



CONGRESSWOMAN ROBIN KELLY  
VETERANS RESOURCES GUIDE

**Congresswoman**

**Robin L. Kelly**

**Illinois' 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District**



**Dear Illinois Veterans, Service Members, and Family Members,**

I am proud to represent many of the 800,000 veterans who call Illinois home. When our service members return, it is our duty to repay them for their services by ensuring they have access to medical care and other resources they need for a smooth transition back to civilian life.

As part of these efforts, my office has created a “Veterans Resource Guide.” This will provide our heroes with key information about federal, state, and community veterans based programs. While this guide may not answer all of your questions, it should serve as a directory for further assistance.

I hope you find this 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robin L. Kelly". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robin L. Kelly  
Member of Congress

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# Important Veterans Affairs Resources

**Bereavement Counseling:** (202) 461-6530

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

**Caregiver Support:** (855) 260-3274 or [www.caregiver.va.gov](http://www.caregiver.va.gov)

**Education:** (888) 442-4551 or [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov)

**Federal Recovery Coordinator Program:** (877) 732-4456

**Foreign Medical Program:** (888) 820-1756

**Headstones and Markers:** (800) 697-6947

**Health Care:** (877) 222-8387 or [www.va.gov/healtheligibility](http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility)

**Homeless Veterans:** (877) 424-3838

**Home Loans:** (888) 244-6711 or [www.homeloans.va.gov](http://www.homeloans.va.gov)

**Life Insurance:** (800) 669-8477 or [www.insurance.va.gov](http://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

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

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

**Burial and Memorial Benefits:** [www.cema.va.gov](http://www.cema.va.gov)

**CHAMPVA:** [www.va.gov/hac/forbeneficiaries/forbeneficiaries.asp](http://www.va.gov/hac/forbeneficiaries/forbeneficiaries.asp)

**Federal Jobs:** [www.usajobs.opm.gov](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov)

**Memorial Certificate Program:** [www.cem.va.gov/pmc.asp](http://www.cem.va.gov/pmc.asp)

**Mental Health:** [www.mentalhealth.va.gov](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov)

**My Health Vet:** [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)

**National Resource Directory:** [www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov](http://www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov)

**Prosthetics:** [www.prosthetics.va.gov](http://www.prosthetics.va.gov)

**Records:** [www.archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel](http://www.archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel)

**Returning Service members:** [www.oefoif.va.gov](http://www.oefoif.va.gov)

**VA Vet Centers:** [www.vetcenter.va.gov](http://www.vetcenter.va.gov)

**VA Home Page:** [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)

**VA Forms:** [www.va.gov/vaform](http://www.va.gov/vaform)

# Casework Assistance

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

## Matteson Office

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

## Chicago Office

1000 E. 111<sup>th</sup> St.  
11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Chicago, IL 60628  
(773) 568-2623

## Washington Office

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

You can also visit my website, [www.robinkelly.house.gov](http://www.robinkelly.house.gov).

# State of Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs Resources

## Key Contacts

- **Illinois Dept. of Veterans Affairs:** [www.veterans.illinois.gov/](http://www.veterans.illinois.gov/) (800) 437-9824
- **Illinois Military Family Relief Fund:** [www.il.ngb.army.mil](http://www.il.ngb.army.mil) (217) 761-3452 or (866) 524-4564
- **Illinois Student Assistance Commission:** [www.collegezone.com](http://www.collegezone.com) (800) 899-4722
- **Illinois Department of Employment Security:** [www.ides.state.il.us/veterans/default.asp](http://www.ides.state.il.us/veterans/default.asp)
- **Illinois Tax Filing Requirements for Military Personnel:** [www.tax.illinois.gov](http://www.tax.illinois.gov) or (800) 732-8866
- **Illinois Tax on Military Retirement:** [www.tax.illinois.gov](http://www.tax.illinois.gov)
- **Illinois Department of Public Health:** [www.idph.state.il.us/](http://www.idph.state.il.us/)
- **Illinois Attorney General Veterans Rights Bureau:** [www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/rights/veterans.html](http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/rights/veterans.html) or (312) 814-6594
- **Secretary of State:** [www.cyberdriveillinois.com](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com) or (800) 252-8980
- **Veterans Outreach Program:** [www.work.illinois.gov/](http://www.work.illinois.gov/)
- **Illinois Association of County Veteran Assistance Commission:** [www.iacvac.org](http://www.iacvac.org) or (618) 227-0040
- **Veteran Assistance Commission of Cook County:** (312) 433-6010
- **Health Coverage for Illinois Parents:** [www.familycareillinois.com](http://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](http://www.dhs.state.il.us) or (800) 843-6154
- **American Red Cross:** [www.redcross.org/il/springfield.com](http://www.redcross.org/il/springfield.com) or (217) 787-7602

## Veterans Affairs Centers

- **Chicago Veterans Resource Center:** 7731 S. Halsted St. Chicago, IL 60620 (773) 962-3740
- **Chicago Heights Center:** 1600 Halsted St. Chicago Heights, IL 60411 (708) 754-0340
- **Chicago VA Regional Office:** 2122 W. Taylor St. Chicago, IL 60612 (800) 827-1000

# Veterans Affairs Hospitals

- **Jesse Brown VA Medical Center:** 820 Damen Av. Chicago, IL 60612, **(312) 569-8387**
- **North Chicago VA Medical Center:** 3001 Green Bay Rd. North Chicago, IL 60064, **(800) 393-0865 or (847) 688-1900**
- **Auburn Gresham Clinic:** 7731 S. Halsted St. Chicago, IL 60620, **(773) 962-3700**
- **Lakeside Chicago VA Outpatient Clinic:** 211 E. Ontario St. Chicago, IL 60611, **(312) 469-4850**
- **Chicago Heights VA Outpatient Clinic:** 30 E. 15<sup>th</sup> St. Suite 207 Chicago Heights, IL 60411, **(708) 754-8880**
- **Manteno Veterans Outpatient Clinic:** 1 Veterans Dr. Manteno, IL 60950, **(815) 468-1027**

## Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs Offices near Illinois' 2<sup>nd</sup> 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) 403-2011  
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) 730-4334  
Hours: 8:00AM-4:30PM

# Veteran Benefits

Both the Illinois and U.S. Departments of Veterans Affairs provide a wide range of compensations, pensions, and bonuses. 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](http://www.veterans.illinois.gov), [www.va.gov](http://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 you are discharged under other than dishonorable conditions.

### Dependency and Indemnity Compensation

Dependency and indemnity compensation is for service connected deaths. This is a monthly benefit paid to survivors.

- You may be eligible if: Service member died during active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training, death resulted from service related injury or disease, death resulted from non-service related injury or disease who was receiving or entitled to receive VA compensation for disability rated totally disabling for at least eight years immediately preceding 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. One must apply with their branch of service to partake 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. If a veterans' death is service connected or direct result of service connected disabilities incurred during.

### **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 residents of Illinois 12 months prior to entry, and who 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 and totally disabled.

- You may be eligible if: You are discharged from service under other than 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, totally 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 other than 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 monthly pension amount may be added to your monthly pension amount 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. For more information about any of these bonuses, please visit

<http://www2.illinois.gov/veterans/benefits/Pages/bonus-payment.aspx>

### **World War II Bonus**

You are eligible for this bonus if you served on active duty between September 16, 1940 and September 3, 1945 and received an honorable discharge.

### **Korean War Bonus**

You are eligible for this 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 bonus if you served between January 1, 1961 and March 28, 1973 and those who served in Operation Frequent Wind Vietnam between April 29 and April 30 of 1975, must have received Vietnam Service Medal or Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for Vietnam, were a resident of Illinois 12 months prior to entering service, and were honorably discharged.

### **Persian Gulf War Bonus**

You are eligible for this bonus if you served between August 2, 1990 and November 30, 1995, received the Southwest Asia Service Medal, honorably discharged, and a resident of Illinois 12 months prior to service.

### **Global War on Terrorism**

You are eligible for this 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, currently on active duty under Global War, a resident of Illinois 12 months prior to entering the service, and honorably discharges.

# 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 Veteran Service facility (listed on page 7). For general information, visit [www.veterans.illinois.gov](http://www.veterans.illinois.gov), [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov), or call 1-800-437-9824.

## **Financial Benefits**

### Montgomery GI Bill

The MGIB-Select Reserve program provides educational benefits to members of the Selected Reserve. Veterans can receive a maximum of 36 months of education benefits and eligibility ends the day you leave Selected Reserve. There are exceptions if you are currently mobilized. To be eligible you must have a six-year obligation to serve in the Selected Reserve signed after June 30, 1985. If you are an officer, you must have agreed to serve six years in addition to your original obligation.

The Montgomery GI Bill may also be available for active duty service members. The MGIB program provides up to 36 months of education benefits. 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 \$5,400 in additional GI Bill benefits.

**To apply or for more information, please visit**

[http://www.gibill.va.gov/benefits/montgomery\\_gibill/](http://www.gibill.va.gov/benefits/montgomery_gibill/)

### Veterans Educational Assistance Program (VEAP)

The Veterans Educational Assistance Program provides educational benefits for veterans who entered service between January 1, 1977, and June 30, 1985; opened a contribution account before April 1, 1987; voluntarily contributed \$25 to \$2,700; completed their first period of service; and were discharged or released from service 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.

**For apply or for more information, please visit**

[http://www.gibill.va.gov/benefits/other\\_programs/veap.html](http://www.gibill.va.gov/benefits/other_programs/veap.html)

### Vet Success

VA assists Veterans with service-connected disabilities to prepare for, obtain, and maintain suitable employment the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Vet Success program. Vet

Success provides you with vocational counseling, job search assistance, and a variety of other educational and training services.

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

### **Post 9/11 GI Bill**

This is a new education program for service members and Veterans who served on active duty on or after September 11, 2001.

To be eligible: the service member or Veteran must serve at least 90 aggregate days on active duty after September 10, 2001, and remain on active duty or be honorably discharged from active duty status, released from active and placed on the retired list, or temporary disability retired list, released from active duty and transferred to the Fleet Reserve or Fleet Marine Corps Reserve; released from active duty for further service in a reserve component of the Armed Forces. Also, if they were honorably discharged from active duty for a service-connected disability after serving 30 continuous days after September 10, 2001.

Service members or Veterans may receive up to 36 months of benefits. Eligibility expires 15 years from the last period of active duty of at least 90 consecutive days. If released for a service-connected disability after at least 30 days 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, monthly housing allowance, and yearly books and supplies stipend.

**To apply or for more information, please visit [http://www.gibill.va.gov/benefits/post\\_911\\_gibill/](http://www.gibill.va.gov/benefits/post_911_gibill/)**

### **Yellow Ribbon GI Education Enhancement Program**

The Yellow Ribbon GI Education Enhancement Program will pay for all resident tuition and fees for a public school or part of your tuition and fees for a private school. You may be eligible for this program if you served an aggregate period of active duty after September 10, 2001, of at least 36 months; You were honorably discharged from active duty for a service connected disability and you served 30 continuous days after September 10, 2001; You are a dependent eligible for Transfer of Entitlement under the Post-9/11 GI Bill based on a veteran's service under the eligibility criteria listed above.

**To apply or for more information, please visit [http://www.gibill.va.gov/benefits/post\\_911\\_gibill/yellow\\_ribbon\\_program.html](http://www.gibill.va.gov/benefits/post_911_gibill/yellow_ribbon_program.html)**

### **Work Study Program**

Veterans who are fulltime or  $\frac{3}{4}$  time students in a college degree program, or a vocational or professional program can receive a VA work study allowance.

- 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.

**To apply or for more information, please visit**

[http://www.gibill.va.gov/resources/education\\_resources/programs/work\\_study\\_program.html](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** [www.proudtoserveagain.com](http://www.proudtoserveagain.com)

## Grants

### Illinois Veteran Grant

The Illinois Veteran Grant 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 returned to Illinois within 6 months following discharge.

**To apply or for more information, please visit** [http://www.collegezone.com/416\\_962.htm](http://www.collegezone.com/416_962.htm) or call 847-948-8550

### 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 States 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](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 of a Veteran who died or became totally disabled as a result of a service in the Armed Forces.

**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 a veteran who has been declared by the Department of Defense or U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to be a prisoner of war; missing-in-action; to have died as the result of a service-connected disability; or be permanently disabled from service-connected causes with 100% disability; and, who was an Illinois resident or was an Illinois resident within six months of entering service. The beneficiary must be a U.S. citizen under the age of 30 years old.

**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.

**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.

**For more information, please visit** [www.awfdn.org/programs/legacyscholarships](http://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 includes both need-based and merit-based awards.

**For more information, please visit**

<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/scholarships.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](http://www.coastguardfoundation.org/how/scholarships) or <http://www.coastguardfoundation.org/how/scholarships/directory>

### **Navy-Marine Corps Relief**

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

**For more information, please visit** [www.nmcrs.org/education](http://www.nmcrs.org/education)

# High School Diplomas for WWII, Korea, and Vietnam Veterans

If you are a veteran that 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](http://www.veterans.illinois.gov), [www.va.gov](http://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 Veteran 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 work force.

**For more information, visit** <http://www.ides.illinois.gov/page.aspx?item=843>

## 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](http://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](http://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](http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/rights/veterans.html).**

# Health Care

Both the Illinois and U.S. Departments of Veterans Affairs provide a wide range of health care programs and 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](http://www.veterans.illinois.gov), [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov), or call 1-800-437-9824.

## Health Care Services include:

- For Women: primary care, specialty care, mental health care, and 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 health care 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/](http://www.illinoiswarrior.com/)

## Life Insurance

**Service Members 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>**

**Service Members 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.insurance.va.gov/sglisite/tsgli/tsgli.htm>**

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

**For more information, please visit <http://www.insurance.va.gov/sglisite/vgli/vgli.htm>**

**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 visit <http://www.mirecc.va.gov/coaching/>**

## **Make the Connection**

Make the Connection is a website which 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 Veteran Service facility (listed on page 7). For general information, visit [www.veterans.illinois.gov](http://www.veterans.illinois.gov), [www.va.gov](http://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 Veteran 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 about 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 [http://www2.illinois.gov/cms/business/sell2/sbsp/pages/set\\_aside.aspx](http://www2.illinois.gov/cms/business/sell2/sbsp/pages/set_aside.aspx) or call (217) 558-3723

## **Women Vetpreneurship 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](mailto: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 Veteran Service facility (listed on page 7). For general information, visit <http://www.va.gov/womenvet/>, [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov), or call 1-800-437-9824.

## USDVA, 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 Health Care

### 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/womens/>

### **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**

### **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](mailto:gmarsh@wbdc.org).**

### **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 Veteran Service facility (listed on page 7). For general information, visit [www.veterans.illinois.gov](http://www.veterans.illinois.gov), [www.va.gov](http://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](http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/burial_benefits/index.asp)

## **Burial Flags**

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

**For more information, please visit** <http://www.va.gov/oal/government/sdc/burialFlags.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 conditions other than dishonorable or who died on active duty. Medal of Honor recipients are entitled to headstone or makers.

**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>

## Veterans' Cash Grant

Illinois citizens can purchase Vets Cash lottery tickets. 100% of proceeds go to supporting Illinois veterans programs. Organizations that serve veterans can apply to receive grants from these lottery tickets.

**For more information, please visit** <http://www2.illinois.gov/veterans/programs/Pages/veterans-cash.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>

## 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\\_vehicle.html](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/vehicles/license_plate_guide/military/disabled_vehicle.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](http://www.transitchicago.com/travel_information/fares/military.aspx)