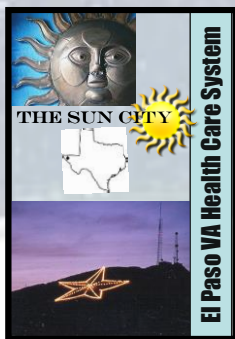
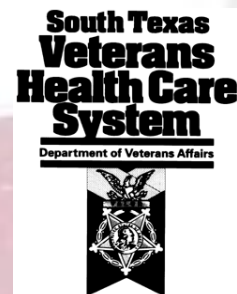
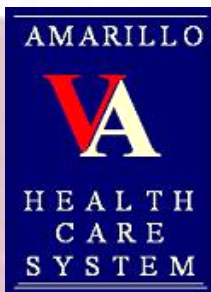




A GUIDEBOOK
FOR
VETERANS INCARCERATED
IN TEXAS



Introduction

This guidebook is designed to help Veterans incarcerated in the state of Texas and their families. It can be used by those who want to access services that will support a better way of life. Some of the information in this guide is subject to change and may vary from state to state for certain benefit programs, so double check your local state laws and regulations.

Although staff from the Health Care for Re-Entry Program assisted in updating this guide, please be advised VA assumes no responsibility for the professional ability or integrity of the non-VA organizations whose names appear in this guide. Being listed in this guide does not constitute an endorsement or recommendation by VA.

Also, agency staff names, addresses, phone numbers, and website addresses change. To try to keep this document current, if you find any incorrect, conflicting, or outdated information please notify:

Lynda Mitchell, Lynda.Mitchell@va.gov

Acknowledgements

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- ❖ The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans which provided basic concepts and core information for this guide through its “Planning for Your Release” guide funded by the U.S. Department of Labor**
- ❖ The Veterans Incarcerated Workgroup of Walla Walla, Washington, for the concept of state-specific information in its “Guidebook for Incarcerated Veterans” and for allowing the use of its guide as a template for this publication**
- ❖ Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. for developing the first incarcerated Veterans guidebook, which has inspired and informed subsequent efforts**
- ❖ Any public domain and agency resources included in the guidebook.**

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The VA's HCRV Program - Healthcare for Reentry Veterans

The HCRV Program is designed to address the community reentry needs of incarcerated Veterans. Most Veterans who are in jail or prison will eventually reenter the community. VA's HCRV program is designed to promote success and prevent homelessness among Veterans returning home after incarceration.

While you are incarcerated, you will receive health care services through the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) or Federal Bureau of Prisons. VA may not provide medical or mental health services while you are incarcerated, but care can be accessed quickly upon release depending on your needs. The Health Care for Re-Entry Veterans (HCRV) Specialist can assist you in accessing those needed services at your local VA facility. An HCRV Specialist can begin working with you prior to your release and can be helpful in putting together a stable release plan. You can contact the HCRV Specialist by mail or through your facility unit case manager. You may also locate information on HCRV services on the Health Care for Reentry Veterans Homepage: <https://www.va.gov/homeless/reentry.asp>

What We do:

Health Care for Reentry Veteran (HCRV) Program Specialists see Veterans in prisons throughout the state of Texas in the 6 months prior to their release from incarceration. We provide information to assist community reentry planning and educate Veterans about programs available for veterans through the Veterans Health Administration (VHA).

We can help determine Veteran eligibility for medical care in VA's nationwide system of hospitals and clinics. We have general knowledge about Veterans Benefit Administration (VBA) system which controls pension or compensation (NSC/SC) income restart and applications, VA loans, GI Bill, etc.

HCRV Specialists in Texas

<p>Angela Boyd, LCSW Hybrid Veterans Justice Social Worker Lubbock VA Outpatient Clinic 3510 4th St. Lubbock, TX 79415 (806)472-3460 Angela.Boyd1@va.gov</p>	<p>Lynda Mitchell, LCSW-S Hybrid Veterans Justice Social Worker Amarillo VA Health Care System 6010 Amarillo Boulevard West Amarillo, Texas 79106 806-355-9703 Ext. 7297 Lynda.Mitchell@va.gov</p>
<p>Christine Bell, LCSW, ACSW, BCD Health Care for Reentry Veterans South TX VA Health Care System 4201 Medical Drive Suite 280 San Antonio, TX 78229 210-705-0714 or 210-616-9915, Option 1 Christine.Bell@va.gov</p>	<p>Montevis Price, LCSW Hybrid Veterans Justice Social Worker El Paso VA Healthcare System Located at Las Cruces VA Clinic 3401 Del Rey Blvd Las Cruces, NM 915-525-4567 Montevis.price@va.gov</p>
<p>Lydia Jimenez, MS Hybrid Veterans Justice Social Worker West Texas VA Health Care System Located at San Angelo, CBOC 4240 Southwest Blvd San Angelo, TX 76904 325-658-6138 Ext. 2459 Lydia.jimenez@va.gov</p>	<p>Brittany Ryan, LCSW HCRV Veterans Justice Social Worker Central TX VA Healthcare System 1901 Veterans Memorial Dr #122T Temple TX 76504 254-981-8335 Brittany.Ryan@va.gov</p>
<p>Shea Langs, LCSW HCRV Veterans Justice Social Worker Michael E. DeBakey Medical Center 2002 Holcombe Blvd Houston, TX 77030 832-217-0536 Shea.Langs@va.gov</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">VACANT</p> <p>HCRV Veterans Justice Social Worker Dallas VA Health Care System</p>
<p>Thomas Mattison LCSW HCRV Veterans Justice Social Worker Conroe VA Outpatient Clinic 3rd Floor 690 South Loop 336 West Conroe, TX 77304 936-522-4000 ex 10950 Thomas.Mattison@va.gov</p>	

SECTION I

USING THIS GUIDE AND SEEKING HELP

This guide is for you to use when planning for your release. It includes addresses, phone numbers, websites, and general information that can lead you towards programs that benefit Veterans. You may want to ask a friend, family member, case worker, advocate, etc. to help you find information if you don't have access to mail, phone, or Internet. Keep in mind this guide does not include all the services available to you. What is available in one area may be different than what is available in another. Be sure to check your local resources to find out about help in your area.

While you are incarcerated, make sure you communicate with your unit case manager or reentry staff about your release planning. Classes may be offered so you can work on skills development and prepare for life after release. You don't want to be released without a plan, so take advantage of the opportunities available to you.

Begin thinking about what specifically you will need upon release. Ask yourself these kinds of questions: Will I need housing? Will I need medical, substance abuse, or mental health care? Do I need to learn a job skill? Do I have any legal issues, such as child support? How do I restart my VA checks or Supplemental Security Income (SSI)?

STEP 1: Make a list of your needs. This can be used as a tool to help you get organized. A sample list might look like this:

NEEDS:	Steps Taken	Contact	Date
<input type="checkbox"/> I need a place to live.			
<input type="checkbox"/> I need a job.			
<input type="checkbox"/> I need clothing to wear to work.			
<input type="checkbox"/> I need to find out what benefits I may be entitled to as a Veteran.			
<input type="checkbox"/> I want to get treatment for addictions			
<input type="checkbox"/> I owe child support.			

Think about your list as you read through this guide. Who do you think can help you with each of your needs? Is there one organization that may be able to work with you on many different things, or do you need to contact several agencies?

STEP 2: When writing a letter to request information, be clear. Keep your letter short, to the point, and write legibly. Include the following information:

- **Your name and contact information.**
- **A brief statement about your current situation.**
- **Your specific request.**
- **What you have done so far (example: I have written to x organization and they suggested I contact you).**

Tips for Contacting Resources

- **When contacting an agency, be patient, persistent and polite to get results. It is not unusual to have to contact/follow up with an agency more than once to get your answer.**
- **Ask questions if information is unclear to you. Many organizations are staffed by volunteers who are eager to help but may not have the answer to your question. If someone cannot help you, ask who else might know the answer. Remember that some agencies do not supply enough staff to be able to rely to your letter.**
- **The internet can be helpful to find information about VA benefits and community resources in your area. This guidebook includes web addresses, when available. If computer access is not available at your facility, you can visit the public library after release. Computer access may also be provided at Texas Workforce Commission and Workforce Solution sites.**

SECTION II

Basic Needs Upon Release

This section includes information that can help you explore your options as they relate to your most basic needs. Remember to check locally for what services are in the area to help you. Some organizations may have waiting lists, require an interview, or have specific rules about whom they serve. *It's best if you start asking about services and requirements now, so you will be prepared when you are released.* You may even ask if your name can be put on a waiting list when you get closer to your release date. The VA does not have programs that an inmate can parole to; although VA programs do accept veterans who have been released and are on parole or probation.

Where to Start

Dial 211. In most areas of the U.S., this will connect you with local social services and referrals for emergency services. Local 211 operators will be able to give you a list of many local organizations that offer different services, which may include emergency shelter, motel vouchers, clothing, urgent care medical services, and more. You may need to contact several agencies to find all the services you need. Included below are some guidelines for services, but your local agencies are your best resource. Remember, it never hurts to ask!

Here are some National Help Lines if you are unsure who you should contact:

- **To locate a VA Medical Facility: 877-222-8387**
- **To find out about VA Benefits: 800-827-1000**
- **National Hotline for Homeless Veterans: 877-4AID-VET (424-3838)**
- **National Coalition for Homeless Veterans: 800-838-4357**
- **Coalition for the Homeless General: 212-776-2000**
- **National Veterans Crisis Line: 800-273-TALK (8255)- press 1 or text 838255**
- **Social Security Administration: 800-772-1213**
- **Texas Driver's License: 512-424-2600**
- **Food Stamps – English & Spanish (718) 557-1399**
- **Texas Workforce Commission Information (800) 939-6631**
- **SAMHSA's National Helpline: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)**
- **LGBT National Hotline: 888-843-4564**
- **1-844-MyVA311 (1-844-698-2311) For info about VA Services**

VA HEALTH CARE

Veterans are strongly encouraged to visit a VA Medical Center/Clinic within 30 days of release from incarceration. Bring your ID and DD-214. Ask VA staff where to sign up for VA Health Care. Bring list medications taken while incarcerated. Ask for a future primary care appointment.

VA Medical Centers may provide the following types of programs to eligible Veterans: comprehensive medical care, mental health care, substance abuse treatment, pharmacy services, employment services, homeless services, surgical services, and many other programs/services. Community Based Outpatient Clinics also offer many of the same basic medical and mental health services as the Medical Centers, although hours of operation are usually more limited and services offered may not be as comprehensive. Veterans are generally eligible for an eye exam and glasses as part of the basic medical package. However, it is unlikely that you will be able to get any dental services at the VA as eligibility for outpatient dental care is not the same as for most other VA medical benefits. Please check with eligibility at a local VA Medical Center/Clinic for additional information about what medical benefits you may be eligible for.

Are You Eligible for VA Hospital/Medical Care?

1. Basic Eligibility

- a. Those who served before September 7, 1980 – need an Honorable, General, or Medical discharge and there is generally no minimum active duty period. If a Veteran had two periods of service, one honorable and the other less than honorable, he may still be eligible for VA benefits based on the honorable period of service.
- b. Veterans who enlisted after September 7, 1980 must have served 24 continuous months in addition to having an Honorable, General, or Medical discharge

2. National Guard and Reserves must have been called up for active duty

- a. National Guard or Reserves are eligible for health care if activated/deployed to a combat zone by Federal Executive Order.
- b. If active-duty status was for training purposes only, you do not qualify for VA health care.

Since there are a number of exceptions to the minimum duty requirements, VA encourages all Veterans to apply for health care, so that the VA may determine their enrollment eligibility.

Proof of Service/DD214: if you are unsure of the length of time in service or your character of your discharge, send for a copy of your military service discharge papers. Instructions for how to send for DD214 are included in this Guidebook.

Texas VA Medical Centers:

Amarillo 79106 6010 Amarillo Blvd. West, 806-355-9703
Big Spring 79720 300 W. Veterans Blvd., 432-263-7361 or 800-472-1365
Bonham 75418 1201 E. 9th St., 903-583-2111 or 800-924-8387
Dallas 75216 4500 South Lancaster Rd., 214-742-8387 or 800-849-3597
El Paso 79930 5001 North Piedras St., 915-564-6100
Garland 75042 2300 Marie Curie Blvd., 214-742-8387
Harlingen 78550 2106 Treasure Hills Blvd., 956-366-4500
Houston 77030 2002 Holcombe Blvd., 713-791-1414 or 800-553-2278
Kerrville 78028 3600 Memorial Blvd., 866-487-1653
San Antonio 78229 7400 Merton Minter Blvd., 210-617-5300
Temple 78613 1901 Veterans Memorial Dr., 254-778-4811 or 800-423-2111
Waco 76711 4800 Memorial Dr., 254-297-3000 or 800-423-2111

Texas VA Clinics:

Abilene 79602 3850 Ridgemont, 325-695-3252
Austin 78744 7901 Metropolis Drive, 512-823-4000 or 800-423-2111
Beaumont 77707 3420 Veterans Cir., 409-981-8550
Beeville 78102 302 S. Hillside Dr., 361-358-9912
Bonham 75418 1201 E. 9th St., 800-924-8387
Bridgeport 76426 812 Woodrow Wilson Ray Cir., 940-683-2538
Brownwood 76801 2600 Memorial Park Dr., 325-641-0568
Bryan/College Station 77845 1651 Rock Prairie Rd., 979-680-0361
Cedar Park 78613 701 Whitestone Blvd., 512-260-1368
Childress 79201 1001 Hwy. 83 North, 940-937-8528
Conroe 77304 690 South Loop 366 West, 936-522-4000
Copperas Cove 76522 336 Town Square, 254-899-6000
Corpus Christi 78405 5283 Old Brownsville Rd., 361-806-5600
Corpus Christi 78405 5277 Old Brownsville Rd., 361-806-5600
Corpus Christi 78405 205 S. Enterprize Parkway, 361-806-5600
Corpus Christi 78416 925 S. Padre Island Dr, 361-806-5600
Dalhart 79022 325 Denver Ave 806-249-0673
Dallas 75224 Polk Street Annex 4243 S. Polk St., 214-372-8100
Decatur 76234 1713 South FM 51, 940-627-7001
Denton 76205 2223 Colorado Blvd., 940-891-6350
El Paso 79936 2400 Trawood Drive, Suite 200 915-217-2428
El Paso 79905 350 Revere St., 915-564-6100
El Paso 79912 1870 Nothwestern Dr., 915-877-5800
Fort Stockton 79735 2071 N. Main, 432-685-2110
Fort Worth 76119 2201 SE Loop 820, 800-443-9672 or 817-730-0000
Galveston 77550 3828 Ave. N, 409-761-3200 or 800-553-2278

Granbury 76049 601 Fall Creek Hwy., 817-326-3902
Grand Prairie 75051 2737 Sherman St., 214-857-3450
Greenville 75407 4006 Wellington Rd., Ste. 100, 903-450-1143
Harlingen 78550 2106 Treasure Hills Boulevard, 956-366-4500
Katy 77450 750 Westgreen Blvd., 281-579-1927
Killeen 76541 1001 E. Veterans Memorial Blvd Ste 401, 254-312-8006
LaGrange 78945 890 E. Travis St., 979-968-5878
Lake Jackson 77566 208 Oak Dr. South 979-230-4852
Laredo 78041 4602 North Bartlett, 956-523-7850, 855-864-0516
Longview 75601 1005 N. Eastman Rd., 903-247-8262
Lubbock 79415 3510 4th St., 806-472-3400
Lufkin 75904 2206 N. John Redditt Dr., 936-671-4300
McAllen 78503 901 E. Hackberry Ave. 956-618-7100
New Braunfels 78130 705 Landa Street, Suite C 830-643-0717
Odessa 79762 8050 E. Hwy 191, 432-685-2110
Palestine 75801 2000 S. Loop 256, Ste. 124, 903-723-9006
Plano 75075 3804 W. 15th Street 972-801-4200
Richmond 77469 22001 Southwest Freeway, Suite 200, 832-595-7700
San Antonio 78201 4522 Fredericksburg Rd. #A10, 210-732-1802
San Antonio 78229 7909 Fredericksburg Rd. #100, 210-437-0884
San Antonio 78240 5788 Eckhert Rd., 210-699-2100
San Antonio/North Cen. 78232 17440 Henderson Pass, 210-483-2900
San Antonio NE 78217 2391 NE Loop 410 Ste 101, 210-590-0247
San Antonio 78222 4243 E. Southcross Blvd., Ste. 204, 210-337-4316
San Antonio 78222 4610 E. Southcross Blvd., Ste. 100, 210-648-1491
San Antonio 78221 1714 SW Military Dr. Ste. 101 210-923-0777
San Antonio 78249 4350 Lockhill-Selma Ste. 200 210-949-3773
San Antonio 78229 8410 Data Point Dr., 210-949-8900
San Antonio 78232 17440 Henderson Pass; 210-483-2900
San Antonio 78239 6938 Walzem Road, 210-590-0247
San Antonio 78247 16019 Nacogdoches Rd. Ste 101, 210-967-2800
San Antonio 78251 9939 State Hwy 151, 210-706-7800
Seguin 78155 526 E. Court St., 830-372-1697
Sherman 75090 3811 US 75 N., 903-478-0477
Stamford 79553 1601 N Columbia, 325-695-3252
Temple 76502 4501 S. General Bruce Dr. Ste. 75, 254-778-4811
Texas City 77591 9300 Emmett F. Lowry Expressway, Suite 206, 409-986-2900 or 800-553-2278 X 12900
Tomball 77375 1200 W, Main St. 281-516-1505
Tyler 75703 7916 S. Broadway Ave. 855-375-6930 or 903-266-5900
Tyler 75701 3430 Golden Road 855-375-6930 Or 903-590-3050
Victoria 77901 1908 N. Laurent St. Ste 150, 361-582-7700;
Wichita Falls 76301 1800 7th St., 940-257-0000

HOUSING

It is important to know that you have a place to go when released. The first step in returning to the community is finding a place to stay. This section includes ways to locate emergency shelter, transitional programs, and permanent housing assistance. Transitional or temporary housing can serve as a step toward full independence upon your release. However, there are often waiting lists for housing assistance programs, so you should ask about applying as soon as possible. If you are released and find yourself homeless, emergency assistance is available.

Health Care for Homeless Veterans

Every VA Medical Center has a Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Program that is responsible for helping homeless Veterans access VA and community-based care to end homelessness among Veterans. The HCHV provides outreach, assessments, and linkage to VA housing. An HCHV staff person can be reached by calling the contact number listed for each VA facility. Additional information can be found on the HCHV website at; <http://www.va.gov/homeless/hchv.asp>

How to access housing?

- 1. Before release – work with TDCJ reentry case manager about halfway housing program that might be available in your community of choice. The VA is unable to assist you prior to your release with housing or place you on a waiting list.**
- 2. When you are released – ASAP go to the HCHV Program Outreach or walk-in clinic at the closest VA Medical Center/Clinic that has a HCHV program. A face-to-face visit is required for you to be evaluated to see if you qualify for a VA Housing Program. There is no guarantee of housing by the VA even if you meet the qualifications as housing is based on availability.**
- 3. Keep going to the HCHV Program and checking in with them- so they will begin to know you and help you find the right program to suit your needs. Each VA has different housing programs available.**
- 4. Yes, there may be a wait-list, so keep checking in with the HCHV program.**

The Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) have developed a working definition of chronic homelessness: “an unaccompanied adult homeless individual with a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more or has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.”

VA Housing Programs

- 1. HUD-VASH (VA Supported Housing) - The Department of Housing and Urban Development – VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Program is a joint effort between HUD and VA to move Veterans and their families out of homelessness and into permanent housing. HUD provides housing assistance through its Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) that allows homeless Veterans to rent privately owned housing. VA offers eligible homeless Veterans clinical and supportive services through its health care system in all 50 states. Veterans are screened for eligibility and eventually placed in a public housing agency (PHA) appropriate housing that is within the catchment area of the VA Case Manager. One exception is HUD-VASH vouchers are not available for lifetime sexual offenders.**
- 2. Grant and Per Diem Program (GPD) – Temporary Housing- The GPD Program (GPD) is offered annually (as funding permits) by the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Programs to fund community agencies providing services to homeless Veterans. The purpose is to promote the development and provision of supportive housing and/or supportive services with the goal of helping homeless Veterans achieve residential stability, increase their skill levels and/or income, and obtain greater self-determination. GPD programs offer supportive housing (up to 24 months). Most GPD programs charge 30% of your income. This program is not available at all VA Medical Centers/Clinics.**
- 3. Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) - For very low-income Veterans, SSVF provides case management and supportive services to prevent the imminent loss of a Veteran's home or identify a new, more suitable housing situation for the individual and his or her family; or to rapidly re-house Veterans and their families who are homeless and might remain homeless without this assistance.**

- 4. Domiciliary Residential Rehabilitation and Treatment Program (DRRTP) - Veterans are usually housed on the grounds of the VA Hospital in San Antonio, Dallas, Big Spring, Temple, and Houston. This program is for those that are at imminent risk for homelessness or require rehabilitation from substance abuse and mental/medical problems. Veterans must be willing to follow program-specific rules and to participate in treatment, physically able to perform activities of daily living.**

HOW CAN YOU GET MORE INFORMATION?

The Department of Veterans Affairs has founded a VA toll-free National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at 1-877-4AID-VET (1-877-424-3838) to speak to a trained VA responder. The hotline is available 24/7 and is free. Neither VA registration nor enrollment in VA healthcare or benefits is required to use this service.

- When you call the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at 1-877-4AID-VET (1-877-424-3838) You will be connected to a trained VA responder who will ask a few questions to assess your needs. If you are a Veteran, you may be connected to the Homeless Program point of contact at the nearest VA facility. Contact information will be requested for staff to be able to follow up.**
- You can always contact the Health Care for Homeless Veterans service provider at any VA Medical Center or the Health Care for Reentry Veterans Specialist (HCRV) to find out if there are homeless Veteran service providers in your area.**
- Community Resource and Referral Centers (CRRCs). CRRCs provide Veterans who are homeless and at risk of homelessness with one-stop access to community-based, multiagency services to promote permanent housing, health and mental health care, career development and access to VA and non-VA benefits. <https://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/Crrc.asp>**

Non-VA HOUSING ASSISTANCE

- 1. If you are unable to get into VA Housing or do not qualify for VA services and benefits, please seek public housing, emergency, SSVF or transitional housing may also be an option.**

- 2. For Emergency and Transitional Housing call 2-1-1 when you don't know who to call; go to the 2-1-1 Texas website: <https://www.211texas.org/211/>**

Directory of Non-VA Homeless Service Organizations

- **Salvation Army** provides services, including shelter and transitional housing, for homeless individuals and families. For local services and information, contact The Salvation Army nearest you or call 800-725-2769 (800-SAL-ARMY) or go to http://www.salvationarmyusa.org/usn/www_usn_2.nsf
- **Texas Homeless Network** provides a directory of organizations assisting homeless individuals. <http://www.thn.org/> , 512-482-8270
- **Local** community organizations, such as charities, Goodwill, Salvation Army, and United Way, may have a variety of programs to assist you. Find these organizations by calling 211.
- **Public housing** waiting lists can be long, but the length of time can vary from place to place. To learn how to apply, call 211 for assistance.
- **National Coalition for the Homeless** has a directory of shelters and homeless assistance programs online. This does not list every program in the country, so be sure to check your phone book for local programs. The following are those listed for the State of Texas. Call 800-838-4357 or go to homelesshelterdirectory.org
- To find a listing of homeless services in Texas, go to the website of the Department of Housing and Urban Development at <https://www.hud.gov/states/Texas/homeless> or call 202-708-1112

FINDING & KEEPING A JOB

Finding a job may be hard and can seem overwhelming, but it is possible and very important! When released you may find that you are completely starting over. You should ask for job counseling and training while incarcerated so you are prepared to work when released. Don't wait until you get out to start thinking about what you will do. Start planning now!

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Federal employment in the U.S.A.: WWW.USAJOBS.GOV

If the job is online, you will find it on Indeed. www.Indeed.com

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES CONTINUED

- **Texas Veterans Commission.** Veterans Employment Services (VES) assists veterans with finding long-term and meaningful employment by conducting job matching services for employers and providing individualized career services to Veterans with significant barriers to employment. Go to <https://www.workintexas.com/> or <https://www.tvc.texas.gov/employment/>. Call 512-463-2333
- **Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E)** If you have a service-connected disability that limits your ability to work or prevents you from working, Veteran Readiness and Employment (formerly called Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment) can help. This program—also known as Chapter 31 or VR&E—helps you explore employment options and address training needs.
- **Texas Workforce Commission.** The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) is the state government agency charged with overseeing and providing workforce development services to employers and job seekers of Texas. For employers, TWC offers recruiting, retention, training and retraining, and outplacement services as well as valuable information on labor law and labor market statistics. For job seekers, TWC offers career development information, job search resources, training programs, and, as appropriate, unemployment benefits. TWC state office main number Call: 512-463-2222. Go to <http://www.twc.state.tx.us/customers/jsemp/job-seekers-employees.html>
- **VA CWT Program.** Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) programs offer structured work opportunities and supervised therapeutic housing for at-risk and homeless Veterans with physical, mental health and addictions problems. VA contracts with private industry and the public sector for work by these Veterans, who learn job skills, re-learn successful work habits, and regain a sense of self-esteem. Veterans are paid for their work and given assistance with employment in the community. For further information, contact the CWT coordinator at the nearest VA at 1-877-822-8387 or go to <http://www.cwt.va.gov/>

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES CONTINUED

- **Texas Workforce Solutions Vocational Rehabilitation Program, (TWS-VR).** provides vocational rehabilitation (VR) services in Texas. The vocational rehabilitation program provides services (VR) in Texas to assist people who have disabilities prepare for, keep, or get a job. Go to www.DRTx.org or call 1-800-252-9108
- **National H.I.R.E. Network** is an information resource for individuals with criminal histories seeking employment. Go to <http://www.hirenetwork.org/>
- **Looking for a job with a criminal record often can be a difficult process but remember, there are many employers willing to hire ex-offenders and felons. You might face roadblocks and have to overcome many rejections. Be persistent, do your part in finding a career, and keep a positive attitude. Employers want to know if you will be an asset to the company. So your job is to honestly highlight your skills and knowledge. Our communities need and want you to be successful. Prove to yourself that your crime does not define who you are or limit what you can accomplish.**

Many cities or counties will hire ex-offenders. Have your DD-214 with you and mention your military service. Even with a felony conviction you can be employed by the Veterans Administration. Veterans also receive hiring a preference. Contact the HR department at your nearest VA or go to www.usajobs.gov to view U.S Government jobs nationwide.

- **General employment nationwide websites: For felon friendly jobs go to <http://www.hirefelons.org/>**
<https://www.monster.com/career-advice/article/ex-felon-job-seekers-business-pledge>

Federal Bonding Program – U.S Department of Labor

Bond coverage is provided for any person whose background usually leads employers to question their honesty and deny them a job. The bond is given to the employer free-of-charge, and serves as an incentive to the company to hire a job applicant who is an ex-offender or has some other “risk” factor in their personal background. The employer is then able to get the worker’s skills without taking any risk of worker dishonesty on the job.

**Call toll free: 1.877.US2.JOBS (1.877.872.5627) www.bonds4jobs.com OR
Contact the Texas Workforce Commission 512-463-0834**

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AND COUNSELING

If you need support for a specific mental health problem—or if you're having problems sleeping, controlling your anger, or readjusting to civilian life—you are not alone. And we can help.

Over 1.7 million Veterans received mental health services at VA last year. Our services range from peer support with other Veterans to counseling, therapy, medication, or a combination of these options. Our goal is to help you take charge of your treatment and live a full and meaningful life.

Veterans Crisis Line

This hotline connects Veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, or text. Veterans and their loved ones can call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1, chat online, or send a text message to 838255 to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

VA Mental (Behavioral) Health Care

The VA offers treatment and support for a range of mental health problems, including Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), Depression, Thoughts of suicide, Issues related to military sexual trauma (MST), Substance use problems, Bipolar disorder, Schizophrenia, and Anxiety disorders.

VA Behavioral Health Care offers a continuum of mental health services across inpatient, outpatient and residential care settings. General Behavioral Health Clinic services, available at all VA Medical Center sites and most community based outpatient clinics, provide individual and group treatment options for a broad spectrum of mental health diagnoses and problems.

VA is committed to a recovery-oriented approach to mental health care. Recovery empowers the Veteran to take charge of his/her treatment and live a full and meaningful life. This approach focuses on the individual's strengths and gives respect, honor, and hope to our nation's heroes and their families. The concepts underlying a recovery-oriented approach to care are very much in line with VA's commitment to provide patient-centered care.

Vet Centers

If you're a combat Veteran or received a military campaign ribbon, you can visit a Vet Center to get free individual and group counseling for you and your family. You can access these services even if you're not enrolled in VA health care and aren't receiving disability compensation. There is no cost for Vet Center counseling. Vet Center staff are available toll-free during normal business hours at 1-800-905-4675 (Eastern) and 1-866-496-8838 (Pacific) or go to <http://www.vetcenter.va.gov/>

The Vet Center Call Center 1-877-WAR-VETS is an around the clock confidential call center where those that served and their families can call to talk about their military experience or any other issues they are facing.

IF YOU DON'T QUALIFY FOR VA HEALTH CARE, YOU MAY STILL BE ABLE TO GET CERTAIN HEALTH CARE SERVICES, LIKE CARE FOR NEEDS LINKED TO MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA.

Call VA general hotline at 800-827-1000 to find out what your care options may be. We're here Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. ET.

IF NOT ELIGIBLE FOR VETERANS HEALTH OR MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS, THE FOLLOWING NON- VA RESOURCES MAY HELP YOU

- **If you cannot afford any health care plan and don't qualify for coverage through Medicaid you can get free or low-cost health care at a nearby community health center. Information is available by calling 211 or online at: <https://www.healthcare.gov/community-health-centers/>**
- **National Alliance for the Mentally Ill lists community mental health services providers at <http://www.nami.org/> or call 1-800-950-6264.**
- **National Mental Health Association offers support groups, rehabilitation, socialization, and housing services through 340 community organizations located across the country. Call 1-800-969-NMHA, or find a local office online at <http://www.nmha.org/>**

SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT

Alcohol and other drugs are often used in response to stress, anxiety, depression, and other mental health challenges. Despite the temporary relief a substance may seem to provide, increased substance use can lead to long-term consequences.

Fortunately, there are many ways to recover from alcohol or drug use disorders. Take the next step and learn about the many VA treatments available, including in- and outpatient care, medications, support groups, specialized therapy, and more. For more information visit the following website,

<https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/mentalhealth/substance-use/treatment.asp>

Contact a local VA Medical Center and make a VA mental health appointment for substance abuse evaluation. Call 1-877-222-8387 or go to <https://www.va.gov/find-locations/> to find the medical center nearest you.

IF NOT ELIGIBLE FOR VETERANS BENEFITS, THE FOLLOWING SOURCES MAY BE ABLE TO TELL YOU WHERE YOU CAN GO TO GET HELP:

- **The Federal Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administrations Treatment Referral Routing Service can refer you to local programs. Call 1-800-662-4357.**
- **Texas Department of State Health Services: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/sa/findingservices/default.shtm> - This site contains a map to find the outreach, screening and referral provider your area. These community-based programs operate 24-hour hot lines and referral services. For the statewide hotline, call (877) 9-NO DRUG (877-966-3784). The call is free.**
- **Focus On Recovery Helpline. A 24-hour national alcohol and drug abuse addiction and treatment hotline: 1-800-888-9383.**

ASSISTANCE WITH FOOD

- **Food Stamps.** If you are unemployed with little or no income, you might receive food stamps (SNAP card). Call the toll-free information number at 1-800-221-5689, or find a list of food stamp hotlines for each state at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/>. You can also contact the local Department of Human Services, many drop-in shelters can assist with an application. Food Stamps can be applied for together with SSI.
- **2-1-1** — The phone number 211 will reach an information and referral service in your local area. They have listings of assistance providers such as churches, non-profits, etc. that may be able to provide financial, food, or housing assistance. Simply dial 211.

SOCIAL SECURITY HELP

- You can complete an application for Retirement, Medicare or Disability Benefits online. If you cannot submit your application online: You can call 1-800-772-1213 for assistance.
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits can be applied for before your release, although you won't receive benefits until after you are released. SNAP benefits can be applied for with SSI. It usually takes about three months to review your application, so apply well before your release date. It is best to get help filling out the application. Applications can be found on line at the SNAP website or by calling to request one by mail. Your unit case manager or reentry staff may have forms available on your individual units. For detailed information or assistance, call 1-800-772-1213 or the web site <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/ssi/index.htm>

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

The Department of Veterans Affairs does not employ attorneys to provide legal services for Veterans.

DISCLAIMER: VA assumes no responsibility for the professional ability or integrity of the organizations whose names appear on this list. This referral does not constitute an endorsement or recommendation by VA.

Veteran military discharge status issues:

You should talk to a Veterans Service Officer for help with discharge upgrades, seeking benefits, and filing a VA claim (call 1-800-562-2308 for the nearest Service Officer).

Other legal issues:

- **Lone Star Legal Aid (800-354-1889) has an online list of offices in Texas that provide free legal help to clients who qualify. Go to <http://www.lonestarlegal.org/>**
- **Legal Services Corporation's Web site lists local legal service providers: www.statesidelegal.org/findinghelp.**
- **Stateside Legal Go to <http://www.statesidelegal.org/>**
- **Texas Legal Aid Finder website is provided by Texas Housing. Go to <http://www.texashousing.org/>**

Women Veterans

- **Most VA Medical Centers and readjustment offices have a designated Women Veterans Coordinator to assist women Veterans in accessing VA benefit programs and healthcare services. She can help coordinate all the services you may need, from primary care to specialized care for chronic conditions or reproductive health. Woman Veterans who are interested in receiving care at VA should contact the nearest VA Medical Center and ask for the Women Veterans Program Manager.**
- **Women Veterans hotline 1-855-VA-WOMEN (1-855-829-6636) a call center that receives and responds to questions from women Veterans, their families, and caregivers across the nation about available VA services and resources.**

CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES

The Office of the Attorney General recognizes that most people need a little time to get on their feet after being released from prison. The Attorney General's Office may be able to temporarily postpone certain enforcement actions if you provide our office with evidence that you are looking for a job and providing some support to your child. Contact Information: P.O. Box 12017, Austin, TX 78711-2017

Website: <https://www.oag.state.tx.us/cs/about/index.shtml>

E-mail: child.support@oag.state.tx.us

For more information about child support services, please call the Office of the Attorney General, Child Support Division at 1-800-252-8014 or contact the child support office nearest you.

HEROES PROGRAM – TEXAS CHILD SUPPORT DIVISION

- **Military and veteran families face unique challenges when it comes to child support and parenting. To provide assistance, the Texas Child Support Division developed the Help Establishing Responsive Orders and Ensuring Support (HEROES) for Children in Military Families program. The HEROES program partners military families with specialized attorneys to work through their child support needs.**
- **HEROES attorneys represent the State of Texas. They are not your or the other parent's attorney. If you need an attorney to represent you, then contact a private attorney or legal assistance.**
- **HEROES Program can partner you with a dedicated HEROES child support attorney for specialized case review to decide if a modification should be made to your child support orders.**

SECTION III

VA BENEFITS AND ENTITLEMENTS

The Veterans Benefits Administration (also referred to as the VBA or Regional Office) provides information and assistance with VA Disability Compensation and Pension, Education and Training Programs, VA Home Loans, Life Insurance, and other federal benefits for eligible veterans.

The Department of Veterans Affairs publishes a booklet called "Federal Benefits for Veterans and Their Dependents" that describes the types of benefits available and lists the addresses and phone numbers for VA facilities nationwide. Write the VA Regional Office (VARO) to request a copy.

U.S. DEPT. OF VETERANS AFFAIRS - REGIONAL OFFICES

Houston VARO

**6900 Almeda Road
Houston, Texas 77030**

Waco VARO

**One Veterans Plaza
701 Clay Avenue
Waco, Texas 76799**

**Call 1-800-827-1000 or find information about benefits at –
<http://www.vba.va.gov/VBA/>**

ELIGIBILITY FOR VA BENEFITS DURING INCARCERATION

Incarcerated Veterans and incarcerated dependents may apply for compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC) – service connected death benefits – and pension benefits the same as Veterans who are not incarcerated. However, Congress restricts the amount of benefits that may be paid to a Veteran or dependent while he or she is incarcerated. These benefits are institutionalized as part of law: 38 U.S.C Sec 5313 (a), 38 C.F.R., Sec. 3.665 (a), (d), which reads as follows:

If a Veteran is incarcerated as the result of a "felony" conviction as defined by law: "Any offense punishable by death or imprisonment for a term exceeding one year, unless specifically categorized as a misdemeanor under the law of the prosecuting jurisdiction."

Then, the amount paid to a Veteran incarcerated for a service-connected disability is generally limited by law to the 10 percent disability rate or half the amount of the ten percent rate if the Veteran's disability rating is 10 percent. (If the Veteran is rated before incarceration as 20

percent disabled or higher, he will receive only the amount payable to a 10 percent disabled Veteran.) Incarcerated DIC recipients will receive one-half the amount paid to a Veteran receiving compensation payments for a 10 percent-rated disability.

A Veteran may not receive non-service connected VA pension benefits, or any portion of these benefits, while incarcerated for a felony or misdemeanor. However, his family may receive an apportionment of such benefits under the procedure described above. (1505 38 C.F.R. Sec.3.666)

BENEFITS PAYMENTS WHILE INCARCERATED

There is a 60-day "grace period" following a conviction when you may still receive full benefits. To avoid an overpayment, it is important that you notify the VA Regional Office (VARO) immediately when you go to prison if you are receiving payments. If you do not notify the VA and receive overpayment, you and your family will lose all financial payments until the debt is paid. The VA considers it to be the Veteran's responsibility and fault if this occurs because the Veteran failed to notify the VA of his or her incarceration. Attempts to obtain a waiver in these situations of overpayment are often unsuccessful.

For example: Joe is a Veteran who receives a VA pension. He commits a crime, is convicted and incarcerated, but does not tell the VA right away and keeps getting paid for 6 months. After serving his sentence of 18 months, he is released, and applies to the VA to have his pension reinstated. He will have an overpayment that must be recovered from the reinstated benefits. Until the overpayment is recovered, Joe will have to go without that income.

Your award for compensation or pension benefits should resume from the date you are released, as long as the VA receives notice of release within one year. Additional information is available on restarting your benefits is included in this Guidebook.

APPORTIONMENT

Legally, a Veteran can only receive a portion of the full amount payable for his or her disability rating while incarcerated, but the remaining balance may be "apportioned to the individual's dependent family". This means your dependent family members (spouse, children, or dependent parents) may be able to receive part of your benefits while you are incarcerated. VA regulations clearly specify an apportionment amount will only go to family members if they can show financial need.

To apply for apportionment, you must send a letter to the VA Regional Office (VARO) that identifies yourself as the Veteran and your spouse, children and/or parent as dependents. Also, you will need to fill out VA Form 21-0788 <http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-0788-ARE.pdf> and forward to your nearest regional office. In deciding whether any apportionment is appropriate, the amount of the apportionment, and to whom it will go, the following factors are considered:

- **The family member's income and living expenses;**
- **The amount of compensation available to be apportioned;**
- **The needs and living expenses of other family members; and**
- **Special needs of any of the family members.**

For example: Tom is rated as 80 percent disability (80% service connected). While incarcerated he can only receive the amount he would get if he was 10 percent disabled (10% service connected). However, his family may be apportioned up to 70 percent, the difference of the 80 percent rating. (80% service connected minus 10% service connected = 70% service connected. The 70% goes to Tom's family.)

There is a 60-day "grace period" following conviction where the Veteran or dependent family members (also called Dependency or Indemnity Compensation (DIC) recipients) may still receive full benefits. If the Veteran continues to receive benefits after the 60-day period, it will result in an overpayment. The VA considers it to be the Veteran's responsibility and fault if this occurs because the Veteran failed to notify the VA of his or her incarceration. Attempts to obtain a waiver in these situations of overpayment are often unsuccessful. As a rule, the Veteran loses most, if not all, financial benefits until the VA recovers the entire overpayment. It has also been a standard procedure that the family will not be entitled to receive an apportionment until the debt is completely recovered.

It is important to remember that most VA decisions, including those on apportionment, can be appealed to the Board of Veterans Appeals and, if need be, to the Court of Appeal for Veterans Affairs.

RE-STARTING BENEFITS AT RELEASE

The VBA needs formal notification of your release from prison in order to re-start benefits. Take your prison release papers in person to the benefits counselor at the VA Hospital/clinic or Veterans County Service Officer. The sooner that documentation is provided to the VBA, the sooner the VA can begin to process your request. A copy of your prison release papers should be submitted along with your request for reinstatement of your VA benefits. You may also send this information yourself to:

**US Department of Veterans Affairs
Evidence Intake Center
Janesville, WI 53547-4444
Fax (844) 531-7818**

The VBA states that it is helpful if the Veteran will request resumption of his/her VA compensation on VA Form 21-4138 and attach a copy of the official release papers. The format on VA Form 21-4138 allows the Veteran to give a good address and phone number, plus VA File Number or SSN.

Veteran needs to be aware that VA benefits will continue to be sent to any previous direct deposit account that was set up prior to incarceration until it is changed using Standard Form 1199a. Veteran can also request that a paper check be mailed to current address or Veteran can call 800-333-1795 to request that a direct express account be set up. The Direct Express Card is a prepaid debit card account that allows federal benefits to be deposited to a prepaid card on a monthly basis.

RESTARTING PENSION OR NON-SERVICE CONNECTED BENEFITS

If the Veteran is requesting re-instatement of a pension or non-service connected pension benefits, they should also submit a new application (to report current financial info), VA Form 21P-527EZ.

<https://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21P-527EZ-ARE.pdf>

HELP APPLYING FOR BENEFITS

If you would like to get benefits or think you have a pending claim before the VA, it is best to get professional help to assist you.

Every county has a local County Veteran Service Officer who can help with discharge upgrades, seeking VA benefits, and filing a VA claim. [2021-VCSSO-List-1.pdf \(texas.gov\)](#)

Many Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) have trained staff who can help you with your VA claim, and can legally represent your claim before the VA. You can contact the VSO listed below to see if there is a service representative near you.

- **Disabled American Veterans** - Your local DAV service officer will help you file a claim and stick with you all through the process, because no veteran should have to go at it alone. All services provided by DAV are free of charge. Call 1-888-604-0234 or visit website: [Home * DAV Department of Texas \(davtexas.org\)](#)
- **Texas Veterans Commission (TVC)** provides assistance with Veterans benefits & entitlements information, VA claims process, representation and advocacy, Education, Veterans Homes for those in need of nursing care, and employment assistance through federal funded reintegration projects. Call 800-252-VETS (8387) or go to [www.TVC.state.tx.us](#)

Mailing Address:

**Texas Veterans Commission
P.O. Box 12277
Austin, Texas 78711-2277
512-463-6564
(FAX) 512-475-2395**

SEEKING BENEFITS ON YOUR OWN

Although we encourage you to seek the aid of a service representative, you may choose to apply for VA benefits on your own. Write your local VA Regional Office or apply for benefits online at <https://www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/Applying.asp>

Below are brief descriptions of forms needed to file for certain VA benefits. Be sure you use a return address where mail will get to you as quickly as possible. Make photocopies of all forms for your records before sending your packet to the Veterans Benefits Intake Center.

- ♦ **VA Form 21-526EZ - Application for Compensation and/or Pension - must be filed to apply for compensation or pension.**
- ♦ **VA form 21P-527 – Apply for Pension only.**
- ♦ **VA Form 21-4138 - Statement in Support of Claim – General form to explain why you deserve the benefits you are asking for because of your disability or disorder, status of your claim, and other correspondence.**
- ♦ **VA Form 21-4142 - Authorization for Release of Information - If you have received medical or mental health care that may be relevant to your claim from the community, fill out a VA Form 21-4142 authorizing permission for release of medical records to the VA.**
- ♦ **VA Form 10-10EZ - Application for enrollment in Health Care - to determine eligibility for medical benefits. Complete and bring it with you to the VA medical facility where you will seek evaluation for treatment.**
- ♦ **VA Form 21-0966 – Intent to File – Use this form to let VA know that you are still gathering information to support your claim, and want to start the filing process. Submitting an intent to file can secure the earliest possible effective date for any retroactive payments you may be eligible to receive. This form is only effective if you file a claim for compensation or pension within 1 year of the intent to file.**
- ♦ **VA Form 10-5345 - Request and Authorization to Release Health Information – This form is used to obtain health care records from VA Health Care facilities. You can authorize the VA to send these records to you, an individual, or an agency. Descriptions of some records you can release are drug and alcohol abuse, health summary, discharge summary, and clinical procedures.**
- ♦ **Search all VA Forms at http://www.va.gov/vaforms/search_action.asp**

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN VA COMPENSATION AND PENSION?

VA Disability Compensation is service-related disability compensation. VA Pension is a monthly benefit pay to certain wartime Veterans with financial need.

VA Disability Compensation

Disability Compensation is a tax-free monetary benefit paid to Veterans with disabilities that are the result of a disease or injury incurred or aggravated during active military service. Compensation may also be paid for post-service disabilities that are considered related or secondary to disabilities occurring in service and for disabilities presumed to be related to circumstances of military service, even though they may arise after service. Generally, the degrees of disability specified are also designed to compensate for considerable loss of working time from exacerbations or illnesses.

Disability compensation is a monthly tax-free benefit paid to Veterans who are at least 10% disabled because of injuries or diseases that were incurred in or aggravated during active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training. A disability can apply to physical conditions, such as a chronic knee condition, as well as a mental health conditions, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

VA Pension Benefits

Wartime veterans who are disabled but whose condition is NOT service-related may be eligible for the VA's disability pension, a different tax-free, monthly benefit designed to assist veterans who are struggling financially due to disability or disease. VA Pension is a needs-based benefit paid to a wartime Veteran and his/her survivor(s).

To be eligible a Veteran must have started active duty before September 8, 1980 and served 90 days or more of active military, naval or air service with at least 1 day during a period of war or if started after September 7, 1980 and served 23 months with at least one day during wartime.

In addition, to be eligible a Veteran must be age 65 or older, have a permanent and total non-service-connected disability, is a patient in a nursing home, or is receiving Social Security disability benefits.

Education for Veterans

Education Benefits

Eligible Veterans incarcerated for a felony conviction can be paid only the costs of tuition, fees, and necessary books, equipment, and supplies. VA cannot make payments for tuition, fees, books, equipment, or supplies if another Federal State or local program pays these costs in full.

If another government program pays only a part of the cost of tuition, fees, books, equipment, or supplies, VA can authorize the incarcerated claimant payment for the remaining part of the costs. The original GI Bill was signed into law in 1944 by then-President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Over the years, the GI Bill has gone through a lot of changes, but at its core, it provides educational benefits to qualified members and their spouses.

Post 911 GI Bill and Hazelwood Act

- ♦ **The period of eligibility for the Post 9/11 GI Bill ends 15 years from the date of the last discharge or release from Active Duty of at least:**
 - ♦ • **90 consecutive days**
 - ♦ • **30 days but less than 90 days if released for a service-connected disability**
- ♦ **Or: 15 years from the date of discharge for the last period of active duty service used to determine eligibility to meet the minimum service requirements of 90 aggregate days of service.**

For more information, call toll-free 1-888-442-4551 (1-888-GI BILL 1) or visit our website at https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/post911_gibill.asp

Who is eligible for benefits under the Post 9/11 GI Bill?

Individuals who serve at least 90 days of aggregate service after September 10, 2001 are eligible.

NOTE: If the Release from Active Duty was on or before January 3, 2011 and the separation reason was for CIWD, EPTS, or HDSP eligibility is still granted for a general discharge. However, a "Dishonorable" discharge does not grant eligibility regardless of the separation reason.

Percentages and total months served:

90% - 30 (including service on active duty in entry level and skill training)

80% - 24 (including service on active duty in entry level and skill training)

70% - 18 (excluding service on active duty in entry level and skill training)

- 60% - 12 (excluding service on active duty in entry level and skill training)**
- 50% - 6 (excluding service on active duty in entry level and skill training)**
- 40% - 90 or more days (excluding service on active duty in entry level and skill training)**

What type of discharge is required to qualify for the Post-9/11 GI Bill?

Normally, an HONORABLE discharge is required to be eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill. However the following types of discharge may also qualify you for the Post-9/11 GI Bill:

- **a medical condition which preexisted service and is not service-connected**
- **a hardship**
- **a physical or mental condition not characterized as a disability and did not result from willful misconduct but did interfere with the performance of duty**

Forever GI Bill

The Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017, commonly known as the “Forever GI Bill”, eliminated the 15-year use-it-or-lose-it constraint associated with the Post 9/11 GI Bill education benefit. The updated bill was created with the intent of improving previous versions of the bill. It eliminated the 15-year time limit tied to the Post-9/11 GI Bill. So, if you were released from active duty on or after January 1, 2013—you qualify.

The Forever GI Bill increased Benefits If You Served Less Than One Year. *The Forever GI Bill increases your benefit level, based on your time in service. Here are the benefit amounts:*

- **0 to 90 days – No benefit**
- **90 days to 6 months – 50% of benefits**
- **6 to 18 months – 60% of benefits**
- **18 to 24 months – 70%**
- **24 to 30 months – 80%**
- **30 to 36 months – 90%**
- **36 months or more – 100% of benefits**

Read more: <https://militarybenefits.info/forever-gi-bill/#ixzz6u0N0D6fp>

Education Benefits in Texas - Hazelwood Act

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

A Veteran must apply and be accepted to a Texas public college or university of his/her choice. Go to www.applytexas.org to apply or use your institution's application for admission. For details on the Hazelwood Act contact the Texas Veterans Commission at 877-898-3833 or education@tvc.texas.gov or P.O. Box 12277 Austin, TX 78711-2277

Veteran Community Care – Eligibility

VA MISSION Act of 2018

MISSION Act website: www.missionact.va.gov

Community Care website: www.va.gov/communitycare/

COMMUNITY CARE ELIGIBILITY

You may be able to receive care from a provider in your local community if you meet specific criteria. Generally, Veterans must be enrolled with VA to receive care, although some Veterans are not required to enroll to receive care. Eligibility further depends upon your individual health care needs or circumstances. It is important to remember that under the Veterans Community Care Program, in most instances VA must authorize your care before you receive it. Under the MISSION Act, there are six different eligibility criteria for community care. Meeting any one of these criteria for the specific care you need means you are eligible to elect to receive that care either through direct VA care or a community provider in VA's network:

- The specific care you need is not provided by VA at any facility**
- You reside in a U.S. state (AK, HI, or NH) or territory (Guam, American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands, or U.S. Virgin Islands) that does not have a full-service VA medical facility**
- "Grandfathered" eligibility based on residence and the 40-mile eligibility criterion from the Choice Program**
- The specific care you need is not available within designated access standards**
- You and your referring clinician decide it is in your best medical interest to receive the specific care you need in the community**
- VA has designated the VA medical service line delivering the specific care you need as not providing care that complies with VA's standards for quality**

Call 1-844-MyVA311 (1-844-698-2311) and Press 1 to get more information about MISSION Act.

WEB SITE RESOURCES FOR VETERANS

Explore VA - <http://explore.va.gov/>

My Health eVet - <https://www.myhealth.va.gov/>

U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs - <http://www.va.gov/>

Veterans Health Administration - <http://www.va.gov/health/default.asp>

Veterans Benefits Administration - <http://benefits.va.gov/benefits/>

Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents and Survivors -

http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book.asp

National Coalition for Homeless Veterans - <http://www.nchv.org/>

Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) - <http://www.vfw.org/>

Disabled American Veterans (DAV) - <http://www.dav.org/>

Vietnam Veterans of America - <http://www.vva.org/>

National Center for PTSD - <http://www.ptsd.va.gov/>

GI Bill - <http://www.gibill.va.gov/>

American Legion - <http://www.legion.org/>

AMVETS - <http://www.amvets.org/>

Social Security Administration - <http://www.ssa.gov/>

Department of Labor – <http://www.dol.gov>

Department Name(s)	Toll Free VA contact Number(s)
VA Benefits: Burial • Death Pension • Dependency Indemnity Compensation • Direct Deposit • Directions to VA Benefits Regional Offices Disability Compensation • Disability Pension Education • Home Loan Guaranty • *Medical Care Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment	1-800-827-1000
VETERANS CRISIS LINE	1-800-273-8255
Beneficiaries in receipt of Pension Benefits	1-877-294-6380
Debt Management Center P.O. Box 11930 St. Paul, MN 55111	1-800-827-0648
Children of Women Vietnam Veterans (CWVV) Foreign Medical Program (FMP) Spina Bifida Health Care Program	1-877-345-8179 (or) 1-888-820-1756
Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA) CHAMPVA In-House Treatment Initiative (CITI)	1-800-733-8387
Education (GI Bill)	1-888-442-4551
Health Care Benefits (<i>Call toll free from even a pay phone. Operator will transfer the call to the requested VA clinic or hospital.</i>)	1-877-222-8387
Combat Call Center (877) WAR-VETS	1-877-927-8387
Life Insurance: Service members and/or Veterans Group Life Insurance Program All other VA Life Insurance Programs	1-800-419-1473 1-800-669-8477
Mammography Helpline	1-888-492-7844
CHAMPVA Meds by Mail	1-888-385-0235 (or) 1-866-229-7389
Special Issues - Gulf War/Agent Orange/Project Shad/Mustard Agents and Lewisite/Ionizing Radiation	1-800-749-8387
Status of Headstones and Markers	1-800-697-6947
Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD)	1-800-829-4833
For health care services, contact your nearest VA medical facility. To locate all VA facilities, click on https://www.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp	

VA



**U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs**



Federal Bureau of Prisons



Texas Department of Criminal Justice

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