

# Minnesota State Veteran's Benefits & Discounts

2017



The state of Minnesota 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

### **Minnesota Homeless Veteran Registry**

The Registry connects Veterans experiencing homelessness with housing and services in their community. It also helps programs serving Veterans to coordinate their efforts. Participation is voluntary for Veterans. Anyone can refer a Veteran to join.

### **MOVE Program**

The Minnesota Operation for Veterans Empowerment (MOVE) program temporarily assists homeless Veterans at the Union Gospel Mission in St. Paul, MN. Assistance includes one-on-one case management with an MDVA Outreach Representative and a paid bed at the mission during case management. Veterans work with the case manager to select the various types of resources needed in order to help empower them to move beyond their current situation.

### **Minnesota Veterans' Homes**

Minnesota Veterans' Homes are located in Fergus Falls, Hastings, Luverne, Minneapolis and Silver Bay. There is also an Adult Day Center located in the Minneapolis Veterans' Home. The Adult Day Center provides a broad array of therapeutic health care services – delivered by trained, highly dedicated professionals. It is a Veteran-based community that allows participants to connect with other Veterans in a safe, comfortable environment. The Adult Day Center allows participants to achieve the highest attainable level of physical, mental and social well-

being – with the independence of living at home. It also provides much-needed respite – and a full array of support services – for Veterans’ caregivers.

Admission to Minnesota Veterans Homes is available to honorably discharged veterans who entered service from Minnesota, or are current residents, who served 181 consecutive days on active duty, unless discharged earlier because of disability incurred in the line of duty. The spouse of an eligible Veteran who is at least 55 years old and meets residency requirements. The applicant must also be able to demonstrate a medical or clinical need for admission. Residents contribute to the cost of their care according to their means.

## **SOAR**

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) has partnered with the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) and the United States Social Security Administration (SSA) to provide Minnesota’s homeless and at-risk Veterans with expanded access to Social Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits.



SOAR, which stands for SSI/SSDI, Outreach, Access, and Recovery, is a program designed to increase access to SSI/SSDI for those who are eligible who are experiencing or at-risk of homelessness and have a mental illness, medical impairment, and/or co-occurring substance use disorder. Eligible Veterans are able to work with a trained MDVA SOAR advocate who will assist them with collecting the necessary information (personal and medical records), completing necessary SSA forms to file a comprehensive application packet to SSA, and aiding them through the determination process. For more information about the MDVA SOAR process, please contact Paul Williams at (651) 201-8233. To refer someone to receive assistance under the SOAR Program, please contact LinkVet at 1-888-LinkVet

## **Financial Benefits**

### **State Income Taxes**

Military pay and retirement pay are not taxed.

### **Short Term Financial Assistance (Subsistence)**

The Subsistence program provides temporary assistance with shelter payments (rent/mortgage), current utility bills and health insurance premiums to eligible Veterans and their Dependents. This benefit is income and asset based, and is designed to assist Veterans for up to six months for those who are unable to work his/her normal occupation due to a temporary disability, or who are permanently disabled and are waiting to receive a permanent disability benefit from VA Compensation, VA Pension, Social Security or other long term benefit.

## **Employment Benefits**

### **MN Veterans Preference Act**

MN Veterans Preference Act (VPA) grants veterans a limited preference over non-veterans in hiring and promotion for MN public employment and also provides protection against unfair dismissals and demotions. VPA grants veterans the right to a hearing, prior to dismissal.

## **Education Benefits**

### **Minnesota GI Bill**

The Minnesota GI Bill is available to Minnesota Veterans who served honorably in any branch of the armed forces at any time; non-veterans who served honorably for a cumulative total of five years or more as a member of the MN National Guard or any other active or reserve component and had active service after September 11, 2001; or eligible spouses, surviving spouses, and children of permanently and totally disabled veterans who are eligible for the Federal GI Bill under Chapters 33 or 35.

Full-time undergraduate or graduate students may be eligible to receive up to \$1,000 per semester and part-time students can receive up to \$500 per semester (up to \$3,000 per academic year and \$10,000 per lifetime). OJT and Apprenticeship individuals are eligible for up to \$2,000 per fiscal year for either program. Approved employers are eligible to receive \$1,000 placement credit payable upon hiring a person under this program and another \$1,000 after 12 consecutive months of employment. Recipients must be a Minnesota resident under the age of 62, and enrolled at a Minnesota institution.

### **Surviving Spouse & Dependent Education Benefit**

Surviving Spouse and Dependent Education assistance is provided to spouses and dependents, including adopted and step-children, whose Veteran spouse and/or Veteran parent died while on active duty, or as a result of a service-connected condition. The Veteran must have been a resident of Minnesota when entering the U.S. military, or have been a resident of Minnesota for at least six months prior to passing away due to a service connected disability as determined by the USDVA. Applicants must be Minnesota residents and the spouse cannot be remarried. There is no age limitation for eligible survivors.

If found eligible, survivors are allowed admission to Minnesota postsecondary education institutions either operated by this state or is operated publicly or privately and maintains academic standards substantially equivalent to those of comparable institutions operated in this state. Surviving spouses and dependents will be able to attend free of tuition until he/she obtains a bachelor's degree. In addition, MDVA will pay \$750 per fiscal year for fees, books and supplies, and/or room and board.

## **Veteran Recreation Benefits**

### **Veterans Campground on Big Marine Lake**

The Veterans Campground on Big Marine Lake is a family campground that provides facilities and opportunities for recreation, rest, and recovery for all who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States, whether still serving or have served in the past, their Families, and sponsored friends.

### **Minnesota State Park Vehicle Permits**

Any active military service personnel stationed outside of Minnesota within the past 90 days can get a free one-day Minnesota state park vehicle permit. Bring your current military orders and military ID, and let the park attendant know your military status when you arrive.

Military personnel or their Dependents who have a Federal government access pass to Federal recreational sites can get a free one-day Minnesota state park vehicle permit. Bring your Federal access pass and military ID, and let the park attendant know your military status when you arrive.

Any resident Veteran with any level of service-connected disability can get a free one-day Minnesota state park vehicle permit. Bring a copy of your determination letter and a photo ID, and let the park attendant know your military status when you arrive.

Any Veteran who has a permanent and total service-connected disability can get a free annual Minnesota state park permit. Present a copy of your determination letter or VA ID card to the park attendant for the free annual sticker, which must be placed on a vehicle that is owned by the Veteran. If the Veteran with the permanent service-connected disability does not own the vehicle transporting the Veteran, you can still get a free one-day Minnesota state park permit.

### **Cross Country Ski Pass Exemptions**

Minnesota residents who have served at any time during the preceding 24 months in federal active service outside the United States and has been discharged from active service is exempt from the pass requirement if the resident possesses official military discharge papers (DD214). Minnesota residents in the US Military who are stationed outside the state and home on leave are also eligible for a pass exemption, (must have leave form).

### **Fishing Licenses**

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, (DNR) has a number of benefits for military Service members and Veterans:

- A person in the U.S. Armed Forces who is stationed or training in the state may purchase a resident fishing license. (Includes those in training at Camp Ripley.)
- A resident who has served at any time during the preceding 24 months in federal active service outside the United States and has been discharged from active service may take fish without a license. Discharged residents must carry proof of Minnesota residency and official military discharge papers. Trout stamps are not required. (Note: Free sturgeon tags are available only from the DNR License Center in St. Paul.)
- Any Minnesota Veteran with a 100% service-connected disability may obtain a permanent angling license. These permanent licenses are available only from the DNR License Center. A trout stamp is not required with this license.

The following are Exempt from Fishing License Requirements:

- Minnesota residents in the U.S. Military who are stationed outside the state and home on leave. Military staff must carry leave or furlough papers.
- Patients of a U.S. Veterans Administration hospital (with written permission of the superintendent or chief executive of the institution).

### **Residents on Leave Hunting License**

Those who have maintained legal residency in Minnesota (must have a valid MN DL or Public Safety ID) and who are serving in the U.S. Military and stationed outside the state may:

- Hunt small game without a license while on leave. No Minnesota Waterfowl Stamp or Pheasant Stamp is needed but must have a Federal Migratory Bird Stamp to hunt waterfowl.
- May hunt deer (Firearms: Code 232; Archery: Code 233, Muzzleloader: Code 234), bear (Code 663), and wild turkeys (Spring: Code 615; Fall: Code 654) and Wolf (Early Season Firearm: Code 691; Late Firearm Code 692; Trapping Code 693) without charge after obtaining the appropriate licenses and tags from an ELS license agent by presenting official leave papers.
- Does not include Moose, Elk or Deer bonus permits. Such service personnel must carry proof of Minnesota residency and official leave papers on their person while hunting. Licenses are valid immediately upon issuance.

### **Residents Discharged Hunting License**

Minnesota residents discharged from the U.S. Armed Forces within 10 days of the start or during the Firearms Deer Season may purchase a Firearms Deer License during the season upon showing official discharge papers. The license is valid immediately after purchase.

Veterans who have served at any time during the preceding 24 months in federal active service outside the United States and have been discharged from active service may:

- Take small game without a license. Discharged residents must carry proof of Minnesota residency and official military discharge papers. No state stamps required. (Federal stamp required for migratory waterfowl hunting.)
- Obtain a free deer license. Eligibility is limited to one deer license per person per year. Discharged residents must provide proof of residency and a copy of their official military discharge papers. (Firearms: Code 232, Archery: Code 233, Muzzleloader: Code 234).
- Obtain a free wolf license. Eligibility is limited to one wolf license per person per year. Discharged residents must provide proof of residency and a copy of their official military discharge papers. (Early Firearms Season: Code 694, Late Firearm Season Code 695; Trapping Code 696)

Veterans who have served at any time during the past 24 months, in active service as a member of the United States armed forces, including the National Guard or other military reserves will receive first preference in drawings for special deer hunts, bear and turkey permits.

### **Resident 100% Disabled Veterans Hunting License**

With proof of a 100% service-related disability may obtain a free Small Game License (241) and a free Firearms (242), or Muzzleloader (240), or Archery (243) Deer License from an ELS license agent. In addition, a disabled Veteran is exempt from purchasing state pheasant or waterfowl stamps, but must purchase a turkey stamp and license to hunt turkeys and a federal duck stamp to hunt waterfowl. Disabled Veterans with 100% service connected disability will receive first preference in drawings for special deer hunts, bear and turkey permits.

**Note:** Military personnel and Veterans who are issued firearms deer licenses under these provisions may take antlerless deer, but are restricted to bucks-only hunting in those lottery deer permit areas that have an either-sex permit quota of zero. To participate in special deer hunts, they must apply and be drawn. They may also purchase bonus permits.

### **Resident Veteran 100% Permanent Card**

Resident Veterans who have 100% permanent service-connected disability as defined by the United State Department of Veterans Affairs may apply for a permanent card that may be presented to an agent annually to receive a free Small Game and/ or a Deer License. This card will assist with the process of receiving these types of license's, however all eligibility requirements must be meet prior to receiving the license(s).

### **Resident Purple Heart Recipients**

Purple Heart recipients must purchase licenses, but will receive first preference in drawings for antlerless deer permits, bear and turkey permits.

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

- Nonresident Spouses of residents on active military duty may purchase resident hunting and fishing licenses. Nonresidents must provide proof of Spouse's residency and active military duty.
- A person in the U.S. Armed Forces who is stationed in the state may purchase resident hunting and fishing licenses, but not moose or elk licenses.

### **Firearms Safety Training**

Military personnel who are on active duty and has successfully completed basic training in the US armed forces, reserve component, or National Guard may obtain a hunting license or approval authorizing hunting regardless of whether the person is issued a firearms safety certificate. Note: They must be on active duty, home on leave with

leave papers (they then qualify only for that time frame). Once discharged or no longer on active duty, they must complete the firearms safety training course or online adult course the same as all others born after Dec 31, 1979.

## **Other Minnesota State Veteran Benefits**

### **Guardianship Division**

The Guardianship Division provides financial case management services to incompetent veterans, their dependents, and survivors, who may be vulnerable to exploitation by others or by their own inability to manage their funds.

### **Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery**

The Minnesota State Veterans Cemeteries provide dignified burial services to Minnesota veterans and their eligible dependents and survivors. They are located 7 miles north of Little Falls, on the banks of the Mississippi River, and in Preston in southeastern Minnesota. Both cemeteries are managed and maintained by the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs. They provide:

- Gravesite or Columbarium Niche
- Pre-placed Grave liner (Standard Size)
- Headstone/Niche Cover
- Perpetual Care
- Veteran Cost is \$0 all burial options
- Spouse/Eligible Dependent cost is \$745 (all burial options)

**Pre-Registration** -- Pre-registration ensures your eligibility in advance and eliminates delays in providing military documents to the cemetery. [Pre-registration applications](#) are available at the cemetery office or at your local County Veterans Service Office (CVSO). Contact your CVSO at [www.macvso.org](http://www.macvso.org) or by calling 1-888-LinkVet (546-5838) MDVA's one-stop customer service line for all Minnesota Veterans and their families.

**Burial Arrangements** -- The funeral director or the next of kin makes burial arrangements for an eligible Veteran, spouse or dependent at the time of need by contacting the Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery. A spouse or dependent is buried based upon the eligibility of the Veteran. To establish the Veteran's eligibility, a copy of the Veteran's military discharge document or a DD214 must be provided. If these documents are not available, the cemetery must be provided with sufficient military information to allow the cemetery to access federal U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and/or military records to establish eligibility. The cemetery staff will set a tentative date for the committal service pending verification of service and character of discharge, and will notify the applicant when the committal service is scheduled. The proposed date and time will be approved only when the cemetery verifies eligibility and confirms the arrangements.

**Floral Policies** -- Fresh cut flowers may be placed on graves at any time. Temporary containers and water are provided in locations around the main cemetery drive. Floral items will be removed from graves by cemetery personnel as soon as they become faded or unsightly. Artificial flowers may be placed on graves during the periods specified on the floral regulation signs located around the main cemetery drive. Plantings, statues, vigil lights, breakable objects of any nature and any other type of commemorative items are not permitted on the graves. [Full floral policy available here.](#)

**Committal Services** -- The cemetery can do seven committal services per day, Monday - Friday, on a first-come first served basis, every hour from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. (3 p.m. is cremation only). Committal services are limited to 20 minutes. All committal services should be brief and need to start on the hour at the scheduled time. Families who extend their services can greatly affect others who have reserved the following time. All committal services are held in the committal service building rather than at the actual gravesite because of burial rates and operational considerations. This ensures the family's safety and provides a fitting location for [military honors](#) and the ability of

our staff to continue cemetery operations. The remains are removed from the committal service building for burial following the family's departure and are never left unattended by cemetery staff. Clergy services and other arrangements are the responsibility of the family or family representative. These arrangements are normally coordinated through the chosen funeral director.

**Casket** -- A pre-placed grave liner will be provided, by the cemetery, for all casket burials. Traditional gravesites are available for individuals who choose to purchase a sealed burial vault from their chosen funeral director.

**Cremation (In-ground)** -- In-ground cremation gravesites provide a traditional burial option for cremated remains. In-ground cremation gravesites are marked with an upright granite headstone. The choice for the placement of cremated remains either in-ground or above-ground will need to be determined by the next-of-kin.

**Cremation (Columbarium)** -- The columbarium provides an above-ground option for cremated remains. Columbarium niches are marked with a granite niche cover. The choice for the placement of cremated remains either in-ground or above-ground will need to be determined by the next-of-kin.

#### Contact Information

- **Hours of Operation:** Both cemetery offices are open from 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday - Friday (closed on State Holidays). Visitors may visit the cemetery grounds during daylight hours, seven days per week.
- **Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery - Little Falls:** 15550 Hwy 115. Little Falls, MN 56345 Phone: (320) 616-2527 FAX: (320) 616-2529 Email: [info.cemlf@state.mn.us](mailto:info.cemlf@state.mn.us).



- **Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery - Preston:** 715 Highway 52, Preston, MN 55965 Phone: (507) 765-7320 Fax: (507) 765-3793 Email: [Info.CemPR@state.mn.us](mailto:Info.CemPR@state.mn.us).



- **Hours:** Both cemetery offices are open from 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday - Friday (closed on State Holidays). Visitors may visit the cemetery grounds during daylight hours, seven days per week.

### **Bronze Star Grave Markers**

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs offers bronze stars to mark the grave site of any veteran buried in the state, where permitted. Bronze Star Markers are available through your local county veterans service officer.

### **Services Program**

The Department of Veterans Affairs Services Program provides claims representation and fiduciary guardianship services.

### **Veterans claims Advocacy**

Staff at our Veterans Claims Offices, located at Fort Snelling and at Fargo/Moorhead, act as advocates for veterans and their dependents who are trying to get their benefits from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (the VA). The staff will assist and represent veterans, their dependents, and survivors with applications for compensation, pension, home loans, educational, and medical treatment. The offices also provide environmental hazards information and assistance (Agent Orange issues, for example). See your County Veterans Service Officer to request this representation.

### **Discharge Certificates**

Veterans' benefits require that applicants provide a copy of their form DD 214 or discharge record, which is evidence of their veteran status. This is an important document and must be safeguarded. If you do not have a copy of your DD 214, contact your County Veterans Service Officer for assistance in obtaining it. If you have a copy of your DD 214 it is recommended that it be recorded in your county courthouse, or at the very least be sure to keep it in a safe place and inform a family member or trusted individual of its location.

Visit the Minnesota Department of Veterans Services website <http://mn.gov/mdva> for contact information and benefits assistance.

[Source: <http://www.military.com/benefits/veteran-benefits/minnesota-state-veterans-benefits> AUG 2017 ++]

## **Military Discounts in Minnesota**

1. MVDC has a list of close to 6,700 locations in Minnesota that have discounts for military personnel or veterans. Similar to businesses, the state of Minnesota provides discounts for its veterans and military population.

2. State of Minnesota discounts for veterans and military personnel

3. Veterans Designation on drivers license: Yes

#### **4. Discounted Fees and Taxes**

- Free high school transcripts provided to veterans
- Returning veterans may participate in a special military hunt at Camp Ripley.
- Free small game and fishing license for 24 months following deployment
- Free fishing and game licenses for 100% service connected disabled veterans
- Discounted license plates based upon the conflict you served in
- \$750 tax credit for retirees or 100% service connected disabled veterans. Must meet income qualifications

#### **5. Education Discounts**

Education Benefit for Minnesota Veterans: Educational benefits are provided in the form of a one-time grant to Veterans who have exhausted their federal benefits, and to war orphans of Veterans who died as a result of a service

connected injury or disease. Your County Veteran Service Officer can assist you in applying for these education benefits.

Eligibility: To be eligible, the applicant must meet the following criteria:

- Must have served for at least 181 consecutive days of active military service and have been separated from active duty under honorable conditions. The length of service requirement does not apply if active service was terminated earlier by reason of disability incurred while serving on active duty. The disability must be recognized and rated by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).
- The Veteran shall have been a resident of the State of Minnesota at the time of entry into the Armed Forces, and for six months immediately preceding entry.
- The Veteran must be a citizen of the United States and a current resident of Minnesota.
- The Veteran must have completely exhausted his/her federal educational benefits prior to the delimiting date or within the eligibility period during which benefits were available. Veterans who have allowed their educational benefits to expire without completely using them do not qualify for this program.

Minnesota National Guard Tuition and Textbook Reimbursement: The National Guard Tuition and Textbook Reimbursement Program reimburses Minnesota Guard member up to 100% of the tuition cost at any VA approved school. The maximum benefit is 100% of the undergraduate per credit rate at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities Campus.

- Eligibility: Minnesota National Guard members.

War Orphan Education Program: This program serves children of Minnesota Veterans who died while on active duty military service or as a result of injuries or disease incurred while on active duty military service. Children are eligible for "tuition free status" at any state college level institution except the University of Minnesota. In addition, \$750.00 per year is available for school related expenses.

- Eligibility: The deceased Veteran parent must have been a resident at the time of entry into active duty military service and the dependent child must have been a resident for two years immediately prior to application.

State Tuition Reimbursement (STR): Minnesota State Tuition Reimbursement (STR) will pay for 100% of your tuition (not including student fees) up to the undergraduate rate at the University of Minnesota for 144 semester credits. This benefit is available to current members of the Minnesota Army and Air National Guard and may be used in conjunction with the GI Bill and Federal Tuition Assistance (again, FTA and STR can be combined but only to equal 100% of tuition). This benefit is paid to the military member after a final grade is received for the course. Submission of required materials, including tuition fee statement and semester grade report, goes through the designated unit official.

- Eligibility: Minnesota National Guard members.

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

[Source: <http://militaryandveteransdiscounts.com/location/minnesota.html> Aug 2017 ++]