the date of notification of one of the following:

- Date of separation from active military service, or
- Date the Veteran was first notified by VA of a service-connected disability rating.

The basic period of eligibility may be extended if a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) determines that a Veteran has a Serious Employment Handicap.

Additional information may be found at:

va.gov/careers-employment/vocational-rehabilitation/

Service-Disabled Veterans Life Insurance (S-DVI)

The Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance (S-DVI) program was established to meet the insurance needs of certain Veterans with service-connected disabilities. S-DVI is available in a variety of permanent plans as well as term insurance. Policies are issued for a maximum face amount of \$10,000.

You can apply for S-DVI if you meet the following 4 criteria:

- You were released from active duty under other than dishonorable conditions on or after April 25, 1951.
- You were rated for a service-connected disability (even if only 0%).
- You are in good health except for any service-connected conditions.
- You apply within 2 years from the date VA grants your new service-connected disability.

Premium information can be found in VA Pamphlet 29-9 located at: benefits.va.gov/INSURANCE/forms/VAP29-9.pdf



Under certain conditions, the basic S-DVI policy provides for a waiver of premiums in case of total disability. Policyholders who carry the basic S-DVI coverage and who become eligible for a waiver of premiums due to total disability can apply for and be granted additional Supplemental S-DVI of up to \$30,000. Premiums may not be waived on this supplemental coverage. S-DVI policyholders are eligible for this supplemental coverage if they:

- Are eligible for a waiver of premiums.
- Apply for the coverage within one year from notice of the grant of waiver.
- Are under age 65

For more information: va.gov/life-insurance/options-eligibility/s-dvi/

Individual Unemployability

If you can't work because of a service-connected disability, you may qualify for Individual Unemployability. This means you may be able to get disability compensation or benefits at the same level as a Veteran who has a 100% disability rating. You may be able to get disability benefits if you meet both requirements listed below.

- You have at least 1 service-connected disability rated at 60% or more disabling, or 2 or more service-connected disabilities—with at least 1 rated at 40% or more disabling and a combined rating of 70% or more **and**
- You can't hold down a steady job that supports you financially (known as substantially gainful employment) because of your service-connected disability. Odd jobs (marginal employment) don't count.

In certain cases, for example, if you need to be in the hospital often, you may qualify at a lower disability rating.

For more information:

va.gov/disability/eligibility/special-claims/unemployability/

Concurrent Retirement and Disability Pay (CRDP)

Concurrent Retirement and Disability Pay allows military retirees to receive both military retired pay and VA compensation. This was prohibited until January 1, 2004. If qualified, you will be enrolled automatically. You may be entitled to CRDP if...

- You are a regular retiree with a VA disability rating of 50 percent or greater.
- You are a reserve retiree with 20 qualifying years of service, who has a VA disability rating of 50 percent or greater and who has reached retirement age.
- You are retired under Temporary Early Retirement Act (TERA) and have a VA disability rating of 50 percent or greater.
- You are a disability retiree who earned entitlement to retired pay under any provision of law other than solely by disability, and you have a VA disability rating of



50 percent or greater. You might become eligible for CRDP at the time you would have become eligible for retired pay.

Veterans Pension

Veterans Pension is a tax-free monetary benefit payable to low-income wartime Veterans. A Veteran must have at least 90 days of active duty service, with at least one day during a wartime period to qualify for a VA Pension. If you entered active duty after September 7, 1980, generally you must have served at least 24 months or the full period for which you were called or ordered to active duty (with some exceptions), with at least one day during a wartime period.

Under current law, VA recognizes the following wartime periods to determine eligibility for VA Pension benefits:

- Mexican Border Period (May 9, 1916 – April 5, 1917 for Veterans who served in Mexico, on its borders, or adjacent waters)
- World War I (April 6, 1917 – November 11, 1918)
- World War II (December 7, 1941 – December 31, 1946)
- Korean conflict (June 27, 1950 – January 31, 1955)
- Vietnam era (February 28, 1961 – May 7, 1975 for Veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam during that period; otherwise August 5, 1964 – May 7, 1975)
- Gulf War (August 2, 1990 – through a future date to be set by law or Presidential Proclamation)

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

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

Your yearly family income must be less than the amount set by Congress to qualify for the Veterans Pension benefit. If eligible, the pension benefit is the difference between “countable” income and the annual pension limit set by Congress. Countable income includes income from most sources as well as from any eligible dependents. It generally includes earnings, disability and retirement payments, interest and dividend payments from annuities, and net income from farming or a business. Some expenses, such as unreimbursed medical expenses, may reduce your countable income.

More information on Veterans’ Pension may be found at: <https://www.va.gov/pension/>

Special Monthly Compensation (SMC)

Special Monthly Compensation is a higher rate of compensation paid due to special circumstances such as the need of aid and attendance by another person or a specific



disability, such as loss of use of one hand or leg.

Compensation and SMC Benefits Rate Tables can be found at:

va.gov/disability/compensation-rates/

Aid and Attendance and Housebound allowances

Veterans who are eligible for a VA pension and require the aid and attendance of another person, or are housebound, may be eligible for additional monetary payment. These benefits are paid in addition to monthly pension, and they are not paid without eligibility to Pension.

Since Aid and Attendance and Housebound allowances increase the pension amount, people who are not eligible for a basic pension due to excessive income may be eligible for pension at these increased rates. A Veteran may not receive Aid and Attendance benefits and Housebound benefits at the same time.

Aid & Attendance (A&A)

The Aid & Attendance (A&A) increased monthly pension amount may be added to monthly pension amount if **one** of the following conditions is met:

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

Housebound

This increased monthly pension amount may be added to monthly pension amount when the Veteran is substantially confined to their immediate premises because of permanent disability.

More information about A&A and Housebound benefits may be

found at: va.gov/pension/aid-attendance-housebound/

Clothing allowances for Service-connected disability requiring prosthetic or orthopedic appliances

VA clothing allowance is a disability compensation benefit for replacement of clothing damaged by prosthetic or an orthopedic device (such as a wheelchair) or by the medicine taken for a skin condition(s).



To receive this disability benefit both of the requirements listed below must be true:

- Your prosthetic or orthopedic device or your skin medicine causes damage to your clothes, **and**
- You need this device or skin medicine because of an injury or illness related to a service- connected condition

This disability benefit can be received as:

- A one-time payment, **or**
- A yearly payment

The current clothing allowance rate may be found at:

va.gov/disability/compensation-rates/special-benefit-allowance-rates/

Specially Adapted Housing/Special Housing Adaptation/Temporary Residence Adaptation Grants

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

Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) Grant

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

- Construct a specially adapted home on land to be acquired
- Build a home on land already owned if it is suitable for specially adapted housing
- Remodel an existing home if it can be made suitable for specially adapted housing
- Apply the grant against the unpaid principal mortgage balance of an adapted home already acquired without the assistance of a VA grant

Special Housing Adaptation (SHA) Grant

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

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

For both SAH and SHA, a maximum of 3 grants, up to the maximum dollar amount are allowed.

Temporary Residence Adaptation (TRA) Grant

A temporary grant may be available to SAH/SHA eligible Veterans who are or will be temporarily residing in a home owned by a family member.



- The TRA grant will not be deducted from the total grant funds available to a Veteran
- The TRA grant will be deducted from one of the three usages available to the Veteran

For more information on VA housing grants, please visit:
[va.gov/housing- assistance/disability-housing-grants/](https://va.gov/housing-assistance/disability-housing-grants/)

Veterans' preference in Federal Hiring

The federal government values the skills and experience that Veterans bring to the workplace. For that reason, Veterans who meet certain criteria receive special consideration when seeking federal employment. This special consideration is called Veterans' Preference.

It's important to note that not all Veterans are eligible for Veterans' Preference. Only those who:

- Were discharged under honorable or general conditions
- Became disabled during their military service
- Or served during specific time periods

Veterans' Preference has two categories: 5 point and 10 point.

- Veterans with 5-point preference must have served on active duty during specific dates. And they don't have any service-connected disabilities.
- Veterans who qualify for 10-point preference have service-connected disabilities or were awarded the Purple Heart



Dependent Benefit Programs

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) is a tax-free monetary benefit paid to eligible survivors of military Servicemembers who died in the line of duty or eligible survivors of Veterans whose death resulted from a service-related injury or disease.

To qualify for DIC, a Surviving Spouse must meet the requirements below.

- Married to a Servicemember who died on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training, **or**
- Validly married the Veteran before January 1, 1957, **or**
- Married the Veteran within 15 years of discharge from the period of military service in which the disease or injury that caused the Veteran's death began or was aggravated, **or**
- Was married to the Veteran for at least one year, **or**
- Had a child with the Veteran, **and**
- Cohabited with the Veteran continuously until the Veteran's death or, if separated, was not at fault for the separation, **and**
- Is not currently remarried

Note: A surviving spouse who remarries on or after December 16, 2003, and on or after attaining age 57, is entitled to continue to receive DIC.

To qualify for DIC, a Surviving Child must meet the requirements below.

- Not included on the surviving spouse's DIC, **and**
- Unmarried, **and**
- Under age 18, or between the ages of 18 and 23 and attending school.

Note: A child adopted out of the Veteran's family may be eligible for DIC if all other eligibility criteria are met.

For more information and eligibility requirements, contact your local County Veterans Service Officer, NDVA or visit: va.gov/disability/dependency-indemnity-compensation/

Parents' Dependency and Indemnity Compensation

Parents' Dependency and Indemnity Compensation is a tax-free income-based monthly benefit for the parent(s) of military Servicemembers who died in the line of duty or Veterans whose death resulted from a service-related injury or disease.

The term "parent" includes: Biological, Adoptive, and Foster parents. A foster parent is a



person who stood in the relationship of a parent to the Veteran for at least one year before the Veteran's last entry into active service. The surviving parent(s) must have an income below a limit established by law.

For more information and eligibility requirements, visit:

[va.gov/disability/dependency-indemnity-compensation/](https://www.va.gov/disability/dependency-indemnity-compensation/)

Survivors Pension

The Survivors Pension, sometimes referred to as Death Pension, is a tax-free monetary benefit payable to a low-income, un-remarried surviving spouse and/or unmarried child or children of a deceased Veteran with wartime service. The deceased Veteran must have met the following service requirements:

- For service on or before September 7, 1980, the Veteran must have served at least 90 days of active military service, with at least one day during a war time period.
- If he or she entered active duty after September 7, 1980, generally he or she must have served at least 24 months or the full period for which called or ordered to active duty with at least one day during a war time period.
- Was discharged from service under other than dishonorable conditions.

Note: War Time periods recognized by VA are listed under Veterans' Pension on pg. 6.

Survivors Pension is also based on yearly family income, which must be less than the amount set by Congress to qualify. While an un-remarried spouse is eligible at any age, a child of a deceased wartime Veteran must be:

- Under 18, **or**
- Under age 23 if attending a VA-approved school, **or**
- Permanently incapable of self-support due to a disability before age 18

More information on Survivors Pension may be found at: <https://www.va.gov/pension/survivors-pension/>

Fry Scholarship

The Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship provides Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to the children and surviving spouses of Service members who died in the line of duty while on active duty after Sept. 10, 2001. Eligible beneficiaries attending school may receive up to 36 months of benefits at the 100 percent level. Eligible beneficiaries attending school may receive:

- Full tuition and fees, paid directly to the school for all public school in-state students (Private or foreign school tuition and fees are capped at a statutory maximum)



- A monthly housing allowance
- A book(s) and supplies stipend

Eligible beneficiaries are:

- Children of active-duty members of the Armed Forces who died in the line of duty on or after Sept. 11, 2001. Eligibility ends on the child's 33rd birthday.
- Surviving spouses of active-duty members of the Armed Forces who died in the line of duty on or after Sept. 11, 2001. Eligibility ends upon remarriage.

More information can be found at:

va.gov/education/survivor-dependent-benefits/fry-scholarship/

Dependents' Education Assistance Program

The Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (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 as a result of a service-related condition. 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. 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.
- A Veteran who died from any cause while such permanent and total service-connected disability was in existence.
- A Servicemember missing in action or captured in line of duty by a hostile force.
- A Servicemember forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power.
- A Servicemember 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.

Utilizing the DEA program may affect your ability to receive other survivors' benefits. Additionally, the total amount of DEA benefits varies based on program, location and other factors. More information may be found at:

va.gov/education/survivor-dependent-benefits/dependents-education-assistance/

Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA)

The Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA) is a comprehensive health care program in which the VA shares the cost of covered health care services and supplies with eligible beneficiaries. You can only get health care through CHAMPVA if you don't qualify for TRICARE and at least **one** of the descriptions below is true for you.



- The spouse or child of a Veteran who's been rated permanently and totally disabled for a service-connected disability by a VA regional benefit office, **or**
- The surviving spouse or child of a Veteran who died from a VA-rated service-connected disability, **or**
- The surviving spouse or child of a Veteran who was at the time of death rated permanently and totally disabled from a service-connected disability, **or**
- The surviving spouse or child of a service member who died in the line of duty, not due to misconduct (in most of these cases, family members qualify for TRICARE, not CHAMPVA).

Due to the similarity between CHAMPVA and the Department of Defense (DoD) TRICARE program (sometimes referred to by its old name, CHAMPUS), the two are often mistaken for each other. CHAMPVA is a VA program while TRICARE is a regionally managed health care program for active duty and retired members of the uniformed services, their families, and survivors. In some cases, a Veteran may appear to be eligible for both or either program on paper; however, if you are a military retiree, or the spouse of a Veteran who was killed in action, you are and will always be a TRICARE beneficiary and cannot choose between the two programs.

As with any health insurance program, there are many additional details to consider. More information can be found at: va.gov/family-and-caregiver-benefits/health-and-disability/champva/



Death Benefits

Burial in a National Cemetery

Veterans, and family members may qualify for burial in a VA national cemetery. There are 137 national cemeteries throughout the nation, with 3 located in Nebraska. Currently only two, Fort McPherson National Cemetery in Maxwell and Omaha National Cemetery in Omaha, have space available to accommodate casketed and cremated remains. To qualify for this benefit, one of these must be true. The person qualifying for burial benefits is:

- A Veteran who didn't receive a dishonorable discharge, or
- A Service member who died while on active duty, active duty for training, or inactivated duty for training, or
- The spouse or dependent child of a Veteran, even if the Veteran died first, or
- In some cases, the adult dependent child of a Veteran (if they aren't married)

Burial benefits available for Veterans buried in a private cemetery may include a Government headstone, marker or medallion, a burial flag, and a Presidential Memorial Certificate, at no cost to the family. Some Veterans may also be eligible for Burial Allowances. There are not any VA benefits available to spouses and dependents buried in a private cemetery.

Burial Flag

A United States flag is provided, at no cost, to drape the casket or accompany the urn of an other than dishonorably discharged deceased Veteran who was a:

- 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 after serving at least one enlistment, or for a disability incurred or aggravated in line of duty
- 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

Headstone or Marker

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. A Government-furnished headstone or marker may be provided for eligible Veterans who died on or after Nov. 1, 1990 and whose grave is marked with a privately purchased headstone. A Government-furnished medallion may be provided for eligible Veterans who



served on or after Apr. 6, 1917, and whose grave is marked with a privately purchased headstone or marker.

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

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

Military Funeral Honors

Upon the family's request, Public Law 106-65 requires that every eligible Veteran receive a military funeral honors ceremony, to include folding and presenting the United States burial flag and the playing of Taps. The Department of Defense (DOD) is responsible for providing military funeral honors. Under the DOD program entitled "Honoring Those Who Served", funeral home directors request military funeral honors on behalf of the Veterans' family. However, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Cemetery Administration cemetery staff can also assist with arranging military funeral honors at VA national cemeteries.

Presidential Memorial Certificates

Under a program initiated in 1962 by President John F. Kennedy and continued by all subsequent Presidents, a Presidential Memorial Certificate (PMC) is available upon request, for any Veteran who would be eligible for burial in a national cemetery. A Presidential Memorial Certificate is an engraved paper certificate, signed by the current President, to honor the memory of a deceased Veteran.

More information on all VA burial benefits may be found at:

[va.gov/burials- memorials/](http://va.gov/burials-memorials/)



State of Nebraska

Veterans' Benefits

State of Nebraska Homestead Exemption

The Nebraska homestead exemption program is a property tax relief program for six categories of homeowners. Three of these categories are specific to Veterans:

- A veteran receiving compensation from the USDVA because of a 100% disability that is service connected
- A wartime veteran totally disabled by a nonservice-connected illness or accident
- A paraplegic veteran or multiple amputee whose home is substantially contributed to by the USDVA.

More information may be found at: revenue.nebraska.gov/PAD/homestead-exemption

Military Retirement Pay Excluded from Income Tax

For taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2022, an individual may exclude 100% of their military retirement benefit income from income counted in federal adjusted gross income (taxable income for the year). Military retirement benefits are defined by Nebraska Legislative Bill 387 as “retirement benefits that are periodic payments attributable to service in the uniformed services of the United States for personal services performed by an individual prior to his or her retirement.” Retirement benefit income reported to an individual on IRS Form 1099-R received by either the US Office of Personnel Management or the US Department of Defense is eligible for exclusion from income tax.

More information may be found at:

revenue.nebraska.gov/about/frequently-asked-questions/military-retirement-benefits-exclusion

Veteran's Annual Small Game Hunt/Fish/Fur Harvest Permit (Age 64 and older)

Veterans age 64 and older who are legal residents of Nebraska are eligible for a Veteran's Annual Small Game Hunt/Fish/Fur Harvest Permit for \$5. This permit includes all state stamps. A copy of a DD214 or a Veteran Indicator on the applicant's Nebraska Driver's License must be presented in person at the time of application.

Veteran and Active Duty Military Waterfowl Hunting Season

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission offers a special waterfowl hunting season for veterans and active duty military. Eligible participants include veterans as defined in Section 101 of Title 38, United States Code, and members of the Armed Forces on active duty, including members of the National Guard and Reserves on active duty (other than for training).



Disabled Veteran's Lifetime Annual Park Entry Permit (no fee)

Disabled Veterans who are legal residents of Nebraska and who have been deemed 50 percent or more service connected or 100 percent disabled non-service connected and receive a pension from the Veterans Administration, are eligible for one (1) perpetual Disabled Veteran's Lifetime Annual Park Entry Permit at no fee.

An application form and signature from a Veteran's Service officer is required. The application can be presented in person when applying for this permit. Nebraska Game and Parks Service Centers can print out applications for individuals interested in the lifetime annual park entry permit. Otherwise, the application may be accessed on the Nebraska Game and Parks' website.

More information may be found at: outdoornebraska.gov/permits/veterans-and-military-permits/

Disabled Veteran's Lifetime Annual Small Game Hunt/Fish/Fur Harvest Permit (no fee)

Disabled Veterans who are legal residents of Nebraska and who have been deemed 50 percent or more service related or 100 percent disabled non-service connected and receive a pension from the Veterans Administration, are eligible for a Disabled Veteran's Lifetime Annual Small Game Hunt/Fish/Fur Harvest Permit at no fee. This permit includes all state stamps.

More information may be found at: outdoornebraska.gov/permits/veterans-and-military-permits/

Nebraska Veterans' Homes

Veterans who served on active duty with an honorable or general discharge and members of the Nebraska National Guard with active duty for training who have lived in Nebraska for at least two years during their lifetime are eligible to become a member of a state veterans' home. The homes are located in Bellevue, Norfolk, Kearney, and Scottsbluff to provide care to veterans across the state.

Member contribution is determined by a sliding scale depending on a person's income and/or assets. Current contribution amounts can be found at veterans.nebraska.gov/homes.

Eligibility may extend to a spouse, surviving spouse, and Gold Star parents.

More information may be found at: veterans.nebraska.gov/homes

Nebraska Veterans Aid Fund (NVA)

Nebraska Veterans Aid (NVA) was created to assist Veterans and their dependents with temporary emergency financial aid when an unforeseen emergency occurs disrupting



their normal method of living and when other resources are not immediately available. This may include paying for food, rent/mortgage, utilities, eyeglasses, hearing aids, preapproved dental bills, medical bills, transportation, and funeral expenses.

More information may be found at: <https://veterans.nebraska.gov/nva>

Military Honor License Plate

Military Honor license plates are available, in lieu of regular county plates, to persons who have served, are currently serving, on active duty or in the Guard/Reserves. The Veteran must be enrolled in the Nebraska Veteran's Registry through the Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs and have served (with an honorable or general under honorable conditions discharge/separation), or be currently serving, on active duty in the specific branch for which a license plate is requested.

More information may be found at: <dmv.nebraska.gov/dvr/military-honor-plates>

Waiver of Tuition Program

Waiver of Tuition is a state program available to dependents of an eligible veteran that may be used to waive 100% of a student's tuition charges and tuition-related fees to the University of Nebraska campuses, Nebraska state colleges, and Nebraska community colleges.

Waiver of Tuition can be used to receive ONE degree, diploma, or certificate from a community college and ONE baccalaureate degree from a university or state college. If the student wishes to take full advantage of the Waiver program, the degree, diploma, or certificate must be earned before the baccalaureate degree. Once a baccalaureate degree has been earned, the student is no longer eligible to receive the Waiver of Tuition; there are no extensions or exceptions to this rule. Waiver of Tuition is not available for masters, doctoral, or professional degrees.

Applications are available at <veterans.nebraska.gov/waiver>

Reservist Tuition Credit Program

Nebraska residents who are members of a Nebraska-based unit of the Active Selected Reserve may be eligible for a 75% tuition credit (or 50% if pursuing a graduate or professional degree). Tuition credit may be granted to 200 applicants each calendar year who are attending University of Nebraska campuses, Nebraska state colleges, or Nebraska community colleges.

To be eligible, applicants must meet the following requirements: be a current Nebraska resident and member of a Nebraska-based Active Selected Reserve Unit, Have agreed to serve a minimum of 3 years in the reserves, be pursuing a course of study leading to a degree or certificate. There is no lifetime limit on tuition credit for any qualifying member.



Applications are required to be submitted on an annual basis in order to renew eligibility for the program.

Applications are available at veterans.nebraska.gov/reservist-tuition

Veterans' Designation on Nebraska License or ID

Veterans may register to have a Veteran's designation displayed on their Nebraska license or ID card. The Veteran must be enrolled in the Nebraska Veteran's Registry through the Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Learn more and apply online:

veterans.nebraska.gov/registry

Occupational Licensure Benefits

Veterans, military service members, and their families may be eligible for licensure by endorsement, expedited licensing, and temporary licensing for certain occupations.

For more information, including a list of occupations, please

visit: [http://dhhs.ne.gov/licensure/Pages/Licensure-](http://dhhs.ne.gov/licensure/Pages/Licensure-Compacts.aspx)

[Compacts.aspx](http://dhhs.ne.gov/licensure/Pages/Licensure-Compacts.aspx)

Department of Labor Priority of Service for Workforce Programs

Veterans and eligible spouses receive access, on a Priority of Service basis, to the full range of public employment and training services. Priority of Service means the Veteran will be granted front of the line privileges and be served first by the next available staff member. Additionally, you receive access to that program or service, for which you are eligible and qualified, either earlier in time or instead of persons who are not eligible for priority of service. These services include:

- Job search assistance
- Workshops, Resume assistance
- Labor market information
- Career counseling
- Job referrals, and referrals to other supportive and training resources

More information on Department of Labor Veteran Services may be found at:

[dol.nebraska.gov/ReemploymentServices/Training/VeteranEmploymentS
ervices](http://dol.nebraska.gov/ReemploymentServices/Training/VeteranEmploymentServices)



Military and Veterans Registry

The Nebraska Veterans' Registry allows Nebraska's veterans to voluntarily identify themselves to the Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs (NDVA) to verify eligibility for state benefits.

- Active Duty Service Members and National Guard may register by providing an application and copy of your current Military identification card to NDVA.
- Veterans may register by providing an application and a copy of your military discharge to NDVA. Your discharge must include the characterization of service.

To register online: <https://veterans.nebraska.gov/registry>

Nebraska Veterans Cemetery at Alliance

In January 2011, the State of Nebraska opened its first state veterans' cemetery. The 20-acre shrine gives Nebraska veterans a final resting place that is fitting of the honor they are owed. Burial fields are available for casket or cremation remains for veterans and their eligible dependents. Memorial Services are offered, with full Military Funeral Honors, for all veterans. Eligibility:

- Active Duty service members whose death occurred while on active duty.
- Veterans discharged from active duty under "other than dishonorable conditions". No minimum service requirements for persons entered as enlisted on or before September 7, 1980, or as an officer commissioned on or before October 16, 1981.
- Veterans discharged from active duty under "other than dishonorable conditions" and completed at least 24 months of service or the full period for which called/ordered to active duty and who entered as an enlisted person after September 7, 1980, or as an officer commissioned after October 16, 1981.
- Reserve and National Guard veterans entitled to retired pay.
- Reserve and National Guard who receive "veteran" status as a result of being called to active duty by Executive Order and who served the full period for which called to active duty.
- Spouses of the above listed Veterans
- A minor child who is unmarried and under 21 years of age or under 23 years of age if pursuing a full-time course of instruction at an approved educational institution.
- Other individuals who meet specific eligibility criteria under title 38, United States Code, section 2402.

More information on the Nebraska Veterans' Cemetery may be found at:
<https://veterans.nebraska.gov/nvca>



Vets Get Pets

Vets Get Pets is a program offered through the Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs that covers up to a maximum of \$350 of an eligible veteran's pet adoption fees. Veterans must be registered in the Nebraska Veterans' Registry to qualify for the Vets Get Pets program and the pets must be adopted from a shelter or rescue licensed by the Nebraska Department of Agriculture.

For more information, visit: veterans.nebraska.gov/vetsgetpets

Veterans Crisis Line: Dial 988, then Press 1

Veterans in crisis, or concerned family and friends, may contact the Veterans Crisis Line any time, day or night. They will be connected with specially trained Department of Veterans' Affairs responders to receive confidential support.

To learn more, visit: veteranscrisisline.net

