CONGRESSWOMAN ROBIN KELLY

VETERANS RESOURCES GUIDEBOOK

Congresswoman

Robin L. Kelly

Illinois' 2nd Congressional District

Dear Illinois Veterans, Service-members,

Last year my office issued a *Veterans Resource Guidebook* to help returning Service members secure the support they need in transitioning back to civilian life. My goal was to empower Veterans with a simple, consolidated resource that could help them access the services and opportunities they have earned. But bureaucracies change and new opportunities arise. Understanding that, I have issued an updated version of that original guidebook. This new and improved guide will equip veterans with the most up-to-date information on what resources are available to him or her.

This guide includes a wealth of resources for both veterans and their families. It compiles the latest information on federal, state, and local programs, key contacts, and the multitude of services to which our veterans are entitled and can serve as a directory for further assistance.

I hope you find this updated guide helpful. Should you need any additional information on programs or issues covered in this guide, or if you have any problems with your VA benefits, please feel free to contact one of my offices for assistance.

Sincerely,

Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress

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Casework Assistance

I have three offices to assist you with your VA inquiries. Each office has veterans caseworkers ready to serve you. We're here to help.

Matteson Office
600 Holiday Plaza Dr.
Suite 505
Matteson, IL 60443
(708) 679-0078

Kankakee Office
304 S. Indiana Ave.
Lower Level
Kankakee, Il 60901
(708) 679-0078

Washington Office
2419 Rayburn House
Office Building
Washington, DC
20515
(202) 225-0773

You can also visit my website, www.robinkelly.house.gov.

Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs Resources

Key Contacts

- **Illinois Dept. of Veterans Affairs:** www.veterans.illinois.gov/ (800) 437-9824
- **Illinois Military Family Relief Fund:** www.il.ngb.army.mil (217) 761-3452 or (866) 524-4564
- **Illinois Student Assistance Commission**: www.collegezone.com (800) 899-4722
- **Illinois Department of Employment Security:** www.ides.state.il.us/veterans/default.asp
- **Illinois Tax Filing Requirements for Military Personnel:** www.tax.illinois.gov or (800) 732-8866
- **Illinois Tax on Military Retirement:** www.tax.illinois.gov or (217) 782-3336
- **Illinois Department of Public Health:** www.idph.state.il.us/ or (217) 782-4977
- **Illinois Attorney General Veterans Rights Bureau:** www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/rights/veterans.html or (312) 814-6594
- **Secretary of State:** www.cyberdriveillinois.com or (800) 252-8980
- **Veterans Outreach Program:** www.work.illinois.gov/ or (217) 782-7100
- **Illinois Association of County Veteran Assistance Commission:** www.iacvac.org or (618) 227-0040
- **Veteran Assistance Commission of Cook County:** (312) 433-6010
- **Health Coverage for Illinois Parents:** www.familycareillinois.com or (866) 255-5437
- **Casualty Assistance Center for Active Duty Service Members and Retirees and Veterans (Fort Lenerwood, MS):** (800) 350-7746
- **Illinois Military Funeral Honors Department of Military** Affairs: (217) 761-3873
- **Military Funerals:** 217-761-3873
- **Legal Services:** (217) 761-3510
- **Inspector General:** (866) 204-7704 or (217) 761-3730
- **IL Department of Human Services:** www.dhs.state.il.us or (800) 843-6154
- **American Red Cross:** www.redcross.org/il/springfield or (217) 787-7602

Veterans Affairs Centers

- **Chicago Veterans Resource Center:** 7731 S. Halsted St. Chicago, IL 60620 (773) 962-3740 or http://www.va.gov/directory/guide/facility.asp?ID=5046
- **Chicago Heights Center:** 1600 Halsted St. Chicago Heights, IL 60411 (708) 754-0340 or http://www.va.gov/directory/guide/facility.asp?ID=5045
- **Chicago VA Regional Office:** 2122 W. Taylor St. Chicago, IL 60612 (800) 827-1000 or http://www.va.gov/directory/guide/facility.asp?id=848

Veterans Affairs Hospitals

- **Jesse Brown VA Medical Center:** 820 Damen Av. Chicago, IL 60612, **(312) 569-8387** or http://www.chicago.va.gov/
- **North Chicago VA Medical Center:** 3001 Green Bay Rd. North Chicago, IL 60064, **(800) 393-0865 or (847) 688-1900** or http://www.lovell.fhcc.va.gov/
- **Auburn Gresham Clinic:** 7731 S. Halsted St. Chicago, IL 60620, **(773) 962-3700** or http://www.chicago.va.gov/locations/Auburn_Gresham.asp
- **Lakeside Chicago VA Outpatient Clinic:** 211 E. Ontario St. Chicago, IL 60611, **(312) 469-4850** or http://www.va.gov/directory/guide/facility.asp?ID=5318
- **Chicago Heights VA Outpatient Clinic:** 30 E. 15th St. Suite 207 Chicago Heights, IL 60411, **(708) 754-8880** or http://www.va.gov/directory/guide/facility.asp?id=781
- **Manteno Veterans Outpatient Clinic:** 1 Veterans Dr. Manteno, IL 60950, **(815) 468-1027**

Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs Offices near Illinois' 2nd Congressional District

Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs in the James R. Thompson Center
100 W. Randolph Suite 5-570
Chicago, IL 60601
(312) 814-2764
Hours: 8:00AM-4:00PM

Kankakee Veterans Outpatient Clinic
581 William Latham Drive Suite 301
Bourbonnais, IL 60914
(815) 932-3823
Hours: 8:00am-4:30pm

IL Dept. of Veterans Affairs
National Guard Armory
1551 N. Kedzie Ave. Chicago, IL 60651
(773) 292-7894
Hours: 8:00am-4:30pm

IL Dept. of Veterans Affairs Clinic
1010 Dixie Hwy-Suite 101
Chicago Heights, IL 60411
(708) 754-8880
Hours: 8:00AM-4:30PM

Chicago Regional VA Office
2122 Taylor St. Suite 127
Chicago, IL 60612
(312) 980-4255

IL Dept. of Veterans Affairs
Dept. of Employment Security
16845 S. Halsted St.
Harvey, IL 60426
(708) 225-8030
Hours: 8:00AM-4:00PM

Village of Orland Park
14700 S. Ravinia Ave.
Orland Park, IL 60462
(708) 403-6140
Hours: 8:00AM-4:30PM

Manteno Veterans Home
#1 Veterans Dr.
Manteno, IL 60950
(815) 468-6581
Hours: 8:00AM-4:30PM

National Guard Armory
2900 W. Jefferson St.
Joliet, IL 60435
(815) 725-3175
Hours: 8:00AM-4:30PM

Veterans Benefits

Both the Illinois and U.S. Departments of Veterans Affairs provide a wide range of compensation, pensions, and bonuses. For help in choosing or applying for any program, contact the nearest Veterans Service facility (listed on page 7). For general information, visit www.veterans.illinois.gov, www.va.gov, or call 1-800-437-9824.

Compensation

Disability Compensation

Disability compensation is a monthly tax-free benefit paid to Veterans who are at least 10% disabled due to injuries or diseases incurred during active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training. It is also available to those who are disabled from VA health care.

- You may be eligible if you have a service-related disability and are discharged not under dishonorable conditions.

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation

Dependency and indemnity compensation is for service-connected deaths. This is a monthly benefit paid to survivors of veterans who died in the line of duty or whose death resulted from a service-related injury or disease.

- You may be eligible if you are a survivor of a service member who died while on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training; who died from service-related injury or disease; who died from a non-service-related injury or disease and was receiving or entitled to receive VA compensation for a service-related disability that was rated as totally disabling for at least ten years prior to death or since released from active duty and for at least five years prior to death, AND the surviving spouse was married to the veteran for those same 8 years.

Line of Duty Compensation

Line of Duty Compensation is administered by the Illinois Court of Claims. If a State employee gave their life in the line of duty after 1995, a surviving spouse or dependent is entitled to the entire sum of $100,000.

Combat Related Special Compensation

Combat Related Special Compensation is for retired members of the military who have served at least 20 years of service. Disability retirees with less than 20 years of service will be

automatically limited to a retroactive date of January 1, 2008 as required by legislation passed by Congress effective 2008. This is payable for combat related disabilities rated at least 10%. Qualified Reservists will not receive this until they begin to receive military retired pay at the age of 60. You must apply with your branch of service to participate in this program.

Vietnam Exposed to Agent Orange Compensation

The VA offers compensation to veterans who may have been exposed to the harmful chemical Agent Orange, or other potentially harmful herbicides. You may be eligible if you served in Vietnam anytime between January 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975, including brief visits ashore or service aboard a ship that operated on the inland waterways of Vietnam; or if you served in or near the Korean demilitarized zone anytime between April 1, 1968 and August 31, 1971

Global War on Terrorism Survivors Compensation

You may be eligible for compensation if you are a survivor of someone killed by terrorist acts or hostile activities performing military services in periods not recognized as wartime by the United States campaign or service medals.

POW Compensation

You may be eligible for POW compensation if you were active duty with the Armed Forces or employed by the United States Government on or after January 1, 1961, were a resident of Illinois 12 months prior to entry, and was taken and held prisoner by forces in South East Asia.

Pensions

Disability Pension

Disability Pension is a tax free benefit paid to wartime veterans with limited or no income who are permanently and100% disabled.

- You may be eligible if you are discharged from service under non-dishonorable conditions, served 90 days or more of active duty with at least one day during war time, family income is below the yearly limit set by law, 100% or permanently disabled, and are 65 years of age or older.

Death Pension

Death pension is a benefit for dependents of deceased wartime veterans.

- You may be eligible if the deceased veteran was discharged from service under non-dishonorable conditions, served 90 days or more of active duty with at least one day

during wartime, surviving spouse or unmarried child, and income falls below the yearly income limit.

Additional Benefits

Aid and Attendance

Aid and attendance is a benefit along with monthly pension. This may not be paid without eligibility to pension.

- You may be eligible if you require aid of another person in order to perform personal functions for everyday living, adjusting to devices or protection, bedridden, in a nursing home, or is blind or nearly blind.

Housebound

This increased amount may be added to your monthly pension when you are substantially confined to your immediate premises because of permanent disability.

NOTE: You cannot receive Aid and Attendance and Housebound benefits at the same time.

Concurrent Retirement/Disability Payments

Concurrent Retirement/Disability Payments restore some or all military retired pay that was deducted due to VA service connected disability compensation.

- You are eligible if you are a member of the military who has served at least 20 years of creditable service and be 50% or more disabled. The disabilities do not have to be combat related. Enrollment is automatic.

Bonuses

You may be eligible for monetary bonuses for war time service. To find more information about any of these bonuses or to download a copy of the bonus application that applies to you, please visit:
http://www2.illinois.gov/veterans/benefits/Pages/bonus-payment.aspx

World War II Bonus

You are eligible for this bonus—$10 per month for domestic service and $15 per month for foreign service—if you served at least 60 days of active duty between September 16, 1940 and September 3, 1945, were an Illinois resident at the time of service, and received an honorable discharge. If you are a survivor of a veteran who died in service during World War II within the specified period you are entitled to a benefit of $1,000.

Korean War Bonus

You are eligible for this $100 bonus if you served between June 27, 1950 and July 27, 1953, received the Korean Service Medal, were a resident of Illinois 12 months prior to entering service, and were honorably discharged.

Vietnam War Bonus

You are eligible for this $100 bonus if you served in Vietnam between January 1, 1961 and March 28, 1973 or in Operation Frequent Wind Vietnam between April 29 and April 30 of 1975, received the Vietnam Service Medal or the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for Vietnam, were a resident of Illinois 12 months prior to entering service, and were honorably discharged. Survivors of a veteran whose death was classified as service-related by the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs are entitled to a $1,000 benefit.

Persian Gulf War Bonus

You are eligible for this $100 bonus if you served between August 2, 1990 and November 30, 1995, received the Southwest Asia Service Medal, were honorably discharged, and lived in Illinois for at least 12 months prior to service. Individuals currently on active duty who served in the Persian Gulf may apply prior to discharge by also including the Armed Forces Certificate.

Global War on Terrorism

You are eligible for this $100 bonus if you served on or after September 11, 2001, received the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, or the Iraq Campaign Medal, served at least 30 consecutive or 60 nonconsecutive days of foreign or sea service, lived in Illinois for at least 12 months prior to entering the service, and were honorably discharged. Individuals who are currently on active

duty in the Global War on Terrorism can apply prior to discharge by also including the Armed Forces Certificate.

POW Compensation

You are eligible for $50 compensation for each month of captivity if you are on active duty with the Armed Forces of the United States or employed by the United States Government on or after January 1, 1961, lived in Illinois for at least 12 months prior to entry, and who were taken and held by hostile forces in Southeast Asia $50 for each month held captive.

Education and Training

Both the Illinois and U.S. Departments of Veterans Affairs provide a wide range of educational and training benefits. For help in choosing or applying for any program, contact the nearest Veterans Service facility (listed on page 7). For general information, visit www.veterans.illinois.gov, www.va.gov, or call 1-800-437-9824.

Financial Benefits

Montgomery GI Bill

The MGIB-Selected Reserve program provides educational benefits to members of the Selected Reserve. Veterans can receive up to 36 months of education benefits in pursuit of, among other things, college degrees, certificate programs, technical or vocational training, apprenticeships, on-the-job training, and certain entrance examinations. Eligibility for the program typically ends the day you leave Selected Reserve but there are exceptions if you are currently mobilized. To qualify you must have a six-year obligation to serve in the Selected Reserve signed after June 30, 1985, have completed your initial active duty for training, meet the requirement to receive a high school diploma or equivalency certificate, and remain in good standing while serving in an active Selected Reserve unit. If you are an officer, you must have agreed to serve six years in addition to your original obligation.

The Montgomery GI Bill may also be available for active duty service members. The MGIB program provides up to 36 months of education benefits to eligible servicemen. To qualify you must have been honorably discharged, have a high school diploma or GED, and fall into one of four categories that can be found on the VA website (www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/mgib_ad.asp). Generally, benefits are payable for 10 years following your release from active duty. This program is also commonly known as Chapter 30. For an additional $600 contribution to the GI Bill, you may receive up to $5400 in increased monthly benefits.

To apply or for more information, please visit
http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/montgomerybill.asp

Veterans Educational Assistance Program (VEAP)

The Veterans Educational Assistance Program provides educational benefits for veterans who entered service for the first time between January 1, 1977, and June 30, 1985; opened a contribution account before April 1, 1987; voluntarily contributed from $25 to $2700; completed their first period of service; and were discharged or released from service under conditions other than dishonorable. If you are currently on active duty and wish to receive VEAP benefits, you must have at least 3 months of contributions available.

To apply or for more information, please visit http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/veap.asp

Vet Success

VA helps Veterans with service-connected disabilities to prepare for, obtain, and maintain suitable employment the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Vet Success program. Vet Success provides vocational counseling, job search assistance, and a variety of other educational and training services.

VetSuccess on Campus (VSOC) aims to help veterans, service members, and their qualified dependents complete their education and transition into the work field by providing on-campus benefits assistance and counseling. Each VSOC school has a VA Vocational Rehabilitation counselor and a VA Vet Center Outreach Coordinator to provided peer-to-peer counseling and referral services. These outreach and transition services aim to help veterans transition from military to college life. The VA Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors in Illinois are:

Armando De La Garza (*Southwestern Illinois College*)
Armando.DeLaGarza@va.gov

Jason Abrams (*University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign*)
Jason.Abrams@va.gov

For more information, please visit http://www.vetsuccess.gov

Post 9/11 GI Bill

This is a new education program for those who served on active duty on or after September 11, 2001.

To be eligible you must have served at least 90 aggregate days on active duty after September 10, 2001 and remain on active duty or have been honorably discharged from active duty for a service-connected disability after serving 30 continuous days following September 10, 2001. Children of Service Member who died in the line of duty on or after September 11, 2011 may be eligible for Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits as well.

Service members or Veterans may receive up to 36 months of benefits. Eligibility generally expires 15 years after release from a period of active duty of at least 90 consecutive days. If released for a service-connected disability after at least 30days of continuous service, eligibility ends 15 years from when the member is released for the service-connected disability.

Based on length of service, participants are entitled to cost of tuition and fees, a monthly housing allowance, and a yearly stipend of up to $1000 for books and supplies.

To apply or for more information, please visit
http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/post911_gibill.asp

Yellow Ribbon GI Education Enhancement Program

The Yellow Ribbon GI Education Enhancement Program covers all in-state tuition and fees for a public school and at least part of the cost for private schools or out-of-state tuition. You may be eligible for this program if you served an aggregate period of at least 36 months of active duty after September 10, 2001; you were honorably discharged from active duty for a service-connected disability and served 30 continuous days after September 10, 2001; or are a dependent who received benefits transferred from an eligible Service member. To apply you must contact your School Certifying Official.

To apply or for more information, please visit
http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/yellow_ribbon.asp

Work Study Program

Veterans who are full-time or ¾-time students in a college degree, vocational, or professional program can receive a VA work study allowance for a number of programs that can be found at http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/workstudy.asp.

The Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs provides VA work-study opportunities at its numerous offices throughout Illinois. The federal VA work-study program provides part-time employment to students receiving VA education benefits who attend school three-quarter time or more. Work-study students are paid either the State or Federal minimum wage, whichever is greater.

For information on approved programs call (312) 814-2460 or (217) 782-7839 and for information on VA Work Study locations available at the Illinois Veterans' Affairs call (312) 814-5538.

To apply or for more information, please visit
http://www.gibill.va.gov/resources/education_resources/programs/work_study_program.html

Please note: Effective June 30, 2013 some work-study activities authorized by Congress expired. VA can no longer pay for certain work-study activities. These include:

- Outreach services to service-members and veterans furnished under the supervision of a State approving agency employee
- Hospital and domiciliary care and medical treatment to veterans in a State home when VA pays an allowance to the State for such care
- Any activity relating to the administration of a national cemetery or a State Veterans' cemetery

Teaching

The Troops to Teaching Program

The Troops to Teaching Program can help veterans with at least 3 years of honorable service and a bachelor's degree transition from the military to K-12 public school teaching. The program can also provide financial assistance of $5,000 to those who enrolled in a certification program or a bonus of up to $10,000 for teachers who serve a three -year commitment in any high needs school across the state.

To apply or for more information, please visit http://www.iltroops.org/**.**

The Illinois Program Manager is Ms. Emily Siefken who can be reached at (312) 814-1831 or troops.teachers@illinois.gov**.**

Grants

Illinois Veteran Grant

The Illinois Veteran Grant Program pays tuition and certain fees at all Illinois state-supported colleges, universities and community colleges for eligible Illinois veterans. To be eligible, an individual must have resided in Illinois six months before entering service, have at least one full year of active duty military service from the State of Illinois, and have returned to Illinois within 6 months following honorable discharge.

To apply find your VSO Office, college financial aid office, or the Illinois Student Assistance Commission at 1755 Lake Cook Road, Deerfield, IL 60015 or call 847-948-8550, or visit https://www2.illinois.gov/veterans/benefits/Pages/education.aspx

To find a list of participating schools in Illinois for 2015-16 visit http://www.isac.org/dotAsset/dbaad5f4-6c3f-426a-b6b9-cdb754ef253a.pdf**.**

Illinois National Guard Grant

Illinois National Guard Grant provides enlisted persons with at least one year of service in the Illinois National Guard and who are enrolled in an Illinois public 2 or 4 year college with acceptable GPAs to apply.

To apply or for more information, please
http://www.il.ngb.army.mil/Recruiting/EdBenefits.aspx

Scholarships

Illinois Specific Scholarships

Bright Start Fallen Heroes Scholarship

The State deposits $2,500 in a Bright Start account for each child of a fallen service member who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom or Enduring Freedom upon the request of a surviving family member.

For more information, please visit
http://www.treasurer.il.gov/programs/scholarships/BRIGHT_START_SCHOLARSHIP_AGREEMENT_FALLEN_HERO_fillin_2010-05-25.pdf, or call 1-877-432-7444

Educational Aid for Children 10-18 years old

Aid available annually for children between the ages of 10 and 18 years of a Veteran who died or became totally disabled as a result of service in the Armed Forces during World War I or II, the Korean and Vietnam Conflicts, the Gulf War, and Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom. The financial aid applies to a state educational institution of elementary grade, high school or vocational training school.

To apply or for more information, please visit
http://www2.illinois.gov/veterans/Documents/childred-educational-opportunities.pdf **or call (312) 814-2460**.

MIA/POW Scholarship

This scholarship is open to dependents of veterans who have been declared by the Department of Defense or U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to be a Prisoner of War or Missing In Action or who died on active duty or became 100% disabled from service-connected disabilities. The beneficiary must be a U.S. citizen under the age of 30 years old. Applicants must also be the survivor of a Veteran who was an Illinois residents at the time of entering their service, within 3 months after entering their service, or until July 1, 2014, became an Illinois resident within 6 months after leaving the service and can establish at least 30 years of continuous residency in Illinois. This scholarship can be used at public colleges in Illinois.

To apply or for more information, please visit
http://www2.illinois.gov/veterans/Documents/MIA-POW-scholarship-application.pdf **or call 217-782-3564**

Branch Specific Scholarships

Air Force Association

The Air Force Association offers a variety of scholarships for Air Force veterans and dependents.

For more information, please visit
http://www.afa.org/AFA/InformationFor/Military/Scholarships

Army Emergency Relief

The Army Emergency Relief offers two scholarships for dependent children who are pursuing their first undergraduate degree. Scholarship applications are accepted from January 2nd to May 1st each year for assistance for the following academic year.

For more information, please visit http://www.aerhq.org/dnn563/Scholarships.aspx **or call 866-878-6378**.

Army Women's Foundation

The Army Women's Foundation's Legacy Scholarship offers tuition assistance to Army women enrolled in courses at a technical school, community college, four year academic institutions, and graduate schools. Starting in 2015 this application must be submitted online.

For more information, please visit www.awfdn.org/programs/legacyscholarships

Coast Guard Exchange System

The U.S. Coast Guard offers a wide variety of scholarships for service-members and dependents and include both need-based and merit-based awards.

For more information, please visit http://www.uscg.mil/worklife/scholarship.asp

Coast Guard Foundation

The Coast Guard Foundation offers scholarships to Coast Guard personnel and their families.

For more information, please visit www.coastguardfoundation.org/how/scholarships **or**
http://www.coastguardfoundation.org/how/scholarships/directory

Navy-Marine Corps Relief

The Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society offers scholarships to active duty or retired service members as well as their dependents.

For more information, please visit www.nmcrs.org/education

High School Diplomas for WWII, Korea, and Vietnam Veterans

If you are a veteran who served in WWII, Korea, or Vietnam and never attained a high school diploma, you may be eligible to receive one.

For more information, please call 800-437-9824.

Employment

Both the Illinois and U.S. Departments of Veterans Affairs provide a wide range of employment benefits. For help in choosing or applying for any program, contact the nearest Veteran Service facility (listed on page 7). For general information, visit www.veterans.illinois.gov, www.va.gov, or call 1-800-437-9824.

Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment

The Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program assists Veterans who have service-connected disabilities obtain and maintain suitable employment. Independent living services are available for severely disabled Veterans who are not ready to seek employment.

For more information, please visit http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre/

Veterans Preference for Federal Jobs

To receive preference for federal jobs, a Veteran must have been discharged or released from active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces under honorable conditions. Preference is also provided to widows and widowers of deceased Veterans who died during service. This includes spouses of service-connected disabled Veterans and mothers of Veterans who died under honorable conditions on active duty or have permanent and total service-connected disabilities.

Jobs for Veterans

The Illinois Department of Employment Security provides trained veterans representatives to help Veterans receive training and job placement assistance. There is a variety of resources that can help veterans find jobs and transition back to the civilian workforce.

For more information, visit
https://www2.illinois.gov/veterans/benefits/Pages/employment.aspx

Employment Assistance for Air National Guard

Illinois state employees receive 15 days of military leave per year and 60 days of special training.

State Employment Preference

State employment preference is given to honorably discharged Veterans when applying for state employment through Illinois Central Management Services.

For more information, visit www.work.illinois.gov .

Veterans Tax Credit

The state of Illinois provides tax credits to businesses that hire veterans. Businesses that hire qualified veterans are eligible to receive a credit of 10% of all wages, up to $1,200. Businesses that hire unemployed qualified veterans are eligible to receive a credit of 20% of wages, up to $5,000.

For more information, visit www.revenue.state.il.us/Businesses/index.htm .

Illinois Reemployment Rights

Illinois National Guard members called to active duty are protected under state law in addition to federal law unless performing state active duty in which case only state law applies.

For more information, visit www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/rights/veterans.html **.**

Healthcare

Both the Illinois and U.S. Departments of Veterans Affairs provide a wide range of healthcare programs and benefits. For help in choosing or applying for any program, contact the nearest Veterans Service facility (listed on page 7). For general information, visit www.veterans.illinois.gov, www.va.gov, or call 1-800-437-9824.

Healthcare Services include:

- Primary care
- Specialty care
- For Women: reproductive health care services
- In/Outpatient care
- Medication
- Veteran Health Registries
- Readjustment Counseling Services
- Prosthetic and Sensory Aids
- Mental Health Care Treatment
- Suicide Prevention
- Reimbursement of travel costs
- Home improvement and Structural alterations

Veterans Care Program

The Veterans Care Program was created to provide affordable healthcare coverage to uninsured Illinois Veterans. It covers doctor and clinic visits, hospital in/outpatient care, lab tests, x-rays, prescription drugs, vision care, limited dental, physical, and occupational and speech therapy, mental health, substance abuse services, and emergency medical transportation.

Illinois Warrior Assistance Program

The Illinois Warrior Assistance Program is a 24-hour, toll-free helpline (1-866-554-4927), staffed by health professionals to assist Veterans with symptoms associated with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and provides Traumatic Brain Injury screening to all interested Illinois Veterans.

For more information, visit www.illinoiswarrior.com/

Life Insurance

Servicemembers Group Life Insurance (SGLI) is a low-cost group life insurance program for service members. Coverage can be extended if the service member is totally disabled.

For more information, please visit http://benefits.va.gov/insurance/sgli.asp

Servicemembers Group Life Insurance Traumatic Injury Protection (TSGLI) provides benefits retroactively for service members who have suffered losses due to traumatic injuries.

For more information, please visit http://www.benefits.va.gov/insurance/tsgli.asp

Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI) is a post-separation insurance program that allows service-members to convert their SGLI coverage to renewable terms.

For more information, please visit http://www.benefits.va.gov/insurance/vgli.asp

Service Disabled Veterans Insurance (S-DVI) provides life insurance for Veterans with a service-related disability.

For more information, please visit http://www.benefits.va.gov/insurance/s-dvi.asp

Veterans Mortgage Life Insurance (VMLI) provides mortgage life insurance to severely disabled veterans and service-members who have been approved for VA Specially Adapted Housing Grants.

For more information, please visit http://www.insurance.va.gov/gli/buying/VMLI.htm

Mental Health Care

If you are experiencing a crisis, please call 911, call the veterans crisis line at 1-800-273-8255, visit http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/, or go to your local Emergency Room

VA Services for Mental Health

The VA offers several programs, guides, and resources to assist service-members with mental health issues.

If you think you have symptoms of mental health problems such as depression and posttraumatic stress disorder, you can visit http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/gethelp.asp#tabs-4.

For more information, please visit http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/index.asp

Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255 or http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/

Coaching into Care

Coaching into Care program provides free phone guidance for family members of veterans struggling with mental health issues.

For more information, please visithttp://www.mirecc.va.gov/coaching/

Make the Connection

Make the Connection is a website that offers hundreds of stories from veterans who overcame mental health issues. http://maketheconnection.net/

Military Sexual Trauma

If you experienced any unwanted sexual contact while in the military, please reach out to your local Veterans Service Facility.

VA Services for Military Sexual Trauma

Both men and women can experience sexual harassment and assault which may impact your physical and mental health. The VA offers free and confidential treatment and counseling for mental or physical health conditions related to military sexual trauma.

For more information, please visit any of the following sites.

For general information of services available: http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/msthome.asp

For women: http://www.womenshealth.va.gov/WOMENSHEALTH/trauma.asp

For information on PTSD and trauma: http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/pages/fslist-violence-abuse.asp

Housing

Both the Illinois and U.S. Departments of Veterans Affairs provide a wide range of housing programs and benefits. For help in choosing or applying for any program, contact the nearest Veterans Service facility (listed on page 7). For general information, visit www.veterans.illinois.gov, www.va.gov, or call 1-800-437-9824.

Home Loan Guaranty

VA offers a Home Loan Guaranty to help Veterans, reservists, and unmarried surviving spouses obtain homes and refinance loans. Applicants must have a good credit rating, sufficient income, certificate of eligibility, and agree to live in the property.

This can be used to buy a home as well as build, repair, or improve a home.

For more information, please visit http://www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/

Illinois GI Home Credit Program

The Illinois GI Home Credit Program allows Illinois Veterans and active duty members who are first time home buyers to take advantage of the MCC Mortgage credit certificate. The credit reduces the amount of federal income tax the borrower must pay.

For more information, please call (312) 836-5200

Specially Adapted Housing Grant

The Specially Adapted Housing Grant is a federal benefit available to Veterans or service members who are entitled to compensation for permanent and total service-connected disability.

The Specially Adapted Housing benefit amount is set by law, but may be adjusted upward annually based on a cost-of-construction index. The maximum dollar amount allowable for Specially Adapted Housing grants in fiscal year 2013 is $64,960. No individual may use the grant benefit more than three times up to the maximum dollar amount allowable.

For more information, please visit http://benefits.va.gov/homeloans/adaptedhousing.asp

Specially Adapted Housing Tax Exemption

The specially adapted housing tax exemption is a state exemption allowed on the assessed value of real property for which federal funds have been used for the purchase or construction of specially adapted housing for as long as the Veteran, spouse, or unmarried surviving spouses reside on the property.

For more information, please call your local Veterans Service Officer (page 7)

Disabled Veterans' Tax Exemption for Mobile Homes

The disabled veterans' tax exemption for mobile homes applies to the tax imposed by the Mobile Home Local Services Tax Act when that property is owned and used exclusively by a disabled veteran, spouse, or unmarried surviving spouse as a home. Veteran must first receive authorization of the Specially Adapted Housing Grant by the USDVA. Applicant must be a permanent resident of the State of Illinois on January 1 of the tax year for which the exemption is being claimed. Disabled veterans that now live in a mobile home and never received the Specially Adapted Housing Grant are not eligible.

For more information, please call your local Veteran Service Officer (page 7)

Returning Veterans' Homestead Exemption

The returning veterans' homestead exemption is a one-time $5,000 reduction in EAV on the principal residence of a veteran upon returning from active duty in an armed conflict involving the armed forces of the United States. Although the exemption is only for a single year, a qualifying veteran can receive the exemption for another tax year in which he or she returns from active duty. Applicants must file Form PTAX-341, Application for Returning Veterans' Homestead Exemption, with the chief county assessment office.

For more information, please call your local County Assessor's office

Disabled Veterans' Standard Homestead Exemption

The disabled veterans' standard homestead exemption is an annual reduction in EAV on the primary residence occupied by a qualified disabled veteran. The disabled veteran must own or lease a single family residence and be liable for the payment of the property taxes. The amount of the exemption depends on the percentage of the service-connected disability as certified by the U. S. Dept. of Veterans' Affairs. A qualified disabled veteran with a disability of at least 50% but less than 70% will receive a $2,500 reduction in EAV, and a disabled veteran with a disability of at least 70% will receive a $5,000 reduction in EAV.

The initial application Form PTAX-342 Application for Disabled Veterans' Standard Homestead Exemption must be filed with the chief county assessment office. The Form PTAX-342-R, Annual Verification of Eligibility for Disabled Veterans' Standard Homestead Exemption must be filed each year to continue to receive the exemption. For a single tax year, the property cannot receive this exemption and the Disabled Persons' Homestead Exemption or Disabled

Veterans' Homestead Exemption. For more information contact the chief county assessment office.

For more information, please call your local County Assessor's office

Illinois Veterans Homes

Aging Illinois veterans with one day or more of service during any wartime period of war may qualify to reside in a Veterans Home. Veterans must have entered military service from the state of Illinois or been a resident for one year prior to applying to an Illinois Veteran's Home. Applicants must pass background checks.

- **Veterans Home at Quincy**: Largest in the state and located in Adams County -(217) 222-8641
- **Veterans Home at LaSalle**: Located in LaSalle County - (815) 223-0303, ext. 210
- **Veterans Home at Anna**: Located in Union County - (618) 833-6302
- **Veterans Home at Manteno**: Located in Kankakee County - (815) 468–6581
- **Prince Homeless/Disabled Veteran's Home**: Located at the Veteran's Home at Manteno – (815)468-6581

Small Business

Both the Illinois and U.S. Departments of Veterans Affairs provide a wide range of benefits to veteran owned small businesses. For help in choosing or applying for any program, contact the nearest Veteran Service facility (listed on page 7). For general information on small business benefits, visit http://www.sba.gov/content/veteran-service-disabled-veteran-owned or http://www.va.gov/osdbu/veteran/

Loan and Grants Search Tool

This tool will help you find what loans and grants your small business may be eligible for.
Please visit http://www.sba.gov/content/search-business-loans-grants-and-financing

Resources for People with Disabilities

This site offers information and resources on starting and building your small business
Please visit http://www.sba.gov/content/people-with-disabilities

Operation Boots to Business: From Service to Startup

This initiative is run by the Small Business Administration (SBA) and provides service members with the information, resources, and tools needed to become successful small business owners.

For more information, please visit http://www.sba.gov/bootstobusiness

The Illinois Veterans Business Program

Veteran-owned small businesses (VOSB) and service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses (SDVOSB) may qualify for the Veterans Business Program (VBP). State agencies and universities are encouraged to spend at least 3% of their procurement budgets with VBP-certified VOSBs. VOSBs and SVBOSBs can receive procurement opportunities by registering with the VBP.

For more information, please visit
http://www2.illinois.gov/cms/business/sell2/Pages/VeteranownedBusinesses.aspx

Small Business Set-Aside

Each year, the Chief Procurement Officer allocates a certain amount of contracts for small businesses. VOSBs and SDVOSBs may apply for this program.

For more information, please visit https://www.sba.gov/sdvosb **call (217) 558-3723**

Women Vetrepreneurship Program

This program is offered by the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs and the Women's Business Development Council. The program offers business development training for women veterans looking to start their own business.

For more information or to enroll, please contact Georgia Marsh at gmarsh@wbdc.org.

Resources for Women Veterans

There are many benefits, programs, and services available to women veterans. For help in choosing and/or applying for any program, as well as assistance with any program, contact the nearest Veterans Service facility (listed on page 7). For general information, visit http://www.va.gov/womenvet/, www.va.gov, or call 1-800-437-9824.

VA, Center for Women Veterans

This center acts as the primary advisor to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on all matters related to policies, legislation, programs, issues, and initiatives affecting women Veterans.

The benefits and services include: health promotion and disease prevention, primary care, substance abuse treatment, mental health, domiciliary, homeless, rehabilitation and long term care, and gender specific health care. Also children of women Vietnam Veterans may be eligible for health care and compensation for certain birth defects, monthly compensation for the loss or loss of use of specific organs or extremities, and military sexual trauma counseling and treatment.

For more information, please visit http://www.va.gov/womenvet/

Women's Healthcare

Women Veterans Health Program

This program was created in 1988 to streamline services for women veterans. Since then, the Women Veterans Health Program has worked to address the needs of women veterans.

For more information, please visit
http://www.womenshealth.va.gov/WOMENSHEALTH/index.asp

Women's Health Centers

Edward Hines Jr. VA Hospital
Women's Health Center
5000 South 5th Ave.
Building 200, 12th Floor
Hines, IL 60141
Phone: 708-202-2075
708-202-2249
Fax: 708-202-3688
http://www.hines.va.gov/services/women/

Jesse Brown VA Women's Health Center
Women Veterans Health Center
820 S. Damen Avenue, Chicago, IL 60612
312-569-6246
http://www.chicago.va.gov/services/women/index.asp

Danville VA Women's Health Center
VA Illiana Health Care System
1900 E. Main St.
Danville, IL 61832
http://www.danville.va.gov/services/women.asp

Women's Transitional Assistance

Business and Professional Women's Foundation

The Business and Professional Women's Foundation (BPW) offers numerous programs and services to assist women veterans in their transition to civilian life.

For more information, please visit http://bpwfoundation.org/

Mentoring Plus

This program offers unlimited free personal coaching and professional guidance for women veterans to help them succeed in their civilian careers.

For more information, please visit http://www.joiningforcesmentoringplus.org/

Burial

The Illinois and U.S. Departments of Veterans Affairs provide a wide range of burial benefits. For help in choosing or applying for any program, contact the nearest Veterans Service facility (listed on page 7). For general information, visit www.veterans.illinois.gov, www.va.gov, or call 1-800-437-9824.

Burial Assistance, Plot, Internment Allowance

Eligibility is established if the Veteran was entitled at the time of death to pension or compensation. It also is established if the Veteran died while hospitalized or domiciled in a VA facility or other facility at the VA's expense.

For more information, please visit http://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/claims-special-burial.asp

National Cemetery Burial

Burial in a VA national cemetery is available at no cost to eligible Veterans, their spouses, and eligible dependents. It includes gravesite, liner, opening and closing of the grave, a headstone or maker, and perpetual care as part of a national shrine.

This benefit also includes flag and military honors, family members and others may request a Presidential Memorial Certificate.

For more information, please visit http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/burial_benefits/index.asp

To schedule a burial: Fax all discharge documentation to the National Cemetery Scheduling Office at 1-866-900-6417 and follow-up with a phone call to 1-800-535-1117. Request your military service records at http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/**.**

Burial Flags

A United States flag is provided, at no cost, to drape the casket or accompany the urn of a deceased Veteran who served honorably in the U.S Armed Forces.

For more information, please visit http://www.va.gov/oal/government/sdc/burialFlags.asp **or call (800) 827-1000. To apply, visit** http://www.cem.va.gov/burial_benefits/burial_flags.asp**.**

Grave Marker of Headstone

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs will furnish a headstone or marker without charge for the unmarked grave of a Veteran who was separated from the service under non-dishonorable conditions or who died on active duty. Medal of Honor recipients are entitled to headstone or markers.

For more information, please visit http://www.cem.va.gov/hmm/

Cartage and Erection Fees

When the federal government has furnished a headstone or marker, IDVA shall pay up to the allowable reimbursement amount for the setting of such marker within Illinois. The current maximum amount is $100 payable upon arrival of application.

For more information, please call your local Veteran Service Officer (page 7)

Indigent Veterans

The County Veterans Assistance Commission provides burial for any honorably discharged indigent veteran, or their mothers, fathers, spouse, or surviving minor children without sufficient means of paying. Maximum benefit is $600.

For more information, please call your local Veteran Service Officer (page 7)

Other Veteran Programs

Veterans Conservation Corps

This is a joint program from the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources for veterans interested in volunteering to protect natural resources.

For more information, please visit
http://www2.illinois.gov/veterans/programs/Pages/conservation-corps.aspx

Veteran of the Month

The Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs Director will recognize an individual who contributes to the betterment of communities and other Veterans across the state of Illinois.

For more information or to nominate someone, please visit
http://www2.illinois.gov/veterans/programs/Pages/veteran-of-month.aspx

The Illinois Military Family Relief Fund

This program provides monetary grants to Illinois National Guard members and Illinois residents serving in the U.S. Armed Forces Reserve Components and their families who were called to active duty as a result of the September 11,2001 terrorist attacks.

For more information, please visit http://www.il.ngb.army.mil/programs/imrf.aspx **or call (866) 524-4564.**

Disabled Veterans License Plates and Parking

Disability license plates may be issued at no cost for the first set of plates to any U.S. Armed Forces Veteran if the veteran holds proof of service connected disability and a licensed physician certification.

For more information, please visit
http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/vehicles/license_plate_guide/military/disabled_vet.html

CTA Military Service Pass

The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) pass is available to all active duty, Reserves and National Guard members, as well as Veterans who are 10% or more service-connected disabled. This pass is only good on CTA.

For more information, please visit
http://www.transitchicago.com/travel_information/fares/military.aspx

Important Veterans Affairs Resources

Bereavement Counseling: (202) 461-6530 or vetcenter.bereavment@va.gov

Civilian Health and Medical Program: (800) 733-8387

Caregiver Support: (855) 260-3274 or www.caregiver.va.gov

Education: (888) 442-4551 or www.gibill.va.gov

Federal Recovery Coordinator Program: (877) 732-4456

Foreign Medical Program: (303) 331-7590

Headstones and Markers: (800) 697-6947

Healthcare: (877) 222-8387 or http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/

Homeless Veterans: (877) 424-3838 or http://www.va.gov/homeless/

Home Loans: (888) 244-6711 or www.homeloans.va.gov

Life Insurance: (800) 669-8477 or www.insurance.va.gov

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: (800) 273-8255

Pension Management Center: (877) 294-6380

Presidential Memorial Certificate Program: (202) 565-4964

Special Health Issues: (800) 749-8387

Specially Adapted Housing: (877) 827-3702 or sahinfo.vbaco@va.gov

VA Benefits: (800) 827-1000 or www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/rates

Women Veterans: (202) 461-1070 or www.publichealth.va.gov/womenshealth

Burial and Memorial Benefits: (800) 535-1117 or www.cem.va.gov

CHAMPVA: (800) 733-8387 or www.va.gov/hac/forbeneficiaries/forbeneficiaries.asp

Federal Jobs: www.usajobs.gov

Memorial Certificate Program: (202) 565-4964 or www.cem.va.gov/pmc.asp

Mental Health: (800) 273-8255www.mentalhealth.va.gov

My Health Vet: www.myhealth.va.gov

National Resource Directory: www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov

Prosthetics: www.prosthetics.va.gov

Records: (314) 801-0800 or www.archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel

Returning Service members: (877) 222-8387 or www.oefoif.va.gov

VA Vet Centers: www.vetcenter.va.gov

VA Home Page: (800) 827-1000 or www.va.gov

VA Forms: http://www.va.gov/vaforms/search_action.asp