

# Massachusetts State Veteran's Benefits

April 2019



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

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

## Housing Benefits

### **Soldiers' Home Chelsea**

Established in 1882, the Soldiers' Home in Chelsea is a multifaceted health care facility available to eligible veterans of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Soldiers' Home is inspected annually by the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the Department of Public Health. Their mission is to provide the best health care possible to eligible veterans who reside in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Located atop Powder Horn Hill, the highest of the hills that semicircle Boston harbor, The Soldiers' Home is really a small, self-sustaining "city", featuring its own library; dry cleaning; barber shops; an auditorium and recreation rooms; a dining room and canteen; and even its own pharmacy. Also available to residents are Catholic, Protestant and Jewish chaplains; counselors; recreational programs; regularly held beanos,

coffee hours and numerous outside trips. The safety and well-being of residents is of paramount concern, as evidenced by our Campus Police Force; medical emergency alert system; and new fire alarm system. Residents can also fully utilize all of the many clinics at the Outpatient Department for their health care needs.



**Soldiers' Home in Chelsea Massachusetts**

Services are available to veterans without charge. They accept medical insurance plans and require that all veterans provide disclosure of their insurance coverage. If insurance does not cover the service, or if the veteran has no insurance, there is never an out-of-pocket charge. The Chelsea Soldiers' Home is a state-funded, fully accredited health care complex that offers veterans quality care, full-time residential accommodations and multi-service out-patient department. The tradition of service to our nation's veterans is surpassed only by their continuing commitment to excellence in care for those who are in need now and in the future. For information on eligibility and admission, contact: The Soldiers' Home in Chelsea: 91 Crest Avenue, Chelsea, MA 02150 Tel: (617) 884-5660/1162F.

### **Soldiers' Home Holyoke**

Established in 1952, The Soldiers' Home in Holyoke is a multifaceted health care facility available to eligible veterans of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In 1971, a major addition was completed providing limited hospital services and additional long-term care beds. The Soldiers' Home in Holyoke is governed by a seven-member Board of Trustees comprised of Western Massachusetts residents who are appointed by the Governor to oversee management of the organization. The Home in Holyoke is fully accredited by The Joint Commission and is inspected annually by the federal Veterans Health Administration. Their mission is to provide care with honor and dignity in the best possible health care environment for eligible veterans who reside in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The Soldiers' Home offers Long-Term Care, Outpatient Services, Residential Care, Social Work Services, Supportive Care Services, and Pastoral Care Services. The Outpatient Department at the Soldiers' Home is committed to serving Veterans. The Outpatient Department is staffed by primary care physicians. Consultant physicians staff our various clinics including Proctology; Optometry; Ophthalmology; Dentistry; Ear, Nose, and Throat; Minor Surgery; Podiatry; Urology; Hematology; and Nephrology. Other services provided by the Outpatient Department at the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke include dietary services, physical therapy, social services, and a Veterans' benefits advisor. All these disciplines collaborate together to assist Veterans with their specific medical needs and concerns.



**Veterans Hospital and Soldiers Home Holyoke Massachusetts**

The domiciliary for ambulatory Veterans is located in a separate building at the facility at the Soldiers' Home. The domiciliary accommodates Veterans who, for social or financial reasons, require minimal assistance with the activities of daily living. Domiciliary Veterans are provided with a variety of social programs which promotes the overall general state of well-being for all veterans. The Compensated Work Therapy Program (CWT) is an example of the social programming offered for domiciliary Veterans at the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke.

For information on eligibility and admission, contact: Soldiers' Home in Holyoke, 110 Cherry St., Holyoke, MA 01040-7002 Tel: (413) 532-9475/0606F. Go to <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/hly/hly-application.pdf> to download an application for admission

### **DVS-Supported Permanent Housing**

The state of Massachusetts maintains permanent housing units for veterans in Worcester, New Bedford, Bedford, and 2 locations in Gardner. These locations offer affordable rental housing for honorably disabled veterans in private rooms. Refer to <http://www.mass.gov/veterans/housing/permanent> for more information.

### **Shelter and Transitional Housing**

DVS provides some funding to a range of non-profit organizations, which provide housing services to eligible veterans. Housing Services range from Emergency Homeless Shelters, group residences, to Single Room Occupancy (SRO) quarters. Among the DVS providers are the only Veterans' Hospice in the nation, and a program for veterans with Head Injuries. All require that residents maintain a sober and drug-free environment. Services are available to both male and female veterans. There are currently no homeless services available to veterans with families. For locations and contact info on transitional housing refer to <http://www.mass.gov/veterans/housing/transitional/shelter-and-transitional.html>

### **State-Aided Public Housing**

Veterans applying for state-aided public housing through a local housing authority who are to be displaced by any: low-rent housing project, by a public slum clearance or urban renewal project, or who were displaced within three years prior to applying for low-rent housing, when equally in need and eligible for occupancy as other applicants, shall be given preference in tenant selection in the following order:

- Families of disabled veterans, whose disability has been determined by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to be service-connected.

- Families of deceased veterans, whose death has been determined by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to be service-connected.
- Families of all other veterans.

The word “veteran” shall also include the spouse, surviving spouse, dependent parent or child of a veteran, and the divorced spouse of a veteran who is a legal guardian of a child of a veteran. Any amounts received by a veteran for tuition, education fees, or the cost of books, cannot be included in the calculation of the veteran’s gross income for purposes of state-aided public housing. Housing authorities are authorized to exclude disability compensation, paid by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, to disabled veterans who are unable to be employed up to \$1,800. However, it is dependent on the housing authority to allow such exclusion. State-aided low-rent housing projects cannot deny continued occupancy to veterans, widows or widowers of veterans, or a Gold Star Mother who has lived there for the last eight consecutive years, provided that the unit is two bedrooms or less and the rent is not more than three months unpaid.

### **Help with Rent and Finding a Place to Live**

The first place to visit to get help finding a place to live is your local Veterans’ Services Officer (VSO) in the community where you live or want to live. There are four emergency shelters, 11 transitional shelters, and 13 state-funded Outreach Centers scattered across the state that will provide help to veterans and their families at no cost. The VA Medical Centers in Bedford, Boston, Brockton, and the VA clinic in Springfield have Homeless Coordinators who can help. Women veterans who are homeless or at-risk for homelessness can get help from the VA Boston’s Women’s Homelessness Program.

- To contact your VSO, call City/Town Hall and ask to be connected with “Veterans’ Services” or go to Find Local VSO <http://www.mass.gov/veterans/utility/local-veterans-service-officers-3.html>.
- To contact a VA Homeless Coordinator, call the VAMC and ask to speak to the “Homeless Coordinator.” Bedford (781) 687-2705; Boston (617) 371-1831; or Brockton (508) 583-4500.
- Call the Women’s Homelessness Program at (857) 364-4027.

### **Public Assistance**

Under Chapter 115 of Massachusetts General Laws, the Commonwealth provides a uniform program of financial and medical assistance for indigent veterans and their dependents including rent or mortgage payments until you can find a job or other benefits.. Chapter 115 is a needs-based program administered through your local VSO.

Qualifying veterans and their dependents receive necessary financial assistance for food, shelter, clothing, housing supplies, and medical care in accordance with a formula which takes into account the number of dependants and income from all sources. Eligible dependents of deceased veterans are provided with the same benefits as they would were the veteran still living. To contact your VSO, call City/Town Hall and ask to be connected with “Veterans’ Services” or go to Find Local VSO <http://www.mass.gov/veterans/utility/local-veterans-service-officers-3.html>.

### **VA Supportive Housing**

The VA Supported Housing (VASH) program provides section 8 vouchers to chronically homeless veterans with substance abuse and/or mental health issues. For information on VASH call the VASH Program Assistant at a VA Medical Center near you

- Bedford (781) 687-2374

- Boston (617) 861-1426
- Northampton (413) 584-4040, x2139.

The SAVE Team may also be able to assist you. Email [save@massmail.state.ma.us](mailto:save@massmail.state.ma.us) or call (888) 844-2838.

### **Women Veterans' Homelessness Program**

The VA Boston's Women Veterans' Homelessness Program provides case management and health services to homeless women and their children in Boston and the surrounding areas. The program offers a range of services not only to homeless women, but those who are at-risk for homelessness. The program offers assistance with other agencies, courts, and VA benefits (processing claims, etc.). Refer to <http://www.mass.gov/veterans/housing/transitional/womens-housing.html> for locations and contact info.

### **InMyArea.com: Military**

<https://www.inmyarea.com/military> is a site dedicated to saving military and veteran families time and money when relocating to a new military base. By selecting the base you're moving to, InMyArea finds housing costs, nearby schools, banks, and other budgeting necessities. InMyArea then collects information on all available packages for high speed Internet, cable and satellite TV, utilities, solar, insurance, mortgage rates, and more. Shop, compare, and choose the best package for your family through clear, unbiased information on home services.

## **Financial Benefits**

### **Income Tax Exemptions**

Military retired pay is not taxable.

### **Tax Exemptions**

Property Tax: Eligible veterans, spouses, and parents. To qualify, all veterans (and spouses where applicable) must:

- Be at least 10% disabled by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- 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.

### **Motor Vehicle Tax**

Disabled veterans of World War I, World War II, Korea, or Vietnam who by reason of service in the U.S. armed forces have suffered the loss of, or permanent loss of the use of, one or both feet or one or both hands or the loss of sight in one eye or who have permanent impairment of vision of both eyes (see statute for details) and are certified by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs are eligible for motor vehicle excise exemption (applicable only to one motor vehicle owned and registered for personal, non-commercial use).

### **Sales Tax Exemption for Disabled Veterans**

Disabled veterans who by reason of service in the U.S. armed forces have suffered the loss of, or permanent loss of the use of, both legs or both arms or one leg and one arm are eligible for a motor

vehicle sales tax exemption (applicable only to one motor vehicle owned and registered for personal, non-commercial use).

### **Annuities**

An annuity in the amount of \$2000, which is payable biannually on August 1st and February 1st in two installments of \$1000 each is available for certain veterans and their spouses, as well as Gold Star Parents. This benefit is provided by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, through the Department of Veterans' Services.

### **Bonuses**

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts provides a Welcome Home bonus to veterans 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.

- World War II Bonus
- Korean War Bonus
- Vietnam War Bonus
- Persian Gulf War Bonus
- Welcome Home Bonus

You are eligible if you meet the following criteria: six months domicile in Massachusetts immediately prior to entry into the armed forces service, beginning September 11, 2001, and discharge under honorable conditions.

- Servicemembers who served active duty in Iraq or Afghanistan receive \$1000.
- Servicemembers with six months or more active service, stateside or outside the continental limits of the United States, receive \$500.

### **Deployed Troops Get Break on Student Loans**

Service members who have been deployed or mobilized are not required to make certain student loan payments during their absences. This applies to members of the National Guard and Ready Reserves who have been called to active duty, as well as to active duty members who duty station has been changed as a result of a military mobilization. The regulations apply to students loans made under the Federal Family Education Loan, William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan and Federal Perkins Loan programs. Active duty members who have not begun the repayment period on their loans should continue to receive a grace period (generally six months) before repaying their loans. Students who were in school at the time of mobilization must also be given a reasonable period to resume school before lenders request payments.

### **Tuition and Fee Waivers for Guard Members**

The Massachusetts National Guard Education Assistance Program provides a 100% tuition and fee waiver for Massachusetts National Guard soldiers attending a state college, university, or community college program. Generally, these state-supported programs are offered during the day as part of a degree program. Your assistance can continue as long as you are in good standing academically and until you have reached 130 semester hours.

Homefront Financial Security Loan Program: In March 2003, State Treasurer Timothy P. Cahill announced a low interest loan program for all resident reservists and Massachusetts National Guard members.

## **Employment Benefits**

### **Civil Service and Veterans' Preference**

Massachusetts veterans are entitled to veterans' preference in civil service exams. If you attain a score of 70% or higher, you are entitled to go to the top of the exam list, with disabled veterans having top priority. If you apply for a promotional exam, you get two points added to your score. If you apply for a civil service job for which there is no exam, you are entitled to veterans' preference in a "provisional appointment." If you apply for a position in the labor force, you are not required to take an exam and you go to the top of the list.

### **Troops to Teachers**

Troops to Teachers is a national program, funded by the U.S. Department of Education and administered by the Department of Defense through an agency called the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES). The program helps eligible military personnel begin new careers as teachers in K-12 public schools where their skills, knowledge and experience are needed most.

Those interested in an academic teaching position (elementary/secondary) must have at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher learning. Those without a bachelor's degree can be considered for vocational, technical, or professional teaching (electronics, computer technology, construction trades, automotive, etc.) but must be able to document their skill level or expertise. Contact

Troy Gipps, New England States Coordinator  
North Atlantic Region Troops to Teachers  
P.O. Box 44  
Grafton, MA 01519  
1-888-463-6488  
Email [tgipps@troopstoteachers.net](mailto:tgipps@troopstoteachers.net)  
Regional website [www.wcufoundation.org/ttnar](http://www.wcufoundation.org/ttnar)  
National website [www.proudtoserveagain.com](http://www.proudtoserveagain.com)

### **Employment Opportunities**

There are numerous federal and state programs available to you if you are seeking employment. VOICE, or Veterans' Outreach Initiative for Competitive Employment, located at the Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services is a good place to start your search, because they can put you in touch with the various federal and state vocational rehabilitation, career counseling, and job network services located within the Commonwealth.

### **Employment Assistance**

Programs and services to assist veterans to find employment or training can be located at <http://www.mass.gov/veterans/employment-and-training/assistance>.

### **Job Protection**

State law protects the jobs of Massachusetts National Guard members called to active duty and provides tenure for certain veterans in non-civil service positions. For more specific information refer to <http://www.mass.gov/veterans/employment-and-training/job-protection>.

## Education Benefits

### **Tuition Waivers**

A Tuition waiver for all Massachusetts veterans to all state colleges and universities.

Veterans of Massachusetts can be eligible for a tuition waiver at any state-supported course in an undergraduate degree program offered by a public college or university. To be eligible, a veteran must also be a legal resident of Massachusetts and he/she 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.

### **Tuition and Fee Waivers for Guard Members**

The Massachusetts National Guard Education Assistance Program provides a 100% tuition and fee waiver for Massachusetts National Guard soldiers attending a state college, university, or community college program. Generally, these state-supported programs are offered during the day as part of a degree program. Your assistance can continue as long as you are in good standing academically and until you have reached 130 semester hours.

### **Cyber Forensics for Veterans**

A special program offered in partnership with the Massachusetts Attorney General. In 18 months you can complete the Course Work in Cyber Forensics and gain hands-on experience with an internship in a certified Law Enforcement Cyber Forensics Lab that is partnered with the Attorney General's Office (AGO).

Courses towards an Associate's Degree/Workforce Certificate/Career Certificate in Cyber Forensics are offered at the following campuses:

- Bunker Hill Community College
- Bristol Community College
- Middlesex Community College

### **Massachusetts Public Service Grant Program**

The Massachusetts Public Service Grant Program was established in recognition of the hardship that a family experiences upon the loss of a parent and or spouse who is killed or missing in the line of public service duty in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This grant program was established to provide educational opportunity to the remaining family members. The Public Service Grant Program is the only scholarship program not based on demonstrated financial need, but rather entitlement.

### **Operation Recognition**

The Welcome Home Bill (signed November 11, 2005) allows high schools to award diplomas to World War II, Korean, and Vietnam veterans who left school for good upon being drafted or enlisting in the military.

### **Upward Bound Program (VUB)**

A free pre-college program to help veterans develop the academic and personal skills necessary for success in a program of post-secondary education. VUB is a TRiO Program, federally funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. There are two Veterans Upward Bound locations in Massachusetts: UMass Boston and Suffolk University.

University of Massachusetts Boston provides a unique opportunity for veterans of all ages to gain access to information about college and career awareness, acquire the academic skills required for entry into higher education and/or to acquire the equivalent of a high school diploma. Services are offered continuously with various workshops, self-paced computer tutorials, individualized tutoring and classroom-based instruction. All Veterans Upward Bound classes and supplies are FREE to qualified veterans. Applicants must have served at least 181 days of active duty military service. Discharge must have been other than dishonorable. Low income and first generation college attendance. (You may also be eligible if you meet all the former requirements and are solely low income or solely a first generation college student. Academic need.

Suffolk University provides a unique opportunity for veterans of all ages to gain access to information about college and career awareness, acquire the academic skills required for entry into higher education and/or to acquire the equivalent of a high school diploma. Services are offered continuously with various workshops, self-paced computer tutorials, individualized tutoring and classroom-based instruction. All VUB classes and supplies are FREE to qualified veterans. In order to qualify, applicants must:

- Be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident
- Have served over 180 days on active military duty or have a service-connected disability. For reservists serving on or after September 11, 2001, shorter terms of service may provide eligibility
- Have a military discharge other than dishonorable
- Have academic need

And, applicants must qualify in one of the following two ways:

- They must be a potential first-generation college graduate (their primary caregiver had not graduated from a four-year higher education institution before the applicant turned 18), OR
- They must meet income guidelines for the program. These are based on federal taxable income and family size. Please call for detailed guidelines.

To apply make an appointment with Veterans Upward Bound staff. Bring your DD214 with you when you go in to fill out an application. (If you do not have your DD214, the VUB staff will be able to help you obtain it.) Contact Veterans Upward Bound, Suffolk University, 73 Tremont, Suite 7025, Boston, MA 02108 phone: 617-725-4100 / fax: 617-994-6864, [www.suffolk.edu/academics/20556.php](http://www.suffolk.edu/academics/20556.php) email: [vub@suffolk.edu](mailto:vub@suffolk.edu).

### **Recreation Benefits**

#### **Resident Hunting/Fishing Licenses for Military Personnel**

Non-resident military personnel stationed in Massachusetts may apply for and receive hunting and fishing licenses at the resident rate.

#### **State Park Parking Fees**

Day use parking fees are waived for vehicles bearing a disabled Veterans' license plate from any state. This waiver does not apply to camping fees and is subject to available parking

## **Other Massachusetts State Veteran Benefits**

### **General**

If you are a veteran or currently serving in the United States military or reserves, there are laws that protect you against employment discrimination and can help you avoid credit or foreclosure problems. These protections may also help you get the most out of your healthcare, disability and education benefits. The Attorney General's [Resource Guide for Veterans and Servicemembers](#) includes information about your rights and protections compiled from the [Department of Veteran Services](#), [Secretary of State's Office](#), the Attorney General's Office, and other state and federal resources.

### **Motor Vehicles Benefits**

Veteran series license plates, excise tax exemptions, and vehicle registration exemptions are benefits offered to veterans in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Disabled veterans who by reason of service in the U.S. armed forces have suffered the loss of, or permanent loss of, the use of one or both hands or feet, or who have permanent impairment of vision in both eyes, or any other disability or handicap of such veterans that may be determined by the Medical Affairs Branch of the Registry of Motor Vehicles are eligible to receive, free of charge, disabled veterans motor vehicle registration plates and are exempt from the biannual registration renewal fee.

All veterans of any war or military action who, in the course of duty, have been captured and incarcerated by an enemy of the U.S. during an armed conflict are eligible to receive, free of charge, ex-prisoner of war motor vehicle registration plates and are exempt from the biannual registration renewal fee. Presentation of satisfactory evidence of such prisoner of war status is required. A surviving spouse will be able to keep this plate until he/she remarries, or fails to renew or cancels such registration, but an annual fee would then be required.

### **Veterans Series License Plates**

Veterans of the Armed Forces can be eligible for special Massachusetts license plates, including the following:

- Veteran plate: Any veteran is eligible for this plate for an automobile or motorcycle. Proceeds from the veteran plate fee benefit the Soldiers' Homes in Chelsea and Holyoke.
- Ex-POW plate: One Ex-POW license plate may be issued (without charge) to a former prisoner of war. Presentation of satisfactory evidence of prisoner of war status is required. A surviving spouse will be able to keep this plate, but an annual fee would then be required.
- Medal of Honor plate: One Congressional Medal of Honor plate, bearing the recipient's initials followed by the letters "CMH," may be issued free to any veteran who has been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. A surviving spouse will be able to keep this plate, but will be subject to an annual fee for the plate.
- Legion of Valor plate: One Legion of Valor license plate may be issued free to those veterans who can provide satisfactory evidence of membership in the Legion of Valor of the United States of America. A surviving spouse will be able to keep this plate, but will be subject to an annual fee for the plate.

- Purple Heart plate: One Purple Heart license plate may be issued free to those veterans who have been awarded the "Purple Heart" medal. A surviving spouse will be able to keep this plate, but will be subject to an annual fee for the plate.
- Pearl Harbor Survivor plate: All military personnel on active duty at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, as verified by the Department of Defense, are eligible for this plate free of charge. A surviving spouse will be able to keep this plate, but will be subject to an annual fee for the plate.
- Silver Star, Bronze Star, or Distinguished Flying Cross plate: One plate may be issued free to a veteran who has been awarded the Silver Star medal, Bronze Star medal, or Distinguished Flying Cross medal. In addition, a surviving spouse will be able to keep this plate, but an annual fee would then be required.
- Gold Star Family plate: One Gold Star Family license plate may be issued free to the parents, children, or spouse of a member of the U.S. Armed Forces killed in action.

Visit the Secretary of State's website <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/cis/cisvet/vetmotor.htm> for more information about Veterans and Disabled Veterans license plates. To apply for any of the above plates write or call: Registry of Motor Vehicles, Special Plates (Vanity) Section, P.O. Box 55889, Boston, MA 02205 Tel: 617-351-9322

### **State Veterans' Cemeteries**

There are two state veterans' cemeteries in Massachusetts (Agawam and Winchendon) where eligible veterans can be buried. There is no charge for burial of veterans. However, for veteran spouses and dependents the fees are \$300 for a full casket burial, for a 150 cremation burial. There is also a \$200 fee for all disinterments. All committal services are conducted in the facility's chapels. No graveside services allowed. Specific gravesites may not be reserved. To arrange for funeral honors, contact your local funeral home.

The first Massachusetts Veterans' Memorial Cemetery opened in Agawam May 2001 and the second in Winchendon opened November 2004. The state Veterans' Memorial Cemeteries serve the Commonwealth's veterans and their families. Services, burial types, and fees are summarized on a PDF cemetery brochure available at <http://www.mass.gov/veterans/docs/cemetery-brochure.pdf>. The cemeteries can be contacted at:

- Massachusetts Veterans' Memorial Cemetery, 1390 Main Street, Agawam, MA 01001 Tel: (413) 821-9500/9829F
- Massachusetts Veterans' Memorial Cemetery, 111 Glenallen Street, Winchendon, MA 01475 Tel: (978) 297-9501/4271F



**Agawam**



**Winchendon**

## **National Veterans' Cemeteries**

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) operates national veterans' cemeteries. Massachusetts has one national veterans cemetery located in Bourne, on Cape Cod.

The Massachusetts National Cemetery is located in Bourne. VA burial benefits include a gravesite in a national cemetery, opening and closing of the grave, perpetual care, a Government headstone or marker, a burial flag, and a Presidential Memorial Certificate, at no cost to the family. Cremated remains are buried or inurned in national cemeteries in the same manner and with the same honors as casketed remains. For eligibility criteria and an application, visit the National Cemetery Administration website [www.cem.va.gov/index.htm](http://www.cem.va.gov/index.htm) or call 1-800-827-1000 to talk to a VA Veterans Benefits Counselor. To contact the cemetery write or call: Massachusetts National Cemetery, Connery Ave., Bourne, MA 02532 Tel: 508-563-7113



**Bourne National Cemetery**

## **CORI Assistance**

Nowadays criminal background checks are conducted for employment, housing, and other purposes. A potential employer or a private company may conduct a review of your criminal record (CORI) and/or your credit record; driving record; educational background, etc. If you are having problems obtaining employment or housing because of a criminal record background check, sign up for a private, one-on-one information session with representatives from the Volunteer Lawyers Project (<https://www.vlpnet.org>), who are available at JobNet Boston twice per month to conduct a private review of CORI. For help with your CORI review you must bring a recent copy of your criminal record. Request a copy of your CORI online at <http://www.mass.gov/eopss/agencies/dcjis> or at the JobNet front desk. To set up a private review session, call JobNet at 617-338-0809.

## **State Benefits for Dependents of a Veteran**

The Commonwealth provides a uniform program of financial and medical assistance for indigent veterans and their dependents. Qualifying veterans and their dependents receive necessary financial assistance for food, shelter, clothing, housing supplies, and medical care in accordance with a formula which takes into account the number of dependants and income from all sources. Eligible dependents of deceased veterans are provided with the same benefits as they would were the veteran still living

## **Statewide Advocacy for Veterans' Empowerment (SAVE)**

"You Give Us the Call...We'll Give You the Answer." The fundamental principle of the SAVE program is to advocate for veterans who are not able to obtain the benefits they have earned due to institutional or personal barriers. The program's primary mission is prevention of suicide and mental health distress through the identification of issues facing veterans when they return from service and proactively

providing them with access to benefits and services that may address these issues and result in positive transitions back to civilian life.

SAVE acts as a liaison between veterans and their families and the various agencies within the federal and state governments. The SAVE team works closely, and in collaboration, with the Massachusetts National Guard. Resources offered by the Massachusetts National Guard and their Family Readiness Program are available to all service members and their families, regardless of the branch in which they serve. Contact Offices are located at:

- Boston Office: SAVE Team Department of Veterans' Service, 600 Washington St., 7th Floor, Boston, MA 02111 Tel: 617-210-5743 Toll-free: 1-888-844-2838 fax: 617-210-5755 [save@massmail.state.ma.us](mailto:save@massmail.state.ma.us)
- Chelsea Office: SAVE Team Chelsea Soldiers' Home 91 Crest Avenue, Building D, Chelsea, MA 02150 Tel: 617-210-5743.
- Holyoke Office: SAVE Team Holyoke Soldiers' Home 110 Cherry Street, Office 065, Holyoke, MA 01040 Tel: 617-210-5743

### **Legislation**

Governor Charlie Baker on August 28, 2018 signed An Act Relative to Veterans **Benefits, Rights, Appreciation, Validation and Enforcement** (S. 2632) at the Soldiers' Home in Chelsea. Highlights from this legislation known as the BRAVE Act include:

- Designates April 5th as Gold Star Wives Day and the last Sunday in September as Gold Star Mothers and Families Day.
- Establishes a Massachusetts Veterans and Warriors Agriculture Program to enhance education, training, employment, income, productivity and retention of veterans working in or aspiring to work in the field of agriculture.
- Allows parents or surviving guardians of veterans, who died in service to the country, to receive a real estate credit on property beginning Jan. 1, 2019.
- Increases veterans' local property tax work-off program from \$1,000 to \$1,500.
- Allows Gold Star License Plates to be affixed to commercial vehicles.
- Provides time off for veterans for Veterans Day and Memorial Day, with or without pay, at the discretion of the employer.
- Requires the Department of Veterans' Services to maintain and publish a list of law firms and organizations that provide pro bono legal representation for veterans.
- Establishes a special commission to study cost and feasibility of exempting all cost to veterans of attending public higher education in Massachusetts.
- Directs the Executive Office of Health and Human Services in consultation with the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, to partner with a Massachusetts college or university to conduct a study relative to veterans and military members suffering from mental health or substance abuse issues related to their military service and their needs in the criminal justice system.
- Extends the veterans' bonus program administered by the Treasurer to allow for the maximum amount of benefits under the program, subject to appropriation, to those veterans who served during Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Noble Eagle, Operation Inherent Resolve and Operation Freedom's Sentinel.

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Visit the Massachusetts Department of Veterans Services website <http://www.mass.gov/veterans> contact information and benefits assistance.

[Source: <https://www.military.com/benefits/veteran-state-benefits/massachusetts-state-veterans-benefits.html> | Apr 2019 ++]