

Louisiana State Veteran's Benefits

April 2019



LDVA
LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

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

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

VETERAN HOUSING PROGRAMS

Louisiana War Veterans Homes

The Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs operates five War Veterans Homes. These homes, located in Reserve, Monroe, Bossier City, Jackson, and Jennings provide nursing care. For admission to a Louisiana State Veterans Home, a veteran must be a resident of the state of Louisiana. State residence is not mandatory if the applicant is referred from an in-state United States Department of Veterans' Affairs Medical Center or by a Louisiana Department of Veterans' Affairs Veterans' Assistance Counselor. The applicant must agree to abide by all rules and regulations governing the Home. Applicants who have

income will be expected to pay for their care as is set forth in the care and maintenance schedule adopted for governing the Home residents. Spouses and Gold Star parents are eligible if they meet basic qualifying criteria. The applicant must undergo an examination to ascertain whether he/she meets the criteria for admission to the Home. Each home offers a variety of services including:

- Long-and short-term care.
- Rehabilitative therapies.
- Alzheimer's and Intermediate care.
- Skilled Nursing.
- Mental Health services.
- Centralized Pharmacy Services and more

Veterans, their spouses and Gold Star parents are eligible for admission into the Veterans Homes if they are deemed to meet basic qualifying criteria. For additional info go to:

- Go to www.vetaffairs.la.gov/Portals/1/PageContent_Documents/Veterans%20Homes/LDVA-VeteranHome_AdmissionRequirements.pdf for a list of Admission Requirements. You can also call 1-877-GEAUX-VA.
- Go to <http://www.vetaffairs.la.gov/Portals/1/LDVA%20Veterans%20Homes%20FAQ.pdf> for frequently asked questions about admission and services.
- To download an application for residency in the LDVA Veterans Homes system go to http://www.vetaffairs.la.gov/Portals/1/PageContent_Documents/Veterans%20Homes/LDVA%20AppAdmiss%202015.pdf

Bossier City



3130 Arthur Ray Teague Pkwy Bossier City, LA 71112 Tel: (318) 741-2763/2783F

This 156-bed state facility opened its doors to the first resident on April 9, 2007. Located on 17 pristine acres in Bossier City, Louisiana, the facility has a fishing pond with pier, a large chapel, and an activities building complete with a sports and game lounge. The facility has an outstanding medical team that provides complete medical care including skilled nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, and Alzheimer's/Dementia care. Ambulatory and wheelchair transportation is also provided for medical appointments to the Overton Brooks VA Medical Center Go to

<http://www.vetaffairs.la.gov/VeteransHomes/BossierCityHome/BossierCityNews.aspx> to View the NW LA War Veterans Home's 2014-2019 Strategic Plan

For information regarding admission to this facility, contact: Rene' Belt, MSW, LCSW Social Services Director Phone: (318) 741-2763 ext. 138 Email: Rene.Belt@vetaffairs.la.gov. For information regarding activities and volunteer opportunities, contact: Lowrane Johns, Activities Director, Phone: (318)741-2763 ext. 127 Email: Lowrane.Johns@vetaffairs.la.gov.

Jackson



4739 Hwy 10, Jackson, LA 70748

This 161 bed facility is located on 82 serene acres and offers a variety of amenities including two fishing ponds, a greenhouse, a nature trail, and a chapel. The staff provides complete medical care including skilled nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, Alzheimer/Dementia care, and transportation services. Go to <https://www.vetaffairs.la.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Jackson-LVH-Strategic-Plan.pdf> to view the LA Veterans Home's 2017-2022 Strategic Plan.

Point of Contact is Ms. Ashlyn Hilburn, Administrator, Phone: (225) 634-5265, Fax: (225) 634-4057, Email: ashlyn.hilburn@la.gov.

Jennings



1610 Evangeline Rd, Jennings, LA 70546

This 156 bed facility opened on November 14, 2004 and is located on 40 majestic acres in Jennings, Louisiana. Features include a 4½ acre fishing lake with pier, large chapel and an activities building complete with a sports and game lounge and provides complete medical care including skilled nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, Alzheimer/Dementia care, and transportation services. Go to <https://www.vetaffairs.la.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/SWL VH-Strategic-Plan.pdf> to View the SW LA Veterans Home's 2017-2022 Strategic Plan.

Point of contact is Matt Duhon, Administrator, Telephone: (337) 824-2829/2581F E-Mail: matt.duhon@vetaffairs.la.gov "or" Joni Frey, Admissions Coordinator, Phone: (337) 824-2829 ext. 113, Email: joni.frey@la.gov.

Monroe



6700 Hwy 165 North, Monroe, LA 71203

This 156 bed facility opened on December 3, 1996 and is located on a 20 acre pecan orchard adjacent to Bayou DeSaird in the northern area of Monroe, Louisiana. It features a fishing pier, chapel, and huge picnic area. The facility provides complete medical care including an 10 bed Medicare Skilled Nursing Unit, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, a Specialty Alzheimer/Dementia Care Unit, and transportation services for medical appointments. Our Recreation Department schedules numerous daily, in-facility activities as well as several monthly, off-site activities. Strategic Plan may be viewed at www.vetaffairs.la.gov/VeteransHomes/MonroeHome/MonroeNews.aspx.

Point of contact is Ms. Marquita Mihaliak, Administrator, Phone: (318) 362-4206 Fax: (318) 362-4241, E-Mail: <mailto:marquita.mihaliak@vetaffairs.la.gov>.

Reserve



4080 W. Airline Hwy., Reserve, LA 70084

This 156 bed facility opened on June 4, 2007 and is located on 20 acres in Reserve, Louisiana. Only 27 miles from New Orleans, it is conveniently located next to the St. John's Parish Senior Citizens Center and the VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic. The facility offers a variety of amenities including a fishing lake and a large chapel, in addition to complete medical care including skilled nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, Alzheimer/Dementia care, and transportation services. To view the SE LA Veterans Home's 2017-2022 Strategic Plan go to <https://www.vetaffairs.la.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Reserve-SELVH.pdf>

Point of contact is Mr. Brian Fremin, Phone: (985) 479-4080/4206 Fax: (985) 479-4090, E-Mail: <mailto:brian.fremin@vetaffairs.la.gov>.

VETERAN FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Income Tax

Up to \$30,000 active-duty pay is tax-free if stationed out-of-state for 120 consecutive days or more. Retired military pay is not taxed.

Combat Pay Exception

Military pay that is exempt from federal taxation, such as combat pay or hazardous duty pay, is also exempt from Louisiana state taxation.

Military Family Assistance Fund (MFA)

MFA was established in 2005 to help members of Louisiana National Guard and Louisiana Military Reserves and their Families address financial hardships they may encounter when they are placed on active-duty status. MFA can pay for a variety of items for those who qualify, such as food, housing, medical expenses, auto repair, and more. MFA is funded by private donations from individuals and corporations. All donations are tax deductible. MFA can pay up to \$10,000 for one claim per active-duty order in a twelve (12) month period.

To qualify for assistance from the MFA Fund, Veterans and activated military applicants must meet certain minimum active-duty service requirements, and have been honorably discharged. Immediate family members of eligible Veterans and activated military personnel may also qualify. Completed applications must include all supporting documents requested on the form.

To apply go online to <https://www.vetaffairs.la.gov/benefit/military-family-assistance-fund>, For more information, you may call toll free 1-877-432-8982

Property Tax Exemption

The property tax for Veterans rated with 50% or greater disability is frozen at the current rate, this also applies to spouses of deceased disabled Veterans. There are income limits and other qualifications, check with your local assessor's office to see if it is available in your parish. Veterans with 100% unemployability or totally disabled as well as their surviving spouses qualify for a higher deduction.

LA National Guard Death and Disability Benefit

Louisiana National guardsmen suffering a permanent and total disability while on federal or state active duty on or after September 11, 2001, or the beneficiary of record of those killed in action may qualify for a \$250,000 death or \$100,000 disability benefit from the State of Louisiana. Certain restrictions apply. For more information contact Vanessa Melancon, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Benefits, Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs (225) 219-5008 or vanessa.melancon@la.gov.

EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

Transfer of Military Skills to Civilian Employment

Individuals with military training and experience can get a corresponding professional license or certification if they had a military occupational specialty that qualified them for that license.

State Employment

Louisiana state and city civil service departments award a five point preference to honorably discharged veterans and ten point preference to honorably discharged service-connected disabled veterans. Spouses of veterans who are rated VA unemployable as well as un-remarried widows of deceased veterans and Gold Star parents are also eligible for this preference. Some restrictions apply for eligibility

Military Service Relief Act

Revised Statutes 29:401-425 relative to military and veterans affairs provide for employers compensation, leave status, retirement credit, life, health and accident insurance coverage, re-employment rights upon release from military service, prohibits against academic penalties, deferral of state income taxes, validation of professional and occupational licenses, and protection of any vacancy in office held by an Elected or Appointed Official, for citizens of Louisiana called to military service in the reserve components of the Armed Forces of the United States. The district court in which the state or its political subdivision exercises authority or conducts its business shall have jurisdiction to hear action to enforce the Act.

Veterans Civil Service Preference (Employment Preference)

Article X, of the Louisiana Constitution provides a five-point preference in original appointments to persons honorably discharged from the Armed Forces of the United States who served between the following dates of wartime service:

- April 6, 1917, through November 11, 1918
- September 27, 1940, through July 25, 1947
- June 25 1950, through January 31, 1955
- July 1, 1958, through May 7, 1975
- August 2, 1990, though, date to be determine (must have been awarded the Southwest Asia Medal)
- Or in a peacetime campaign or expedition if a campaign badge or expeditionary medal is authorized.

Ten points preference in original appointments are accorded each honorable discharged veteran who served in either war or peacetime and has one or more service connected disabilities established with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Veterans preference also extends to layoffs over other employees of equal lengths of service and efficiency ratings.

Licensing and Certification

Open new doors to employment by getting licensed or certified as a mechanic, medical technician, attorney, or other professional position. Often required for work in certain fields, these tests may be eligible for GI Bill reimbursement. Eligibility requirements apply. To apply visit your local Veterans Assistance Counselor (VAC) who can be found at <https://www.vetaffairs.la.gov/locations>.

LAVETBIZ

This is a business initiative established to provide additional opportunities for Louisiana based Veteran and service-connected disabled Veteran-owned small business owners when they seek to work with the State of Louisiana. LAVETBIZ is supported by compliance mandates which are enforced through the Louisiana Division of Administration. To learn more about this initiative refer to <https://www.vetaffairs.la.gov/benefit/lavetbiz>.

Hero2Hired

Hero2Hired assists unemployed Reserve Component Servicemembers with job placement. For more information, please visit: www.H2H.jobs

Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment

This program helps Veterans with service-connected disabilities prepare for, find, and keep jobs. Certain qualifications apply. For more information, please visit: www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab.

Louisiana Business and Career Solution Centers

The Louisiana Workforce Commission operates local centers across the state to assist Veterans in finding employment and making career choices, including apprenticeship programs. To learn more visit your local VAC who can be found at <https://www.vetaffairs.la.gov/locations>.

EDUCATION BENEFITS

Louisiana Title 29 Dependents Educational Assistance

Louisiana offers education assistance to surviving spouses of deceased veterans as well as children of 90 percent or greater disabled veterans and children of 100 percent disabled and unemployable veterans. The deceased veteran must have been a resident of Louisiana for at least 12 months immediately preceding entry into service. The living veteran must have lived in the state for at least 24 months prior to the child being admitted into the program. The surviving spouse has 10 years to use the benefit, the child must be between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five to be eligible. To apply visit your local VAC. Go to <https://www.vetaffairs.la.gov/locations> to find your nearest LDVA Veterans Parish Service Office.

Louisiana In-State Tuition Status

In-state tuition status is granted to Veterans and active-duty military who seek to attend any Louisiana public college or university. Eligibility requirements apply. To apply visit your local Veterans Assistance Counselor (VAC) who can be found at <https://www.vetaffairs.la.gov/locations>.

National Guard Tuition

Members are exempt from tuition at any state-funded college, university, or vocational/technical school for five years or a bachelor's degree, whichever comes first.

VA Work Study Program

This program is available to qualifying Veterans or their dependents who are utilizing VA education benefits and are currently enrolled as full-time students. For more information on the work study program www.benefits.va.gov/gibill . To apply visit your local Veterans Assistance Counselor (VAC) who can be found at <https://www.vetaffairs.la.gov/locations>.

Military Training Towards Education/Certification Credits

Louisiana recognizes that the skills learned during military training can often apply to the civilian workforce. As such, Act 276 of the 2012 Regular Legislative Session states that individuals with military training and experience will be granted civilian professional licensure and/or certification when the Servicemember has been awarded a military occupational specialty and performance in that specialty that is at a level equal to or exceeding the requirements for said license and/or certification. Provisions apply. Refer to <https://www.vetaffairs.la.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/VA-Law-191-Education-College-Credits.pdf> to read the official digest for this statute. To apply visit your local Veterans assistance Counselor (VAC) who can be found at <https://www.vetaffairs.la.gov/locations>.

Survivors and Dependents Education (Chapter 35)

Provides education and training opportunities to dependents of Veterans who are permanently and totally disabled due to a service-related condition or who died while on active duty or as a result of a service-related condition. Eligibility requirements apply. To apply visit your local VAC who can be found at <https://www.vetaffairs.la.gov/locations>.

Veterans Educational Assistance Program (VEAP)

VEAP may be used for degree and certificate programs, flight training, apprenticeship and/or on-the-job-training, correspondence courses, remedial deficiency and refresher courses. Eligibility requirements apply. To apply visit your local VAC who can be found at <https://www.vetaffairs.la.gov/locations>.

Licensing and Certification

Open new doors to employment by getting licensed or certified as a mechanic, medical technician, attorney, or other professional position. Often required for work in certain fields, these tests may be eligible for GI Bill reimbursement. Eligibility requirements apply. To apply visit your local VAC who can be found at <https://www.vetaffairs.la.gov/locations>.

Veteran GI Bill Apprenticeship and OJT Program

Offers an alternative way to use GI Bill education and training benefits. Eligibility requirements apply. To apply visit your local VAC who can be found at <https://www.vetaffairs.la.gov/locations>.

Montgomery GI Bill

VA educational benefits may be used while the Servicemember is on active duty or after the Servicemember's separation from active duty with a fully honorable military discharge. Eligibility requirements apply. To apply visit your local VAC who can be found at <https://www.vetaffairs.la.gov/locations>.

Yellow Ribbon GI Bill Education Enhancement Program

May assist eligible individuals with payment of their tuition and fees in instances where costs exceed the in-state tuition charges at a public institution or the national maximum payable at private and foreign institutions. Eligibility requirements apply. To apply visit your local VAC who can be found at <https://www.vetaffairs.la.gov/locations>.

Post 9/11 GI Bill

Education benefit program for Servicemembers and Veterans who served on active duty after September 10, 2001. Benefits are payable for training pursued on or after August 1, 2009. No payments can be made under this program for training pursued before that date. Eligibility requirements apply. To apply visit your local VAC who can be found at <https://www.vetaffairs.la.gov/locations>.

Recreation Benefits

Free Hunting/Fishing Licenses for Disabled Veterans

Disabled veterans classified with a service connected permanent disability, rated 50% or higher and who are Louisiana residents can get hunting and fishing licenses free of charge.

Active Duty Military Hunting & Fishing Licenses

Active duty members and their dependents may buy hunting and fishing licenses at the resident rate.

Free and Discounted Admission to State Parks

Disabled veterans, as well as everyone in the same vehicle as them, are exempt from paying the day-use entrance fee to any Louisiana state park. Active duty members plus one additional family member get half off admission to state parks.

OTHER STATE VETERAN BENEFITS

Discounts on Driver's License or ID Fees

Veterans may qualify for special discounts or waivers on fees for LA Driver's Licenses and ID's. The below Specialty Plates can be purchased by the military community at locations identified on http://dpsweb.dps.louisiana.gov/OMV_Welcome.nsf/2a656c057052b310862575f300653b85/f6ebae290b4b797e862575f300631507?OpenDocument

Active Duty



Awards



Veteran





Reserves



Retired



Korea





Desert Storm



Vietnam





World War II



Louisiana Veterans Honor Medal Program

The Louisiana Veterans Honor Medal was established in 2008 as a way to honor, recognize and thank Louisiana Veterans for their honorable military service. The Medal is available for all Louisiana Veterans who were honorably discharged and to the families of those who were killed in action. The Medal comes with ribbons to distinguish honorable service, Purple Heart, Prisoner of War, and Killed in Action.

Louisiana Veterans Honor Medal applications can be submitted using the online application at <https://www.vetaffairs.la.gov/benefit/louisiana-veterans-honor-medal> or by downloading the hard copy at <https://www.vetaffairs.la.gov/wp-content/uploads/Honor-Medals-App-NEW.pdf> For more information, call toll free at 1-877-432-8982.

Louisiana Burials

The Louisiana Department of Veteran Affairs (LDVA) Veterans Cemetery Program has grown in recent years and continues to expand to serve the needs of Louisiana's Veterans and their families. LDVA Veterans Cemeteries are made possible with grants through the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs,

which provide 100% funding for all aspects of initial planning and construction. LDVA follows eligibility standards as set by the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs. In February 2012, LDVA proudly added the Central Louisiana Veterans Cemetery in Leesville to the LDVA Cemetery Program, joining the Northwest Louisiana Veterans Cemetery which had been established in Keithville in 2007. LDVA's third cemetery opened in June of 2014. The Southeast Louisiana Veterans Cemetery is located just outside the main gates of the Louisiana National Guard's Camp Villere in Slidell. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs recently awarded a construction grant to LDVA to build a fourth Louisiana Veterans Cemetery in Rayville, Louisiana. The cemetery will be named the Northeast Louisiana Veterans Cemetery and construction will depend on the availability of funding in the 2014 U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs budget.



LDVA Cemeteries offer well maintained grounds, professional, courteous staff, covered shelter for committal service, Avenue of flags displayed on special holidays, and Opportunities for community and Veteran volunteers. Refer to the following for grave locators, interment eligibility, and interment applications:

- A grave locator is also available online at <http://gravelocator.cem.va.gov>. Additionally, each LDVA Veterans Cemetery features an Administrative Building with a computerized grave locator.
- Application for Interment: LDVA Cemetery Interment Applications can be downloaded at [http://www.vetaffairs.la.gov/Portals/1/PageContent_Documents/Cemeteries/LDVA%20Uniform%20Cemetery%20Interment%202014%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.vetaffairs.la.gov/Portals/1/PageContent_Documents/Cemeteries/LDVA%20Uniform%20Cemetery%20Interment%202014%20(2).pdf)
- Request to Determine Eligibility For Interment: Download the request form at <http://www.vetaffairs.la.gov/Portals/1/LDVA%20Eligibility%20Interment%202014.pdf>

Veterans have a choice of burial in the following State and National cemeteries:

State

- Northwest Louisiana Veterans Cemetery, 7970 Mike Clark Road, Keithville, LA 71047 Tel: (318) 925-0612 or Email nlvc@la.gov.
- Central Louisiana Veterans Cemetery, 3348 University Parkway, Leesville, LA 71446 Tel: (337) 238-6405 or Email clvc@la.gov.
- Southeast Louisiana Veterans Cemetery, 34888 Grantham College Road (Adjacent to Camp Villere), Slidell, LA 70460 Tel: (985) 646-6458 Fax: 985-646-6481 Ted Krumm: ted.krumm@la.gov.

- Northeast Louisiana Veterans Cemetery, 2413 Hwy. 425, Rayville, LA 71269 Timothy Johnson, Director Phone: 318-728-4346 FAX: 318-728-5921

National

- Alexandria National Cemetery - Visitation Only (no new interments), 209 E. Shamrock Ave., Pineville, LA 71360. Phone: 601-445-4981 FAX: 601-445-8815
- Baton Rouge National Cemetery - Visitation Only (no new interments), 220 North 19th Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70806. Phone: 225-654-1988 FAX: 225-654-1989
- Port Hudson National Cemetery (cremation only) , 20978 Port Hickey Road, Zachary, LA 70791 Tel: (225) 654-1988 FAX: 225-654-1989
- Louisiana National Cemetery, 303 W. Mount Pleasant Road, Zachary, LA 70791 Phone: 225-654-1988 FAX: 225-654-1989

For more information about LDVA Veterans Cemeteries, call 1-877-GEAUX-VA (1-877-432-8982).

Visit the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs website <http://vetaffairs.la.gov> for contact information and benefits assistance. [Source: <http://www.military.com/benefits/veteran-state-benefits/louisiana-state-veterans-benefits.html> | APR 2019 ++]