

# Colorado State Veteran's Benefits



**2018**

The state of Colorado provides several veteran benefits. This section offers a brief description of each of the following benefits.

- Housing Benefits
- Financial Assistance Benefits
- Employment Benefits
- Education Benefits
- Recreation
- Other State Veteran Benefits

## **Housing Programs**

### **State Veterans Homes**

Under the direction of the Colorado Department of Human Services, the mission of the Veterans Community Living Centers is to honor and serve our nation's veterans, their spouses and Gold Star Parents by creating opportunities for meaningful activity, continued growth and feelings of self-worth in resident-centered long-term care and supportive living environments. The department's vision is that residents experience compassion, dignity and companionship in communities filled with life, love and laughter.

Colorado's State Veterans Homes serve honorably discharged veterans, veterans' spouses/widows and "Gold-Star" parents whose children died while serving in the Armed Forces. Residents enjoy the camaraderie of sharing activities and daily life with other veterans, friends and family. Each location provides: 24 hour nursing care, Meals, Physician services & restorative therapy, Transportation, Diversified activities, and an all-inclusive rate. Additionally, the following services are offered:

- **Long-term care:** These services include skilled nursing care; speech, physical and occupational therapy; social activities; and assistance with bathing, dressing and other daily activities.
- **Short-term rehabilitation:** Individuals seeking to return home following a qualifying hospital stay can work to regain skills and improve physical strength, endurance and aerobic capacity through Medicare-certified rehabilitation services.
- **Domiciliary cottages (similar to assisted living):** The Colorado State Veterans Center at Homelake (Monte Vista) offers assisted living-like services in 48 recently renovated cottages.
- **Memory care services:** Specialized care for individuals with dementia is offered in all State and Veterans Nursing Homes. Secure units are available at the State Veterans Home at Fitzsimons, Florence, Rifle and Walsenburg.
- **Short-term “respite” care:** Respite care can provide a helpful option when homecare providers are unavailable. These short-term stays are offered at the State Veterans Homes at Florence, Homelake, Rifle and Walsenburg.
- **End-of-life/hospice services:** Comfort-oriented care is offered at all State and Veterans Nursing Homes.

Colorado has 5 state veterans' homes located in Aurora, Florence, Homelake, Rifle, and Walsenburg as indicated on [http://vets.dmva.state.co.us/?page\\_id=475](http://vets.dmva.state.co.us/?page_id=475) and pictured below. For detailed information on each refer to <https://sites.google.com/a/state.co.us/cdhs-velc>



**Colorado State Veterans Home at Fitzsimons**



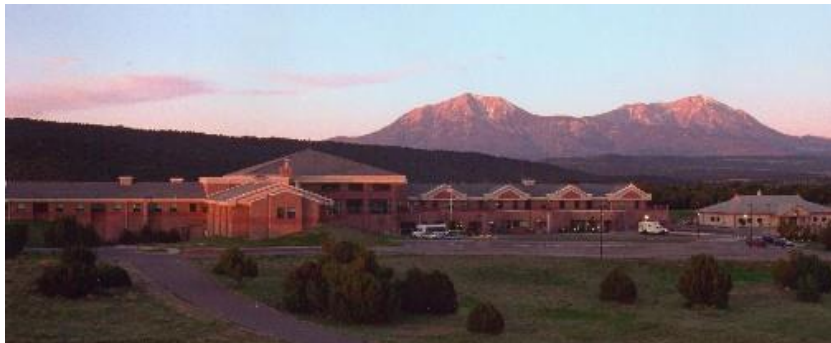
**Bruce McCandless Colorado State Veterans Home in Florence**



**Colorado State Veterans Center at Homelake**



**Colorado State Veterans Home at Rifle**



**Colorado State Veterans Home at Walsenburg**

Those desiring admission can do so by downloading and completing the application form at [https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B9eaXW7\\_92zSTjHQ2NObHVNeUk/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B9eaXW7_92zSTjHQ2NObHVNeUk/view); Contact Information and capacity for each facility is:

- **Fitzimmons** – Tel: 720-857-6400/6500F, 1919 Quentin Street, Aurora, CO 80045 (180 beds)
- **Florence** – Tel: 800-283-2668, 903 Moore Drive, Florence, CO 81226 (120 beds)
- **Homelake** – Tel: 1-888-838-2687 or 719-852-5118.3881F, Mail: PO BOX 97, Homelake, CO 81135, 3749 Sherman Ave., Monte Vista, CO 81144 (40 operating beds in the domiciliary unit and 60 beds in nursing care service)
- **Rifle** – Tel: 1-800-828-4580 or 970-625-0842/3706F, 851 East Fifth Street, Rifle, CO 81650 (100 beds)
- **Walsenburg** – Tel: 1-800-645-8387 or 719-738-5000/5138F, 23500 US HWY 160, Walsenburg, CO 81089 (120 beds)

## **Financial Assistance Benefits**

### **Colorado State Tax Advantage**

- There is a Property Tax Exemption for 50% of the first \$200,000 of a home's value for 100% service-connected disabled veterans (Individual Unemployability does not qualify). You must have owned and occupied the property since January 1st of the year in which the Veteran is applying. At <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/Disabled-Vet-Instructions.pdf> are instructions for applying. If you have questions feel free to call The Colorado Division of Veterans Affairs at 303-284-6077 or fax an application into their office at 303-284-3163.
- Active Duty Pay: Military pay is tax-free for Colorado residents who are stationed outside the state of Colorado.
- Retired Military Pay: Military retirees ages 55 - 64 can exclude up to \$20,000 in any one taxable year from their retirement pay, those 65 and over can exclude up to \$24,000.

### **Property Tax Deferral Program for Seniors and Active Military Personnel**

The Property Tax Deferral program helps military personnel and seniors, many of whom live on a fixed income, continue to afford to living in their home by deferring the payment of their property taxes. The State Treasurer's office makes tax payments directly to the county on behalf of the participant for the tax amount due. The loan is logged as a lien against the participant's property that does not have to be remitted until the participant no longer qualifies to defer their property taxes. Click here for a list of outstanding loans by county.

### **Requirements for Eligibility**

- Applicant must be a senior who is 65 years or older or a person called into military service pursuant to CRS 39-3.5-101 (1.8), on January 1 of the year in which the person files a claim.
- All prior years' property taxes must be paid.
- Applicant must own and occupy the property as their primary residence. The property cannot be income-producing.
- The total value of liens against the property (mortgages, deferrals, and/or deeds of trust) cannot exceed 100% of the assessed market value.
- Mortgage lender agrees that the state's interest in the property would take priority over all other interests.
- If a qualified applicant has a reverse mortgage, the property is only eligible for future deferrals if a subordination agreement from the mortgage lender is submitted with the application.
- The deferral amount must be paid upon sale or transfer of the property. The deferral amount can also be paid any time prior to sale or transfer without affecting future eligibility.

### **Procedure**

- Those who qualify must file an application with their respective county treasurer between January 1st and April 1st of each year.
- Once approved, the county treasurer will issue a certificate of deferral to the property owner, keeping one copy on record and sending one copy to the state Treasurer's office. (Note: If property taxes are included in your mortgage payment, you should present a copy of your deferral certificate to the mortgage lender for a refund of the property tax monies held in escrow)

- By April 30, the state Treasurer's office will pay the deferred amount to the county treasurer where the property is located.
- The state Treasurer's office maintains an account for each tax-deferred property which accrues interest which is credited to the state's General Fund. Call the Treasurer's office for the current interest rate.
- When the deferred amount is paid to the county treasurer upon sale or transfer of the property, that amount is then transmitted to the state Treasurer's office.

## **Employment Benefits**

### **Employment Preference**

Colorado gives veterans' preference in the form of extra points added to the state employment examination. Eligibility requirements are as follows:

- Five-point preference for honorably separated active duty veterans who served during a time of war or in receipt of a campaign medal, the spouse of a veteran unable to work because of a service-connected disability, and the widow/widower of a deceased veteran who was or would have been entitled to veterans' preference.
- Ten point preference for honorably separated veterans who are receiving VA disability or pension.

### **Career Assistance for Veterans**

Colorado offers career assistance to all individuals who are eligible for Veteran's services. Each workforce center location across the state provides Veterans with priority of service for employment, training, and placement services. Each workforce center is staffed with a local veterans employment representative who is there to assist. For more information, contact your local workforce center.

### **Employment Vet Benefit**

State Active Duty employees receive 15 days of paid military leave per year. Eligibility extends to Colorado National Guard.

## **Education Benefits**

### **Tuition Assistance**

Any member of the Colorado National Guard is eligible for state tuition assistance, up to 100% tuition paid at any CO state-funded school depending on funding available. State funding can be used in conjunction with Federal Tuition Assistance.

- Deadline for Spring Semester is Dec. 1. Deadline for Fall Semester is July 1. Summer deadline is May 1 (if funding is available).
- Eligibility: Colorado National Guard member must serve 2 years for each year granted.

### **Tuition Assistance for Children of POWs, MIAs, or Disabled/Deceased ARNG**

Free tuition in certain State-support schools for children of prisoners of war or persons missing in actions who were Colorado residents when they entered the Armed Forces, or for children of Colorado National Guardsmen who died or were permanently disabled while on State active duty limited to dependents who do not qualify for Federal Education benefits.

### **Operation Recognition**

Operation Recognition is a program to award High School diplomas to deserving and qualified WWII, Korea and Vietnam Era Veterans. Operation Recognition, is authorized by Colorado State Law and is offered by the Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs in cooperation with the Colorado Department of Education and the Colorado Association of School Boards.

## **Recreation Benefits**

### **Hunting & Fishing License for Disabled Veterans**

Free lifetime combination small-game hunting and fishing license for a resident veteran with a permanent service-connected disability of 60% or more or any resident patient at a VA hospital located within Colorado.

### **Hunting & Fishing License for Active Duty**

Nonresidents of Colorado and their families can get hunting and fishing licenses at the resident rate while stationed in the state.

### **Resident Fishing While Home on Leave**

Colorado residents who are on active duty and permanently stationed outside of the state may fish without a license while in Colorado on temporary leave.

### **Free State Park Admission for Disabled Veterans**

Veterans with a Disabled Veterans License Plate receive free admission to any state park or recreation area.

## **Other State Veteran Benefits**

### **Disabled Veterans License Plate**



Veterans meeting the requirements may apply through the Division of Motor Vehicles for one free Disabled Veteran Plate. To apply you will need to submit:

- Completed application [Disabled Veteran License Plate Application](#)

- DD214 demonstrating honorable discharge.
- An eligibility letter from the Veterans Affairs office stating: 1) the veteran has a 50% or greater disability and 2) the disability is service connected and 3) the disability is permanent. To immediately obtain the letter you must visit either the Denver VA Regional Office public contact at 155 Van Gordon, Lakewood, CO or the PFC Floyd K. Lindstrom VA Clinic in Colorado Springs at 3141 Centennial Blvd., Colorado Springs, CO. You can also order a letter to be mailed to your residence by calling 303-284-6077.
- The registration of the vehicle if currently registered or a title receipt or title completion notice from the County.
- Colorado vehicle title.
- Proof of Insurance

Recently, many Colorado counties began issuing military exempt license plates, a complete list is follows. Adams, Alamosa, Arapahoe, Bent, Boulder, Broomfield, Chaffee, Cheyenne, Costilla, Delta, Denver, Douglas, Eagle, Elbert, El Paso, Fremont, Garfield, Gilpin, Grand, Jefferson, La Plata, Lake, Larimer, Las Animas, Lincoln, Mesa, Moffat, Montrose, Morgan, Otero, Ouray, Park, Pueblo, Rio Blanco, Routt, Sedgwick, Teller, Washington, Weld.

If your county of residence is not listed, your military exempt license plate will be issued through the state. Submit the packet to:

- In person -- Colorado Department of Revenue Division of Motor Vehicles, Registration Section, 1881 Pierce Street, Lakewood, CO 80214-3503
- By Mail -- Department of Revenue, Title and Registration Section, PO BOX 173350, Denver, CO 80217-3350

**Additional Info:**

- Fees: One set of plates is exempt from fees allowed by CRS 42-3-213(1)(b)(II)(B). A second or additional set requires a one-time fee of \$50.00 for issuance or replacement of plates, in addition to other taxes and fees. Number of Plates Allowed: Exempt – One set only. Second and additional – Unlimited.
- Number of Plates Allowed: Exempt - One set only. Second and additional - Unlimited.
- This plate does not permit the owner to park his/her vehicle or a vehicle in which they are a passenger in designated disability parking spaces. For assistance in ensuring correct documentation is being submitted and to speed up the issuance process, please print and use the Disabled Veteran License Plate Checklist.

**Special Vehicle License Plates**

The State of Colorado offers veterans a distinct license plate to display their service in the Armed Forces through a Military Veteran Recognition License Plate Program. To review what is available, fees if applicable and details for procurement go to <https://www.colorado.gov/dmv/license-plates-military>. The veteran must provide proof of military service and/or proof of award of a military related medal. To obtain a “VETERAN” license plate take your DD-214 to your local DMV Office. License plates include: U.S. Air Force, Fallen Air Force, U.S. Army, Fallen Army, U.S. Army Special Forces, U.S. Coast Guard, Fallen Coast Guard, U.S. Marines, Fallen Marines, U.S. Navy, Fallen Navy, Fallen Navy, Honorably Discharged Veteran, Veteran of Afghanistan War, Korean War Veteran, Veteran of Iraq War, Veteran of World War II, National Guard, Vietnam veteran, 4th Infantry and NORAD. Medals available include:

## Medical Benefits

Dental coverage and full medical for line-of-duty. Eligibility: Colorado National Guard

## Health Care

The Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA) provides coverage for unmarried surviving spouses and children of veterans who:

- Died of a service-connected disability; or
- Were permanently and totally disabled due to a service-connected disability at the time of death; or
- Died in service in the line of duty, and the dependents are not eligible for Department of Defense TRICARE benefits.

## Burial

Any Honorably Discharged Veteran is eligible to be buried at any National Cemetery free of charge. Veterans are also eligible to order a Government Headstone at no charge for placement in a private cemetery; however, the family must pay to place the stone. In order to file for burial benefits for reimbursement the Veteran must be receiving monies from the US Department of Veterans Affairs. The person who paid the funeral bill must apply for reimbursement. If buried in a private cemetery the VA will pay \$300.00 for funeral costs and \$422.00 for plot allowance. If the Veteran dies in a VA Medical Center and is buried in a National Cemetery the VA will pay up to \$722.00 for the funeral cost. If buried in a private cemetery the total; will not be more than \$722.00 total for funeral and burial. To schedule a burial in one of Colorado's two existing National Veteran cemeteries 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. To apply for burial benefits include the paid receipt with the 21-530 burial benefits application at <http://vets.dmva.state.co.us:8000/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/21-530-burial-benefits-application.pdf>

- **Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado.** Located in Grand Junction. Eligibility for burial in the cemetery is the same as for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) national cemeteries but includes a residency requirement. Regulation regarding the cemetery use and operation are available at [https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/Cemetery\\_07-01-2003.pdf](https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/Cemetery_07-01-2003.pdf).



**Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado**

- **Fort Logan National Cemetery.** Located in the southwest section of Denver at 4400 W. Kenyon Avenue, Denver, CO 80236 Tel: (303) 761-0117/781-9378F. This cemetery has space available to accommodate casketed and cremated remains.





**Fort Logan National Cemetery after a snowfall.**

**Fort Lyon National Cemetery.** Located in southeast Colorado, approximately five miles from the town of Las Animas at 15700 County Road HH Las Animas, CO 81054 Tel: (303) 761-0117/781-9378. Fort Logan National Cemetery is responsible for all administrative functions, including the scheduling of burials. Comprised of 52 acres, only 11 acres are currently developed and the cemetery is expected to have burial space for approximately the next 30 years.



**Front gate at Fort Lyon National Cemetery.**

- **Southern Colorado.** A national veterans cemetery is finally in the works for southern Colorado. The earliest the cemetery could be up and running would be 2018. The proposed cemetery would be just east of Colorado Springs in El Paso County, at Marksheffel Road near Drennan Road. The land was purchased in January 2014 for \$4.49 million. The VA says they have funding for the planning and design stage of the cemetery, which has already begun, but they are waiting on construction funding, which would have to be approved in the 2017 budget. The hope is that the cemetery would accommodate veteran burials for the next 160 years. A lot still needs to happen before the cemetery can open, including naming it. There is no word yet on exactly how many vets the cemetery will be able to accommodate. That won't be released until the final design plans are complete.

**Appointments**

Call the State office at 303-284-6077 Monday-Thursday 7:00AM-4:00PM and Friday 7:00AM-1:00PM or contact your local County Veterans Service Officer/Office. For a list of the County offices refer to <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/vets/county-veterans-service-offices>.

Visit the Colorado Division of Veterans Affairs website <https://www.colorado.gov/dmva> for contact information and benefits assistance

[Source: <https://www.military.com/benefits/veteran-state-benefits/colorado-state-veterans-benefits.html> | OCT 2018 ++]