

# Mississippi State Veteran's Benefits & Discounts

2016



The state of Mississippi 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
- Other State Veteran Benefits

## Veteran Housing Programs

### **Mississippi Veterans Home Purchase Board**

The Veterans Home Purchase Board provides low interest mortgage loans for eligible veterans and unmarried surviving spouses to purchase an existing single family home or to construct a new home.

Eligibility requires that the veteran be a Mississippi resident prior to entering military service or be a resident for two (2) consecutive years prior to applying for the loan. The veteran must have or obtain a Certificate of Eligibility for Home Loan Guaranty from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and be discharged from extended active duty under honorable conditions. The unmarried surviving spouse of eligible persons who died as a result of service or service-connected injuries qualifies, as well as the unremarried spouse of any eligible veteran who has not purchased a home since the veteran's death are eligible

### **State Veterans Nursing Homes**

Mississippi Veteran homes are located at:

- Collins Veterans Home, 3261 Hwy 49 South, Collins, Ms.39428 Tel: (601) 765-0403/5045F
- Jackson Veterans home, 4607 Lindbergh Drive, Jackson, Ms. 39209 Tel: (601) 353-6142/ (601) 354-6060F
- Martha Jo Leslie State Veterans Home, 310 Autumn Ridge Drive, Kosciusko, Ms.39090 Tel: (662) 289 7044/7824F
- Oxford Veterans Home, 120 Veterans Drive, Oxford, Ms. 38655 Tel: (662) 236-7641/7863F

Each of the four State Veterans Nursing Homes has 150 beds and provides skilled nursing home care for eligible Veterans and spouses. Eligibility for admission to the Homes requires that the applicant:

1. Was active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces and have been discharged under other than dishonorable conditions (applicant must supply Form DD 214 or equivalent report of Separation from Service); or a spouse of a veteran who is currently a resident of a Mississippi State Veterans Home or deceased.
2. Be or have been a Mississippi resident; however, if no Mississippi resident is waiting for admission, a non-resident may be admitted to the home.
3. Have had a medical examination by a personal or VA-physician within 30 days of admission and, as a result, demonstrate that he/she:
  - Does not have a communicable disease;
  - Does not require medical or hospital care for which the Home is not equipped or staffed to provide;
  - Does not have traits which may prove dangerous to the physical wellbeing of other residents, employees or the veteran.

Applicants must have a medical need for nursing home care and must be able to pay the applicable daily charge for care in the Home. A portion of the cost of care in a Mississippi State Veterans Home is covered by the VA with the remaining cost paid by the veteran or by his/her family; from available funding sources, such as military or civilian retirement; VA compensation or non-service connected pension; social security benefits for personal funds. Indigent veterans may qualify for financial assistance.

The homes offer trained specialists and a variety of health care disciplines, the latest in medical technology and equipment, full support services and access to nearby amenities. Each home:

- Employs a licensed medical director and provides long term care. These physicians provide admission exams and routine physical examinations. They visit residents to ensure their physical wellbeing. They provide care to all residents; however veterans may also choose a private physician at their own expense.
- Employs a licensed nursing staff, supervised by a registered nurse. The staff serves residents 24 hours a day. Nursing personnel offer a broad range of experience, with a particular emphasis on geriatric services.
- Provides rehabilitation services by a licensed professional. To improve and maintain maximum functioning of each veteran, the homes offer occupational, physical, speech and hearing therapy.
- Provides medication for the residents and has a licensed pharmacist who reviews drug regimens and counsels residents on medication usage.

Staff at Mississippi State Veterans Homes strive to provide a comfortable home for the veterans. A full range of daily living services are available to help make each day a pleasant and productive one.

- Recreational activities encourage residents to lead active lives by meeting their physical, emotional, social and religious needs.
- Service officers provide counseling to residents and their families. Residents may also receive assistance in obtaining financial benefits.

- All meals are prepared on site, and special therapeutic diets are available if prescribed by a physician. The nutritional needs of each resident are supervised by registered dietitians. Meal are served in the attractive dining halls and resident’s rooms.
- Transportation to and from community activities and medical appointments may be provided by each home. In an emergency, ambulance service to near-by hospitals may also be provided.

Applications for admission to the Mississippi State Veterans Homes may be obtained from the homes, county veterans service officers (listed at <http://www.vab.ms.gov/csolist.pdf> ) or online at <http://www.vab.ms.gov> The completed application should be sent to the home of choice. The admission committee at the home reviews the application, and a member of the social work staff will contact the applicant’s family to arrange admission. The process usually takes approximately two weeks, but may be shortened in emergency situations. At the time of approval, if no spaces are available in the applicant’s home of choice, the applicant may choose to an alternative home or place on a waiting list until space becomes available.



**Martha Jo Leslie State Veterans Home of Kosciusko**

### Financial Assistance Benefits

#### **Privilege Tax**

Persons who are 65 or older, blind, deaf, dumb, or with loss of hand or foot, or loss of use of the hand or foot or who can provide documentation that they are 50% disabled to perform physical labor and whose annual gross income is \$900.00 or less are exempt from payment of privilege tax for specified businesses..

#### **Ad Valorem Tax**

Any Veteran having a service-connected, total disability and who has been honorably discharged from military service shall be exempt from all Ad Valorem taxes on the assessed value of homestead property and to extend such exemption to un-remarried surviving spouses of such veterans

### Employment Benefits

#### **Employment Preference**

The State Personnel Board grants each veteran who is fully qualified preference over other applicants for initial or promotional appointments (5 points). Disabled veterans are given additional preference (10 points). In state layoffs, veterans are granted preference and additional preference is given disabled veterans.

### **State Retirement**

Members of the State Public Employees Retirement System who served in the Armed Forces of the United States or who served in Maritime Service during periods of hostility in WWII shall be entitled to up to four (4) years credit for active duty in the Armed Forces or in such Maritime Service, provided they entered State Service after discharge from the Armed Forces or after completion of such Maritime Service. Credit may be extended beyond four (4) years for those persons who can provide positive proof that they were retained in the Armed Forces or such Maritime Service during WWII by causes beyond his control and without opportunity for discharge.

### **Education Benefits**

#### **Educational Assistance**

Children of any member of the armed services whose official home of record and residence is within the State of Mississippi and who is officially reported as being either a prisoner of a foreign government or missing in action can receive an eight-semester scholarship, without cost, exclusive of books, food, school supplies, materials and dues or fees for extracurricular activities at any state supported college or university within the State.

The Adjutant General is authorized to pay the tuition for any member in good standing with the active Mississippi National Guard who is enrolled within the State of Mississippi in an accredited institution of higher learning and who is not eligible for GI Bill educational assistance and who meets requirements specified in Mississippi law.

Military personnel stationed in Mississippi are classified as state residents for the purposes of payment of tuition at state colleges and universities.

#### **Mississippi Employment Security Commission**

Veterans seeking assistance regarding employment or unemployment insurance benefits should contact their local Mississippi Employment Security Commission Office for assistance. MS Employment Security Commission offices are located in larger cities and towns throughout the state.

### **Other State Veteran Benefits**

#### **Documents**

The State Bureau of Vital Statistics is to furnish, without charge, copies of birth and death certificates when they are needed to establish claims for dependency, disability, or survivors benefits for any veterans who are legal residents of the State of Mississippi or their claimants.

The State Bureau of Vital Statistics is to furnish, at no expense, and immediately upon application a certified copy of birth certificates for any person volunteering for service in one of the armed forces of the United States.

Chancery and Circuit Clerks are to furnish, without charge, copies of marriage licenses, divorce decrees, adoption decrees and any and all other records when the same are needed to establish claims for dependency, disability or survivors benefits for any veterans who are legal residents of the State of Mississippi or their claimants.

Chancery Clerks shall record, without cost whatsoever to any person of the Armed Forces of the United States residing in the same county, all honorable discharges and all certificates of service of any and all members of the Armed Forces of the United States. Certified copies will be furnished free without cost to the soldier, sailor, marine, coast guardsman, or nurse

#### **Hunting and Fishing Licenses**

Veterans who have a total service-connected disability from the Veterans Administration are not required to

purchase a hunting or fishing license, but must have on their person proof of age, residency and disability status while engaged in hunting or fishing.

### **State Veterans Memorial Cemetery**

The Mississippi Veterans Memorial Cemetery is open for in-ground burials and accepts cremains for both in-ground or columbarium interment. The cemetery is located approximately three (3) miles east of Newton on Highway 80 at 248 Honor Circle, Newton, MS 39345 Tel: (601) 683.2959/2958F. Veterans, their spouses and eligible dependent children can be buried in the Cemetery. Burial for Veterans is at no cost unless the burial involves re-interment from another cemetery and the VA burial allowance has previously been paid. A fee must be paid to bury non-Veteran spouses and eligible dependent children. The VA provides a free grave marker and perpetual care is provided at no cost. Contact your funeral director or the cemetery office for information.

### **Vehicle License Plates**

Photos of Mississippi Veteran and military license plates can be viewed on the web site for the Mississippi Department of Revenue <http://www.dor.ms.gov> . Once you enter the Dept. of Revenue web site click on Tag/Titles, then click on Special Plates and then click on Available License Plates. Color photos of available specialty plates will be displayed.

The following are special vehicle military license plates issued to eligible persons in Mississippi:

- Active Reserve
- Afghanistan Veteran
- Air Medal
- Bronze Star
- Disabled Veteran
- Distinguished Flying Cross
- Former Prisoner of War
- Gold Star Family
- Iraq Veteran
- Killed In Action
- Marines
- Medal of Honor
- National Guard
- Navy & Marine Corps
- Pearl Harbor Survivors
- Purple Heart
- Retired Armed Forces
- Retired Armed Forces, Air Force
- Retired Armed Forces, Army
- Retired Armed Forces, Coast Guard
- Retired Armed Forces, Merchant Marines
- Retired Armed Forces, National Guard
- Retired Armed Forces, Navy
- RAF Reserve
- Silver Star
- Veteran
- Vietnam Veteran
- Iraq Veteran
- Afghanistan Veteran



Visit the Mississippi Veterans Affairs Board website <http://www.vab.ms.gov> for contact information and benefits assistance

[Source: <http://www.military.com/benefits/veteran-state-benefits/mississippi-state-veterans-benefits.html> JAN 2016 ++]

## Military Discounts in Mississippi

1. MVDC has a list of close to 2,500 locations in Mississippi that have discounts for military personnel or veterans. Similar to businesses, the state of Mississippi provides discounts for its veterans and military population.
2. Veterans Designation on drivers license: **Yes**
3. **Discounted Fees and Taxes**

- \$15,000 of military income exempt from state taxes (National Guard only)
- Retired military pay exempt from state taxes

#### 4. **Education Discounts**

- The Mississippi Education Assistance Program pays tuition up to \$250 per hour, maximum \$4,500 per year for eligible national guard members to obtain associates and bachelor's degrees
- In-state tuition rates for non-resident active duty personnel and national guard members
- Tuition waivers for children or spouses of disabled veterans or service members that have died in action at in state schools

6. To find businesses that provide military and veteran discounts refer to <http://militaryandveteransdiscounts.com>.

[Source: <http://militaryandveteransdiscounts.com/location/mississippi.html> Jan 2016 ++]