

South Dakota State Veteran's Benefits



January 2020

The state of South Dakota provides benefits to veterans and active duty personnel. This section offers a brief description of each of the following ones:

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

During World War II, recognizing the need for veterans' assistance in the state, Governor M. Q. Sharpe called a special session of the State Legislature on July 10, 1944, to establish the South Dakota State Veterans Department and the Veterans Commission. Prior to this time, there existed what was described as a 'mere gesture' towards veterans' assistance. This gesture was in the form of a single contact officer whose total reimbursement was \$2,500 per year for salary and all expenses. The position of Contact Officer is believed to have existed from about 1923 until the establishment of the Department in 1944.

The legislation establishing the Veterans Department and the Commission included authority for counties to employ County Veterans Service Officers (CVSO). The law, however, did not include any requirements as to salary, term of office, or standards of performance. Many of the original CVSO's were individuals who had served voluntarily as Post Service Officers for various veterans organizations and, while they were dedicated in their efforts, meager salaries provided little incentive toward improvement. Through the years new legislation implemented the following changes:

- Requirement that each county must employ, or join with another county in employing, a CVSO;
- Supplemental salary assistance from the state for counties who maintain certain salary and service standards,
- Authorization for the tribes to hire their own Tribal Veterans Service Officer (TVSO).

Legislation enacted in 1973 renamed the former Veterans Department to the Division of Veterans Affairs and placed it within the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs. In 2011, by Executive Order, Governor Dennis Daugaard created a separate Department of Veterans Affairs. Areas of service within the Department include: the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home in Hot Springs, the claims office in Sioux Falls, and the field staff and education staff in Pierre. SDDVA representatives can be contacted at the office in Sioux Falls – phone # (605) 333-6869 or in Pierre – phone # (605) 773-3269.

The mission of the Department is to ensure that all veterans, and their eligible family members, understand and receive all the benefits, support, care and recognition that were earned through the veteran's service to our nation, by administering all current programs and meeting their needs in the future.

The Field Staff is charged with training and assisting the network of County & Tribal Service Officers in veteran's benefits and the origination and development of well-grounded claims for submission to the US Department of Veterans Affairs. The Claims Office does the hands-on processing and representation of the claims at the Regional Office in Sioux Falls. The Education Representatives are responsible for the approval and supervision of programs under the G.I. Bill. South Dakota's Veterans Home provides person-centered care designed and delivered according to the individual needs of each resident. VA operates a 24/7 facility that provides a combination of skilled nursing care, special care units for dementia and Alzheimer's, domiciliary care, rehabilitation services, recreational therapy, and work therapy programs.

Currently, South Dakota has 58 County VSO's serving the 66 counties in South Dakota and they now have six Tribal VSOs. At <http://www.nd.gov/veterans/service-officers/county> can be found who they are and their contact information. Since the original legislation in 1944, the network of County & Tribal Veterans Service Officers and SDDVA personnel have assisted thousands of South Dakota veterans, and their family members, with receiving the benefits that were earned through service to our country, and VA's job is nowhere near done. World events over the last several years have led to a whole new generation of veterans who will need their assistance for years to come. These young men and women were raised in a much faster paced and technologically advanced environment than their fathers and grandfathers from previous wars and their needs and expectations are much different from those who served before them. Providing the professional level of service they will expect, well into the 21st century, is a challenge that VA's entire network must accept and be prepared for.

Housing

State Veterans Home

The Dakota Territorial Legislature met in February of 1889. While in session, they passed a bill establishing the Dakota Soldiers' Home to be located in Hot Springs, South Dakota. The bill carried an appropriation of \$45,000 for construction. The object of the Home was to provide the care and subsistence for veterans and their wives and widows who meet eligibility requirements for admission to the Home. The cornerstone of the first building was placed on November 11, 1889. This building remains in service and houses the Home's administrative offices and recreational facilities.

On October 3, 1998, Governor William J. Janklow and Major General Philip Killey dedicated the South Dakota Veterans Home to Medal of Honor Recipient "Michael J. Fitzmaurice." Michael received the Medal of Honor for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity of action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as a Specialist Four, United States Army, Troop D, 2nd Squadron, 17th Cavalry, 101st Airborne Division at Khe Sanh, Republic of Vietnam, March 23, 1971.

In 2010 staff began working with federal and state officials to secure funding to construct a new state veterans home. Building Four was dismantled in 2013 and a groundbreaking ceremony was held in September of 2013 to construct the new home. In January of 2016 residents were moved into the new home and a groundbreaking ceremony was held in March. The facility at 2500 Minnekahta Avenue, Hot Springs, SD 57747 is located at the southern edge of the beautiful Black Hills in western South Dakota. It sits on a hill overlooking downtown Hot Springs, facing the Veterans Affairs Medical Center on the opposite hill. Hot Springs is twelve miles south of Wind Cave National Park, the home of deer, antelope, buffalo and elk. It is twelve miles north of Lake Angostura, a manmade prairie lake providing excellent boating and fishing, and three miles from Cold Brook Canyon, a trout fishing location.



The newly designed Michael J. Fitzmaurice South Dakota Veteran's Home is a 133,000-square-foot stacked two-story building with a lower level walkout main entrance. The 100-bed

facility is used to serve South Dakota veterans and will contain 76 skilled nursing beds on the main level and 24 non-skilled living beds on the upper level. The living spaces are broken into eight neighborhoods housed in eight wings. Each neighborhood includes a living room, dining room and kitchen area that provide a home-like environment to the 12-13 occupants housed in each neighborhood. The design incorporates residential type furnishings and finishes, and warm, welcoming colors to give the spaces a more comforting feel.

The facility contains energy efficient heating and cooling systems, low flow-fixtures to reduce water consumption, as well as many windows to bring natural light to the interior spaces. The biomass boiler system uses local wood chips as a fuel source which will reduce the annual fuel cost. In January of 2016 residents were moved into the new home and a groundbreaking ceremony was held in March. The new building will joins about 50 remaining units from the former setup. To obtain information on the home call (605) 745-5127 or email Larry.Wilcox@state.sd.us.

The mission of the home is to provide a quality living environment, along with adequate medical support, in an independent living and long-term care setting for eligible South Dakota veterans and their spouses, widows, or widowers; and, to provide administration, maintenance, management, medical care, and other services necessary to meet or exceed state and federal requirements.

At <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/veteranshome/Application%20policy2019.pdf> can be found the latest guideline for admission. To qualify you must be a resident of South Dakota, be an honorably discharged Veteran or the spouse or widow of such a Veteran, be ambulatory and be able to care for self and living area. The home is not staffed for, and does not receive aid for veterans from the Veterans Administration in an assisted living community. The costs for Residential Living and Nursing Care at the home are as follows:

- a. Care and maintenance for RLS residents with total assets below \$50,000 is 50% of net income for individuals and 55% of net income for couples.
- b. Additional monthly charges apply incrementally for assets over \$10,000. Accountable assets are any item that has a determined value and is owned solely by the applicant or spouse, owned jointly with spouse, or owned jointly with others, and must be spent down or liquidated and used toward payment of the resident's care and maintenance. Non-accountable Assets are those items of determined value that are owned solely by the applicant or spouse, or owned jointly with spouse, jointly with others or jointly by spouse and others and will not be spent down or liquidated and used toward payment of residents' care and maintenance. The following are considered non-accountable assets:
 - The primary residence if the spouse is still living in it. However, if the property is sold, and a portion or all the proceeds from the sale are not reinvested in a primary residence, any income earned from the investment of any or all the proceeds will be counted as income
 - All the household effects there in

- One automobile (one for resident, one for spouse)
- c. RLS residents with total assets over \$50,000 are required to pay actual cost of care. In 2019 this was \$109.34 per day per person. Veterans who agree to pay actual cost of care are not required to provide 3 months of bank statements or 3 years income tax returns as requested in the application packet. All other financial information requested in the application packet is required for the purpose of asset verification.
 - d. For nursing care applicants must have Medicare A, B and D or apply for these Medicare programs at the next available opportunity. An applicant shall agree that when the applicant's available resources are insufficient to pay for the entire cost of care or maintenance on the current basis, he or she will apply for the maximum of every benefit or assistance program for which the applicant or resident may be eligible. This includes, but is not limited to, Medicaid and VA benefits. In 2019 the cost for Nursing Care at the Home was \$284.29 per day.

Fees cover room and 3 meals per day, medical care, laundry, medication, activities, social services, and pastoral care. Services available at the home include:

- **Complete Medical Services.** A local physician comes to the Veterans Home regularly and is on call for other medical services. The nursing staff of the Nursing Care Unit, continuously supervised by Registered Nurses, provides whirlpool baths, assistance in activities in daily living, supervised medications, and other personal services.
- **Pharmacy Services.** Prescribed medications are available to members without extra charge at the Veterans Home pharmacy operated by the facility's registered pharmacist.
- **Therapy Provided by Trained Staff.** Physical therapy and occupational therapy departments work toward the fullest possible rehabilitation of every resident. The staff achieves restoration of targeted functions through supervised exercise and training, using advanced appropriate techniques and equipment. Activities are individualized to achieve optimal results. The therapy staff offers a broad range of intensive therapeutic services designed to maximize the functional capabilities of our residents. Our goal is to enable them to reach their highest level of independence as quickly as possible.
- **24-Hour Professional Nursing Team Care.** Our excellent, highly trained staff provides specialized care and treatment for our residents. The plan of care that is created for implementation for each resident addresses the medical, dietary, social and spiritual needs of the resident.
- **Planned, Supervised Recreational Programs.** Recreational activities are based on each resident's personal lifestyle. We promote the concept of a community where a diverse number of veterans can maintain the lifestyles to which they are accustomed. Areas are available for socializing and engaging in hobbies. Facilities and equipment are available for independent activities such as craft work, bingo, billiards and reading. Click on the activities button to see a detailed list of activities.

- **Meals.** Nutritious meals are prepared under the watchful eye of a professional food service manager and a clinical dietitian. Therapeutic diets are created to meet the assessed needs of each resident.
- **Social Services.** A staff of certified professionals from the Department of Social Services and the Department of Labor are located on the campus and are available for counseling and guidance
- **Spiritual Guidance.** The Chaplain conducts church services, hymn services, Bible study, funerals and other religious activities. Catholic and Protestant services are held weekly with additional services on special holidays. The Chaplain and a social worker are available for counseling services.
- **Transportation Services.** Vans and buses transport residents to local community activities. Van transportation for residents is scheduled to downtown Hot Springs.
- **Veterans Service Technician.** Professionally trained staff member to assist resident veterans with benefit issues.

Applications and assistance can be obtained by calling or visiting your Tribal/County Veterans Service Officer (refer to <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov/veteransserviceofficers/locatevso.aspx> to locate) or by contacting/visiting the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home. Once approved, if there is not an apartment available, there a waiting list for each level of care. Smoking and pets are prohibited on campus grounds. Residents are allowed one vehicle and two storage totes for off season clothing and extra items. For more information, contact your County/Tribal VSO or check out <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov/veteranshome/Features.aspx> .

Financial Assistance

Property Tax Exemption for Veterans and Their Widow or Widower

Dwellings or parts of multiple family dwellings which are specifically designed for use by paraplegics as wheelchair homes and which are owned and occupied by veterans with the loss, or loss of use, of both lower extremities, or by the unremarried widow or widower of such veteran, are exempt from taxation. The dwelling must be owned and occupied by the veteran for one full calendar year before the exemption becomes effective. The term "dwelling" generally means real estate in an amount not to exceed one acre upon which the building is located. In addition veterans that have been rated as permanently and totally disabled as the result of a service connected disability may be eligible for up to \$100,000 of their property value to be exempt from property taxes. Go to http://dor.sd.gov/Taxes/Property_Taxes/Property_and_Sales_Tax_Relief_Programs.aspx for more information.

Property Tax Exemption for Veterans and Their Widow or Widower

Up to \$100,000 of the full value of a home that is owned and occupied by a permanently and totally disabled veteran is exempt from taxation. The surviving spouse may also be eligible. Application for the exemption is made through the county assessor. The surviving spouse of veteran who was rated as permanently and totally disabled from a service connected disability qualifies for the same property tax exemption. For more information refer to [http://dor.sd.gov/Taxes/Property_Taxes/Property and Sales Tax Relief Programs.aspx](http://dor.sd.gov/Taxes/Property_Taxes/Property_and_Sales_Tax_Relief_Programs.aspx)

Property Tax Refund for Aged and Disabled Persons

Certain low income property owners are eligible for a property tax refund and should check with their county treasurer for details and assistance in making application. To qualify the following conditions must be met:

1. The head of the household must be sixty-five years of age, or older, or shall be disabled prior to January first of the year in which taxes are levied;
2. The applicant must have owned the property for at least three years or, have been a resident of this state at least five years if not qualified under the three year ownership criteria.

Go to [http://dor.sd.gov/Taxes/Property_Taxes/Property and Sales Tax Relief Programs.aspx](http://dor.sd.gov/Taxes/Property_Taxes/Property_and_Sales_Tax_Relief_Programs.aspx) for more information.

Sales Tax Refund for Certain Elderly and Disabled Persons

Certain low income persons who are sixty-five, or older, or who are disabled, may qualify for a sales tax refund. Applicants should check with their county treasurer for details and assistance. Note: No individual may receive both a property tax and sales tax refund in the same year.

South Dakota Veterans Bonus

South Dakota currently offers a bonus of up to \$500 for current or former eligible members of the Armed Forces who were legal residents of the state for no less than six months immediately preceding their period of active duty and who meet certain criteria during one or more of the following periods:

- August 2, 1990 to March 3, 1991 – All active service counts for payment.
- March 4, 1991 to December 31, 1992 – Only service in a hostile area qualifying for the Southwest Asia Service Medal counts for payment.
- January 1, 1993 to September 10, 2001 – Only service in a hostile area qualifying for any United States campaign or service medal awarded for combat operations against hostile forces counts for payment.
- September 11, 2001 to a date to be determined – [OIF/OEF] All active service counts for payment.

Active Duty for training is not allowed for Bonus purposes. Veterans with qualifying service from August 2, 1990, to December 31, 1992, (Desert Storm) may receive one bonus of up to

\$500. Veterans with qualifying service after January 1, 1993, may receive another bonus of up to \$500. Veterans living in South Dakota may apply through the nearest County or Tribal Veterans Service Officer. Applicants living outside of South Dakota may obtain an application by email at jeri.smith@state.sd.us. If you do not have email you may request an application and instructions by writing SD Veterans Bonus, 425 E. Capitol, Pierre, SD 57501 or by calling 605-773-7251.

Employment

Federal Government Employment

When applying for federal employment, honorably separated men and women of the Armed Forces, and veterans' widows (or widowers), spouses and mothers are entitled to certain benefits. Preference points (either 5 or 10) are added to passing grades earned in examinations for entrance into federal employment. Thus, veterans and other eligible persons receive preference, but are not guaranteed employment. A Standard Form (SF) 15 must be completed and submitted with supporting documentation. If you have questions, complaints or concerns regarding preference in federal employment, contact the South Dakota State Director of Veterans' Employment and Training (DVET) at 605.626.2325.

State and Local Government Employment

South Dakota defines an eligible veteran as:

- Honorably discharged.
- A citizen of the United States.
- Having served under qualifying conditions (see South Dakota Codified Law (SDCL) 33A-2).

Eligible veterans receive preference for appointment, employment and promotion at all levels of government, including state, counties, municipalities and school districts. If the applicant possesses at least the minimum qualifications necessary to fill the position, the veteran shall be granted an interview.

They may not be disqualified by their age, by loss of a limb or by any other physical impairment which is not incapacitating. However, they must possess the qualifications necessary to do the job in question. A veteran disabled due to a service-connected cause is given preference over a non-disabled veteran.

Unmarried Spouse of Deceased Veteran

The unmarried spouse of an eligible veteran who died while in service, or died later from a service-connected cause, is entitled to the same preference as an eligible veteran, provided the spouse possess the qualifications necessary to do the job in question.

Spouse of Disabled Veteran

If a disabled eligible veteran is unable to exercise his or her right to a veteran employment preference due to the disability, the veteran's spouse is entitled to the same preference, provided the spouse has the qualifications to do the job in question.

Education

State Approving Agency

Each State has a State Approving Agency (SAA) and a few states have two or three. Some states have one agency to approve all school programs, another agency to approve all on-the-job training programs, and then possibly a third agency to approve the flight schools. Congress determined that each State should create an agency to approve the programs within their borders and to determine in which programs it was appropriate for veterans to enroll, in order for them to utilize their VA educational benefits. The first State SAA's were formed for veterans after World War II. After a few years states realized that a National Association was needed and in 1948 it was formed. The National Association of State Approving Agencies (NASAA) assisted states in coordinating their efforts to do a better job for the veterans. Also, it was a tool to resolve mutual problems.

In many ways, the fundamental role of state approving agencies is the same today as it was when they were founded. As state entities acting on behalf of the Federal Government, the SAA's have been an outstanding example of the workability of the State-Federal partnership, allowing Federal interests to be pursued at the local level while preserving the identity, interests, and sovereignty of States' Rights in education. The primary responsibility and focus of the SAA's continues to be the review, evaluation and approval of quality programs of education and training under State and Federal criteria.

SAA's continue to conduct on-site supervisory visits to approved institutions and schools seeking approval. They continue to provide technical assistance to all interested parties and are engaged in outreach activities to foster the usage of the GI Bill®. Further, they continue to act as state liaison in assisting military installations to provide base personnel with quality educational offerings. Yet, while the fundamental role of the SAA has remained the same, the SAA's have grown with the changes in our society over the past fifty years. They have become advocates for quality education and training for Veterans and other eligible persons. They have become educational partners with the institutions themselves, facilitating even greater and more diverse educational opportunities for Veterans. They have become strong advocates for the usage of the

GI Bill and have developed a working partnership with the Federal government, which other Federal agencies have tried to emulate.

The programs that can be approved are found in institutions of higher learning (colleges and universities), non-degree institutions (vocational and technical schools), apprenticeship programs, other on-the-job training programs, and flight training schools. Each state reviews the appropriateness of each program as to its own standards and laws in addition to VA rules and regulations along with any other applicable laws and/or regulations. Then it is either approved or disapproved; continuous supervision is required of approved programs. The approval process is ongoing and involves regular monitoring of the programs. South Dakota has approximately 2,100 eligible people enrolled in programs. The programs are found in 47 schools and 192 training establishments and businesses.

The South Dakota State Approving Agency is located in Pierre with the Department of Veterans Affairs and it approves all programs. For information or assistance call (605) 773-3269 or 773-3648 (school programs) or 773-3565 (training programs). [Click here for information about the GI Bill](#)

On the Job Training

On the Job Training or OJT - is training you receive while performing a job and earning wages. This program can range from 6 – 24 months. This requires the employee to be full-time and have GI Bill® eligibility. Examples are police officer, correctional officer, shop technician, chef, highway maintenance worker, farmer, buildings engineer, veterans benefits representative, service technician, highway patrol trooper, wellness instructor, information technology specialist, surface maintenance repairer, deputy sheriff, plant operator, truck driver, or bakers assistant. [Click here to see a full lists of active programs in South Dakota.](#) For more information or assistance call (605) 773-3269 or 773-3565.

Apprenticeship Training

An apprenticeship training program is training you receive while performing a job and earning wages. This program can range from 24 – 48 months and may include supplemental training. This requires the employee to be full-time and have GI Bill® eligibility. Examples are plumber, electrician, carpenter, mechanic, firefighter/medic, sheet metal apprentice, power plant mechanic, lineman, welder, fire sprinkler installer, power plant operator, machinist, or stone mason. . [Click here to see a full lists of active programs in South Dakota.](#) For more information or assistance call (605) 773-3269 or 773-3565

Free Tuition for Veterans

Honorably discharged SD residents who had service after Aug. 1, 1990 and received a campaign, expeditionary, or service medal for combat operations are eligible for free tuition at state colleges. They **must not** be eligible for the GI Bill or other federal education benefit. You get one

month of free tuition for each month of "qualifying service" with a minimum of one, up to a maximum of four, academic years.

The Application for Free Tuition is available at the schools' financial aids, veterans representative or registrars offices or, they can be downloaded by tapping [forms](#). The completed application, along with a copy of the veteran's DD-214 must be submitted to Shane Olivier at the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, 425 E. Capitol Avenue, Pierre, SD 57501.

Free Tuition for Children of Veterans Who Die During Service

Children who are under the age of 25, are residents of South Dakota, and whose mother or father was killed in action or died of other causes while on active duty, are eligible for free tuition at a state supported school, if the deceased parent was a bona-fide resident of this state for at least six months immediately preceding entry into active service. SDDVA form E-12 "Application for Free Tuition at State Supported Institutions" is available at the schools' financial aids, veterans representative or registrars offices or, they can be obtained from the Division of Veterans Affairs.

Free Tuition for Dependents of POW's and MIA's

Children and spouses of prisoners of war, or of persons listed as missing in action, are entitled to attend a state supported school without the payment of tuition or mandatory fees provided they are not eligible for equal or greater federal benefits. The Application for Free Tuition is available at the schools' financial aids, veterans representative or registrars offices or, they can be obtained from the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs or [by clicking here](#).

Reduced Tuition for South Dakota National Guard

SDCL 33-6-5 - 33-6-8.1 Provides for Guard members, who meet the requirements for admission, are eligible for a fifty percent (50%) reduction in tuition charges at any state supported school for undergraduate programs up to 128 undergraduate credits and graduate programs up to 32 credits. OR, one program of study, approved by the state Board of Education, at any state vocational school upon payment of fifty percent (50%) of the tuition charges. The receipt of federal educational benefits does not affect eligibility for this program. To qualify the guard member must:

1. Be a resident of this state and a member of the SD Army or Air Guard throughout each semester or vocational program for which he or she applies for benefits
2. Have completed required active duty for training
3. Attend 90% of drills and training periods and maintain a satisfactory academic grade level
4. Provide proper notice to the institution at time of registration for the term in which benefits are sought.

Free Tuition to Spouse or Child of South Dakota National Guardmember Disabled or Deceased in the Line of Duty.

DCL 33-6-10 Provides for free tuition to child or spouse of National Guard member disabled or deceased in line of duty--Administration. Any resident of this state who is less than twenty-five years of age and whose parent has died or has sustained a total disability, permanent in nature, resulting from duty as a member of the South Dakota National Guard, while on state or federal active duty or any authorized training duty, is entitled to tuition without cost and is entitled to attend any course or courses of study in any state educational institution under the control and management of the Board of Regents. Any person who is a resident of this state whose spouse has died or has sustained a total disability, permanent in nature, resulting from duty as a member of the South Dakota National Guard, while on state or federal active duty or any authorized training duty, is entitled to tuition without cost and is entitled to attend any course or courses of study in any state educational institution under the control and management of the Board of Regents. The application and receipt of the benefits of this section are governed by the provisions of §§ 13-55-6 to 13-55-9, inclusive.

Honorary High School Diploma

SDCL 33A-2-34 provides for honorary high school diplomas for veterans who served during certain wartime periods. Eligible veterans include anyone who served on active duty at any time during the periods: December 7, 1941 to September 2, 1945; June 25, 1950 to July 31, 1953; or February 28, 1961 to May 7, 1975. As stated in the law, the school district selected by the veteran shall award the diploma to the veteran.

South Dakota Colleges and Universities - Veterans Resources[Augustana](#)

[Black Hills State University](#)

[Dakota State University](#)

[Dakota Wesleyan University](#)

[Globe University](#)

[Lake Area Technical Institute](#)

[Mitchell Technical Institute](#)

[Mount Marty College](#)

[National American University - Sioux Falls](#)

[Northern State University](#)

[South Dakota School of Mines and Technology](#)

[South Dakota State University](#)

[Southeast Technical Institute](#)

[University of Sioux Falls](#)

[University of South Dakota](#)

[Western Dakota Technical Institute](#)

Recreation

Disabled Veteran Hunting & Fishing Licenses

South Dakota resident veterans who are entitled to VA Special Monthly Compensation, are former POWs, get Social Security Disability, or get at least 40 percent VA disability get a 4 year hunting & fishing license for a small administrative fee.

Active Duty Hunting & Fishing License

South Dakota residents on active duty outside the state and home on leave can hunt & fish without a license. Migratory bird stamp must still be purchased.

State Park Admission

Certain resident veterans may obtain free admission to any South Dakota state park and are eligible for a fifty percent discount on any camping fee or associated electrical fee. To qualify the veteran must: To qualify the veteran must:

- Be totally disabled from service connected disabilities or,
- Be in receipt of the VA "K" award OR,
- Have been held as a Prisoner of War.

Application forms may be obtained from the local park manager or through the Game, Fish and Parks office in Pierre.

Hunting and Fishing Cards for Disabled Veterans

For a \$10 fee, eligible veterans may receive a hunting and fishing card which is valid for four years. This card is the equivalent of the resident fishing and small game license. To be eligible the veteran must:

- Be rated as totally disabled from service connected injuries OR,
- Be in receipt of the VA "K" award OR,
- Have been held as a Prisoner of War OR,
- Be in receipt of Social Security benefits because of a total disability.

Application forms are available from the Game, Fish and Parks Regional Office. The application, along with verification of eligibility, are submitted to Game, Fish and Parks, 412 West Missouri, Pierre, SD 57501

Free Admission and Reduced Camping Fees for Veterans

Certain resident veterans may obtain free admission to any South Dakota state park and are eligible for a fifty percent discount on any camping fee or associated electrical fee. To qualify the veteran must:

1. Be totally disabled from service connected disabilities or,
2. Be in receipt of the VA "K" award OR,

3. Have been held as a Prisoner of War.

Application forms may be obtained from the local park manager or through the Game, Fish and Parks office in Pierre.

Burial

The following applies to South Dakota's state burial benefits. For federal burial benefits refer to <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/benefits/Federal/Burial.aspx>

Eligibility

Burial eligibility in the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery extends to:

- Members of Armed Forces who died on active duty
- Any veteran who was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable (certain veterans must meet 24-month continuous active duty requirement)
- Certain United States citizens who serve in the Armed Forces of an allied nation
- Certain Reservists and National Guard members entitled to retired pay
- Certain Reservists and National Guard members hospitalized or undergoing treatment at government expense
- Certain members of the Reserve Officers' training Corps who die while traveling to, or conducting, authorized training or while hospitalized or undergoing treatment at government expense
- Certain Reserve Components who were disabled or died from a disease or injury incurred or aggravated in the line of duty during period of active and/or inactive duty for training
- Certain Commissioned Officers of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- Certain Commissioned Officers of the Public Health Service
- Certain World War II Merchant Marines with oceangoing service during armed conflict in World War II
- Certain Philippine veterans with United States citizenship or lawful alien status who served during World War II
- and surviving spouses of eligible veterans
- Minor children of an eligible veteran
- Certain unmarried disabled adult children of an eligible veteran
- Certain biological or adoptive parents of veterans

Those who are not eligible for burial in the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery include:

- Former spouses (if not otherwise eligible)
- Other family members not already listed
- Disqualifying characters of discharge
- Discharge from Draft

- Persons found guilty of a Capital Crime
- Certain persons convicted of subversive activities
- Active or Inactive duty for training unless they meet eligibility criteria listed above

Burial sites at the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery include casket gravesites, cremation gravesites, and columbaria for cremated remains. This cemetery compliments services provided by the National Cemetery Administration. The National Cemetery Administration provides support to state cemeteries in the form of grants that are used for development, expansion, and/or improvement of state veterans cemeteries. Anyone interested in burial at the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery is encouraged to complete the pre-registration application. Go to <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/veteranscemetery/SDSVC%20Pre-Application%20Form.pdf> to download the application. Pre-registration establishes the Veteran's eligibility for burial. It does not, however, reserve a specific gravesite.

The cemetery administrative staff assigns gravesites at the time of death. Pre-registration applications are available at the cemetery office, through your local County and Tribal Veterans Service Officer

Burial Allowance for Veterans, Wives or Widows

There is no fee for burial of an eligible veteran. There is a \$780 (all burial options) for spouses and eligible dependents. Additional charges may be added if the casket is oversized and a larger grave-liner is needed. If a grave-liner is supplied as part of a prepaid burial plan, the plan will be reviewed and every effort made to meet the terms of the prepaid plan within existing cemetery guidelines. Fees for spouse/eligible dependents cannot be prepaid and are subject to change.

A payment of up to \$100 may be paid by the state to help defray the burial and funeral expenses of any honorably discharged veteran or the wife, widow or widower of a veteran when the estate, or immediate family, of the deceased is lacking in funds to pay the expenses. The veteran must have been a citizen of the United States for one year preceding entrance into military service or one year preceding the death. This payment CANNOT be made to another unit of government. The surviving spouse, or relatives, must furnish an affidavit to the C/TVSO that sufficient funds are not available for payment of the expenses. Application for the Burial Allowance must be submitted to the Pierre office within one year from the date of the burial.

Headstone Setting Fee

The state will pay \$100 towards the cost of setting a government headstone or marker at the grave of a veteran who was a resident of this state for one year preceding entrance into the military service or one year preceding death.

Cemetery Burial Arrangements

The person(s) coordinating burial should contact the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery at (605) 360-4173 to make arrangements for burial. A DD214, or equivalent military discharge document, must be provided to establish the veteran's eligibility. If these documents are not available, the cemetery must be provided with sufficient military information to allow the cemetery to access VA and/or military records to establish eligibility. 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. Coordinators should be aware of the following:

- Committal Services -- The cemetery can conduct seven committal services per day, Monday - Friday, 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 scheduled services following theirs. All committal services are held at the committal service building rather than at the gravesite. This ensures the family's safety and provides a fitting location for military honors and the ability of our staff to conduct 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 a funeral director.
- Casket -- A pre-placed graveliner is provided by the cemetery for all casket burials. Casket gravesites are permanently marked with an upright headstone.
- Cremation -- In-ground cremation gravesites provide a traditional burial option for cremated remains. In-ground cremation gravesites are permanently marked with an upright headstone. The columbarium provides an above-ground option for cremated remains. Columbarium niches are permanently marked with a niche cover. Placement of cremated remains, either in-ground or above-ground, is determined by the next-of-kin.
- Flower 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 periods specified on the Floral Regulation signs located around the main cemetery drive. Plantings, statues, vigil lights, breakable objects of any nature, or any other commemorative items are not permitted on the graves.
- Military Honors -- South Dakota Veterans Cemetery will arrange for honor guard services through our Memorial Rifle Squad and the South Dakota Military Funeral Honors Program, if this has not been arranged already through the funeral director.

Military Funeral Honors Stipend Reimbursement

The 2015 South Dakota Legislature approved funding for a \$50 reimbursement to congressionally chartered veterans service organizations for their services in conducting military funeral honors on or after July 1, 2015. Forms must be submitted, by the veterans service organization, after services have been performed. Forms must be submitted to the: South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (425 E. Capitol, Pierre, SD 57501). Reimbursement will be paid quarterly.

- [Click here to view the reimbursement form.](#)
- [Click here if you are applying for reimbursement for the first time](#)

Other State Veteran Benefits

Free Certified Copies of Veterans Records

South Dakota counties may not charge for certified copies of birth, death, marriage, adoption, divorce, guardianship or conservatorship papers when such records are required in support of a claim against any agency of the federal or state government by, or on behalf of, a servicemember or veteran, or the spouse, surviving spouse or dependents of a servicemember or veteran.

Special License Plates

- Special distinctive license plates are available for veterans who are residents of South Dakota. The fee for the special plates is \$10.00 per set, in addition to registration fees. A \$5.00 mailing fee required for each set of car or motorcycle license plates to be mailed.
- No special plate renewal fee is charged, but registration fees apply.
- For additional information on eligibility and application procedures, visit: <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/benefits/State/special%20license%20plates.aspx> and/or <https://dor.sd.gov/individuals/motor-vehicle>.

The following plates are available



[Pearl Harbor Survivor](#)

[Prisoner of War](#)

[Disabled Veteran](#)

[Purple Heart](#)

[Gold Star](#)



Military License Plates - Veterans

	Vehicle Plate	Motorcycle Plate
Air Force		
Army		
Coast Guard		
Marine		
Navy		

Military License Plates - Active Duty

	Vehicle Plate	Motorcycle Plate
Air Force		
Army		
Coast Guard		
Marine		
Navy		

Veterans Designation on Drivers License or ID Card

Veterans who have been honorably discharged from the military have the option of adding the word "Veteran" to the front of their South Dakota drivers license or identification card. Veterans who wish to add the designation to their driver license or non-driver ID card may visit any South Dakota driver license office. They will need to present their DD-214, which shows their honorable discharge status from active duty, or present a certificate signed by a county or tribal veterans service officer verifying their status. They will also need to provide the other documents required of any applicant and pay the appropriate duplicate or renewal fee.

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Visit the South Dakota DVA website <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov> for more information on any of these programs.

[Source: <https://www.military.com/benefits/veteran-state-benefits/south-dakota-state-veterans-benefits.html> | January 2020 ++]