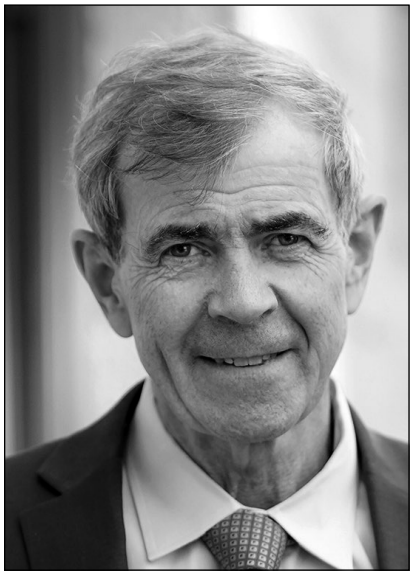
Veterans'
Laws and Benefits

William Francis Galvin

Secretary of the Commonwealth

updated 7/22/2026

A Message from the Secretary of the Commonwealth



Dear Massachusetts Veteran,

I'm pleased to present this guide to Veterans' Laws and Benefits, with information on major state benefits for education, employment, housing, motor vehicles, property taxes, and medical assistance. This guide also contains information on any recent amendments to federal and state legislation regarding veteran employment rights and federal burial benefits.

I'm particularly pleased to include information specifically for National Guard members and Reservists.

This guide connects you with appropriate agencies for benefit eligibility and application information, and also describes how local veterans' agents can help with referrals and emergency assistance.

I thank the state Executive Office of Veterans' Services for helping keep this guide up-to-date, and I hope you will find this guide useful.

Sincerely,

William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth Recent Legislation

We at Citizens Information Service have made every effort to insure accuracy in the telephone numbers and websites listed in the Veterans' Laws and Benefits book. However, changes do happen and a telephone number or website may no longer be accurate. We encourage citizens to let us know if/when a telephone number, or website is no longer in service or no longer accurate.

William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Citizen Information Service
One Ashburton Place, Room 1611
Boston, Massachusetts 02108
Telephone: 617-727-7030
Toll-free: 1-800-392-6090 (in Mass. only)
MassRelay English: 1-866-887-6619 Mass Relay Spanish: 1-866-930-9252
Fax: 617-742-4528
E-mail: cis@sec.state.ma.us
Website: www.sec.state.ma.us/divisions/cis/citizen-information-service.htm

Our acknowledgements to:
Executive Office of Veterans' Services
One Bowdoin Square
15 New Chardon Street, Suite 400
Boston, MA 02114
Tel: 617-210-5480
Toll Free: 1-888-844-5660
www.mass.gov/veterans

Recent Legislation

2026 Federal Appropriations

- A Fiscal Year 2026 appropriation allowed for a 3.8% pay raise that went into effect in January 1, 2026.

The HERO Act

The HERO Act marks the first time in 20 years that a Massachusetts Governor has introduced a comprehensive and expansive legislative package dedicated to the welfare of veterans. Since its filing, additional provisions were added by the Senate and House to further bolster Massachusetts' commitment to veterans and their families. The HERO Act provisions can be organized into four categories. Highlights from the legislation include:

Benefit Expansion

- Behavioral Health Treatment: Expands access to behavioral health treatment by allowing veterans to be reimbursed for visits to outpatient behavioral health providers.
- Increases the Disabled Veteran Annuity: Increases the disabled veteran annuity from $2,000 to $2,500, phased in over two years, and will be one payment, annually, on August 1.
- Increases the Vet-Hire Tax Credit: Increases to $2,500 a tax credit for small businesses hiring chronically unemployed or low-income veterans. Eligible veterans include those receiving SNAP benefits, chronically unemployed veterans, and unemployed service-connected disabled veterans.
- Active-Duty Buyback Program: Extends the timeframe for veterans in public service to utilize the Active-Duty Service Buyback program from 180 days to ten years.
- Prevents the "COLA Cliff": Ensures that a cost-of-living adjustment in Social Security benefits will not affect veterans' eligibility for Chapter 115 benefits mid-fiscal year.
- Increases Local Flexibility for Veterans Property Tax Exemptions: Allows municipalities to double property tax exemptions with local options and ties the annual property tax abatement amount to inflation.
- Protects Access to Sales Tax Exemption: Ensures disabled veterans can use the Purple Heart specialty license plate for sales tax exemptions.
- Increases Support for Military-Connected Students: Requires public school districts to provide support services to military-connected students when a parent or guardian is called to active duty.
- Creates a Military Family Advocacy Program: Establishes a program to protect against child abuse on military installations.

Commitment to Inclusivity and Greater Representation

- Broadens the Chapter 115 Definition of Veteran: Aligns the state Chapter 115 program definition with the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs definition.
- Expands the Scope of the Veterans Equality Review Board: Includes discharges related to Military Sexual Trauma, PTSD, TBI, mental health conditions or HIV.
- Expands the Definition of Veteran Dependent: Supports more dependents based on the Family Court definition.

Modernization of Veterans Services

- Codifies Dental Assistance Benefits: Ensures veterans receive essential dental care by codifying dental benefits for Chapter 115 recipients.
- Codifies Medical Assistance Benefits: Provides consistent care to veterans by codifying medical assistance benefits.
- Codifies Authority for Veterans Cemeteries: Ensures proper management and care of veterans cemeteries.
- Modernizes Statute Language: Revises Chapters 115 and 115A for gender-neutral and inclusive language.

- Initiates a Study on Alternative Therapies for Mental Health: Establishes a working group to study the benefits of alternative therapies, such as psilocybin, for treating veterans' mental health disorders.

Recognition/Honoring our Veterans

- Half-Staff Flag Requirement: Requires flags to be flown at half-staff from the day of death until the day of interment for any military service member residing in Massachusetts.
- Expands Gold Star Families Recognition: Requires the Governor to issue a proclamation on Memorial Day and illuminate certain bridges in gold.
- Establishes United States Space Force Day: Declares December 20th of each year as United States Space Force Day.
- Establishes United States Merchant Marine Day: Declares May 22nd of each year as United States Merchant Marine Day.

Executive Office of Veterans' Services

In August 2022, Massachusetts elevated the former Department of Veterans' Services to an executive-level office under the Governor's jurisdiction. The legislation created the Executive Office of Veterans' Services, issued organizational and governance changes, and created a Cabinet-level Secretariat office.

- Jon Santiago, MD, MPH was sworn in by Governor Maura Healey and Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll as Massachusetts' first Secretary of the Executive Office of Veterans' Services on March 1, 2023.

Military Speed Act

In July 2022, Massachusetts passed the Military SPEED Act to provide additional support to veterans and their families. The bill eases relocation requirements for military families. Some of the benefits include:

- Creating a 30-day expedited licensing process for military spouses with out-of-state occupational licenses
- Granting automatic three-year teaching certificates (without testing) for military spouses with an out-of-state teaching license
- Enrolling students in K-12 schools in advance, without needing to appear physically for enrollment
- Extending "in-state" status at public universities and colleges to any active-duty member stationed in Massachusetts, and their spouse or child

Brave Act

In August 2018, the General Court passed the BRAVE Act, which allows honorably discharged veterans to avoid prosecution on some criminal charges if they suffer from certain conditions due to their service. However, the act also significantly narrowed the scope of this benefit, and restricted excessive use.

The act:

- Limits the crimes to which the act can apply
- Applies the provisions of the act available to first time offenders only
- Makes the act available only to veterans who have been diagnosed with certain conditions (such as PTSD)

Additional Immediate Orders

- Every year, on December 13th, the Governor must publicly observe the founding of the United States Army, Coast Guard, Air Force, and National Guard.
- Service members residing in Massachusetts and pursuing a degree at a state college or university can't lose in-state status if they're transferred on military orders, if they're honorably discharged, or if they retire.
- The Massachusetts National Guard Family Education Program allows qualified members to transfer tuition benefits to their dependents. Transfers are subject to certain criteria.
- The Commissioner of Education can issue Military Spouse Certificates, or licenses to teach, to spouses of service members if they meet certain requirements.

Contents

Massachusetts Veterans Definitions 1
- Veterans 1
- Guard Members 1
- Reservists 1
- Minimum Service Exception (For Death or Disability) 1
- Training Duty Exception 1
- Merchant Marine 1
- Eligible Dependents 1
- Ineligible Persons 2
- Chart of Definitions 2
- Veterans' Bill of Rights 3
- Governor's Advisory Council on Veterans' Services 3

Public Assistance 4
- History of Veterans' Benefits in Massachusetts 4
- Mission 4
- Massachusetts Health Insurance Law and VA Healthcare 5

Education Benefits 5
- Tuition Waiver 5
- National Guard Tuition and Fee Waiver 5
- Public Service Scholarship Programs 5
- Post 9/11 GI Bill 5
- The Yellow Ribbon Program 6
- Eligibility 6
- In-State Student Classification 6
- Military-Connected Student 6
- Purple Star Campus 7
- The Massachusetts National Guard Family Education Program 7
- Massachusetts Soldiers Legacy Fund 8
- Veterans Upward Bound Program 8

Motor Vehicle Benefits 9
- Veterans' License Plates 9
- Veterans' Series License Plates 10
- Distinctive Military Emblems 16
- Veteran ID Indicators 16

Property Tax Exemptions 17
- Eligibility 17
- $750 Exemption (Clause 22A) 17
- $1,250 Exemption (Clause 22B) 17

$1,500 Exemption (Clause 22C) 17
$1,000 Exemption (Clause 22E) 18
Parent or Guardian Eligibility (Clause 22H) 18

Housing 18
State-aided Public Housing 18
Gross Income Calculation 18
Continued Occupancy 19
Homeless Shelters, Transitional Housing, and Supportive Housing with Services 19
Veterans' Homes 20
Veterans' Homes Council 21
Tenancy Preservation Program 21
VA Supported Housing Program 21

Outreach, Counseling, and Trauma Resources 22
Outreach Centers 22
Vet Centers 23
SAVE Program 24
Suicide Prevention Lifeline (988) 24
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) 24
Military Sexual Trauma (MST) 24
Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) 25

Employment 26
Veterans' Tenure 26
Civil Service 26
Retirement: Pension Buy-Back 27
Public Works Employment 27
Protections for Active Duty and Reserve/Guard Members 27
Veterans' Employment and Training Services (VETS) 28
Off-Base Transition Training (OBTT) 29
Anti-Discrimination Protection 30
Job Training for Homeless Veterans 30
Work Opportunity Tax Credit for Hiring Veterans 30
Military Spouse Certificate 31

Women Veterans 31
Women Veterans' Network 31
Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans 32
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' Center for Women Veterans 32
Accessing Local VA Services 32
VA Programs in Massachusetts 33
Women Veterans' Organizations in Massachusetts 34

Veterans' Bonuses and Annuities 34
Bonuses 34
Amendments 35
Appeal a Bonus Decision 35
Annuities 36

Burial Benefits 37
Burial in State Veterans' Cemeteries 37
Burial in National Veterans' Cemeteries 38

Military Records and State Memorials 39
War Records in Massachusetts 39
National Personnel Records Center 40
Changing Military Records and Discharge Ratings 41
Authorization for Earned Medals 41
State Memorials 42

Rights of Called-Up Guard and Reserve Members 42
Servicemembers Civil Relief Act 42
Rights Under Massachusetts Law 45
Other Massachusetts Benefits and Protections 45
Military Family Relief Fund 46
Military and Family Support Center 46
Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program 47

Other Sources of Assistance 48
Post-9/11 Transition and Case Management 48
Service Dogs for Combat Veterans 48
Agent Orange Illness Assistance 48
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs 49
Hanscom AFB Commissary 49
State Park Parking Fee Waiver 50
Veterans' Organizations 50
Legal Assistance by County 51
Veterans' Service Officers 52

Massachusetts Veterans Definitions

Massachusetts General Laws (M.G.L.) Chapter 4, Section 7, Clause 43 established the definition of "veteran" for state benefit purposes.

See the Chart of Definitions below for more information on service era, "wartime," and status requirements.

Veterans

To be a "veteran" under Massachusetts law, you must have either of the following:

- **180 days** of regular active duty service, and a last discharge under honorable conditions, OR
- **90 days** of active duty service, one day of which is during "wartime," and a discharge under honorable conditions (except for Vietnam I, which requires 180 days of active duty service).

Guard Members

To qualify as a National Guard veteran, you must have either of the following:

- **180 days** of service, an activation under Title 10 of the U.S. Code, and a last discharge under honorable conditions
- **90 days** of service, at least one of which is during "wartime," and a last discharge under honorable conditions for any members activated under Title 10 or Title 32 of the U.S. Code or M.G.L. ch.33, s.38, 40, and 41.

Reservists

If you served as a Reservist, your eligibility is based on completed active duty service. Requirements differ based on the era of service; See more in the Chart of Definitions below.

Minimum Service Exception (For Death or Disability)

Massachusetts doesn't enforce a minimum service requirement for death or disability benefits if you meet one of these conditions:

- Served some time in a campaign and awarded the Purple Heart
- Suffered a service-connected disability per the Discharge Certificate
- Died in the service under honorable conditions

Training Duty Exception

If you served as a trainee in the Army or Air National Guard (or any Reserve), you aren't considered in "active service" under state law.

Merchant Marine

If you served as a Merchant Marine, you may qualify for benefits if you:

- Served for at least 90 days in armed conflict between December 7, 1941 and December 31, 1946, and
- Received an honorable discharge from the Army, Navy, or Coast Guard of the United States

Eligible Dependents

The following dependents may qualify to receive veterans' benefits:

- Your spouse
- Your widow

- Your dependent parent
- Any person who acted as a parent to you for five years immediately before your wartime service
- Your biological children (until 19 years of age)
  - Coverage extends through 24 years of age if the children attend high school, an institution of higher learning, or some other accredited educational institution
  - Coverage can extend indefinitely if the children can't mentally or physically support themselves and were affected by the disabilities before their 18th birthday
- Your legally adopted children

Ineligible Persons

Under state law, you wouldn't receive veterans' benefits if any of the following apply:

- You intended to become a U.S. subject or citizen upon entering the armed forces, but later withdrew that intention under the provisions of the Act of Congress approved July 9, 1918
- You identified as an enemy alien and were discharged from the armed forces on your own application or solicitation
- You were convicted of willful desertion
- You only served as a member of the Coast Guard Auxiliary, as a temporary member of the Coast Guard Reserve, or both
- You have a dishonorable or other than honorable (OTH) last discharge or release

Chart of Definitions

M.G.L. ch.4, s.7, cl.43 as amended by the Acts of 2005, ch. 130

Era of Service	Dates	Requirement for Veteran Status
PEACETIME	12-Nov-1918 15-Sep-1940	180 days of regular active duty service and a last discharge under honorable conditions.
WWII (Merchant Marine: Dec. 7, 1941 through Dec. 31, 1946)	16-Sep-1940 25-Jul-1947	90 days of active duty service, one day during "wartime" and a last discharge under honorable conditions.
PEACETIME	26-Jul-1947 24-Jun-1950	180 days of regular active duty service and a last discharge under honorable conditions.
KOREA	25-Jun-1950 31-Jan-1955	90 days of active duty service, one day during "wartime" and a last discharge under honorable conditions.
Korean Defense Service Medal	28-Jul-1954 (to be determined later)	90 days of active duty service, a last discharge under honorable conditions, and the Korean Defense Service Medal
VIETNAM I	1-Feb-1955 4-Aug-1964	180 days of regular active duty service and a last discharge under honorable conditions.
VIETNAM II	5-Aug-1964 7-May-1975	90 days of active duty service, one day during "wartime" and a last discharge under honorable conditions.
PEACETIME	8-May-1975 1-Aug-1990	180 days of regular active duty service and a last discharge under honorable conditions.

Era of Service	Dates	Requirement for Veteran Status
Lebanon Campaign *	25-Aug-1982 (to be determined later)	**90 days** of active duty service, one day during "wartime" and a last discharge under honorable conditions.
Grenada Campaign *	25-Oct-1983 15-Dec-1983	**90 days** of active duty service, one day during "wartime" and a last discharge under honorable conditions.
Panama Campaign *	20-Dec-1989 31-Jan-1990	**90 days** of active duty service, one day during "wartime" and a discharge under honorable conditions.
PERSIAN GULF	2-Aug-1990 Present	**90 days** of active duty service, one day during "wartime" and a discharge under honorable conditions.

* Naval and Marine DD Form 214 must indicate Expeditionary Medal. All DD Form 214's must specify campaign: Lebanon, Granada, or Panama.

Veterans' Bill of Rights

M.G.L. ch.115 and 108 CMR (Code of Massachusetts Regulations)

- If you qualify as a veteran under state law, you have a right to:
  File a written application for veterans' benefits at any time. You can insist upon this right, even if told that you're not eligible. (108 CMR 4:02 (1))
- Receive assistance from your local Veterans' Service Officer (VSO) in completing your application (M.G.L. ch.115, s. 3)
- Receive a full explanation of the services and benefits available under M.G.L. ch.115, as well as other available benefits
- Receive a written notice and explanation of the approval or denial of your application for benefits (108 CMR 8.02)
- Be treated with dignity and respect and receive accurate, courteous, and timely service
- Appeal and request a hearing if you disagree with any action taken in your case (108 CMR 8.07 (1))
- Expect confidentiality. Personal information will not be collected or used except for the purpose of determining your eligibility for benefits (M.G.L. ch.40, s.51)
- Receive fair and equal treatment without regard to sex, race, religion, handicap, ethnicity, or national origin (M.G.L. ch.151B, s.3)
- Receive preference in public employment (M.G.L. ch.31, s.12, 26, 28 and ch.41, s.112)

For additional information on your rights, speak to your city or town VSO, call the Massachusetts Executive Office of Veterans' Services at 617-210-5480, or visit www.mass.gov/forms/contact-the-eovs.

Governor's Advisory Council on Veterans' Services

Executive Order No. 483

The Governor's Advisory Council on Veterans' Services was established in April 2007. The Council advises the Governor, along with the Secretaries of Health and Human Services and Veterans' Services, on issues relating to veterans of the Commonwealth. The Council reviews and assesses state and federal statutes and programs that relate to veterans, and the delivery of services to veterans, including healthcare, education, housing, outreach, training, and retraining.

The Council serves as an educational resource for citizens and elected and appointed officials on veterans' issues.

Public Assistance

Under M.G.L. ch.115, the Commonwealth provides needs-based, means-tested financial and medical assistance programs for impoverished veterans and their dependents.

If you qualify, you and your dependents can receive necessary financial assistance for food, shelter, clothing, fuel, and medical care. Your eligible dependents will still receive the same benefits after your death.

How to Apply

To apply for benefits, contact your local Veterans' Service Officer (VSO). To find a VSO:

- Contact your local city or town hall and ask for Veterans' Services
- Call the Executive Office of Veterans' Services: 617-210-5480, and ask for the VSO's name and contact information
- Visit the EOVS website at www.mass.gov/FindMyVSO to search by municipality

History of Veterans' Benefits in Massachusetts

- Massachusetts and its colonial predecessors established multiple systems to support veterans fighting in various conflicts.
  In the 18th century, towns in the Massachusetts Bay Colony provided assistance to needy veterans of the French and Indian War (1754-1763), primarily fought in British North America.
- The Commonwealth of Massachusetts began providing veterans' benefits immediately following the Revolutionary War.
- When the Civil War began in 1861, the state legislature formalized veterans' assistance by establishing M.G.L. ch.115 and the Department of Veterans' Services. Every city and town opened its own offices of Director of Veterans' Services, Burial Agent, and Graves Officer.

State and local government leaders wanted to recognize service in the armed forces by providing certain essential benefits to service members (both living and deceased)—and to their families.

- M.G.L. ch.115 enables every eligible Massachusetts veteran to receive certain financial, medical, educational, employment, and other benefits earned by military service. Veterans, their dependents, and surviving spouses can receive counseling and assistance from the 351 municipal Veterans' Services offices.
- Today, M.G.L. ch.115 requires every city and town to maintain an EOVS office and an exclusive (or district) Veterans' Service Officer for part-time or full-time work. The VSO provides veterans (living and deceased) and their dependents access to every federal, state, and local benefit and service to which they're entitled—including assisting in their funerals and honoring them on Memorial Day and Veterans' Day.

Mission

The Executive Office of Veterans' Services (EOVS) serves as chief advocate for veterans of the Commonwealth and their families. EOVS provides quality support services and emergency financial assistance for veterans and their dependents.

Executive Office of Veterans' Services
One Bowdoin Square
15 New Chardon Street, Suite 400
Boston, MA 02114
617-210-5480
www.mass.gov/veterans
mdvs@mass.gov

Massachusetts Health Insurance Law and VA Healthcare

As of July 2007, all adult Massachusetts residents must have health insurance. Residents verify health insurance coverage on their tax returns, and those without insurance may face financial penalties. Veterans can access several health insurance options:

The federal VA healthcare system (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs) qualifies as creditable insurance coverage under state and federal law. Because many veterans earn this healthcare through their service, and it's often available with low or no out-of-pocket costs, veterans may apply for VA healthcare before signing up for Commonwealth Care, Medicare, or MassHealth (which may charge premiums, fees, and copays).

Education Benefits

Tuition Waiver

M.G.L. ch.15A, s.19

As a Massachusetts veteran, you may qualify for a tuition waiver for any state-supported course in an undergraduate degree or certificate program offered by a public college or university. To be eligible, you must legally reside in Massachusetts, and you can't be in default of any federal student loans.

Full and partial waivers are offered to eligible veterans on a space-available basis. Each college or university determines its own policies for available space. Contact an institution's veterans' representative for details.

National Guard Tuition and Fee Waiver

Acts of 2005 ch. 130

If you're a National Guard member, you can apply for a full tuition and fees waiver at any state college or university. Contact your college or university veterans' representative for details.

Public Service Scholarship Programs

M.G.L. ch.15A, s.16

Scholarships are awarded to:

- Children of POW/MIA service members serving in Southeast Asia between February 1, 1955 and the end of the Vietnam campaign
- Children of deceased Commonwealth veterans (either killed in action or otherwise died from their service)

Scholarships cover costs for undergraduate studies at any Massachusetts higher education institution.

Massachusetts Department of Higher Education
Office of Student Financial Assistance
454 Broadway Street, Suite 200
Revere, MA 02151
617-391-6070
www.osfa.mass.edu
osfa@osfa.mass.edu

Post 9/11 GI Bill

If you served at least 90 days of active duty on or after September 11, 2001, you may qualify for the Post 9/11 GI Bill. This federal program provides increased educational benefits for veterans.

To be eligible, you must either:

- Have served at least 90 aggregate days on or after September 11, 2001 and received an honorable discharge
- Have been discharged with a service-connected disability after 30 continuous days

Benefits vary by state, since each state bases tuition and fees on the highest in-state undergraduate rate. The

program also includes a monthly housing allowance and a book stipend of $41.67 per credit for up to 24 credits (or $1,000 per academic year).

For information and to apply, call 888-442-4551 or go to www.gibill.va.gov.

The Yellow Ribbon Program

The Yellow Ribbon Program, administered by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, allows colleges and universities to fund tuition and fees expenses that exceed their maximum rates. Under the program, institutions may contribute up to 50% of unmet charges, and the VA will match that amount.

You, or your eligible dependent, may participate in the program if you qualify at the 100% level of the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill.

Eligibility

You may qualify for the Yellow Ribbon Program **under one or more of the following conditions:**

- You served at least 36 months on active duty (either all at once or with breaks in service) and were honorably discharged
- You received a Purple Heart on or after September 11, 2001, and were honorably discharged after any amount of service
- You served at least 30 continuous days (without breaks) on or after September 11, 2001, and were discharged or released from active duty for a service-connected disability
- You're an active-duty service member with at least 36 months on active duty (either all at once or with breaks in service)
- You're a spouse using the transferred benefits of an active-duty service member who has served at least 36 months on active duty
- You're a dependent child using benefits transferred by your veteran guardian
- You're a Fry Scholar

Your school must also meet **all of the following conditions:**

- It's an institution of higher learning
- It offers the Yellow Ribbon Program
- It hasn't exceeded the maximum number of Yellow Ribbon benefits allowed from the VA
- It has certified your enrollment with VA and provided the Yellow Ribbon Program information

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
800-698-2411
www.va.gov/education
www.va.gov/education/yellow-ribbon-participating-schools

In-State Student Classification

M.G.L. ch.15A, s. 19 3/4

If you're an active duty U.S. armed forces service member stationed in Massachusetts, you can receive in-state student classification when pursuing an associate, bachelor, or post-graduate degree. You won't lose that classification even if you're transferred, honorably discharged, or choose to retire.

In-state classification also extends to your spouse or dependents, as long as you serve in Massachusetts.

Military-Connected Student

M.G.L. ch.71, s. 6B(a)(b) and s. 99(a)

Definition

"Military-connected students" are dependents with currently-serving parents or guardians. Specifically, your

dependents can qualify for educational benefits as military-connected students if you:

- Currently serve in active military service of the United States, or
- Currently serve full-time active status with the National Guard of any state

Enrollment

If the military relocates or transfers you into a Commonwealth installation, your dependent student is deemed a resident pupil of the applicable school district for enrollment purposes. Schools must allow a military-connected student to enroll remotely without charge, and can't require your student (or you) to physically appear for registration.

However, this only applies if you provide your military orders requiring service in Commonwealth during the current or following school year.

To enroll your student, use an address that is:

- Within the applicable school district, and
- Is within one of the following:
  - A temporary on-base billeting facility
  - A purchased or leased home or apartment
  - Federal government or public-private venture off-base military housing

You don't need to provide proof of residency during remote registration, but you must provide it no later than 10 days after student begins attending school.

For more information, contact the Office of Student and Family Support (SFS) or your Purple Star Campus military liaison.

Purple Star Campus

M.G.L. ch.71, s. 99(a)(b)(c)

Purple Star Campus schools offer unique services and support for military-connected students.

To qualify as a Purple Star Campus, a school must employ a military liaison, responsible for:

- Identifying military-connected students enrolled at the school
- Serving as the point of contact between the school and military-connected students and their families
- Determining appropriate school services available to military-connected students
- Assisting in coordinating school programs relevant to military-connected students

For more information, contact the Office of Student and Family Support (SFS).

Student and Family Support (SFS)
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street
Malden, MA 02148
781-338-3010
www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/edstability.html
achievement@doe.mass.edu

The Massachusetts National Guard Family Education Program

If you're a National Guard member, you may be able to transfer your unused education benefits to your dependents. Certain restrictions and limits apply. Contact the Massachusetts National Guard's Education office at 339-202-3199 for more information.

Massachusetts Soldiers Legacy Fund

The Massachusetts Soldiers Legacy Fund provides educational assistance funds to children of Massachusetts service members who died in the Global War on Terror.

Massachusetts Soldiers Legacy Fund
508-630-2382
www.mslfund.org
info@mslfund.org

Veterans Upward Bound Program

The Veterans Upward Bound (VUB) is a free federal pre-college program designed to motivate and assist veterans in the development of academic and other requisite skills necessary for acceptance, success, and completion of a postsecondary education program.

Services include vocational schooling, licensures, certificates, certifications, and assistance with obtaining an associate or bachelor's degree at any institution of your choice.

VUB provides veterans with wrap-around services tailored to individual veteran needs:

- **Academic Support**
  - College entrance exam preparation
  - Remedial or refresher academic coursework in mathematics (through pre-calculus), English composition, reading comprehension and literature, lab sciences, and foreign languages
  - Tutoring services and mentoring programs
  - Cultural activities
- **Educational Planning and Application Assistance**
  - Academic advising, degree and college planning
  - Additional post-secondary opportunities
  - College culture and environment review
- **Financial Aid Counseling and Application Assistance**
  - VA education benefits
  - Additional resources – FAFSA, grants, loans, scholarships, and others
- **Student Success Skill Instruction**
  - Time management and organizational skills
  - Note taking, study skills and reducing test anxiety
- **Personal Development**
  - Financial and economic literacy workshops
  - Referrals to local, state and federal resources

Veterans Upward Bound
Suffolk University - Center for Access & Opportunity
73 Tremont St, 7th Floor
Boston, MA 02108
617-725-4102
www.vubma.com
vub@suffolk.edu

Motor Vehicle Benefits

Veterans' License Plates

The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) offers special veterans' license plates and motorcycle plates, along with decals for specific branches and wartime eras.

All fees are subject to change. Proceeds from special plate fees go to the Chelsea and Holyoke Veterans' Homes.

VETERAN PASSENGER VEHICLE PLATE (WITH BRANCH OF SERVICE DECAL OR FLAG)

You can apply for a veterans' license plate if you meet certain service conditions:

- **180 days** of regular active duty service for enlisted or drafted service members, and a last discharge under honorable conditions
- **90 days** of active duty service for Reservists or National Guard members, one day of which is during "wartime," and a last discharge under honorable conditions

Training days are NOT included as service days for qualification.

If you qualify, you can receive one set of plates for each registered vehicle under your name. You'll receive your license plates and registration via U.S. Mail.

How to Apply

Complete the Application for Veterans' Plates and present the following documents (or photocopies) at a full service RMV location:

- Honorable Discharge (or DD Form 214 Release from Active Duty)
- If swapping plates on a current vehicle, a copy of your current vehicle registration and a signed and stamped Registration and Title Application Form from your insurance agent
- If acquiring plates on a new vehicle, a signed and stamped Application for Registration and Title (RMV-1 Form) from your insurance agent

Fees

- Initial Registration Fee: $60
- Special Plate Fee: $40
- Renewal Fee: $100 every two years

Renewal

Renew your passenger plates every two years.

VETERAN MOTORCYCLE PLATE (WITH BRANCH OF SERVICE DECAL OR FLAG)

You can apply for a veterans' motorcycle plate if you meet certain service conditions:

- **180 days** of regular active duty service for enlisted or drafted service members, and a last discharge under honorable conditions
- **90 days** of active duty service for Reservists or National Guard members, one day of which is during "wartime," and a last discharge under honorable conditions

Training days are NOT included as service days for qualification.

If you qualify, you can receive one set of plates for each registered motorcycle under your name. You'll receive your license plates and registration via U.S. Mail.

How to apply
Complete the Application for Veterans' Plates and present the following document (or photocopy) at a full service RMV location. You can also mail your completed application to the RMV's Special Plates Department.

- Honorable Discharge (or DD Form 214 Release from Active Duty)

Fees

- Initial Registration Fee: $20
- Special Plate Fee: $20
- Renewal Fee: $40 every year

Renewal
Renew your motorcycle plate every year.

Veterans' Series License Plates

M.G.L. ch.90, s.2

BRONZE STAR PLATE

If you received a Bronze Star for your service, you may apply for a set of Bronze Star plates. If eligible, you would qualify for one set of plates for each Bronze Star medal received. You'll receive your license plates and registration via U.S. Mail.

How to apply
Complete the Application for Veterans' Plates and submit a photocopy of one of the following documents to the RMV's Special Plates Department:

- Honorable Discharge
- DD Form 214 Release from Active Duty
- Statement of Service from the United States Veterans Administration

Fees
No fee

Renewal
Renew your Bronze Star plates every two years.

BRONZE STAR MOTORCYCLE PLATE

If you received a Bronze Star for your service, you may apply for a set of Bronze Star motorcycle plates. If eligible, you would qualify for one set of motorcycle plates for each Bronze Star medal received. You'll receive your license plates and registration via U.S. Mail.

How to Apply
Complete the Application for Veterans' Plates and submit a photocopy of one of the following documents to the RMV's Special Plates Department:

- Honorable Discharge
- DD Form 214 Release from Active Duty
- Statement of Service from the United States Veterans Administration

Fees
No fee

Renewal
Renew your Bronze Star motorcycle plates every year.

MEDAL OF HONOR PLATE

If you received the Medal of Honor for your service, you may apply for one set of vehicle plates for each Medal of Honor received. You'll receive your license plates and registration via U.S. Mail.

How to apply

Complete the Application for Veterans' Plates and submit a photocopy of one of the following documents to the RMV's Special Plates Department:

- Honorable Discharge
- DD Form 214 Release from Active Duty
- Statement of Service from the United States Veterans Administration

Fees

No fee

Renewal

Renew your Congressional Medal of Honor plates every year.

DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS VEHICLE PLATE

If you received the Distinguished Flying Cross medal while serving in any capacity within the Armed Forces, you may apply for one set of Distinguished Flying Cross vehicle plates. You'll receive your license plates and registration via U.S. Mail.

How to apply

Complete the Application for Veterans' Plates and submit a photocopy of one of the following documents to the RMV's Special Plates Department:

- Honorable Discharge
- DD Form 214 Release from Active Duty
- Statement of Service from the United States Veterans Administration

Fees

No fee

Renewal

Renew your Distinguished Flying Cross plates every two years.

DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS MOTORCYCLE PLATE

If you received the Distinguished Flying Cross medal while serving in any capacity within the Armed Forces, you may apply for one set of Distinguished Flying Cross motorcycle plates. You'll receive your license plates and registration via U.S. Mail.

How to apply

Complete the Application for Veterans' Plates and submit a photocopy of one of the following documents to the RMV's Special Plates Department:

- Honorable Discharge
- DD Form 214 Release from Active Duty
- Statement of Service from the United States Veterans Administration

Fees

No fee

Renewal

Renew your Distinguished Flying Cross motorcycle plates every year.

LEGION OF VALOR PLATE

If you received the Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross, Navy Cross, or Air Force Cross for your service, you may apply for one set of Legion of Valor plates. You'll receive your license plates and registration via U.S. Mail.

How to apply

Complete the Application for Veterans' Plates and submit a photocopy of one of the following documents to the RMV's Special Plates Department:

- Honorable Discharge
- DD Form 214 Release from Active Duty

Fees

No fee

Renewal

Renew your Legion of Valor plates every year.

LEGION OF VALOR MOTORCYCLE PLATE

If you received the Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross, Navy Cross, or Air Force Cross for your service, you may apply for one set of Legion of Valor motorcycle plates. You'll receive your license plates and registration via U.S. Mail.

How to apply

Complete the Application for Veterans' Plates and submit a photocopy of one of the following documents to the RMV's Special Plates Department:

- Honorable Discharge
- DD Form 214 Release from Active Duty

Fees

No fee

Renewal

Renew your Legion of Valor motorcycle plates every year.

PEARL HARBOR SURVIVOR VEHICLE PLATE

If you're a veteran who served in Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, you may apply for one set of Pearl Harbor Survivor plates. You'll receive your license plates and registration via U.S. Mail.

How to apply

Complete the Application for Veterans' Plates and submit photocopies of the following documents to the RMV's Special Plates Department:

- A Pearl Harbor Association membership card
- Honorable Discharge (or DD Form 214 Release from Active Duty)

Fees

No fee

Renewal

Renew your Pearl Harbor Survivor plates every two years.

PEARL HARBOR SURVIVOR MOTORCYCLE PLATE

If you're a veteran who served in Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, you may apply for one set of Pearl Harbor Survivor motorcycle plates. You'll receive your license plates and registration via U.S. Mail.

How to apply
Complete the Application for Veterans' Plates and submit photocopies of the following documents to the RMV's Special Plates Department:

- A Pearl Harbor Association membership card
- Honorable Discharge (or DD Form 214 Release from Active Duty)

Fees
No fee

Renewal
Renew your Pearl Harbor Survivor motorcycle plates every year.

SILVER STAR VEHICLE PLATE
If you received the Silver Star for your service, you may apply for one set of plates for each Silver Star received. You'll receive your license plates and registration via U.S. Mail.

How to apply
Complete the Application for Veterans' Plates and submit photocopies of the following documents to the RMV's Special Plates Department:

- Honorable Discharge (or DD Form 214 Release from Active Duty)
- Statement of Service from the United States Veterans Administration

Fees
No fee

Renewal
Renew your Silver Star plates every two years.

SILVER STAR MOTORCYCLE PLATE
If you received the Silver Star for your service, you may apply for one set of motorcycle plates for each Silver Star received. You'll receive your license plates and registration via U.S. Mail.

How to apply

Complete the Application for Veterans' Plates and submit photocopies of the following documents to the RMV's Special Plates Department:

- Honorable Discharge (or DD Form 214 Release from Active Duty)
- Statement of Service from the United States Veterans Administration

Fees
No fee

Renewal
Renew your Silver Star motorcycle plates every year.

DISABLED VETERAN
If you're an eligible Disabled Veteran, you may apply for one set of plates. You're eligible if you:

- Have a vehicle registered in your name
- Currently reside in Massachusetts
- Provide a DV Plate letter from the Veterans Administration, listing impairments which otherwise qualify for disabled parking and total at least 60% service connected rating

- Meet one (or more) of the following conditions, as certified by a Massachusetts registered and licensed physician, chiropractor, or nurse practitioner:
  - Can't walk 200 feet without stopping to rest
  - Can't walk without the assistance of another person, prosthetic aid, or other assistive device
  - Restricted by lung disease to such a degree that forced (respiratory) expiratory volume (FEV) in one second, when measured by spirometry, is less than one liter
  - Use portable oxygen
  - Have a Class III cardiac condition according to American Heart Association standards
  - Have a Class IV cardiac condition according to American Heart Association standards (You must surrender your license in this case)
  - Have Class III or Class IV functional arthritis according to American College of Rheumatology standards
  - Have been declared legally blind (You must surrender your license in this case)
  - Have lost one or more limbs or permanently lost the use of one or more limbs

How to Apply
Complete the Application for Disabled Parking Placard/Plate and either mail it to the RMV or deliver it in person.

By mail: Mail the completed application, along with a photocopy of your Veterans Administration DV Plate letter, to the RMV Medical Affairs office:

Registry of Motor Vehicles
Attn: Medical Affairs
P.O. Box 55889
Boston, MA 02205-5889
857-368-8020

In person: Deliver the application materials to the Boston (Haymarket) RMV Service Center:

Haymarket Center
136 Blackstone Street, 3rd Floor
Boston, MA 02109

Fees
No fee

Renewal
Renew your Disabled Veteran plates every two years.

Disabled Veteran Fee/Tax Exemptions
If you're approved for a Disabled Veteran plate, **you don't need** to pay the following fees and taxes:

- **Registration Fee: Waived for one passenger vehicle or pick-up truck.** You must own the vehicle and use it for non-commercial purposes. You must still pay fees for special, vanity, or reserved plates, or for additional vehicles. (M.G.L. ch.90, s.33(29))
- **Driver License Fee: Waived if you're approved for (or currently hold) DV plates.** (M.G.L. ch.90, s.33(29))
- **Excise Tax: Waived for one passenger vehicle or pick-up truck, if you're approved (or currently hold) DV plates**. You must own the vehicle and use it for non-commercial purposes. Contact the board of assessors in the vehicle's registered city or town for an exemption. You must still pay excise taxes for additional vehicles. (M.G.L. ch.60A, s.1)

- **Sales Tax:** Waived for **one passenger vehicle or pick-up truck**, if you're approved (or currently hold) DV plates. You must own the vehicle and use it for non-commercial purposes. You must still pay sales taxes for any additional vehicle purchases. (M.G.L. ch.64H, s.6)

EX-PRISONER OF WAR PLATE

If you're an ex-prisoner of war, you may apply for one set of Ex-POW plates. You'll receive your license plates and registration via U.S. Mail.

How to apply

- Present the following documents to a full service RMV location to verify your eligibility: Honorable Discharge (or DD Form 214 Release from Active Duty)
- If swapping plates on a current vehicle, a copy of your current vehicle registration and a signed and stamped Registration and Title Application Form from your insurance agent
- If acquiring plates on a new vehicle, a signed and stamped Application for Registration & Title (RMV-1 Form) from your insurance agent

Fees

No fee

Renewal

Renew your Ex-POW plates every two years.

EX-PRISONER OF WAR MOTORCYCLE PLATE

If you're an ex-prisoner of war, you may apply for one set of Ex-POW motorcycle plates. You'll receive your license plates and registration via U.S. Mail.

How to apply

Present the following documents to a full service RMV location to verify your eligibility:

- Honorable Discharge (or DD Form 214 Release from Active Duty)
- If swapping plates on a current vehicle, a copy of your current vehicle registration and a signed and stamped Registration and Title Application Form from your insurance agent
- If acquiring plates on a new vehicle, a signed and stamped Application for Registration & Title (RMV-1 Form) from your insurance agent

Fees

No fee

Renewal

Renew your Ex-POW motorcycle plates every year.

PURPLE HEART VEHICLE PLATE

If you received a Purple Heart for your service, you may apply for one set of plates for each Purple Heart medal received. You'll receive your license plates and registration via U.S. Mail.

Per the Valor Act II, Purple Heart plates now read, "COMBAT WOUNDED" for veterans and "ACTIVE DUTY" for currently active duty service members.

How to apply

Present the following documents to a full service RMV location to verify your eligibility:

- DD Form 214 Release from Active Duty (or any DD Form 215 amending your Form 214 and granting the award)
- If swapping plates on a current vehicle, a copy of your current vehicle registration and a signed and stamped Registration and Title Application Form from your insurance agent

- If acquiring plates on a new vehicle, a signed and stamped Application for Registration & Title (RMV-1 Form) from your insurance agent

Fees
No fee

Renewal
Renew your Purple Heart plates every two years.

PURPLE HEART MOTORCYCLE PLATE

If you received a Purple Heart for your service, you may apply for one motorcycle plate for each Purple Heart medal received. You'll receive your license plates and registration via U.S. Mail.

Per the Valor Act II, Purple Heart plates now read, "COMBAT WOUNDED" for veterans and "ACTIVE DUTY" for currently active duty service members.

How to apply
Present the following documents to a full service RMV location to verify your eligibility:

- DD Form 214 Release from Active Duty (or any DD Form 215 amending your Form 214 and granting the award)
- If swapping plates on a current vehicle, a copy of your current vehicle registration and a signed and stamped Registration and Title Application Form from your insurance agent
- If acquiring plates on a new vehicle, a signed and stamped Application for Registration & Title (RMV-1 Form) from your insurance agent

Fees
No fee

Renewal
Renew your Purple Heart motorcycle plates every year.

Distinctive Military Emblems

If you have a standard Veteran (Flag) plate, you can add a distinctive branch or service era emblem. Additional costs apply, and you can't place emblems on vehicles with commercial registrations. Emblem requests are processed alongside standard veteran plate orders, and aren't given higher preference.

How to apply
Complete the Application for Veterans' Plates and select the emblem of your choice under "Branch of Service Decal or Flag Choice." Submit your application to the RMV's Special Plates Department.

Veteran ID Indicators

If you're an honorably-discharged Massachusetts resident veteran, you can add a Veteran indicator on your Driver's License, Learner's Permit, Massachusetts ID card, or Liquor ID card. Veteran's indicators can't be added online. You'll need to visit a full-service Registry branch office.

The word "Veteran" would appear in the lower right corner of your license or ID card, or in the bottom center of your learner's permit. There are no additional fees for the Veteran indicator, but all regular transaction fees apply.

How to apply
Complete a Class D, M, or DM License Application, ID Card Application, or CDL Application, and select the Veteran indicator box.

- Present one of the following documents (typed, not handwritten) to an RMV Service Center:
  - DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty)
  - DD Form 215 (Correction To DD Form 214)
  - Honorable Discharge

Property Tax Exemptions

M.G.L. ch.59, s.5 outlines property tax exemptions for veterans and eligible family members.

Eligibility

To qualify for a property tax exemption, you (and your spouse where applicable) must:

- Be legal Massachusetts residents
- Occupy the property as a primary residence on July 1 of the application year
- Have lived in Massachusetts for at least six months prior to entering the service (spouses exempted), or have lived in Massachusetts for five consecutive years immediately before applying

In most cases, surviving spouses retain the exemption—though they would lose it if they remarry.

$400 Exemption (Clause 22)

Under Clause 22, you could receive a $400 tax exemption if you meet one of the following:

- 10% (or more) service-connected disabled veteran
- Awarded Purple Heart
- Gold Star mother or father
- Spouse of eligible veteran
- Surviving spouse who does not remarry

$750 Exemption (Clause 22A)

Under Clause 22A, you could receive a $750 tax exemption if you meet one of the following:

- Loss (or loss of use) of one hand above the wrist, or one foot above the ankle, or one eye
- Awarded Medal of Honor
- Awarded Distinguished Service Cross
- Awarded Navy Cross
- Awarded Air Force Cross

$1,250 Exemption (Clause 22B)

Under Clause 22B, you could receive a $1,250 tax exemption if you meet the following:

- Loss (or loss of use) of both hands or both feet
- Loss (or loss of use) of one hand above the wrist and one foot above the ankle
- Loss (or loss of use) of both eyes (blindness)

$1,500 Exemption (Clause 22C)

Under Clause 22C, you could receive a $1,500 tax exemption if you're:

- Permanently and totally disabled (as rated by the VA), and have specially adapted housing
- Full Exemption for Surviving Spouses (Clause 22D)
- Under Clause 22D, the state would waive property taxes for your surviving spouse (who does not remarry) if you served in the U.S. Armed Forces (or Guard), and either:
- Died from combat zone-induced injury or disease
- Were deemed missing in action with a presumptive finding of death

$1,000 Exemption (Clause 22E)

Under Clause 22E, you could receive a $1,000 tax exemption if you're:

- Classified as 100% disabled by the VA

Parent or Guardian Eligibility (Clause 22H)

Under Clause 22H, surviving parents or guardians may receive an exemption regardless of the timing of your death (or declaration of missing in action).

However, the exemption only applies to tax years beginning on or after January 1, 2019, and lasts until the deaths of the surviving parents or guardians.

- Surviving parents can only seek an exemption for property that serves as their primary residence, and they must have lived in Massachusetts for at least five consecutive years immediately before the filing date (or you must have lived in Massachusetts for no less than six months before entering service).

For more information, contact your local city/town assessor's office or the Department of Revenue:

Department of Revenue
Division of Local Services
Bureau of Municipal Finance Laws

100 Cambridge Street (no walk-in service)
Boston, MA 02210
617-626-2300
Fax: 617-626-2330
www.mass.gov/orgs/orgs/division-of-local-services

Housing

State-aided Public Housing

Preference in Tenant Selection
M.G.L. ch.200, Acts of 1948; M.G.L. ch.121B, s.1 and s.32; 760 CMR 7.04

You will receive preference in tenant selection for state-aided public housing if you meet certain requirements. Specifically, you must apply through a local housing authority, and must meet these conditions:

- Displaced by any low-rent housing project, public slum clearance, or urban renewal project
- Displaced within three years prior to applying for low-rent housing

Tenant selection preference is granted in the following order:

1. Families of disabled veterans who have a service-connected disability as determined by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
2. Families of deceased veterans who died from a service-connected condition as determined by the VA
3. Families of all other veterans

The word "veteran" also includes your spouse, surviving spouse, dependent parents, or children—and any divorced spouses who are legal guardians of your children.

Gross Income Calculation

760 CMR 6.05(3)(C) and M.G.L. ch.121B, s.32

When calculating your gross income for state-aided public housing, you don't need to include any funds used to pay tuition, fees, or the cost of books. Housing authorities can also exclude any disability compensation paid by the VA to totally unemployable disabled veterans, in excess of $1,800.

Continued Occupancy

M.G.L. ch.121B, s. 32

State-aided low-rent housing projects can't deny continued occupancy to veterans, widows of veterans, or a Gold Star Mother who has lived there for the last eight consecutive years.

This clause only applies if the housing unit is two bedrooms or less, and the rent is not more than three months in arrears.

Homeless Shelters, Transitional Housing, and Supportive Housing with Services

The Executive Office of Veterans' Services provides funding to select non-profit organizations that offer housing services to eligible veterans.

Housing services include emergency homeless shelters, group residences, and single occupancy (SRO) quarters. All eligible providers require that residents maintain a sober and drug-free environment. Services are available to both male and female veterans.

Homeless Shelters (Short Stay)

Shelter	Address	Telephone	Website
Veterans Inc.	69 Grove Street Worcester, MA 01605	1-800-482-2565	www.veteransinc.org/
New England Center and Home for Veterans	17 Court Street Boston, MA 02108	617-371-1800	www.nechv.org/
Veterans Transition House	20 Willis Street New Bedford, MA 02740	508-992-5313	www.vetshouse.org/
Soldier On	425 North Main Street, Buildings 6 and 26 Leeds, MA 01053-0481	413-584-3059	www.wesoldieron.org/
Bedford Veterans Quarters (SRO)	200 Springs Road Bedford, MA 01730	781-843-1242 x18	www. caritascommunities.org

Transitional (longer stay) and supportive housing with services

Shelter	Address	Telephone	Website
Armistice Homestead	116 Pearl Street Leominster, MA 01453	978-466-7778	Congregate Care only. No Hospice. No Website.
Montachusett Veterans Outreach Center, Inc.	268 Central Street Gardner, MA 01440	978-632-9601	www.veterans-outreach.org/
Cape and Islands Veterans Outreach Center, Inc.	247 Steven Street, Suite E Hyannis, MA 02601	508-778-1590	gina@capevertaerans.com www.capeveterans.com/
Pine Street Inn	444 Harrison Avenue Boston, MA 02118	617-892-9100	www.pinestreetinn.org
Bilingual Veterans Outreach Center	281 Franklin Street Springfield, MA 01104	413-731-0194	bilingualvets.org/ Email: bilingualvets.org/ contactus/
New England Center and Home for Veterans, Merrimack Valley	17 Court Street Boston MA 02108	978-305-9810	nechv.org/get-help/merrimack-valley/ christopher.nowak@nechv.org

Other programs not supported by EOVS funding
Consumer Education Centers (MassHousing)
800-224-5124
www.masshousing.org

Home Modification Loan Program
(Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission)
866-500-5599
www.mass.gov/home-modification-loan-program-hmlp

Homeless Women Veterans' Outreach and Case Management
Jamaica Plain VA Medical Center
150 South Huntington Avenue, 116B-3
Boston, MA 02130
617-232-9500
800-865-3384
www.va.gov/homeless/for_women_veterans.asp

MassHousing's Home for the Brave Loan Program
617-854-1000
www.masshousing.com

MetroHousing Boston
800-272-0990
www.metrohousingboston.org

Disabled American Veterans Department of Massachusetts
3 Victory Lane
Gardner, MA 01440
978-632-1271
www.davma.org

Veterans' Homes

Massachusetts Veterans' Homes provide a variety of services to veterans, such as nursing, long-term care, physical and occupational therapy, laboratory, radiology, and social services.

There are two state Veterans' Homes: Chelsea and Holyoke.

Veterans' Home in Chelsea
91 Crest Avenue
Chelsea, MA 02150
617-884-5660
www.mass.gov/orgs/veterans-home-in-chelsea

Veterans' Home in Holyoke

110 Cherry Street
Holyoke, MA 01041
413-532-9475
www.mass.gov/orgs/veterans-home-in-holyoke

Veterans' Homes Council

Massachusetts established the 19-member Veterans' Homes Council in 2022. The Council advises the Secretary of the Executive Office of Veterans Services (EOVS) to ensure the health, well-being, and safety of residents in state-operated Veterans' Homes. It also seeks to improve access to equitable, high quality, and competent care for Commonwealth veterans.

The Council's responsibilities include:

- Recommending policies, proposing rules and regulations, and advising the Secretary of the EOVS on the Veterans' Homes
- Referring recommendations for appointment or removal of the Superintendent of the Veterans' Homes
- Providing an annual report of the two Veterans' Homes, with recommendations to increase equity and accessibility for people of all identities

Veterans' Homes Council
Executive Office of Veterans' Services
One Bowdoin Square
15 New Chardon Street, Suite 400
Boston, MA 02114617-210-5480
www.mass.gov/orgs/veterans-homes-council

Tenancy Preservation Program

Through the Tenancy Preservation Program (TPP), MassHousing works to prevent homelessness among people with disabilities. TPP acts as a neutral party between landlord and tenant, and provides clinical consultation services to the Housing Court.

For more information, call 617-788-6500 or visit www.mass.gov/info-details/tenancy-preservation-program.

VA Supported Housing Program

The VA Supported Housing (VASH) Program is a joint project of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). VASH provides section 8 vouchers to chronically homeless veterans with substance abuse and/or mental health issues. The voucher provides a rent subsidy that generally covers rental costs in excess of 30% of the veterans' income. The goal of the program is to transition veterans from homelessness to independent subsidized housing by providing supportive, community-based case management services.

Eligibility requirements

- A veteran must not be a lifetime sexual offender
- Be homeless or at-risk for homelessness
- Have a substance abuse or mental illness history
- Be clinically stabilized
- Have a need and willingness to accept case management services over a period of time to be determined by the case manager
- Be within income guidelines
- Have a savings account

For more information, contact the VASH Program Assistant at a VA Medical Center near you.

Bedford: 781-687-2000
Boston: 617-232-9500
Northampton: 413-584-4040

Outreach, Counseling, and Trauma Resources

Outreach Centers

These Outreach Centers may or may not receive some state funding through EOVS. They assist veterans and their families with various services, including:

- Assistance and referrals to obtain federal and state veterans' benefits
- Food pantry and clothing closets
- Transportation services
- Community activities
- Peer counseling
- Professional counseling
- Substance abuse counseling
- Anger management
- Post-traumatic stress counseling

Eligibility

For Outreach Center services, you do NOT need to meet the state's "veteran" definition under M.G.L. ch.4, s.7, cl.43.

Outreach Center	Address	Telephone	Website
Cape and Islands Veterans Outreach Center, Inc.	247 Steven Street, Suite E Hyannis, MA 02601	508-778-1590	gina@capeveteran.com www.capeveterans.com/
North Shore Veterans' Counseling Services, Inc.	45 Broadway Beverly, MA 01915	978-921-4851	www.northshoreveterans.com
Pine Street Inn	444 Harrison Avenue Boston, MA 02118	617-892-9100	www.pinestreetinn.org
Veterans' Association of Bristol County	755 Pine Street Fall River, MA 02720	508-679-9277	thevabc.com
Montachusett Veterans' Outreach Center, Inc.	268 Central Street Gardner, MA 01440	978-632-9601	www.veterans-outreach.org
Veterans' Northeast Outreach Center, Inc.	10 Reed Street Haverhill, MA 01832	978-372-3626	www.vneoc.org
Veterans' Outreach Center - Metrowest	40 Mechanic Street, Suite 101 Marlborough, MA 01752	508-460-9993	www.vneoc.org
Community Health Center of Cape Cod	107 Commercial Street Mashpee, MA 02649	508-477-7090	www.chcofcapecod.org
Soldier On	425 North Main Street Northampton, MA 01053	413-582-3059	www.wesoldieron.org
Nathan Hale Foundation	116 Long Pond Road Plymouth, MA 02360	508-224-0100	www.thenathanhaleveterans outreachcenter.com
Bilingual Veterans Outreach Center	281 Franklin Street Springfield, MA 01104	413-731-0194	www.bilingualvets.org
Veterans Inc.	69 Grove Street Worcester, MA 01605	508-791-1213	www.veteransinc.org/

Vet Centers

Vet Centers provide readjustment services to returning veterans and their family members with available program options near their respective communities. Vet Center counselors also provide bereavement counseling to parents, spouses, and children of service members who died while serving.

Vet Center services include:

- Individual readjustment counseling
- Benefits assistance and referrals
- Group readjustment counseling
- Liaison with community agencies
- Marital and family counseling
- Substance abuse help and referrals
- Job counseling and placement
- Sexual trauma and PTSD counseling
- Community education

All services are free to eligible veterans, their families, and significant others. Vet Center staff protects the privacy of all clients, and all treatment records are kept confidential and not shared with the VA.

Outreach Center	Address	Telephone	Website
Boston Vet Center	7 Drydock Avenue, Suite 270 South Boston, MA 02210	857-203-6461	www.va.gov/boston-vet-center
Brockton Vet Center	1 Pearl Street, Suite 2300 Brockton, MA 02301	508-580-2730	www.va.gov/brockton-vet-center
Hyannis (Cape Cod) Vet Center	474 West Main Street Barnstable, MA 02601	508-778-0124	www.va.gov/cape-cod-vet-center
Loell Vet Center	10 George Street Lowell, MA 08151	978-453-1151	www.va.gov/lowell-vet-center
New Bedford Vet Center	73 Huttleton Avenue Fairhaven, MA 02719	508-999-6920	www.va.gov/new-bedford-vet-center
Springfield Vet Center	95A Ashley Avenue, Suite A West Springfield, MA 01089	413-737-5167	www.va.gov/springfield-ma-vet-center
Worcester Vet Center	255 Park Avenue, Suite 900 Worcester, MA 01609	508-753-7902	www.va.gov/worcester-vet-center

SAVE Program

The SAVE program advocates for veterans who can't (or aren't able to) obtain earned benefits themselves. The program primarily focuses on suicide prevention and mental health distress, identifying issues facing veterans when they return from service. SAVE proactively provides them with access to helpful benefits and services, encouraging positive transitions back to civilian life.

SAVE also connects veterans and their families with various federal and state government agencies. The SAVE team collaborates with the Massachusetts National Guard to administer its Family Readiness Program, available to all service members and their families.

Executive Office of Veterans' Services SAVE Team
One Bowdoin Square
15 New Chardon Street, Suite 400
Boston, MA 02114617-210-5743
Toll-Free: 888-844-2838
www.mass.gov/veterans

Suicide Prevention Lifeline (988)

988 is the number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. This line provides service for anyone in crisis, including veterans.

- The previous toll-free number, 800-273-TALK (8255), can also connect you with VA suicide prevention and mental health service professionals.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a psychiatric disorder that can occur after life-threatening events, such as military combat, natural disasters, terrorist incidents, serious accidents, or violent personal and sexual assaults. PTSD can induce biological changes and psychological symptoms. It frequently occurs with related mental disorders, such as depression, substance abuse, and memory or cognition problems.

PTSD sufferers often relive the experience (through nightmares and flashbacks), develop sleep disorders, and feel detached or estranged. Their physical health can also deteriorate. These symptoms can worsen and persist, damaging social life and causing problems with jobs, families, marriages, and parenting.

National Center for PTSD
VA Boston Healthcare System
150 South Huntington Avenue (116B-2)
Boston, MA 02130
617-232-9500
Mental health care line: 857-364-5647
ptsd.va.gov

You can also contact a local Vet Center for help with managing PTSD. See Vet Centers, beginning on page 23, for the center nearest you.

Military Sexual Trauma (MST)

VA Medical Centers, Vet Centers, and the National Center for PTSD all offer confidential support and guidance for victims of Military Sexual Trauma (MST). Many veterans, female and male, never discuss these incidents with counselors.

- The law defines MST as "sexual harassment, sexual assault, rape, and other acts of violence."
- Sexual harassment is defined as "repeated unsolicited, verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature, which is threatening."

Veterans with a history of sexual trauma suffered while in the military MAY be eligible for free VA treatment for conditions related to that trauma, even if the trauma isn't service-connected.

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) occurs when the brain suffers damage from an external physical force. TBIs may develop from direct hits to the head, collision with a stationary object, or violent shaking. These incidents may occur from car accidents, serious falls, or acts of violence.

Service members may sustain a TBI from a blast injury or shockwave. TBIs may result in significant cognitive, behavioral, or social challenges.

Statewide Head Injury Program (SHIP)

The Statewide Head Injury Program (SHIP), offered by the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC), provides community-based services to TBI victims, including:

- Skills training, including skills needed to live in the community.
- Adult companionship and social activities. Aides can also support caregiving family members.
- Residential services provided in a home setting for more than one individual. Supervision and support is available at all times. Availability is limited due to funding.
- Shared living in a paid caregiver's home. Caregivers help with everyday needs. Availability is limited due to funding.
- SHIP Brain Injury Community Centers, offering site-based rehabilitation with support through a membership program. Each Center becomes a community, with staff and members working together to develop and manage services. This work supports member skill growth, goal development, and self-esteem.

SHIP also offers TBI screening exams and neuropsychological assessments for Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) veterans who have not been previously diagnosed with or treated for TBI.

Eligibility

To become eligible for SHIP services, you must meet **all of the following conditions:**

- Currently reside in Massachusetts
- Have a confirmed brain injury caused by an outside event
- Have difficulty managing your everyday life because of the brain injury
- Be willing and able to accept services and participate in programs

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission
Statewide Head Injury Program (SHIP)
600 Washington Street, 7th Floor
Boston, MA 02111
617-204-3665
Toll-free: 800-223-2559
www.mass.gov/info-details/statewide-head-injury-program-ship
shipu@mrc.state.ma.us

Employment

Veterans' Tenure

M.G.L. ch.30, s.9A

If you've held a state non-civil service position for more than three years, you can't be involuntarily separated for lack of work or money if similar offices or positions exist.

This clause doesn't apply if other positions are also held by veterans. In that case, work separations occur in reverse order of the original appointments.

Civil Service

M.G.L. ch.31, s.26

Veterans seeking a civil service position receive preference based on the following order:

- Disabled veterans
- Veterans
- Spouses or single parents of veterans who were killed in action or who died from a service-connected disability during wartime service, provided that the spouse or parent has not remarried

M.G.L. ch.31, s.12

Veterans who apply for civil service jobs without an exam receive preference over equally qualified non-veterans.

- If more than one veteran qualifies for a position, the appointing authority makes the hiring decision. If an authority wants to bypass this law, it must get approval from the Human Resources Division (HRD).
- HRD's civil service unit also maintains lists of state agencies with vacancies, and will notify interested veterans of openings.

Open Competitive Exams

Civil service uses a system of absolute veteran preference, based on certain scores in an open competitive exam. If you receive 70 points or above on an exam (including police and firefighter) you'd immediately move to the top of the eligibility list.

However, this does not mean that you'd automatically get the job. Rather, you're placed at the top of the list and hired when a vacancy occurs. Within the veteran's preference system, veterans are ranked as follows:

- Disabled veterans have first preference
- All other veterans have second preference
- Spouses and single parents of veterans who died in action or from service-connected wounds receive third preference

Note: If you're a Guard or Reserve member called for active duty, you can either take exams overseas or take make-up promotional exams upon return. Contact the Human Resources Division at 617-878-9757 before deployment for more information.

Promotional Exams

All veterans, regardless of type, receive two points to their scores. However, they aren't placed at the top of the list.

Labor Service

M.G.L. ch.31, s.28

Labor service positions don't require exams. Veterans, whether disabled or not, are placed at the top of the eligibility list. Spouses and single parents of veterans are placed below veterans, but above all other applicants.

Public Service
Acts of 1941 c.708 (4)

If you're a National Guard member or Reservist, you could receive protection for civil service original appointment exams if you meet the following criteria:

- Enter active service
- Take and pass a civil service test
- Currently sit on a certified list

You must make a request in writing, within a year after your discharge, for continuation or restoration to these lists equal to your time of military service. If you're on more than one list, you must request this protection separately for each list.

Retirement: Pension Buy-Back
M.G.L. ch.32, s.4 (h)

If you're employed by state government (or certain other governmental units), you can buy back up to four years of active service.

Buy-backs accrue at the following rates:

Active duty: One year buyback for every year of service

Reserve or National Guard: One year buyback for every four years of service

Public Works Employment
M.G.L. ch.149 s.26

As a veteran, you receive higher preference for jobs in public works construction, either by the state, a county, town, authority or district, or by anyone contracting or subcontracting for such work.

Each county, town, district, contractor, or subcontractor must give preference to veterans and service-connected disabled veterans who live in their jurisdiction.

Eligible veterans
All veterans as defined by state law. See the Definition of a Massachusetts Veteran section of this guide for more.

For veterans' preference in civil service positions:

Human Resources Division
One Ashburton Place, 3rd Floor
Boston, MA 02108
617-878-9757
www.mass.gov/orgs/human-resources

Protections for Active Duty and Reserve/Guard Members
Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA)
Under USERRA, you're entitled to return to your civilian public or private employment with the seniority, status, and pay you would have attained with continuous employment—if you meet certain criteria.

In particular, the law:

- Expands anti-discrimination protection for Reserve and Guard members in hiring, retention, and advancement on the basis of their military obligation
- Requires employers to make reasonable efforts to retrain or upgrade skills to qualify workers for reemployment
- Expands healthcare and employee benefit pension plan coverage

- Extends the number of years an individual may be absent for military duty
- Improves protections for disabled veterans
- Improves enforcement mechanisms for service members who believe their reemployment rights have been violated

You must inform your employer of any service obligations in advance, unless military necessity makes this impossible. You must also notify your employer of any intent to return to employment, under a set of guidelines based on the length of time absent from the job.

Employers and service members with specific USERRA questions should first contact the Massachusetts office of Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (MA ESGR).

You can call their Customer Service Center at 800-336-4590, Option 1, or email OSD.USERRA@mail.mil.

Release for Training
M.G.L. ch.33, s.59 and 59A

If you're a Massachusetts National Guard member and serve as a state, county, city, or town employee, you may receive paid release days for training—provided your jurisdiction accepted this provision.

Eligible Guard members can receive either:

- Up to 34 paid days off for any state fiscal year
- 17 paid days for any federal fiscal year, with the same leaves of absence or vacation given to others

Employers can't require you to use vacation or other time for training drills ordered during normal work hours. These work releases also can't affect leaves of absence or vacation with pay given to others.

M.G.L. ch.149, s.52A

If you're a Ready Reserve member employed in the public or private sector, you can't lose your position or benefits—including normal vacation, sick leave, bonuses, and advancements—during your annual training, as long as you meet the following criteria:

- You don't exceed 17 training days in any calendar year
- You give notice of return and departure

The leave may be with or without pay at the employer's discretion.

Public Employees serving in Global War on Terror
Ch. 77 of the Acts of 2005

If you're a National Guard or Reservist public employee, and you were called into active service between September 11, 2001 and September 11, 2011, you're entitled to the difference, if any, between your base pay as a public employee and your base pay from the military. This applies for any jurisdiction that accepted the law.

Veterans' Employment and Training Services (VETS)

The Veterans' Employment and Training Services (VETS) program, supported through grants from the U.S. Department of Labor, allows MassHire to provide Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LVER) at MassHire Career Centers throughout the Commonwealth.

MassHire Career Centers
MassHire Career Centers are located across the state in every major city, with branch offices in additional communities. While centers design services to meet local needs, there are core services that are similar across the statewide network.

There's no charge for these services for veterans. DVOPs and LVERs give priority service to veterans.

Visit www.mass.gov/masshire-career-centers or call toll-free 877-872-5627 (US2-JOBS).

Serving Greater Boston/Eastern Mass.
Father Bill's & MainSpring Administrative Office 430 Belmont Street Brockton, MA 02301 Tel: 508-427-6448 www.helpfbms.org **New England Center and Home for Veterans** 17 Court Street Boston, MA 02108 Tel: 617-371-1800 www.nechv.org **Project Place** 1145 Washington Street Boston, MA 02118 Tel: 617-542-3740 www.projectplace.org

Serving Central/Southern Mass.
Veterans, Inc. 69 Grove Street, Worcester, MA 01605 Tel: 508-791-1213 Toll Free: 1-800-482-2565 www.veteransinc.org

Serving Western Massachusetts
Soldier On 425 North Main Street Northampton, MA 01053 Tel: 413-582-3059 www.wesoldieron.org

Individual Shelters:
Father Bill's Place 38 Broad Street Quincy, MA 02169 Tel: 617-770-3314 **MainSpring House** 54 North Main Street Brockton, MA 02301 Tel: 508-587-5441

Transition Assistance Program (TAP)
The Department of Labor's Transitional Assistance Program (TAP) is an intensive five-day course designed to ease military personnel back into civilian life.

TAP workshops are facilitated regularly by DVOP and LVER staff at Hanscom Air Force Base in Bedford, Fort Devens, and the U.S. Coast Guard Base in Boston. TAP is available to transitioning military personnel and their family members who are within 12 months of separating (if active) or 24 months of separating (if retiring).

MassHire Department of Career Services
100 Cambridge Street, 5th Floor
Boston, MA 02114
617-626-5300
www.mass.gov/orgs/department-of-career-services

Off-Base Transition Training (OBTT)

The Off-Base Transition Training (OBTT) pilot program is an opportunity earned through service for veterans, veterans currently serving in the National Guard and Reserve, and their spouses to take control of their career through workshops to help meet their employment goals.

OBTT offers the opportunity for you to move your career forward. Workshops combine the skills you learned in service and as a spouse with DOL (Department of Labor) taught employment fundamentals.

The ten, two-hour workshops are in-person, virtual and built to fit your schedule. These workshops are offered to you at no cost based on your service. You can mix and match workshops to meet your employment goals and attend workshops at your own pace.

Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS)
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20210
866-487-2365
www.dol.gov

Anti-Discrimination Protection

M.G.L. ch.151B, s.4

It's illegal for any employer to deny initial employment, reemployment, retention in employment, promotion, or any benefit of employment to a person who is a member of, applies to perform, or has an obligation to perform, service in a uniformed military service of the United States, including the National Guard.

If you believe that your employer discriminated against you on the basis of your veteran status, report any complaints to the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD).

Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD)
One Ashburton Place, Room 601
Boston, MA 02108-1518
617-994-6000
TTY: 617-994-6196
www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-commission-against-discrimination

You can also contact the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS), which handles USERRA-related complaints. They can refer complaints to the U.S. Office of Special Counsel for litigation.

www.dol.gov/agencies/vets/about/regionaloffices/boston#ma

Job Training for Homeless Veterans

The Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP) is an employment focused competitive grant program of the Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service (DOL-VETS), the only federal grant to focus exclusively on competitive employment for homeless veterans.

HVRP grants require that the participating veteran be homeless or currently residing in a shelter in order to be eligible for the training, job assistance, and housing services. For eligibility criteria, contact the individual program.

New England Center and Home for Veterans
Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program Massachusetts (HVRP)
17 Court Street
Boston, MA 02108
617-371-1800
www.nechv.org

Work Opportunity Tax Credit for Hiring Veterans

For-profit employers in Massachusetts may be eligible for a federal tax credit through the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) program if they hire a qualifying unemployed veteran.

To qualify for the credit, the employer must hire an "unemployed veteran" that meets the following criteria:

- Discharged or released from the military within five years of the hiring date
- Received at least four weeks of unemployment benefits within the year before the hiring date

Qualified individuals must be identified as a member of this target group before a job offer is made.

The WOTC program has two purposes:

- To help employ individuals who qualify as members of a target group
- To help employers who hire qualified individuals by giving them a credit on their federal taxes

The person hired must be employed for at least 120 hours. For more information on this federal program, ask a DVOP/LVER at a MassHire Career Center near you or call 617-626-5353.

Military Spouse Certificate

M.G.L. ch.71, s.38G

Spouses of military members seeking an expedited teaching license in the Commonwealth can apply for one through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Eligibility rules apply. Licenses are awarded to spouses of service members who are:

- Serving in the U.S. Armed Forces, a reserve unit of the Armed Forces, or the National Guard of another state; and
- Currently serving in the Commonwealth, or in a bordering state while living in the Commonwealth

The spouse must hold a valid teaching certificate from another state in good standing, and must not yet have satisfied certification testing requirements.

Certificates are valid for at least three years. Service under a military spouse certificate will count toward acquiring professional teacher status, assuming the teacher passes all required certification tests.

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Office of Educator Licensure
75 Pleasant Street
Malden, MA 02148
781-338-6600
www.doe.mass.edu/licensure/

Women Veterans

Women Veterans' Network

The Women Veterans' Network (WVN) informs women veterans of their rights and benefits. The Network is the central resource for women veterans in Massachusetts. Its mission is to:

- Provide women veterans with information on federal, state, and local benefits
- Expand awareness of women veteran needs, and identify available health and human resources to meet those needs
- Advocate on behalf of women veterans in Massachusetts

Database of Women Veterans

WVN maintains a confidential database of women veterans in Massachusetts. It uses this list for its biannual newsletter, containing information on benefits, programs, and events. WVN also hosts events every year, including webinars, gatherings, the Women Veterans Appreciation Day, and its annual conference.

To add your name to the Database of Women Veterans, contact WVN at EOVSWomenVets@mass.gov.

Deborah Sampson Award

The Deborah Sampson Award, sponsored by the Women Veterans' Network, recognizes a female veteran who excelled in serving fellow Women Veterans throughout the year. The award is presented to the recipient at the annual Women Veterans' Conference.

Contact the network for more information at EOVSWomenVets@mass.gov.

Women Veterans' Network Steering Committee

WVN's work is supported and guided by a committee of women veterans and community leaders. The WVN Steering Committee include women veterans from all eras, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs representatives, local Veterans' Service Officers, representatives of veterans' services organizations, and active duty military personnel. The Committee meets bimonthly to share information and work on projects.

36 Frequently Asked Questions from Massachusetts Women Veterans
The Women Veterans' Network Committee compiled a booklet answering the 36 most frequently asked questions of Massachusetts' women veterans. This publication is an easy-to-use reference tool that points readers to the federal and state programs and resources available to women veterans.

Call or email to request a free copy:
617-939-5786
EOVSWomenVets@mass.gov

Speakers Bureau
The Women Veterans' Network has a Speakers Bureau consisting of women veterans interested in speaking about their experiences in the military. The Network receives requests from cities and towns, schools, organizations, and private groups looking for speakers at different veterans' events, especially on Memorial Day and Veterans' Day. To become a member of the Speakers' Bureau or to request a speaker, contact the Women Veterans' Network.

Executive Office of Veterans' Services
Women Veterans' Network
Jessica Frost - Director
One Bowdoin Square
15 New Chardon Street, Suite 400
Boston, MA 02114
857-303-3017
www.mass.gov/veterans

Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans
M.G.L. ch.115, s.2

In 1984, Governor Michael S. Dukakis established a special Advisory Committee on Women Veterans, under the direction of the Commissioner (now Secretary) of Veterans' Services. The Advisory Committee promotes the interests of women veterans in Massachusetts. It also hosts a luncheon every fall to recognize women veterans.

Executive Office of Veterans' Services
One Bowdoin Square
15 New Chardon Street, Suite 400
617-210-5480
www.mass.gov/veterans

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' Center for Women Veterans
The Center for Women Veterans (CWV) monitors and coordinates the VA's administration of health care, benefits, services, and programs for women veterans. CWV raises awareness of the responsibility to treat women veterans with dignity and respect. It also acts as the primary advisor to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on programs, issues, and initiatives for women veterans.

Center for Women Veterans
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20240
202-461-6193
www.va.gov/womenvet

Accessing Local VA Services

At the local level, each VA Medical Center has a Women Veterans' Program Manager. These representatives help women veterans access their treatment and benefit entitlements.

Contact Information

Bedford VAMC: 781-687-2000

Boston VAMC: 857-364-5994

Brockton VAMC: 508-583-4500

Jamaica Plain VAMC: 617-232-9500

Northampton VAMC: 413-584-4040

West Roxbury VAMC: 617-323-7700

Regional (Federal) Information

15 New Sudbury Street, 16th Floor
JFK Federal Building
Boston, MA 02203
617-303-1384
Toll-free: 800-827-1000

The VA can provide appropriate and timely medical care to any eligible woman veteran. In addition to routine medical care, each VA medical facility can provide eligible women veterans with:

- Complete physical exams that include breast and pelvic examinations
- Gynecological services
- Referral for necessary services at other facilities

VA Programs in Massachusetts

Brockton Vet Center
1 Pearl Street, Suite 270
Brockton, MA 02301
508-580-2730

Homeless Women Veterans' Outreach and Case Management Program
VA Boston Healthcare System
150 South Huntington Avenue 116B-3
Boston, MA 02130
617-232-9500
Toll-free: 800-865-3384
www.va.gov/homeless/for_women_veterans.asp

Military Sexual Trauma Counseling
Boston Vet Center
665 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02215
617-424-0665

National Center for PTSD
Boston VA Medical Center
150 South Huntington Avenue 116B-3
Boston, MA 02130
857-364-4145
www.ptsd.va.gov

Pelvic Floor Dysfunction Clinic
Northampton VA Medical Center
421 North Main Street
Northampton, MA 01053-9764
413-584-4040

Women Veterans' Organizations in Massachusetts

Several women veteran service organizations have chapters in Massachusetts. For a complete listing, contact the Women's Veterans Network.

Gail McAuliffe
Women's Veterans Network
617-939-5786

Veterans' Bonuses and Annuities

Bonuses

Massachusetts provides bonuses to veterans of certain designated campaigns, as long as they were living in Massachusetts immediately before entering the armed forces.

Bonus eligibility extends to your spouse and children, parents, siblings, or other dependents (in that order).

World War II Veteran Bonus
Acts of 1945, ch.731

If you're a veteran of World War II, you can claim a bonus based on the following stipulations:

- $100 if you served between one day and six months of active duty
- $200 if you served six months or more stateside
- $300 if you served in any foreign country

Korean War Veteran Bonus
Acts of 1953, ch.440

If you're a veteran of the Korean War, you can claim a bonus based on the following stipulations:

- $100 if you served at least 90 days of stateside duty
- $200 if you served six months or more of active duty
- $300 if you served one or more days outside the continental limits of the United States, or performed foreign service

Vietnam War Veteran Bonus
Acts of 1968, ch.646

If you're a veteran of the Vietnam War, you can claim a bonus if you performed at least six months of active duty from July 1, 1958, to May 17, 1975. Bonuses are awarded based on where you served:

- $200 if you served six months or more active duty outside of Vietnam
- $300 if you served any active duty in Vietnam

Persian Gulf War Veteran Bonus
Acts of 1992, ch.153

If you're a veteran of the Persian Gulf War, you can claim a bonus if you performed at least 30 days of active duty between August 2, 1990 and April 10, 1991.

Service must have been under honorable conditions. Bonuses are awarded based on the following stipulations:

- $500 if you served in active duty in the Persian Gulf area (either the war zone or contiguous waters), and received the Southwest Asia Service Medal

- $300 if you're a National Guard member or Reservist called to active service in an area other than the Persian Gulf

Global War on Terrorism Veteran Bonus
Acts of 2005, ch.130

If you're a veteran of any operation under the Global War on Terrorism, you can claim a bonus. Eligible campaigns include:

- Operation Enduring Freedom
- Operation Iraqi Freedom
- Operation Noble Eagle
- Operation Inherent Resolve
- Operation Freedom's Sentinel
- Any successor or related operation

Your service must have been under honorable conditions, and you must have lived in the Commonwealth for six months prior to entering service. Bonuses are awarded based on the following stipulations:

- $1,000 if you served outside the continental limits of the United States, whether in Afghanistan, Iraq, or any other area designated by the Department of Defense as an imminent danger area
- $500 if you served within the continental limits of the United States
- $500 if you served outside the continental limits of the United States, but didn't qualify for hostile fire or imminent danger pay as determined by the Department of Defense

Amendments

Persian Gulf Active Duty Bonus
Acts of 2009, ch.132, s.14

This Amendment revised Ch. 153 of the Acts of 1992, extending bonuses to currently serving active duty personnel.

Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq Bonus
Acts of 2011, ch.130 and ch.171

This amendment revised Chapter 132 of the Acts of 2009, adding new detail about bonus claims for veterans of the Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The updated law awards bonuses to eligible Massachusetts resident veterans based on the number of deployments:

- Eligible veterans may receive the full bonus allowed after the first deployment to the Afghanistan or Iraq area (or any area designated as eligible by the proper federal authority)
- Eligible veterans may also receive the full bonus allowed after the first deployment within the continental limits of the United States, or outside the continental limits of the United States other than in the Afghanistan or Iraq areas
- Veterans may receive 50 percent of the eligible bonus for each additional return from deployment in the designated areas, subject to availability of funds

Office of the Treasurer
One Ashburton Place, 12th Floor
Boston, MA 02108
617-367-9333 x859 (OEF/OIF/ONE veterans only)
www.mass.gov/orgs/veterans-bonus-division
veteransbonus@tre.state.ma.us

Appeal a Bonus Decision

If you want to contest a bonus rejection, you can to a board consisting of a member of the Department of the State Treasurer, an assistant Attorney General, and the Adjutant General (or their designees). This board must grant you a hearing, after due notice, upon such appeal.

The decision of the board is final. For more information, contact the Veterans' Bonus Division.

Office of the Treasurer
Veterans' Bonus Division
One Ashburton Place, 12th Floor
Boston, MA 02108
617-367-9333 x859 (OEF/OIF/ONE veterans only)
www.mass.gov/how-to/appeal-a-decision-regarding-your-veterans-bonus
veteransbonus@tre.state.ma.us

Annuities

M.G.L. ch.115, s.6A, 6B, 6C and 108 CMR 9.01, Acts of 2005, ch.130

The Executive Office of Veterans' Services offers an annuity payment of $2,000, paid in two $1,000 installments in February and August of each year.

This annuity recognizes the service of distinguished 100% service-connected disabled veterans. It can also support Gold Star parents and un-remarried spouses of distinguished veterans who gave their lives in wartime service.

Eligibility

- You (or your parent or spouse) can apply for the annuity if you:
  - Meet one of the service time requirements set forth in state law
- See M.G.L. ch.4, s.7, cl.43, M.G.L. ch.115, s.6A, and 108 CMR 3.03.
  - Received a discharge from military service under other than dishonorable conditions
  - Reside in Massachusetts when applying
  - Meet requirements for blindness, paraplegia, double amputation or other disability set forth in state law and certified by the federal Department of Veterans Affairs

See M.G.L. ch.115, s.6B

You must provide proof of service and disability in your application

How to Apply for an Annuity

You (or your parent or spouse) must be a Massachusetts resident at the time of filing, and must continue to reside in the Commonwealth.

For an August payment, EOVS must receive and approve your application by June 30th in any given year. For a February payment, EOVS must receive and approve your application by December 31st in any given year.

EOVS strongly recommends submitting annuity applications electronically.

You can apply online by visiting www.mass.gov/service-details/veteran-annuity-payment.

- To receive an annuity, include the following documents:
- The Annuity Application packet (either digital or the PDF version)
- W-9 Form (either digital or the PDF version)
- Certificate of Discharge or Release from Active Service (Form DD 214 w/Character of Services)
- VA Rating Decision
- Death Certificate or Casualty Report of Deceased Veteran

- Birth Certificate of Deceased Veteran (parent applications only)
- Marriage Certificate (spouse applications only)
- VA/DIC Rating Decision (spouse applications only)
- Direct Deposit Form (optional, either digital or the PDF version)

You can also apply via email, regular mail, or in person through your local Veterans' Service Officer (VSO).

- Email: VetsAnnuity@mass.gov
- Mail: Send the application packet and all required materials to:

Executive Office of Veterans' Services
One Bowdoin Square
15 New Chardon Street, Suite 400
Boston, MA 02114
617-210-5480
www.mass.gov/info-details/veteran-annuity-payment

In person: Visit www.mass.gov/FindMyVSO to find a local VSO.

Burial Benefits

Burial in State Veterans' Cemeteries

Massachusetts operates two state veterans' cemeteries in Agawam and Winchendon. Eligible veterans are buried at no cost, while burial of spouses, widows/widowers, and eligible dependents incur nominal fees.

Eligibility

The Massachusetts Veterans' Memorial Cemeteries follow the National Cemetery Administration's military eligibility requirements. For burial in municipal, private, or religious cemeteries, contact the local managing authority for application information.

Military Service

You receive burial benefits if you meet any of the following criteria:

- Die in active duty service with any of the armed forces of the United States, and with a listed Massachusetts home of record
- Discharged or released from active duty service under honorable conditions
- Served at least 20 years in the National Guard or United States Reserve and received a military pension or documentation verifying retirement pay at age 60

With certain exceptions, your service must be for a minimum of 24 months if it began after September 7, 1980 (for enlisted persons) or October 16, 1981 (for officers)—or the full period for which the person was called to active duty if less than 24 months (for example, anyone serving in the Gulf War or Reservists who were federalized by presidential recall).

Ineligible for Military Burial

You would not be eligible for burial benefits if you meet any of the following criteria:

- You were convicted of a federal or state capital crime and sentenced to death or life imprisonment (violation of Title 38, United States Code, Section 2411)
- You only served in active duty for training purposes
- You were discharged under dishonorable conditions, or with a bar on veterans' benefits due to character of service

Eligibility for Family of Veterans
Your spouse or widow may receive burial benefits in the state veteran's cemeteries if they were legally married to you at the time of death.

- A spouse or surviving spouse qualifies for interment, even if you're not buried or memorialized in a state veterans' cemetery, or if your remains are unavailable for burial
- For veteran deaths before January 1, 2000: A surviving spouse who subsequently remarried a non-veteran may receive burial benefits in a state veterans' cemetery because of the prior marriage to you
- A former spouse is not eligible if your marriage ended by annulment or divorce

Your children may also receive burial benefits in a state veterans' cemetery, provided that they're:

- Unmarried
- Under 21 years of age or under 24 years of age and pursuing full-time instruction at an approved educational institution

Children with permanent physical or mental disabilities, of any age, may also receive burial benefits in a state veterans' cemetery, provided that they're:

- Unmarried
- Incapable of self-support before reaching 21 years of age, or before 24 years of age while pursuing full-time instruction at an approved educational institution

How to Apply
To simplify the process, have the following documents ready when applying:

- An application by either you or your next-of-kin
- All discharge papers
- Birth Certificate

Forward these documents to one of the Massachusetts veterans' cemeteries for approval.

Massachusetts Veterans' Memorial Cemetery at Agawam
1390 Main Street
Agawam, MA 01001
413-821-9500
www.mass.gov/massachusetts-veterans-memorial-cemeteries

Massachusetts Veterans' Memorial Cemetery at Winchendon
111 Glenallen Street
Winchendon, MA 01475
978-297-9501
www.mass.gov/massachusetts-veterans-memorial-cemeteries

Burial in National Veterans' Cemeteries
The Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration maintains 155 national cemeteries in 42 states (and Puerto Rico) as well as 34 soldier's lots and monument sites. The Massachusetts national cemetery is located in Bourne, MA.

VA burial benefits include a gravesite in a national cemetery, opening and closing of the grave, perpetual grave, a government headstone or marker, a burial flag, and a Presidential Memorial Certificate at no cost to your family. Cremated remains and casketed remains are buried or interred in national cemeteries in the same manner, and with the same honors.

Eligibility and How to Apply

- Visit the National Cemetery Administration website at www.cem.va.gov
- Toll-free: 800-698-2411
- Talk to a VA Veterans Benefits Coordinator

Massachusetts National Cemetery
Connery Avenue
Bourne, MA 02532
508-563-7113

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
National Cemetery Administration
Toll-free: 800-698-2411
www.cem.va.gov

Military Honors at Funeral
To arrange for military funeral honors, contact your funeral director (or the funeral home directly if you don't have a director). Also contact the relevant branch of service for guidance:

Air Force:
781-377-4850
Fax: 781-377-3153

Army:
774-286-1702
Fax: 508-233-6781

Coast Guard:
617-990-6249
Fax: 617-223-3490

Marine Corps:
866-826-3628
Fax: 703-784-9827

Navy:
860-694-3475
Fax: 860-694-3699

Military Records and State Memorials

War Records in Massachusetts

If you're a veteran discharged to Massachusetts, you can obtain a copy of your military records by contacting the Military Records Branch of the Office of the Adjutant General.

The Military Records Branch converted all records to electronic format for easier access. Restricted online access to military records is available for authorized users, such as Veterans' Service Officers and funeral directors.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Joint Force Headquarters (JFHQ-MA)
Military Records Branch
2 Randolph Rd., Bldg. 1505
Hanscom AFB, MA 01731-3001
508-422-1993
Fax: 508-422-1997
www.massnationalguard.org
military.records@mass.gov

National Personnel Records Center

The National Personnel Records Center, Military Personnel Records (NPRC-MPR) is the repository of millions of military personnel, health, and medical records of discharged and deceased veterans of all services since 1900.

NPRC (MPR) also stores medical treatment records of retirees from all services, as well as records for dependent and other persons treated at naval medical facilities. Information from the records is made available upon written request (with signature and date) to the extent allowed by law.

National Personnel Records Center
Military Personnel Records
1 Archives Drive
St. Louis, MO 63138
www.archives.gov/veterans
MPR.center@nara.gov

Obtaining Military Records

If you're a veteran, or next-of-kin of a deceased veteran, you can order a copy of military records online from the National Archives at www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records.

For all other requests, submit a Standard Form 180. All requests **must be in writing, signed, and mailed** to the address shown below. Email requests aren't accepted.

National Personnel Records Center
Military Personnel Records
1 Archives Drive
St. Louis, MO 63138

Obtaining Clinical and Medical Treatment Records

Clinical and medical treatment records are filed at the National Personnel Records Center by whichever facility last held them. To request information from medical records, you must provide the following information:

- Name of the last facility that held the records. Usually, this is the last facility where treatment was provided
- The year and the type of treatment (inpatient, outpatient, dental, mental health, etc.). If you need copies of specific records, state the type of illness, injury, or treatment involved
- The patient's full name used during treatment
- The patient's Social Security number and status during treatment (military, retiree, dependent of military, federal employee, dependent, or other)
- Branch of service and sponsor's service number or Social Security number (if the former patient is/was a dependent)
- Veterans and next-of-kin may request records online at www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records. For all other requests, you must mail a Standard Form 180 to the addresses below.

For medical records of separated/retired military personnel and Navy/Marine Corps dependents, send your request to:

National Personnel Records Center
Military Personnel Records
1 Archives Drive
St. Louis, MO 63138

For medical records of Air Force, Coast Guard, or Army dependents, send your request to:

National Personnel Records Center
Civilian Personnel Records
111 Winnebago Street
St. Louis, MO 63118-4126

Note: If you're planning to file a claim for medical benefits with the VA, you don't need to request a copy of your military health record from the NPRC. When you file a VA claim, the VA will request the records automatically.

National Personnel Records Center
Military Personnel Records
1 Archives Drive
St. Louis, MO 63138
314-801-0800
Toll-free: 866-272-6272
www.archives.gov/personnel-records-center/military-personnel

Changing Military Records and Discharge Ratings

Each military branch maintains a discharge review board, with authority to change, correct, or modify any discharges or dismissals not issued by a sentence of a general courts-martial. However, the board can't address medical discharges.

Either you, your surviving spouse, your next of kin, or a legal representative may apply for a review of discharge by writing to the military department concerned, using DD Forms 293 or 149.

- If you were discharged within the past 15 years and wish to change, correct, or modify your discharge records, fill out and submit DD Form 293, Application for Review of Discharge or Dismissal from the Armed Forces of the United States.
- If you were discharged more than 15 years ago, fill out DD Form 149, Application for Correction of Military Records and submit it to the review board agency of your branch of service.

The contact information for the review boards of all branches of service is listed on both forms. You can also contact your local Veterans' Service Officer for assistance.

Authorization for Earned Medals

You can determine which medals you've earned by examining your military discharge forms (DD-214, WD 53-35, NAVPERS, etc.). These forms list all medals awarded to you at the time of discharge.

You may request replacement of any medals that were lost, stolen, destroyed, or rendered unfit through no fault of your own. You may also request awards that were earned but never issued. Next-of-kin of deceased veterans may also make these requests.

You can request replacement medals online by visiting www.archives.gov/veterans/replace-medals. You can also contact your local Veterans' Service Officer.

State Memorials

World War II Memorias

Battleship Cove is home to Massachusetts' official memorial to all Bay Staters killed in service to their nation during World War II. Located on board the U.S.S. Massachusetts, this memorial symbolizes the eternal gratitude of a proud Commonwealth and nation.

Battleship Cove
Five Water Street
P.O. Box 111
Fall River, MA 02722-0111
508-678-1100
Toll-free (within New England): 800-533-3194
www.battleshipcove.org

Korean War Memorial

The Massachusetts Korean War Memorial is installed in Charlestown Naval Shipyard Park, within the Boston Navy Yard. Featuring a bronze sculpture of a soldier on a granite base, the memorial honors over 1,200 Massachusetts veterans who died in Korea.

Vietnam War Memorial

The Massachusetts Vietnam Veterans' Memorial, located at Green Hill Park in Worcester, honors the service and sacrifice of those who served in the U.S. armed forces from 1955-75. The memorial was dedicated in 2002, and serves as the statewide tribute to the 1,536 men and one woman who rendered the ultimate sacrifice during the Vietnam War, and the 235,000 Bay State veterans of that conflict who still survived.

Massachusetts Vietnam Veterans' Memorial
Green Hill Park
50 Skyline Drive
Worcester, MA 01605
508-799-1190
www.massvvm.org

Rights of Called-Up Guard and Reserve Members

If you're a National Guard or Reserve member called up for active duty, you will be eligible for additional federal and state benefits. These benefits can help you avoid legal problems, retain your job, and possibly save money.

Because of the emotional, physical, and social disruption that occurs from a call-up, Congress and the Massachusetts Legislature have provided various rights and benefits for called-up service members.

Servicemembers Civil Relief Act

Formerly the Soldiers and Sailors Civil Relief Act

The SCRA provides extra protections if legal or financial transactions adversely affect your rights during military or uniformed service. These protections enable you to devote your entire energy to the country's defense needs.

Under the SCRA, protection begins when you enter active duty, and generally terminates within 30-90 days after your discharge date.

Below is a summary of the various benefits offered through the SCRA:

Maximum rate of interest

If you take out an auto, home, or student loan, or incur credit card debt before joining active duty, you can have all interest rates reduced to a maximum of 6% per year.

To receive this benefit, you must notify your lender in writing and include either:

- A copy of your orders to active duty service, OR

- A letter from your commanding officer showing the date you began active duty service

Rent and eviction
If your rent does not exceed a certain amount (updated every year), your landlord can't evict your dependents from your primary residence without a court order. If the landlord seeks a court order, the court may stay the proceedings for 90 days.

Termination of residential leases
If you meet one of the following conditions, and you (or your dependents) currently occupy a rental unit, you may terminate the lease without penalty:

- You entered into a residential lease before you started active duty
- You received a permanent change of station while on active duty
- You deploy with a unit for 90 days or more

To terminate the lease, you must provide your landlord with a written notice and a copy of your military orders. Effective termination for month-to-month rentals is 30 days after the date of the next rental payment due. For all other leases, termination occurs on the last day of the following month after you deliver proper notice.

You must still pay rent for any months before the lease ends. If you paid rent in advance, the landlord must prorate and refund the unearned portion.

Motor vehicle leases
If you leased a motor vehicle for personal or business use (either by you or your dependents), you may terminate the lease under one of the following conditions:

The lease began before you started active duty, and you were called to serve active duty for 180 days or more

You executed the lease and then received a permanent change of station outside the continental U.S.

You're deployed with a military unit for a period of 180 days or more

To terminate the lease, you must provide the leasing company with a written notice and a copy of your military orders. The lease will terminate on the day you return the vehicle, which must be within 15 days of your written notice.

You don't need to pay an early termination charge, but you may still be responsible for title and registration fees, taxes, and excess mileage charges.

Protection from court proceedings
If you're sued while on active duty, you have certain legal protections under the SCRA. These include some protections from a default judgment in a civil action.

The SCRA doesn't extend this protection to evictions and repossessions.

For these provisions to apply, your military service must materially affect your ability to either defend or pursue a civil action.

- **If you didn't receive notice of a lawsuit: The party suing you must** provide the court with an affidavit stating your military service status.
- If you're in military service, the court must appoint an attorney to represent you before rendering any judgment. If the attorney can't locate you, or if you must be present to assert your defense, the court will delay the proceedings for 90 days or more.
- If the court renders a default judgment, you can apply to reopen it within 60 days after leaving active duty. However, you must have a valid defense against the action, and you must show that your military service materially affected you from asserting this defense.
- **If you did receive notice of a lawsuit:** The court can delay for 90 days or more, but only if you provide the court with written notice that your military duty materially affected your ability to appear, and

provide the date you will appear. Your CO can also issue a letter stating that military duty prevents your appearance in court.

- If you're not available to appear in court, and the court refuses to delay the proceedings, the court must appoint an attorney to represent you.

Time in service can't be used when determining the statute of limitations on any action or proceeding, whether in court or elsewhere (except for federal tax laws).

Foreclosures
If you hold a mortgage for real personal property or a non-mortgage installment contract, you may be protected from foreclosure court proceedings if the following conditions apply:

- You took out the mortgage before entering active service
- You (or your dependents) owned the property before you entered service
- You (or your dependents) still own the property
- Your ability to pay is materially affected by your service

Health insurance
If you're re-employed after your service ends, you must receive the same level of health insurance that was in effect on the day before you began service. Your employer or insurer can't institute a waiting period, limit coverage, or add new exclusions for pre-existing medical conditions.

Apply for reinstatement within 120 days of release from military service. USERRA and SCRA provide similar protections regarding health insurance coverage.

Life and professional insurance
Your private life insurance provider can't terminate your policy, decrease your coverage, or increase your premiums (except based on age) because of nonpayment of premiums or indebtedness. Protection extends for the duration of military service, and for two years afterward.

You can suspend your professional liability insurance upon written request to the insurance carrier for the period of your active duty. You (or your beneficiary) must apply to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to receive this protection.

Income taxes
Your home state may tax your military income, along with your real and personal property. Even if you serve in another state, your home state doesn't change. You may defer federal and state income tax while you serve, plus six months afterward, if your service restricts your ability to pay taxes.

Taxes and assessments on personal/real property
If you can't pay personal property taxes (including motor vehicles) during your military service, they'll accrue at an interest rate of no more than 6% per year. You also won't incur any additional fees or penalties.

During your military service, your property can't be sold to satisfy a tax obligation or assessment—except upon a court order. The court may delay this order if appropriate.

Re-employment rights
If you're called up to active duty, either from a public or private sector job, your employer must guarantee your job and additional rights (under USERRA) when you return–under the following conditions:

- You give advance notice of your deployment to your employer
- You aren't gone for more than five years
- You receive an honorable or general discharge
- You promptly return to work

Rights Under Massachusetts Law

Massachusetts' version of the federal SCRA provides employment protections for public employees who enter military service in an emergency, provided they aren't dishonorably discharged.

The Commonwealth also provides civil litigation and official documents protections for all service members. These state protections are more generous than the federal SCRA, and in the case of certain court proceeding extensions, they supersede federal law. However, they don't apply to proceedings if you're a defendant, executor, or administrator.

Re-employment

If you're a public employee who resigns to serve in the military, you can be re-employed if you return within two years of military service. You'd be considered on an extended leave of absence in this case.

You'll also retain any seniority rights, provided you return to public service within two years. Your employee pension is protected and your military service is credited to it. (These protections supersede federal benefits under USERRA).

Substitute Protection for Municipal, District, and County Employees

Certain elected municipal, district, and county officer positions are protected by temporary substitutes.

Official Documents

You can have real estate deeds, powers of attorney, and other instruments acknowledged before certain commissioned officers. These officers may serve as commissioners, notaries public, and justices of the peace, and may administer oaths, take depositions, collect affidavits, and accept acknowledgements of those in military service.

Other Massachusetts Benefits and Protections

National Guard members

If you're in the Massachusetts National Guard, you receive extra employment protections. No employer, public or private, can discriminate against you because of your military status.

If you work for the state, you'll retain your state salary while on certain types of duty in the Commonwealth—at the order of the commander-in-chief. This applies to counties and municipalities if they adopt M.G.L. ch.33, s.59.

- These duties include: annual training, emergency assistance, repelling invasions or suppressing insurrections, controlling riots or mobs, or protecting persons or property during catastrophes or natural disasters.

Real estate tax

You may qualify for a property tax exemption if you meet certain conditions:

- You can show poverty or financial hardship resulting from a call-up (as verified by an assessor)
- You file a timely application

The exemption occurs through a tax deferral and recovery agreement, providing protection for your share in the property and for your surviving spouse and heirs.

Layoffs

If you're an eligible veteran, and you hold a state job which is not subject to civil service law, you're protected if you have three years in your position. The state will also retain your tenure in that position.

If you're laid off, you have a right to a similar existing position in the same group or grade—unless all positions are already held by veterans. In this case, layoffs occur in inverse order of their original appointments. Tenured veterans have preference amongst themselves, according to the dates of their appointments.

Veterans who are civil service employees also have layoff protection. Disabled veterans are retained in preference to all other persons—including non-disabled veterans.

Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance
Acts of 2005 ch. 130

If you're a member of the Massachusetts National Guard, and you purchase a policy from Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance, the Commonwealth will reimburse 50% of the monthly premium for any amount of coverage.

If you purchase a group life insurance policy with a different company, the Commonwealth will reimburse 50% of equivalent coverage—up to the amount that would have been covered if you chose a Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance policy.

Creditable Service
Acts of 2005 ch. 130

If you're a National Guard member or Reservist living in a neighboring state but working in public service within Massachusetts, the Commonwealth will count your military service as creditable service time. This time may be applied toward retirement, on a ratio of five years of Guard or Reserve time for each year of active service.

Executive Office of Veterans' Services
One Bowdoin Square
15 New Chardon Street, Suite 400
Boston, MA 02114
617-210-5480
www.mass.gov/veterans
mdvs@mass.gov

Military Family Relief Fund
Acts of 2005 ch. 130

Friends of the National Guard and Reserve Families administers the Military Family Relief Fund as a needs-based program, assisting families suffering financial hardship due to military deployment.

Friends of the National Guard and Reserve Families
212 Humphrey Street
Swampscott, MA 01907
Toll-free: 1-84HELP-VETS (844-357-8387)
www.militaryfriends.org
info@militaryfriends.org

Military and Family Support Center
The Military and Family Support Center is an agency of the Massachusetts National Guard, supporting Guard and Reserve members and their families by coordinating local, state, and federal resources. Services include:

- Distance learning classrooms and conference rooms (for validated agencies)
- Executive Office of Veterans' Services representatives
- Family program staff and services
- Financial assistance and readiness
- Healthcare assistance
- Housing assistance
- Legal services
- Military identification card services
- Military One Source representatives
- Transitional assistance
- Traumatic Brain Injury support

Deployment Cycle Support Operation Locations

Wellesley MFAC
14 Minuteman Lane
Wellesley, MA 02481
339-202-4800

Hanscom Air Force Base MFAC
MA National Guard Joint Force Headquarters
2 Randolph Road
Hanscom AFB, MA 01731
339-202-4823

Taunton MFAC
111 Honorable Gordon Owens Riverway
Taunton, MA 02780
339-202-7804/7805

Joint Base Cape Cod / Otis Air National Guard Base
102nd Intelligence Wing
156 Reilly Street
Otis ANGB, MA 02542
508-968-4855
102IW.MFRC.org@us.af.mil
www.102iw.ang.af.mil/Services/Military-Family-Readiness/

Worcester MFAC
640 Plantation Street
Worcester, MA 01604
339-202-4398

Springfield MFAC
1505 Roosevelt Avenue
Springfield, MA 01109
339-202-5593

Barnes Air National Guard Base MFAC
815 Southampton Road, Building 12
Westfield, MA 01085
413-568-9151 ext. 698-1183/1681
www.104fw.ang.af.mil/Units/Wellness-Center/Airman-Family-Readiness/

Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program

The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program is a Department of Defense effort to promote the wellbeing of National Guard and Reserve members and their loved ones by connecting them with resources throughout the deployment cycle.

The YRRP consists of seminars conducted at conference sites across the state, aimed at selected units and any veteran or active duty dependent who wishes to attend. The seminars include a number of interactive mental strength building sessions, free job services, financial planning advice, legal services, health and nutrition strategies, and many other beneficial activities and briefings. Family members and friends are welcome to attend free of charge.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP)
Toll-free: 888-442-4551
www.yellowribbon.mil
800-698-2411

Other Sources of Assistance

Post-9/11 Transition and Case Management

Post-9/11 Transition and Case Management (TCM) supports service members and veterans transitioning from military to civilian life. Post-9/11 TCM case managers help service members and veterans connect to VA and community resources.

This program covers all active duty military personnel and veterans who served on or after September 11, 2001.

Bedford VAMC: 781-687-2000

Boston VAMC: 617-232-9500

Brockton VAMC: 508-583-4500

Jamaica Plain VAMC: 617-232-9500

Northampton VAMC: 413-584-4040

West Roxbury VMAC: 617-323-7700

Visit www.va.gov/post911veterans/ for more on Post-9/11 programs for returning veterans.

Executive Office of Veterans' Services
600 Washington Street, 7th Floor
Boston, MA 02111
617-210-5480
www.mass.gov/veterans
mdvs@mass.gov

Service Dogs for Combat Veterans

New England Assistance Dog Services (NEADS), based in Princeton, MA, trains service dogs to assist veterans with physical disabilities. NEADS dogs receive public access rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

To receive a service dog, applicants must attend a two-week dog training course and pay a fee. NEADS offers fundraising assistance and flexible payment options, and they won't deny an application because of an inability to pay.

NEADS, Dogs for Deaf and Disabled Americans
P.O. Box 1100
Princeton, MA 01541
978-422-9064 voice or TTY
www.neads.org

Agent Orange Illness Assistance

Agent Orange was a tactical herbicide used by the U.S. military for control of vegetation. The military sprayed Agent Orange and other tactical herbicides during the Vietnam War. Agent Orange exposure also occurred in the Korean Demilitarized Zone, on Thai Air Force bases, at other locations, and on C-123 Aircraft.

The VA offers eligible veterans a free Agent Orange Registry health exam for possible long-term health problems related to exposure. VA also offers health care, disability compensation, and other benefits to eligible veterans for certain disease conditions, as well as benefits for children of Vietnam veterans diagnosed with spina bifida. Dependents and survivors may also be eligible for other benefits.

Visit the VA's Agent Orange Public Health page for more information, or call toll-free 877-222-8387.

www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/benefits/registry-exam.asp

Gulf War Veteran Assistance

Gulf War veterans may experience "various clusters of medically unexplained chronic symptoms, including

fatigue, headaches, joint pain, indigestion, insomnia, dizziness, respiratory disorders, and memory problems."

If you're a veteran of the First Gulf War (1990-1991), you may qualify for a variety of VA benefits, including a Gulf War Registry health exam, the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry, health care, and disability compensation for diseases related to your service. Your dependents and survivors also may be eligible for benefits.

Visit the VA's Gulf War Public Health page for more information, or call toll-free 877-222-8387.

www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/gulfwar/medically-unexplained-illness.asp

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs provides benefits to U.S. veterans and their families. The VA administers benefits through three major units: the Veterans Benefits Administration, the Veterans Healthcare System, and the National Cemetery Administration.

VA benefits cover education and job training, disability compensation, pension payments, life insurance programs, loan guarantee programs, and hospital and medical care services. In addition to medical centers, the healthcare system includes nursing homes, domiciliary, and Vet Centers offering readjustment counseling.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Boston Regional Office
JFK Federal Building, Room 1525
Boston, MA 02203
Toll-free: 800-698-2411
www.benefits.va.gov/boston

VA Numbers

- MyVA411 (main information): 800-698-2411
- MyVA411 TTY: 711
- VA benefits: 800-827-1000
- Education (GI Bill): 888-442-4551
- Gulf War/Agent Orange Helpline: 877-222-8387
- Health benefits: 877-222-8387
- Life insurance: 800-669-8477
- Headstone and Marker Status: 800-697-6947

Massachusetts VA Medical Facilities

- Bedford VA Medical Center: 781-687-2000
- Brockton VA Medical Center: 508-583-4500
- Jamaica Plain (Boston) VA Medical Center: 617-232-9500
- Northampton VA Medical Center: 413-584-4040
- West Roxbury (Boston) VA Medical Center: 617-323-7700

Hanscom AFB Commissary

If you're an active duty service member, a retired veteran, a Reservist, or a National Guard member, you and your family can shop at the Hanscom AFB Commissary for quality grocery products at cost.

Store services:

- ATM
- Bakery (including party cakes and photo cakes)

- Deli (including sandwiches-to-go)
- Hot foods
- Plants

Hanscom AFB Commissary
1709 Building A - Griffiss Street
Hanscom AFB, MA 01731-6290
781-430-1900
shop.commissaries.com

State Park Parking Fee Waiver

If you have a Disabled Veteran or Purple Heart license plate, you can enter Massachusetts State Parks for free. For more information, contact the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Department of Conservation and Recreation
State Transportation Building
10 Park Plaza, Suite 6620
Boston, MA 02116
617-626-1250
www.mass.gov/orgs/department-of-conservation-recreation
mass.parks@mass.gov

Veterans' Organizations

Organization	Telephone	Website
American Legion (Massachusetts)	617-727-2966	www.masslegion.org
American Legion National Service Office	800-433-3318	
American Legion Auxiliary	617-880-9244	www.masslegion-aux.org
AMVETS	301-459-9600	www.amvets.org
AMVETS National Service Office	301-459-9600	
Bilingual Veterans Outreach Center	413-731-0194	www.bilingualvets.org
Disabled American Veterans (DAV)	617-303-5675	www.davma.org
DAV National Service Office	877-426-2838	www.dav.org
Gold Star Wives of America, Inc.	1-888-751-6350	www.goldstarwives.org
Italian American War Veterans	781-397-6386	iawveterans.org/
Jewish War Veterans	202-265-6280	www.jwv.org
Korean War Veterans	843-379-3993	kwva.us
Marine Corps League	703-207-9588	www.mcleaguelibrary.org
Marine for Life	229-639-5234	albany.usmc-mccs.org
Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH)	703-642-5360	www.purpleheart.org
New England Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America	800-660-1181	www.pvanewengland.org
Polish Legion of American Veterans	512-560-6091	www.plav.org

Organization	Telephone	Website
Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)	816-756-3390	www.vfw.org/contact-us
Vietnam Veterans of America	301-585-4000	www.vva.org

Legal Assistance by County

If you need help with legal matters, contact one of the legal services below. These organizations may offer sliding fee and pro bono services.

EOVS also produces an annual list of law firms and organizations that provide pro-bono legal representation for veterans.

www.mass.gov/lists/legal-resources-for-veterans

Massachusetts (Statewide)

Legal Service	Contact
Massachusetts Bar Association, Boston Office	617-338-0500
Massachusetts Bar Association, Western Office	413-731-5134

Barnstable, Dukes, Bristol, Norfolk, and Nantucket County

Legal Service	Contact
South Coastal Counties Legal Services	Toll-free: 800-244-9023

Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden, Hampshire, and Worcester County

Legal Service	Contact
Community Legal Aid	Toll-free: 855-252-5342

Essex County

Legal Service	Contact
Northeast Legal Aid	978-458-1465

Middlesex County

Legal Service	Contact
De Novo Center for Justice and Healing	617-661-1010
Greater Boston Legal Services (Cambridge/Somerville office)	617-603-2700
Harvard Legal Aid Bureau (Cambridge)	617-495-4408
MetroWest Legal Services	508-620-1830 Toll-free: 800-696-1501
Boston College Legal Assistance Bureau	617-552-0248
Northeast Legal Aid	978-458-1465

Plymouth County

Legal Service	Contact
South Coastal Counties Legal Services	Toll-free: 800-244-9023
Greater Boston Legal Services	617-371-1234 Toll-free: 800-323-3205
Volunteer Lawyers Project	617-423-0648

Suffolk County

Legal Service	Contact
Greater Boston Legal Services	617-371-1234 Toll-free: 800-323-3205
De Novo Center for Justice and Healing	617-661-1010
Volunteer Lawyers Project	617-423-0648

Worcester County

Legal Service	Contact
Community Legal Aid	Toll-free: 855-252-5342

Veterans' Service Officers

Veterans' Service Officers (VSOs) are appointed by city mayors and town select boards to administer Chapter 115 benefits to veterans. One person may serve as a VSO for multiple communities.
VSOs can process emergency assistance benefit applications for you and your dependents if you can't do so yourself. They also administer burial expense benefits if you (or your survivors) don't have sufficient means to pay on your own.

Visit www.mass.gov/FindMyVSO to find a VSO near you.

Executive Office of Veterans' Services
One Bowdoin Square
15 New Chardon Street, Suite 400
Boston, MA 02114
617-210-5480

The Volunteer Lawyers Project of the Boston Bar Association (BBA), partnered with the Legal Advocacy & Resource Center, the Boston Bar Association, and Shelter Legal Services, has created a legal services hotline for active duty members of the military, veterans of recent wars, and the families of both groups who live in Greater Boston.

The Massachusetts Bar Association also provides legal advice through a weekly Dial-a-Lawyer program for veterans living across the state.

Legal Assistance Hotline: 617-603-1710
Leave a message any time of day. Someone will call you back within two business days. This service is for military personnel and veterans who live in Greater Boston.

Monthly Dial-a-Lawyer Program: 617-338-0610
The first Wednesday each month between 5:30 and 7:30 p.m. The Dial-a-Lawyer operates a call-in line for assistance with legal questions. The phones tend to be extremely busy during that two hour time period.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
JFHQ-MA
Military Records Branch
2 Randolph Road, Bldg. 1505
Hanscom AFB, MA 01731-3001

REQUEST FOR MILITARY RECORDS FORM

SERVICE MEMBER INFORMATION:

Name: _____ DOB: _____

Social Security#_____ and/or Service Number: _____

Date of Service - FROM: _____ TO: _____

Branch of Service: _____ *(Check One)* Enlisted ☐ **or** Commissioned ☐

Records/Documents Needed: _____

REQUESTER: (Check One)

☐ Self/Military Service Member ☐ Next of Kin ☐ Vet Agent ☐ VA ☐ Funeral Home

* Copy of Death Certificate required with request

☐ Other: _____

** If you are a Power of Attorney for service member, POA documents required with request

I declare (or certify, verify or state) under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the information contained in this section is true and correct. Note: Digital signature is not accepted

_____ _____ _____
Name (Please print clearly) Signature Date

_____ _____ _____
Phone Number Fax Number Email Address

PREFERRED METHOD OF RECEIPT:

☐ Fax ☐ Email ☐ US Mail Address _____
(Street)

_____ _____
(State) (Zip Code)

Please send this request to:

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
JFHQ-MA
Military Records Branch
2 Randolph Road, Bldg. 1505
Hanscom AFB, MA 01731-3001

* You may also email this form back to the individual who sent it to you *

NOTE: If you require a "certified" copy of your records, it is necessary to provide a US mailing address as certified copies cannot be sent via fax or electronic mail.

William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth
Citizen Information Service
One Ashburton Place, Room 1611
Boston, Massachusetts 02108
Telephone: 617-727-7030
Toll-free: 1-800-392-6090 *(in Mass. only)*
MassRelay English: 1-866-887-6619
MassRelay Spanish: 1-866-930-9252
Fax: 617-742-4528
Email: cis@sec.state.ma.us
Website: www.sec.state.ma.us/divisions/cis/citizen-information-service.htm