

# Pennsylvania State Veteran's Benefits

October 2020



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

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

## Housing Benefits

### **State Veterans Homes**

Applications for residency are still being accepted at each home, but in order to safeguard against COVID-19, at this time individuals will only be added to a WAITLIST until a time when the homes begin to allow new residents and there is a bed available that meets the specific needs of each applicant. For more information, including how to apply to a veterans home, visit the Pennsylvania Veterans Homes website <https://www.dmva.pa.gov/paveteranshomes/Pages/default.aspx>. You can also contact:

- Toll free – 1-800-547-2838
- Email – RA-MVVA-HOMES@PA.gov
- Mail – Bureau of Veterans Homes, Bldg. 0-47, Fort Indiantown Gap, Annville, PA 17003-5002

The State of Pennsylvania runs six Veterans Homes:

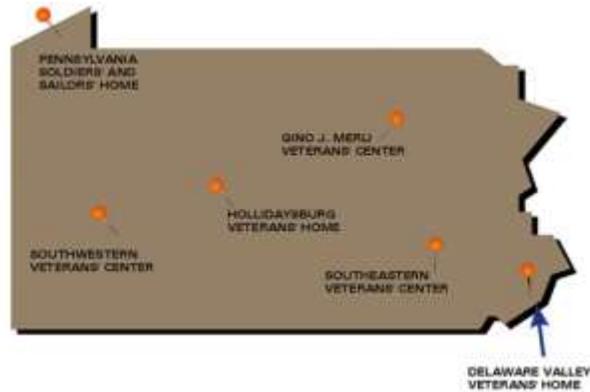
- The Delaware Valley Veterans Home in Philadelphia
- The Gino J. Merli Veterans Center in Scranton
- The Hollidaysburg Veterans Home

- The Pennsylvania Soldiers' and Sailors' Home in Erie
- The Southeastern Veterans Center in Spring City
- The Southwestern Veterans Center in Pittsburgh

The level of care provided includes personal care, skilled nursing care, domiciliary care, and dementia care. These facilities offer qualified veterans and their spouses dedicated, superior care. An applicant shall be an eligible veteran, spouse or surviving spouse of an eligible veteran. An "eligible veteran" is defined as an individual who has served in the Armed Forces of the United States or the Pennsylvania Military Forces and was discharged under honorable conditions. An applicant shall be a bona fide resident of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or the eligible veteran or spouse of an eligible veteran for who the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is his/her home of record upon entry into the Armed Forces of the United States or the Pennsylvania Military Forces. Current residents have priority, however, in admission. A resident of a state veterans home shall be required to make monthly payments against maintenance fee liability in accordance with the resident's ability to pay. The following are not eligible for admission

- An applicant whose condition requires mental health care or custody.
- An applicant whose behavior creates a reasonable threat to the health, safety or welfare of himself/herself or to others. This exclusion applies to an applicant who is taking medication to control behavior where in the absence of the medication, the applicant's behavior would reasonably be expected to create a potential threat to the health, safety or welfare of himself/herself or others.
- An applicant whose condition requires treatment or level of treatment not available at the home, except under circumstances where alternative sources of treatment are reasonably available in the immediate vicinity of the home.
- An applicant with a history of alcoholism or drug abuse whose history indicates that the applicant may not be responsive to treatment or may not accept or participate in available treatment programs.
- An applicant with a contagious disease.
- An applicant who was convicted of a felony, unless the applicant has demonstrated good character and behavior and has no convictions of crimes or offenses for at least five years subsequent to incarceration.

The veteran must be a bona fide resident of the Commonwealth when applying. Spouses and surviving spouses of eligible veterans may also apply. Applications are processed on a "first come, first served" basis. Contact information for admission is Bureau of Veterans Homes, Bldg S-0-41, Fort Indiantown Gap, Annville, PA 17003 Tel: (717) 861-8906 Email: [RA-MVVA-HOMES@pa.gov](mailto:RA-MVVA-HOMES@pa.gov). Applications can be downloaded at [http://www.milvet.state.pa.us/DMVA/Docs\\_BVA/Forms/homesapp.pdf](http://www.milvet.state.pa.us/DMVA/Docs_BVA/Forms/homesapp.pdf). NOTE: Only the original application with original signatures will be accepted (i.e. no FAX) and must be mailed directly to the following address: Bureau of Veterans Homes, Attn: Admission's Office, Bldg. 0-47, Fort Indiantown Gap, Annville, Pennsylvania 1700



## DELAWARE VALLEY VETERANS' HOME



The Delaware Valley Veterans' Home was dedicated on November 1, 2002 and is the commonwealth's sixth and newest veterans home operated by the PA Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. It is architecturally designed to seize full advantage of its peaceful setting. Every room in the facility has at least one wall of glass to fill it with natural light and offer views of meadows and woodland. Hallways have skylights to add to the bright and cheery environment. The public areas are large, bright and welcoming. The main thoroughfare in the facility is called "Main Street." Here visitors will find a fully-stocked library, including computers for resident use; a canteen where residents and visitors can purchase everything from sodas to ice cream to t-shirts and gifts; and inviting places to sit and walk, complete with park benches, aquariums and aviaries.

The home can serve up to 171 veterans and their eligible spouses. It is designed to meet a variety of levels of care:

- The 30-bed Dementia unit is secured to help protect residents who have a tendency to wander.
- There are two 50-bed skilled nursing units for residents who need more help with activities of daily living, including dressing, eating and bathing.
- The Personal Care unit has 41 beds and is designed for residents who are more independent.

All rooms are double occupancy. Roommates are chosen based upon ability to motivate one another, encouraging socialization, while discouraging isolation. Rooms are equipped with automatic beds, state-of-the-art mattresses, armoires, locking bedside cabinets, radios and televisions with remote controls.

Families are encouraged to provide pictures, bed spreads and knick-knacks to promote a home-like environment for loved ones. The home strives to meet the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual needs of each resident. The units are staffed with registered nurse supervisors, registered nurses, licensed practical nurses and certified nursing assistants. Each resident is offered physical, occupational and speech therapies, as needed, to maintain or improve their physical capabilities. The facility employs a full time physician who handles resident's day-to-day medical needs. More complex situations are referred to outside services.

Religious services are held at the facility at least weekly. Catholic, Protestant and Jewish faiths are served by priests, pastors and rabbis from the surrounding community. In addition, the home offers counseling services through its Social Services department to help residents and families. Exciting activity programs are offered to residents seven days a week. Activities include everything from bowling, to bingo, to trips to the local malls and Philadelphia Phillies baseball games. Wonderful family nights are planned monthly, bringing together parents, grandparents and children for an afternoon or evening of fun. Held on a quarterly basis is Family Counsel, where families are invited to attend, meet each other, hear interesting speakers and ask questions of facility management. Use the following to contact the home:

- Delaware Valley Veterans' Home, 2701 Southampton Road, Philadelphia, PA 19154
- Phone: 215-856-2700 Fax: 215-856-2777
- Email: [RA-MVVA-HOMES@pa.gov](mailto:RA-MVVA-HOMES@pa.gov) or Web: [www.dvvh.pa.gov](http://www.dvvh.pa.gov)

## **GINO J. MERLI VETERANS' CENTER**

The Gino J. Merli Veterans' Center provides a broad spectrum of health care and related services to those commonwealth veterans and their eligible spouses who are disabled, chronically ill, or in need of specialized care. We assist residents in functioning independently and at their optimal level. Most importantly, all residents are treated with respect and dignity. Our facility includes a chapel, pharmacy, barber and beautician services, dining rooms and a multi-purpose room for large gatherings. Outdoor areas include a courtyard with a covered pavilion and a 'victory' garden area where residents plant flowers and vegetables. Our staff considers it a privilege to serve those who served their country. We extend an invitation to all interested persons to visit the Center and witness the first-class care which we provide.



When the Gino J. Merli Veterans' Center opened as the Northeastern Veterans' Center in January 1994, it held the distinction of being the first newly constructed home for veterans within the state system. In July 2002, it was renamed the Gino J. Merli Veterans' Center, in honor of the noted World War II hero and Medal of Honor recipient from northeastern Pennsylvania. It was built on the site of the former

Scranton State General Hospital. The old building was razed and ground was broken for the new four-story Center on May 31, 1991. The Center provides 196 beds, including 156 for full nursing care and 40 for dementia. The major difference in the types of residency is the level of care:

- The Nursing Care Unit provides 24-hour care, seven days a week. Residents receive a complete range of clinical services under the direction of physicians and other licensed health care professionals.
- The Dementia Care Unit provides long-term care in a safe and secure environment. The focus is to provide specialized care tailored to meet the needs of these unique residents in an atmosphere that promotes sensory stimulation.

Additional services of a specialized nature, such as psychological evaluations and podiatry, are provided as necessary to maintain a resident's quality of life. All residents receive medical, clinical and nursing services; drug and nutritional therapy; rehabilitative services such as physical therapy, occupational therapy and recreational therapy; speech therapy; dental services; social services; transportation; housekeeping; maintenance; business management; and related services. Use the following to contact the home:

- Gino J. Merli Veterans' Center, 401 Penn Avenue, Scranton, PA 18503
- Phone: 570-961-4300
- Email: [RA-MVVA-HOMES@pa.gov](mailto:RA-MVVA-HOMES@pa.gov) or Web: [www.gmvc.pa.gov](http://www.gmvc.pa.gov)

## **HOLLIDAYSBURG VETERANS' HOME**

"We care for our veterans" is not only the philosophy of the Hollidaysburg Veterans' Home, it is our commitment to serving the current health care requirements of those veterans and their spouses. Furthermore, we remain diligent in planning for anticipated needs of an aging veteran population that will require improved and innovative services. Our dedicated staff provides services that range from medical care and rehabilitative programs to housekeeping and 24-hour security. Therefore, Hollidaysburg is a true "veterans' community" designed specifically with the commonwealth's veterans of the armed services and their spouses as its focus.



This perspective of community and the home's history of professional care prompt us to remain confident about the future quality of life for our veterans. Our staff is ever mindful of our mission and we consider it a privilege to serve those who served their country in time of need. We extend an invitation to all interested persons to visit Hollidaysburg Veterans' Home and witness the first-class care available to our deserving veteran residents.

Hollidaysburg is the largest of the state's veterans homes. It opened with just five residents on June 30, 1977, but the facility's history as a care-provider goes back to 1904, when the Blair County Hospital for Mental Diseases opened on what had been 150 acres of farmland. The original red brick building survives as the Old Administration Building, now home for the Pennsylvania National Guard's 28th Infantry Division Band. The state took over operation of the facility in 1941, renaming it Hollidaysburg State Hospital, treating the mentally ill. But it was not until after World War II that it began the expansion that resulted in the building of Rush Hall, Neil Hall and Sommer Hall as the main housing and administration units of the complex. The grounds doubled in size, to 326 acres. As the care of the mentally ill changed from custodial care to outpatient care, the population here dwindled until a decision was made in the 1970s to shut it down.

However, the Department of Military Affairs was looking to expand its veterans homes system. At the time, the Soldiers' and Sailors' Home at Erie was the only facility available. The decision to shut down Hollidaysburg was reversed and it was transferred to Military Affairs in September 1977. Rush Hall, built in 1953, is now the administration building and nursing care facility. It was renamed Eisenhower Hall after the five-star general and president, Dwight D. Eisenhower. Neil Hall, built in 1949, was renamed MacArthur Hall after the former five-star general, Douglas MacArthur. On April 10, 1992, the old Sommer Hall, built in 1954, officially became Arnold Hall, named after the five-star general and native Pennsylvanian, Henry H. (Hap) Arnold, who is considered the father of the Air Force.

Hollidaysburg Veterans' Home consists of a total of 506 beds, including 66 for domiciliary care, 167 for personal care and 339 for skilled nursing care with 52 beds in two secure units. The major difference in the types of residency is the level of care required:

- The personal care/domiciliary care unit provides food and shelter, medical and nursing care, ancillary therapeutic services and recreational activities. Residents receive a supervised, protected environment. When needed, assistance is provided for eating, bathing, shaving and other activities of daily living which do not require constant nursing care.
- The nursing unit provides 24-hour care, seven days a week. Residents receive a complete range of clinical services under the direction of physicians, nurses and other licensed health care professionals.
- Two specialty units provide long-term care within a secure setting.

Available to all residents are medical, clinical and nursing services; drug and nutritional therapy; rehabilitative services such as physical therapy and occupational therapy; dental services; social services; laundry; transportation; housekeeping; maintenance; security; fiscal management; and other related services. Additional services of a specialized nature, such as mental health services, podiatry, and speech/audiology therapy, are provided as necessary to maintain a resident's quality of life. Use the following to contact the home:

- Hollidaysburg Veterans' Home, 500 Municipal Drive, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648
- Phone: 814-696-5201
- Email: [RA-MVVA-HOMES@pa.gov](mailto:RA-MVVA-HOMES@pa.gov) or Web: [www.hvh.pa.gov](http://www.hvh.pa.gov)

## **PENNSYLVANIA SOLDIERS' AND SAILORS' HOME**



The home is situated on 26 pastoral acres overlooking Lake Erie and is steeped in history. Remodeled and modernized, the home provides state-of-the-art care and treatment in a homelike atmosphere. A little-known fact is that spouses of veterans are eligible for admission. Merchant Marines with "ocean-going" service between December 1941 and August 1945 and veterans of the Pennsylvania National Guard are also eligible for admission. The Pennsylvania Soldiers' and Sailors' Home in Erie has been in operation for more than a century. It was dedicated and opened on February 22, 1886, although the actual construction began nearly two decades earlier. Work began in 1867 when it was conceived as a Marine hospital to be used by the federal government as part of its system of homes for disabled volunteer soldiers. The government declined the offer, however, and work was halted in 1885 when the project ran out of funds.

The Pennsylvania General Assembly decided there should be a home for indigent and disabled ex-soldiers from Pennsylvania and created a commission to pursue this objective. The commission chose the Marine hospital site in Erie. It purchased an additional four acres adjacent to the 100 acres in the original plot, and constructed new buildings around the Marine hospital. At first, a board of trustees, an administrative agency within the Department of Military Affairs, managed the home. The Adjutant General was given full responsibility 90 years later and the board of trustees was replaced by an advisory board, later replaced by an advisory council. The annex was dedicated in June 1980, with 75 beds available to provide quality nursing care. The main building has 100 beds, divided into personal care and domiciliary care. The major difference in the types of residency is the level of care required.

- The personal care/domiciliary care unit provides food and shelter, medical and nursing care, ancillary therapeutic services and recreational activities. Residents receive a supervised, protected environment. When needed, assistance is provided for eating, bathing, shaving and other activities of daily living which do not require constant nursing care.
- The nursing unit provides 24-hour care, seven days a week. Residents receive a complete range of clinical services under the direction of physicians, nurses and other licensed health care professionals.
- The 32-bed Dementia/Alzheimer's unit provides veterans suffering from dementia or Alzheimer's disease with long-term care in a safe and secure environment. The ward has an open layout with a large lounge area, designed to put residents in familiar, home-like surroundings. During treatment for early stages of dementia, the entrance to each resident's room contains a "memory box" with items from a resident's past to help jog their memory as to where his or her room is located.

Available to all residents are medical, clinical and nursing services; drug and nutritional therapy; rehabilitative service such as physical therapy, occupational therapy and recreational therapy; dental services; social services; laundry; transportation; housekeeping; maintenance; security; fiscal management; and other related services. There is a landmark Civil War cannon on the building grounds, one of only 12 Napoleon field pieces brought back to Pennsylvania by Union troops. Several of the others were melted down during the two world wars. The cannon was completely refurbished in 1985 by vocational students at the George Junior Republic, in a project underwritten by the Erie Chapter of the 40 et 8 Club. Also located on the grounds is the veterans cemetery, established in 1896. It is the resting place for 1,100 veterans who served the United States in wars dating back to the early 19th century. It was rededicated April 3, 1992, following a rehabilitation project. Use the following to contact the home:

- Pennsylvania Soldiers' and Sailors' Home, 560 East Third Street, Erie, PA 16507
- Phone: 814-871-4531
- Email: [RA-MVVA-HOMES@pa.gov](mailto:RA-MVVA-HOMES@pa.gov) or Web: [www.pssh.pa.gov](http://www.pssh.pa.gov)

## **SOUTHEASTERN VETERANS' CENTER**

Since its dedication in December 1986, Southeastern Veterans' Center (SEVC) has developed new and improved services, expanding its capabilities to keep pace with technological advancements. SEVC is located in Spring City, Chester County. It houses 238 skilled nursing care residents and 54 personal care residents. It is one of six state facilities operated by the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.

A search by a special selection committee began November 22, 1983 to determine a site for a third veterans home. At the time, there was only the Erie Soldiers' and Sailors' Home and the Hollidaysburg Veterans' Home, providing space for approximately 370 veterans. Spring City was designated as the new site on January 3, 1985. The Department of Military Affairs took possession of the 120 acres a few days before Christmas in 1986. In February 1990, work began on a project to convert Horizon Hall, one of the 40 buildings of Pennhurst, to skilled nursing care facility for 194 veterans. Horizon Hall was dedicated on May 20, 1993 as Coates Hall, named after retired Brigadier General John B. Coates.



SEVC currently accommodates 292 veterans. The new four-story building, with 140,000 square feet of living space, has 154 skilled nursing beds of which 30 are reserved for veterans with memory impairment and are located on the ground floor of the new building. The building was designed based on "Community Living Center" concept, intended to de-institutionalize long-term care by eliminating large

nursing facilities and creating a more home-like setting. Each resident in the new building has a private bedroom, full bath and television. This innovative concept offers privacy, support, enjoyment and a place to call home.

The rooms are arranged in family style units that house no more than 15 residents. The focus of each unit is the kitchenette/ dining room which congregates the residents in a homelike setting for meals. At the entrance to each unit are the living and adjacent activity rooms which allows for group activities and for residents to socialize with their neighbors. Each unit provides our residents 24-hour care and offers a complete range of clinical services under the direction of physicians and other licensed health care professionals. Additional services of a specialized nature, such as mental health services, podiatry and speech/audiology therapy, are also provided as necessary to maintain a resident's quality of life. Immediately off each living room residents can exit unto a screened porch which affords the resident opportunities to “go outside” while the structural screen offers safety and supervision for all residents.

- The second floor of Coates Hall houses 64 skilled nursing beds in a variety of private, semi-private and quad rooms. A common dining room is shared between each of the two housing units. Each housing unit serves 32 residents and is equipped with a kitchenette, combination television and activities room as well as a quiet room.
- The fourth floor of Coates Hall was renovated to house 54 personal care beds in a variety of private and semi-private rooms. A common dining room is shared between each of the two housing units. Each housing unit serves 27 residents and is equipped with a kitchenette, combination television and activities room as well as a quiet room.
- The ground floor of Coates Hall contains a large multipurpose room sufficient to house large group activities. In addition, the Tighlman Hall dining facility is located immediately adjacent to both buildings and is an ideal venue for bringing together residents of both buildings for large group activities, wood shop and festivals.

Attached to the new building is a glassed-lined passage way to “Main Street,” which supports a resident bank, post office, all denominational chapel, library, clinic, barber/stylist shop, canteen and a multipurpose meeting room. Use the following to contact the home:

- Southeastern Veterans' Center, One Veterans Drive, Spring City, PA 19475
- Phone: 610-948-2400
- Email: [RA-MVVA-HOMES@pa.gov](mailto:RA-MVVA-HOMES@pa.gov) or Web: [www.sevc.pa.gov](http://www.sevc.pa.gov)

## **SOUTHWESTERN VETERANS' CENTER**



The Southwestern Veterans' Center provides a broad spectrum of health care and related services to veterans who are disabled, chronically ill or in need of specialized care. The center serves 236 veterans and spouses; 196 beds with full nursing care and 40 beds for residents with Dementia/Alzheimer's disease. Our focus is to assist veterans in functioning independently and at their optimal levels within the limitations of their illnesses. Specialized services include a chapel, pharmacy, canteen, barber and beautician services, dining rooms, library and a multi-purpose room for large gatherings. We also participate in the HealthNet System, which provides a telecommunications link between the center and medical experts throughout the state.

Act 188 of 1992 provided the mechanism to operate the Southwestern Veterans' Center. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs transferred 10.5 acres to the Department of Military Affairs on February 11, 1994. Ground was broken on May 19, 1995. The building was dedicated by Governor Ridge on July 14, 1997, and the first resident was admitted November 7, 1997. The center is comprised of 196 nursing care beds, including a 40-bed dementia unit. The second, third and fourth floors house the resident units. The second floor, divided into two wings, houses the domiciliary veterans and an Alzheimer's Care Unit. The second floor units include outdoor patios.

The resident bedrooms are semi-private rooms and more in the aspect of a small studio apartment than a traditional nursing care room. Two semi-private rooms share a full bathroom and shower. Each bedroom features a floor-to-ceiling bay window affording a variety of views. Outside the resident rooms there are a variety of lounge, dining and activity rooms, as well as nourishment centers and laundry rooms. Niches for benches, artwork, telephones and wheelchair parking break up the hallways between wings. Nursing control is maximized for efficiency and control, with the placement of nursing stations at the crossing of the intersecting wings. The major difference in the types of residency is the level of care.

- The nursing unit provides 24-hour care, seven days a week. Residents receive a complete range of clinical services under the direction of physicians and other licensed health care professionals.
- In addition to the other services, the dementia-specialty unit provides long-term care in a safe and secure environment.
- Additional services of a specialized nature, such as mental health services, podiatry and speech/audiology therapy, are provided as necessary to maintain a resident's quality of life.
- Health care delivery support services include physicians' services, drug therapy, 24-hour medical support and physical, recreational, occupational and speech therapy. Dental, podiatry, x-ray and lab services are provided through contracted vendors.

## **Financial Benefits**

### **Income Tax**

Military retirement pay is tax free. Active duty pay earned outside of Pennsylvania is not taxed. Military retirement pay and SBP payments are tax-free

### **Military Family Relief Assistance Program**

Emergency financial assistance for eligible PA service members and their eligible family members, and must have a direct and immediate financial need as a result of circumstances beyond their control. The maximum grant amount is \$3,500.

## **Veterans Temporary Assistance**

Pennsylvania may provide temporary financial assistance to veterans and their unremarried surviving spouses for the necessities of life (food, shelter, fuel and clothing). Recipients must show a direct and immediate need for temporary assistance in order to provide themselves and their families with shelter and the necessities of living. The assistance can't exceed \$1,600 in a twelve month period.

## **Real Estate Tax Exemption**

Any honorably discharged Pennsylvania resident veteran with a 100 percent VA disability and wartime service may be exempt from property taxes on their home. There are income limits, unremarried surviving spouses may also be eligible.

- Veteran's eligibility criteria:
  - Served in the military honorably
  - Served during established war service dates (DOC) as determined by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The following decorations can also be used to establish wartime service: Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal or Navy Expeditionary Medal.
  - Must have a total or 100% permanent service-connected disability rating by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs or as the result of military service the veteran is blind or paraplegic or has sustained the loss of two or more limbs
  - Blind: Visual acuity of three-sixtieths or ten two-hundredths, or less normal Vision
  - Paraplegic: The bilateral paralysis of the upper or lower extremities of the body
  - Must be a resident of the Commonwealth
  - Must occupy the real estate as his/her principal dwelling
  - Dwelling is owned solely by the veteran or as an estate in the entirety
- Must prove financial need:
  - Veteran must prove financial need according to the criteria established by the State Veterans Commission if their annual income exceeds \$92,594, effective Jan. 1, 2019
  - Applicants with an annual income of \$92,594 or less are given a rebuttable presumption to have a need for the exemption
- Upon the death of a qualified veteran, tax exemption may pass on to the unmarried surviving spouse if financial need can be shown.

Contact the [County Veterans Affairs Director](#) in the county you reside to apply for this program. An applicant whose gross annual income exceeds \$92,594 will be considered to have a financial need for the exemption when the applicant's allowable expenses exceed the applicant's household income. The applicant's monthly household expenses will be calculated to include a cost of living allowance and dependent's allowance. After the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs certifies a "financial need" for the Disabled Veterans Tax Exemption and eligibility criteria has been verified the County Board for the Assessment and Revision of Taxes will grant the tax exemption. Cases that have been granted tax exemption will be reviewed periodically (every 5 years) to determine continued need for exemption from certain real estate property taxes. For further info email [Ra-retx@pa.gov](mailto:Ra-retx@pa.gov).

## **Blind Veterans Pension**

Provides for a pension of \$150.00 per month for a person who served in the military or naval forces of the United States, or women's organization officially connected therewith, who gave the Commonwealth as his/her place of residence when entering the military and while performing duties connected with the service, suffered an injury or incurred a disease which resulted in loss of vision so that the visual acuity with the best correcting lens is 3/60 or 10/200 or equivalent, or less normal vision in the better eye. Less normal vision than 3/60 or 10/200, or equivalent, includes circumstances where the widest diameter of the visual field of the better eye has contracted to such an extent that it subtends an angular distance of not greater than 20 degrees. The term does not include a person separated from the military or naval forces of the United States or a women's organization officially connected therewith under other than honorable conditions.

### **Paralyzed Veterans Pension**

Provides for a pension of \$150.00 per month for any person separated under honorable conditions from the Armed Forces of the United States, who gave the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as his or her place of residence at time of entering the military or naval forces of the United States, and who currently resides in Pennsylvania. Veterans qualify for the pension if they suffered an injury or disease resulting in the loss or loss of use of two or more extremities (arms/hands or legs/feet).

### **Persian Gulf Conflict Veterans' Bonus Program**

The Persian Gulf Conflict Veterans' Bonus paid eligible Pennsylvania residents \$75 per month who served in the Persian Gulf Theatre of Operations (maximum benefit \$525) during the Persian Gulf War, August 2, 1990 to August 31, 1991. The deadline for submitting applications for the Persian Gulf Conflict Veterans Benefit Program was August 31, 2018 thus it is no longer available.

## **Education Benefits**

### **Veterans Educational Gratuity**

Payment of educational gratuities are for children of honorably discharged veterans who have been certified by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as having wartime service-connected disabilities rated as totally and permanently disabled or children of veterans who die or have died of war service-connected disabilities or died in service during a period of war or armed conflict. Children must be between the ages of 16 and 23, living within the Commonwealth five years prior to application and must attend a school within the Commonwealth to be entitled to this educational gratuity. Applicants must demonstrate financial need, the maximum gratuity amount is \$500 per semester for four years.

### **National Guard Education Assistance Program**

The Pennsylvania National Guard Education Assistance Program offers up to 10 semesters free college at a state school for National Guard members who execute a six year contract.

### **Military Family Education Program**

The Military Family Education Program offers up to 10 semesters free college at a state school for families of National Guard members who execute a six year contract. You cannot use the same six year contract for both the National Guard Education Assistance Program and the Military Family Education Program.

## **Employment Benefits**

### **Veterans' Preference For State Jobs**

Honorably discharged veterans who served on active duty since August 2, 1990; spouses of disabled veterans, and surviving spouses of disabled veterans can get 10 additional points on their final earned ratings, provided they pass the examination and will get mandatory appointment preference over non-veterans when their names appear together within the Rule-of-Three on certifications.

### **State Retirement**

Honorably discharged Veterans employed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for a period of at least three years may be eligible to purchase retirement credit for active duty military time.

## **Recreation Benefits**

### **Hunting/Fishing/Trapping License for Disabled Veterans**

Wartime veterans with 100 percent disability may be eligible for free hunting/fishing/trapping licenses. Veterans with a 60 - 99 percent disability can get reduced fee licenses. Application can be made at your county treasurer. Application can be made at your county treasurer.

### **Active Duty Hunting & Fishing**

Residents home on leave can get a free fishing license and reduced fee hunting license. Non residents stationed in Pennsylvania can get a fishing license for the resident rate.

## **Other State Veteran Benefits**

### **Burial Allowance**

County burial allowances are provided whether or not the person died in the county or was buried in the county.

### **Grave Markers**

A county grave marker is provided free of charge by the county. Future replacements, deteriorated or missing markers may be replaced by the county in which the Veteran is buried.

### **Pennsylvania Veterans Registry**

The PA VETERANS REGISTRY is an online application that allows veterans, family members and people who work with veterans to connect with DMVA to request information related to the valuable state benefits, programs and services offered. By connecting with DMVA, registrants can also opt-in to receive ongoing communications such as the weekly DMVA DIGEST (view our most recent edition [here](#)), breaking news and other updates. The PA VETERANS REGISTRY is DMVA's first step in a long-term strategy to achieve a higher level of communication with our veterans as well as our partners who support them. To register go to <https://www.dmva.pa.gov/veteransaffairs/pages/outreach-and-reintegration/pennsylvaniaveteransregistry.aspx>.

## Military Special License Plates

Veterans desiring military license plates must complete Form MV 150V (7/19) which can be downloaded at <https://www.dmv.pa.gov/Information-Centers/Military-Veterans/Pages/Military-License-Plates.aspx>, pay the \$22 fee, and submit the appropriate documentation indicated. If a personalized plate is desired there is an additional \$108 fee charged.



## Veterans Registry

The PA VETERANS REGISTRY is an online application that allows veterans, family members and people who work with veterans to connect with DMVA to request information related to the valuable state benefits, programs and services offered. All registrants' information will be shared with County Directors for Veterans Affairs and other Commonwealth of Pennsylvania agencies in order to facilitate local connections. By connecting with DMVA, registrants can also opt-in to receive ongoing communications such as the weekly DMVA DIGEST ([view our most recent edition here](#)), breaking news and other updates. The PA VETERANS REGISTRY is DMVA's first step in a long-term strategy to achieve a higher level of communication with our veterans as well as our partners who support them. To register go to <https://register.dmv.pa.gov>.

## Veterans' Trust Fund

The mission of the Veterans' Trust Fund (VTF), administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA), is to assist and support Pennsylvania veterans and their families.

The VTF issues grants to statewide charitable organizations that assist veterans, veterans service organizations and county directors of veterans affairs to assist veterans in need of shelter and necessities of living. Funding for the Veterans' Trust Fund was established by law (51 Pa.C.S. § 1721) and it includes:

- Transfer of funds after the sale of the former Scotland School for Veterans' Children
- Proceeds from the voluntary \$3 donations from people applying for or renewing their Pennsylvania driver's license or photo ID and renewing motor vehicle registrations
- Proceeds from the sale of the "[Honoring Our Veterans" standard and motorcycle license plate](#)
- Grants, gifts and donations from a person, business, or governmental entity ([Make an online donation now](#))
- Money appropriated to the fund

One hundred percent of all donations go into the VTF, and DMVA charges no administrative costs, salaries or contract costs to the Fund. Please note that a portion of the VTF is used to reimburse the Pennsylvania Dept. Transportation (PennDOT) for the costs PennDOT incurred in implementing the check-off for applications for drivers' licenses and vehicle registrations and the veterans' designation on drivers licenses. These one-time start-up costs are being paid to PennDOT over a period of years. Go to <http://www.dmva.pa.gov/veteransaffairs/Pages/Programs%20and%20Services/Veterans'%20Trust%20Fund/Veterans-Trust-Fund.aspx>.

## **Pennsylvania Veterans' Memorial**



At its site at the [Indiantown Gap National Cemetery](#) in Lebanon County, Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Veterans' Memorial is the first in the Commonwealth to honor veterans of all eras from the Revolutionary War forward. Maintained by DMVA, it is the largest veterans' memorial located in any of the 133 national cemeteries operated by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

## **VA National Suicide Hotline**

Veterans, Service members, and their loved ones can call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1, send a text message to 838255, or chat online to receive free, confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, even if they are not registered with VA or enrolled in VA health care. The counselors at the Veterans Crisis Line are specially trained and experienced in helping Veterans of all ages and circumstances — from those coping with mental health issues that were never addressed to recent Veterans dealing with relationships or the transition back to civilian life.

## **Homeless Veterans**

If you are a veteran who is homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless, please contact the VA hospital at 570-824-3521 and ask to speak to the homeless coordinator.

For additional assistance, you may also contact any County Directors Veterans Affairs office. At <https://www.dmva.pa.gov/veteransaffairs/Documents/Outreach-and-Reintegration/countyprint.pdf> is a listing of all Pennsylvania offices.

### **Office of Veteran Affairs Contact Info**

#### Office of Veterans Affairs (OVA)

Bldg. 0-47, Fort Indiantown Gap, Annville, PA 17003-5002

Phone: 717-861-8910

Fax: 717-861-8589

Toll Free: 800-547-2838

Email: RA-VA-Info@pa.gov

#### Philadelphia Field Office

Veterans Administration Center

P.O. Box 42938, Philadelphia, PA 19101-2938

Phone: 215-381-3040

Fax: 215-381-3492

Toll Free: 866-754-8637

#### Pittsburgh Field Office

William S. Moorhead Federal Building

1000 Liberty Ave., Suite 1612, Pittsburgh, PA 15222-4003

Phone: 412-395-6225

Fax: 412-395-6224

Toll Free: 866-754-8636

### **County Directors of Veterans Affairs**

County Directors of Veterans Affairs provide county veterans and their dependents direct assistance to identify, determine eligibility and assist in the preparation of applications for County, State and Federal veterans benefits and programs. The County Director is responsible for the payment of Burial Allowances and ensuring Grave Markers and Headstones are properly requested and placed for each deceased County Veteran. They also provide direct application for State programs like Real Estate Tax Exemption, Veterans Emergency Assistance, Blind and Paralyzed Pensions and Education Gratuity for veterans who are currently rated a 100% Permanent and Total by the Federal Veterans Administration. Refer to <https://www.dmva.pa.gov/veteransaffairs/Documents/Outreach-and-Reintegration/countyprint.pdf> for a Listing of the County Directors of Veterans Affairs offices contact data.

[Source: <http://www.military.com/benefits/veteran-state-benefits/pennsylvania-state-veterans-benefits.html> & <http://www.dmva.pa.gov/Pages/default.aspx> | October 2020 ++]