



# CENTRAL HAMPSHIRE VETERAN SERVICES

Servicing the towns of Pelham, Amherst, Hadley, Williamsburg, Goshen, Cummington, Chesterfield, Worthington, Middlefield, Chester and the city of Northampton

Main office at 240 Main St. Rm 4 Northampton MA 01060  
ph. 413 587-1299 fax 413 587-1062 [email vetadmin@northamptonma.gov](mailto:vetadmin@northamptonma.gov)



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### Definitions of Massachusetts Veteran

To be a "Veteran" under Massachusetts law a person is required to have either:

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

To Be Eligible for Benefits A veteran must meet at least one of the following requirements:

- Served at least 180 days; or
- Served at least 90 days with at least one day in war time; or
- Had a service-connected disability after one day of active service in war time; or
- Was awarded the Purple Heart; or
- Died in service

A veteran's dependent must be one of the following to qualify:

- A veteran's spouse or widow(er)
- A veteran's child aged 18 or younger
- A veteran's child aged 19 to 23 years old who is in high school or college
- A veteran's child aged 19 or older who is totally disabled and was disabled before turning 19
- A veteran's parent

## What is Chapter 115 Veterans Benefits?

**There are three requirements to qualify for these benefits – (1) You *must be a veteran or a dependent of a veteran*; (2) *have financial need*; and (3) *live in Massachusetts*.**

The Chapter 115 Benefits Program is a Massachusetts initiative providing financial aid to veterans and their dependents who have limited income and reside in Massachusetts. It is to assist with:

- Fuel
- Housing/Shelter
- Cash Assistance
- Medical Expenses

The program is overseen by the Massachusetts Department Of Veterans' Services (DVS), which administers the program in partnership with local Veterans' Service Officers (VSOs) in your local City/Town.

### Cash Assistance

Whether you are eligible to receive this benefit depends on several factors: your living situation, special needs, and income. For example, if you are a single veteran living alone, you may qualify for a monthly payment of between \$1 and \$1,548.

### Medical Expense Reimbursements

You may qualify to be reimbursed (in full or in part) for a variety of medical expenses, such as insurance premiums, co-pays, dental work, hearing aids, and eyeglasses. Even if you exceed the income guidelines to get Cash Assistance, you may still be eligible to receive Medical Expense Reimbursements.

### Emergency Assistance

You may qualify to receive financial aid if you are behind on your mortgage or rent, or your utility bills. You may even be eligible to receive financial aid for emergency home repairs or assistance in cases of natural disasters.

### Eligibility

If your income is less than \$2126.00 (single) \$2873.00 (Family) & asset limits of \$5,000 single \$8,000 (married) you may be eligible for this program. If you think you are eligible or have any questions, contact the Central Hampshire Veterans Services Department at (413) 587-1299.

(\*This program can only be administered in the City or Town in which the veteran or dependents reside).

**Springfield Empowerment  
Center  
Eastfield Mall  
1655 Boston Road  
Springfield, MA 01129**

### Springfield Food Assistance

The purpose of the Empowerment Center is to provide well-balanced, shelf-stable food boxes to help alleviate food and nutritional insecurity for Veterans, active-duty Military and their families.

PRIOR registration is required for ALL locations (see the link after each location to register

Open to all Veterans  
Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays 12pm-6pm

<https://mmsfi.org/food4vets/>



To see if you might qualify, use DTA's confidential screener at:  
[www.DTAConnect.com/screening](http://www.DTAConnect.com/screening)

How do I Apply?

Online at [www.DTAConnect.com](http://www.DTAConnect.com), or

Print a paper application from [www.Mass.gov/DTA](http://www.Mass.gov/DTA) and

Mail to:

DTA Document Processing Center,

P.O. Box 4406, Taunton, MA 02780

Fax to: 617-887-8765, or

Visit a DTA office near you. To find an

office visit [www.Mass.gov/DTA](http://www.Mass.gov/DTA) and click

on "DTA Office Locations." Our office has assisted many veterans with this process. Don't be afraid to ask us to help



**BUILDING BRIDGES**  
UNITING FOOD, FRIENDS AND VETERANS

Working in concert with the Veterans Administration, nonprofit veteran organizations, and churches, Building Bridges' mission is to build bridges within the veteran population, and between veterans and the communities they risked their lives to protect. Our operating strategy is as simple as our mission: to create veteran communities around a weekly or monthly lunch which fosters collegiality and mutual support.

Building Bridges provides a comfortable, respectful, and non-judgmental space for veterans to gather at free lunches at local veterans clubs and lodges. We partner with a host of veteran service providers, agencies, and independent nonprofits to collaboratively address the significant challenges facing US veterans. The Initiative offers a hot, nutritious weekly meal, camaraderie, and relevant programming on such issues as PTSD and its treatment, the acquisition of service dogs, and available Veterans Administration benefits. Indeed, Veteran Service Officers repeatedly remark that Building Bridges provides supportive venues to make accessible critical veterans services that they find difficult to deliver from their offices.

#### First and Third Wednesday of Every Month

Spare Time Bowling Alley  
525 Pleasant Street  
Northampton, MA

#### [Directions](#)

#### Free Lunch for Veterans (including their family and friends!)

This free meal for veterans, their friends and family, or any person concerned about veterans issues, is intended to build community, plain and simple. These are informal gatherings to meet and talk as a fellowship and community of veterans and non-veterans alike. We believe that filling bellies with warm, delicious food is an important step to feeding and filling the spirit of a community. It is our hope that anyone who has served, regardless of religion or lack of religion, will feel comfortable attending.

#### Every Thursday at 12:00pm

Elks Lodge  
2 Church St.  
Greenfield, MA 01301

#### [Directions](#)

Join us every Thursday at the Elks Lodge for a meal and great company! All veterans welcome. Veterans can bring one guest.

#### Last Tuesday of the month at 12:00pm

Polish American Citizens Club  
46 S. Main St.  
South Deerfield, MA

#### [Directions](#)

Join us at the Polish American Citizens Club for a meal and great company! All veterans welcome. Veterans can bring one guest.



**our mission:**

## To Help Veterans In Need!

At Homeward Vets, we aim to rebuild hope where it's been damaged or lost. We work with veterans in need, who are underprivileged, and who are underserved, to rebuild their lives. Our focus lies on community efforts by education and assisting veterans transitioning from chronic homelessness.

<https://www.facebook.com/HomewardVets> · Charity Organization

Did you know....

## Massachusetts Awards “Welcome Home Bonuses” to its Veterans

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts provides a bonus to veterans of certain designated campaigns who were domiciled in Massachusetts immediately prior to entry in the armed forces. In case of the death of a veteran, the spouse and children, mother or father, brother or sister or other dependents of the deceased veteran (in that order) are eligible for a bonus.

### Post 9/11 Veterans

(Served on or after September 11, 2001)

The amount of the Post 9/11 Bonus depends on if you served in Iraq or Afghanistan (\$1000) or served elsewhere in the U.S. or abroad for six months or more (\$500).

Depending on the length of your service and number of deployments, you may be eligible for more than one “Welcome Home Bonus.” These later bonuses are paid at a lower rate.

### Persian Gulf Bonus

(Served for at least 30 days between August 2, 1990 and April 10, 1991 for).

The amount of the Persian Gulf Bonus depends on whether you served in the Persian Gulf Area and received the Southwest Asia Service Medal (\$500); or served elsewhere (\$300).

### Vietnam Bonus

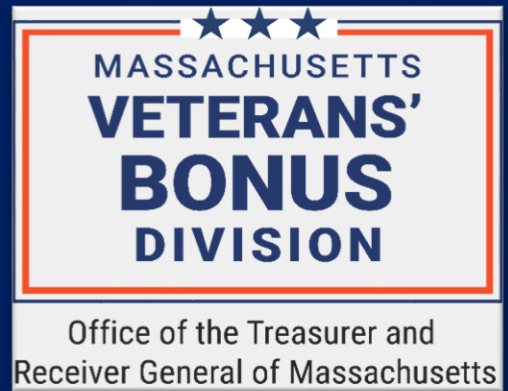
(Served between July 1, 1958 and May 17, 1975)

The amount of the Vietnam Bonus depends on whether you served in Vietnam (\$300) or elsewhere for at least six months (\$200).

### Korean Bonus

(Served between June 25, 1950 and January 31, 1955).

The amount of the Korean Bonus depends on whether you served one or more days outside the United States (\$300); served at least six months in the U.S. (\$200); or served 90 days in the U.S. (\$100).



### World War II Bonus

(Served between September 16, 1940 and July 25, 1947).

The amount of the World War II Bonus depends on whether you served outside the U.S (\$300); served more than six months in the U.S. (\$200); or served less than six months in the U. S. (\$100).

### Bonuses for Survivors of Veterans

If an eligible veteran has died, the spouse and children, mother, father, brother or sister, or other dependents (in that order) may be eligible to receive the veteran's bonus.

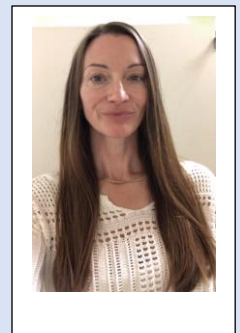
Visit: <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-a-welcome-home-veterans-bonus>.

## Meet Your VSO Staff

**STEVE CONNOR, DIRECTOR OF VETERANS SERVICES**-Born and raised in Florence, MA., Steve became the director for the city of Northampton department of Veteran Services in 2004, and grew the department by forming a district in 2008 consisting of 11 communities to date. Steve is the chief advocate for Hampshire County Veterans and their families. Steve has been involved in Veterans issues since childhood with his father's mission on veterans' causes. Steve is the past President of Massachusetts Veterans' Service Officers Association and sits on many statewide committees including WMass Taskforce to End Homelessness and the Governors Committee to develop and implement The Integrated Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness among Veteran.

**REBECCA L. TWINING, INVESTIGATOR**-Rebecca began working with the Northampton Veteran Service Office in September of 2006, Steve and Rebecca formed a district in 2012 joining 11 communities, and she was awarded the 2012 Outstanding Veteran Service Officers Administrator of the year for her work in the district. She was also awarded 2021 COSA Direct Service Award for Hampshire County. Currently she is the Treasurer of Western Mass Veteran Service Officers Association and "I serve alongside Steve Connor on any adventures he agrees to!"

**JESSICA BARRY, ADMIN**-She was born and raised in Western Massachusetts. Post-graduation, she served in the Massachusetts Army National Guard with the 42nd MP Co in Chicopee. She joined the team at Central Hampshire Veteran Services in April of 2018. "I couldn't imagine a more perfect fit, it is a privilege and honor to serve our Veterans and their dependents!"



CALL ON US! Main office at 240 Main St. Rm 4 Northampton MA 01060  
ph. 413 587-1299 fax 413 587-1062  
[email vetadmin@northamptonma.gov](mailto:vetadmin@northamptonma.gov)

Schedule An Appointment Today To Go Over Your Entitled Benefits

# Property Tax Exemptions

Eligible veterans, spouses, and parents

To qualify, all veterans (and spouses where applicable) must:

Be legal residents of Massachusetts; be occupying the property as his/her domicile on July 1 in the year of application; have lived in Massachusetts for at least six months prior to entering the service (spouses exempted) or have lived in Massachusetts for five consecutive years immediately prior to filing for a property tax exemption. In most cases a surviving spouse receives the exemption if he/she was receiving it before the veteran passed away. However, surviving spouses receiving exemption under Clauses 22 and 22D will lose the exemption upon remarriage.

## M.G.L. ch. 59, s.5, clause 22

Clause 22 allows for a \$400 tax exemption for the following persons:

- 10% (or more) service-connected disabled veteran;
- Purple Heart recipient;
- Gold Star mothers and fathers; and
- Spouse of veteran entitled under Clause 22

## M.G.L. ch. 59, s.5, clause 22A

Clause 22A allows for a tax exemption of \$750 if the veteran meets the following:

- Loss of or loss of use of one hand above the wrist, one foot above the ankle or one eye; or
- Be a recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor; Distinguished Service Cross; or Navy or Air Force Cross.

## M.G.L. ch. 59, s.5, clause 22B

Clause 22B allows for tax exemption of \$1,250 if the veteran meets the following:

- Loss of or loss of use of both hands or both feet;
- Loss or loss of use of one hand and one foot as described previously;
- Loss or loss of use of both eyes (blind).

## M.G.L. ch. 59, s.5, clause 22C

Clause 22C allows for tax exemption of \$1,500 if the veteran:

- Is rated by the VA to be permanent and totally disabled and has specially adapted housing.

## M.G.L. ch. 59, s.5, clause 22D

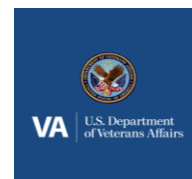
Clause 22D is for surviving spouses (who do not remarry) of soldiers, sailors, or members of the Guard whose death occurred as a proximate result of an injury sustained or disease contracted in a combat zone, or who are missing in action with a presumptive finding of death, as a result of combat as members of the armed forces of the United States.

Total exemption so long as the spouse does not remarry.

## M.G.L. ch. 59, s.5, clause 22E

Clause 22 E allows for \$1,000 for veterans that are 100% disabled by the VA.

M.G.L. ch. 58, s.8A – Repealed 2014, 62, Sec. 9



**Our Office  
can help  
with ...**

The Veterans Service Office is available to all veterans and dependents needing assistance with filing claims. Whether filing an initial VA claim, requesting an increase in benefits or you would like to file a Notice of Disagreement, we are here to assist you.

- Assist veterans who are filing original claims for compensation and/or pension with the Department of Veterans Affairs and complete the required VA forms on behalf of the claimant.
- Assist veterans in reopening claims for service-connected disabilities and complete the required VA forms.
- Follow up on status of claims filed by veterans with the VA Regional Office.
- Review statements of the case from the VA regarding denials of claim and assist veterans with the preparation of responses.
- Assist veterans or surviving spouses in the preparation of appeals for denied claims
- Complete VA Forms other than for original claims.

Call our office to schedule an appointment (413) 587-1299.

### **Need your DD214?**

There are several ways to go about locating your military records depending on what you are looking for! Call our office to see if we have your records on file in our state database or to see how to go about requesting them through the National Archives.

## VETERANS TAX WORK OFF PROGRAM

The veteran Tax Work Off program is open to a veteran, as defined by MGL Ch. 4 § 7 clause 43, who owns property in in some of our communities and pays real estate taxes to that Town of Residence. The program participant's name must appear on the property deed. The program year runs from January 1 to October 31. A \$1,500 property tax credit, minus the required withholdings, will be applied to the participant's real estate tax bill in the following fiscal year, not the current year's property tax bill.

Applications for additional years will be available in November of each year. For more information on this program, contact the Veterans Services Department or visit

<https://northamptonma.gov/194/Veterans-Services>

### Requesting your records from the National Personal Records Center

You can request your military records in any of these ways: Mail or fax a Request Pertaining to Military Records (Standard Form SF 180) to the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC).

Recent military service and medical records are not online. However, most veterans and their next of kin can obtain free copies of their DD Form 214 (Report of Separation)



## Why you should enroll In VA Health Care

*With VA health care, you're covered for regular checkups with your primary care provider and appointments with specialists (like cardiologists, gynecologists, and mental health providers). You can access veterans health care services like home health and geriatric (elder) care, and you can get medical equipment, prosthetics, and prescriptions. Find out how to apply for and manage the health care benefits you've earned.*



## State Annuities

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts and its Department of Veterans' Services provides an annuity in the amount of \$2,000 which is payable biannually on August 1st and February 1st in two installments of \$1,000 each.

This annuity is given in recognition of the service of our distinguished 100% service-connected disabled veterans and to the parents of distinguished veterans (Gold Star Parents) and the unmarried spouses (Gold Star Wives or Husbands) of distinguished veterans who gave their lives in the service of their country during wartime.

## Mass Health Buy-in

This program will allow Mass Health to pay all of your Medicare Part B premiums for Massachusetts residents who are not getting other Mass Health benefits. You might be eligible for Mass Health Buy-in if you are: **INDIVIDUALS**-IF your countable assets are less than or equal to \$16,800 AND your monthly income before taxes and deductibles is less than or equal to THEN you will be eligible for...\$1,473 Senior Buy-In \$1,869 Buy-In. OR a **MARRIED COUPLE** who live together IF your countable assets are less than or equal to \$25,200 AND your monthly income before taxes and deductibles is less than or equal to... THEN you will be eligible for...\$ 1,984 Senior Buy-In \$2,518 Buy-In Contact our office for more info or go to [mass.gov/masshealth](https://mass.gov/masshealth)

## Education Benefits

*Tuition Waiver For All Massachusetts Veterans To All State Colleges And Universities.*

**M.G.L. ch. 15A, s.19** Veterans of Massachusetts, as defined by M.G.L. ch. 4, s.7, clause 43, may be eligible for any state-supported course in an undergraduate degree program or certificate program offered by a public college or university. To be eligible, a veteran must also be a legal resident of Massachusetts and must not be in default of any federal student loans.

Veterans will be eligible on a space-available basis for a waiver of full or partial tuition based on proper documentation of the eligibility of the veteran. Space availability shall be determined in accordance with normal practices and procedures as published by each institution, i.e., the individual college or university. Contact the Veterans Representative at the college or university for details.

**National Guard Tuition And Fee Waiver Acts of 2005 ch. 130** Members of the National Guard are eligible for a waiver of both fees and tuition at all state colleges and universities. Please contact the college or university Veterans' Representative for details about this program.

These are just some of the many benefits you are entitled to. Please contact our office for more information.

## State Burial Benefits

### Burial Allowances

*If you are low-income and cannot afford funeral expenses, you may be given money to pay for the burial of a veteran or their dependents. To apply, you must submit an application to your VSO within 60 days of the date of death..*

### Burial in State Veterans' Cemeteries

*Massachusetts has state Veterans' Memorial Cemeteries located in Agawam and in Winchendon. There is no fee for a veteran's burial in a state Veterans' Memorial Cemetery. A nominal fee will be charged for the burial of spouses, widows/widowers, and qualified dependents.*

### Federal Burial Benefits

*You may be eligible for veterans burial allowances if you're paying for the burial and funeral costs and you won't be reimbursed by any other organization, like another government agency or the veteran's employer. You must also meet all of the requirements.*

*If you're eligible, you may receive these benefits:*

- VA burial allowance for burial and funeral costs
- VA plot or interment allowance for the cost of the plot (gravesite) or interment
- VA transportation reimbursement for the cost of transporting the veteran's remains to the final resting place

*Note: You'll need to pay for these services or other costs first before you apply for an allowance.*

Visit our new website: <https://northamptonma.gov/194/Veterans-Services>

Follow us at: <https://www.facebook.com/northamptonvets>

Follow us at: <https://twitter.com/vetsinmass>

# SOLDIER ON

Soldier On mission is to **change the end of the story for homeless veterans throughout the country**

Soldier On Supportive Services for Veterans and Veteran Families Program helps individuals and families who are homeless or at risk. If you meet the basic eligibility requirements, Soldier On provides direct services and financial assistance to help search for housing, assist with initial rent costs, and pay for certain bills related to back rent or utilities.

## SSVF Services Include:

- Healthcare Referrals
- Daily Living Service Referrals
- Budgeting and Money Management
- Benefits Assistance and Advocacy
- Case Management
- Housing Counseling and Assistance

## Financial Assistance For:

- Rent
- Utilities
- Moving Expenses
- Security Deposit
- Transportation
- Childcare
- Emergency Supplies
- Legal Services

To become a participant household under the SSVF Program, the following conditions must be met:

1. A member of a “Veteran family”: Either (a) is a Veteran; or (b) a member of a family in which the head of household, or the spouse of the head of household, is a Veteran. (Note: The head of household should be identified by the Veteran family.)
2. “Very low-income”: Household income does not exceed 50 percent of area median income.
3. “Occupying Permanent Housing”: A very low-income Veteran family is considered to be “occupying permanent housing” if they fall into one of three categories:  
(Category 1) Is residing in permanent housing and at risk of becoming literally homeless but for grantee’s assistance;  
(Category 2) Is literally homeless, and at risk to remain in this situation but for grantee’s assistance, and scheduled to become a resident of permanent housing within 90 days pending the location or development of housing suitable for permanent housing; or  
(Category 3) Is literally homeless after exiting permanent housing within the previous 90 days to seek other housing that is responsive to the very low-income Veteran family’s needs and preferences.

Regarding the above references to literally homeless: for specifics as to what circumstances do and do not constitute literal homelessness, see Section I.C. definitions: Homeless, Literally.

Grantees must ensure that literally homeless participants qualify under this definition

If you are a veteran in need of services, please call 866-406-8449.

**If you or a Veteran you know needs immediate assistance to avoid eviction or loss of their housing, please call the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at 1-877-4AID VET or (877) 424-3838. Calls are answered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week**

## VETERAN ID CARDS

How to apply for a Veteran ID Card. A Veteran ID Card (VIC) is a form of photo ID you can use to get discounts offered to Veterans at many restaurants, hotels, stores and other businesses. Please note: Retail vendors volunteer to take part in this discount program. If a business decides to provide discounts to Veterans, it doesn't mean we're recommending or favoring that business.

### *Am I eligible for a Veteran ID Card?*

You may be eligible if you meet of both of the requirements listed below:

Both of these must be true. You:

- Served on active duty, in the Reserves or in the National Guard (including the Coast Guard) and
- Received an honorable or general discharge (under honorable conditions)

You'll need to provide a copy of your discharge papers when you apply for a VIC to prove your character of discharge.

### *How do I apply for a Veteran ID Card?*

You can apply online by going to [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) and following the instructions.

### *What happens after I apply for a Veteran ID Card?*

Once you've submitted your VIC application, they will verify your eligibility and send you an email letting you know the status of your application.

### *How do I check the status of my application after I've applied?*

You can sign in to your online Access VA account to check the status of your VIC application.

### *Replace your Veteran ID Card if it gets lost or stolen*

To request a new card, please send us an email to: [vetidcard@va.gov](mailto:vetidcard@va.gov)

### *Get help with your application*

If you have any questions or need help, please send us an email.

Email us at [vetidcard@va.gov](mailto:vetidcard@va.gov)



### [Veterans Dragon Boat USA](#)

A dragon boat team exclusively for US military veterans. Our vision is to bring military veterans together, channeling their energy and focus toward propelling this massive vessel – and drawing from it energy, adrenaline and the sheer exhilaration of making the dragon fly across the water.

#### **Join Us**

Membership includes training/practice sessions both on and off the water, use of equipment (dragon boat, paddles, PFDs, rowing and paddling ergs), and racing fees. Practices are held at Holyoke Rows, 25 Jones Ferry Rd, Holyoke, MA – during water season on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, 6:00-7:30 PM; during off-season on Monday and Wednesday evenings, 6:00-7:30 PM. No experience is necessary – just the desire to learn a new sport alongside fellow veterans.