

Nebraska State Veteran's Benefits



2019

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

- Housing Benefits
- Financial Assistance Benefits
- Education Benefits
- Recreation Benefits
- Other

Housing Benefits

Property Tax/Homestead Exemption

A homestead exemption provides relief from property taxes by exempting all or a portion of the valuation of the homestead from taxation. The state of Nebraska reimburses the counties and other governmental subdivisions for the taxes lost due to homestead exemptions. Refer to financial Assistance Benefits.

Nebraska Veterans Homes

The Division of Veterans' Homes includes the state Veterans' Homes located in Bellevue, Norfolk, Grand Island and Scottsbluff. The four Homes focus on wellness and allowing people to live their lives to the fullest extent possible. Services range from assisted living, for members able to essentially care for themselves, to skilled nursing care. Admissions to the four Homes are determined on a case-by-case basis by the Veterans' Homes Board, a separate, independent entity. To review the current waiting list refer to <https://veterans.nebraska.gov/sites/veterans.nebraska.gov/files/doc/11-22-19.pdf>. Various veterans' organizations donate time, money and companionship to people living in the Homes. This unique relationship creates a positive difference in the quality of life of our members. Those eligible for admission include:

- All veterans who served on active duty, who were discharged or otherwise separated with a characterization of honorable or general (under honorable conditions) and who lived in Nebraska at least two years during their lifetime.
- Veterans must be disabled by reason of service, age or otherwise unable to earn a livelihood; wholly or partially dependent upon public support; or require care that is only available in a public facility
- Spouses, widows and widowers of veterans
- Gold Star mothers and fathers are eligible under similar requirements

Veterans may be admitted without regard to their financial situation. Charges are based on each individual's income and assets. Those who can are required to pay a part of their care costs but there is no fixed charge. Maintenance Charge is determined by a sliding scale depending on a person's income and or assets. Your contribution to the cost of care at the Home could be from \$0 to \$4,097.00 per month. Long term care insurance may be utilized. Each applicant's eligibility and charges are determined by an impartial Veterans Homes Board. Board members include appointed representatives of all veterans' service organizations. The Nebraska Director of Veterans' Affairs is the permanent Secretary of the Board. To apply for admittance into a state veterans' home, you may:

- Apply to the home directly.
- Apply through the County Veterans Service Officer (CVSO) in the county where you currently reside. Find your CVSO here.
- Apply through a recognized veterans organization:
 - American Legion
 - AMVETS
 - DAV
 - Marine Corps League
 - Military Order of the Purple Heart
 - Paralyzed Veterans of America
 - Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States
 - Vietnam Veterans of America

The admission to a Home within the Nebraska Veterans Home System is initiated with the completion of the application, which is obtained from a PDF County Veterans' Service Officer (CVSO). Refer to <https://veterans.nebraska.gov/cvso> for locations.

The completed application indicates which facility the applicant wants as first choice. The applicant may also indicate second, third and/or fourth choices. The application is endorsed by the CVSO and then sent to the Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) for review. This review includes verifying statutory eligibility and completeness of the application, and criminal history and sex offender registry checks. All applications are subject to approval by the Veterans' Home Board. An application for admission may be denied by the Board. Examples of reasons for denial include, but are not limited to:

- Applications that are inaccurate or incomplete
- Certain felony convictions
- The applicant being registered as a Level 3 sex offender
- Certain transfers of property, income or assets

- Denial of income or assets that could affect the amount or payment of the monthly maintenance charge
- Failure to provide both requested information and a written consent to release this information
- In addition, an application may be denied by the Board if it is determined that the Nebraska Veterans' Home System is unable to meet the needs of an applicant based on either psychosocial or physical needs. Examples include but are not limited to: danger to self or others, care needs greater than the system can provide, or does not meet the minimum criteria for domiciliary level of care as defined by the VA. When this determination is made, the facility of first choice composes the letter that is submitted to the Board.

Veteran homes are located at:

- **Eastern Nebraska Veterans' Home** - Situated on 20 acres near 40th Street and Capehart Road in Bellevue, the new 120-bed veterans' home is a modern replacement for the Thomas Fitzgerald Veterans' Home in Omaha which was opened in 1980 in the former Douglas County Hospital Annex. The Home covers nearly 118,000 sq. feet and has four separate wings. The Home is designed to serve members in four areas: assisted living, intermediate care, skilled care, and Alzheimer's care. Each area serves 30 members and has its own exterior courtyard designed to serve different mobility levels of the members. The Governor credited efforts by the public and private sector for helping the new veterans' home project reach the construction phase. The City of Bellevue donated the land to the state and the Sarpy County Board of Commissioners donated \$300,000 to build an access road to the site. The total capacity at the facility is 117.



- **12505 South 40th Street, Bellevue, NE 68123**
- **Administrator: David Williamson** David.Williamson@nebraska.gov
- **General Info (402) 595-2180 | Admission Inquiries (402) 591-4883 | Volunteer Opportunities (402) 591-4852**

- **Norfolk Veterans' Home** - The Norfolk Veterans' Home opened in 1963. Members moved to the current location in 2001. The total capacity is 151, including: 30 DOM Unit beds, 30 Special Needs beds, 10 Advance Palliative Care beds 81 Skilled Nursing Bed



- **600 East Benjamin Avenue, Norfolk, NE 68701**
- **Administrator:** Jerry Eisenhauer Jerry.Eisenhauer@nebraska.gov
- **General Info:** (402) 370-3330 | **Admission Inquiries** (402) 370-3109 | **Volunteer Opportunities** (402) 370-3102

Central Nebraska Veterans' Home - The campus of the Central Nebraska Veterans Home opened in 2019 is comprised of 11 buildings on a 67 acre site in north-east Kearney. The Veteran's Home Center (VHC) is the main building at 75,000 square feet and facilities administration, food service, clinic, wood shop, craft area, chapel, and large group gathering spaces. On each side of the VHC is a HUB building at 13,000 square feet each, which primarily supports physical therapy needs. Six Neighborhood buildings ranging from 34,000-38,000 square feet are the living quarters for the Members (Veterans). Each Neighborhood has three homes, each Home has 12-15 Member Bedrooms for a total of 225 units.



- **4510 E 56th Street, Kearney, NE 68847**
- **Administrator:** Alex Willford alex.willford@nebraska.gov
- **General Info:** (308) 865-6000 | **Admission Inquiries** (308) 865-3426 | **Volunteer Opportunities** (308) 865-3421

- **Western Nebraska Veterans' Home** - The Western Nebraska Veterans' Home in Scottsbluff opened March 19, 1975. The total capacity at the facility is 103



- **1102 West 42nd Street, Scottsbluff NE 69361 Phone 308-632-0300**
- **General Info:** (308) 632-0300 Admission Inquiries (308) 632-0366
- **Current waiting list:** https://veterans.nebraska.gov/sites/veterans.nebraska.gov/files/doc/11-22-19_2.pdf

- **Grand Island Veterans' Home** - The Grand Island Veterans' Home, originally known as the Nebraska Soldiers and Sailors Home, opened in 1887 and was the first Veterans' home in Nebraska. The total capacity at the facility was 266. The facility has closed and is available for lease. The lease coordinator is Johnny Knoche johnny.knoche@nebraska.gov or Tel: 402.310.0176



2300 Capital Ave, Grand Island, Nebraska 68803 (308) 385 6252

Each Home Has Available:

- Physical therapy (PT) services to help improve a member's quality of life through examination, diagnosis, prognosis, physical intervention, and patient education. Each facility may offer a variety of different types of PT equipment and modalities to help promote mobility and function.
- Occupational therapy (OT) services to help members continue to participate in meaningful activities and functions through assessment and interventions, which may include adaptive equipment recommendations.
- Speech Therapy services to help evaluate, diagnose, and treat communication disorders (speech and language disorders), cognitive-communication disorders, voice disorders, and swallowing disorders.
- Restorative Nursing Therapy services with the focus on nursing interventions that promote the member's ability to adapt and adjust to living as independently and safely as possible. We actively focus on maintaining optimal physical, mental and psychosocial functioning. Ron testimonial

- Hospice/Palliative Care for members facing the end of their life. Special care is provided to encourage comfort and preferences by an interdisciplinary team including medical professionals, social workers, clergy, hospice organizations, and trained volunteers. Being a part of the Nebraska Hospice – Veteran Partnership helps our facilities better provide end of life care to veterans and their families.
- Memory Support Care Units dedicated to providing a safe, structured, and supportive environment for members. Our primary goal is to help our members achieve the best possible quality of life. The dementia program is an interdisciplinary team approach which enables the member to be involved in their daily life to the highest potential in a communal setting. This program provides opportunities for successful individual and group involvement based on their cognitive level of dementia. The program is tailored to the needs of the member relating to meals, ADLs, grooming, exercise, spiritual, cognitive, gender-specific activities, social interactions, music, walks, 1:1 interventions, small group interaction and rest. The members' prior lifestyles and occupations also influence the content of this program.

Nebraska Financial Assistance Benefits

Retired Military Pay:

Beginning in tax year 2015, individuals who retire after July 18, 2014 may make a one-time election within two years after the date of their retirement to exclude a portion of their retirement income. One of two elections may be made:

- The individual may elect to exclude 40% of their military retirement income for seven consecutive taxable years beginning with the year in which the election is made; OR
- The individual may elect to exclude 15% of their military retirement income for all taxable years beginning with the year in which they turn 67 years of age.

All retirement income after the 40% election or before the 15% election is treated as fully taxable income. Once an election is made, it cannot be changed. * Note: If you don't make a choice within 2 years of discharge you lose the exemption..

National Guard and Reserve Service members: Individuals who retire from the uniformed services of the U.S., but do not begin receiving military retirement benefits immediately upon retirement, still must make the election to exclude a portion of his or her military retirement benefits within two years after his or her retirement date.

Veterans' Aid Fund

The NVA Fund was established in 1921. This temporary emergency aid fund assists veterans, their spouses, and dependents when an unforeseen emergency occurs disrupting their normal method of living and when other resources are not immediately available. All income from the Fund is used for aid and not for administrative expenses of the fund. Aid can only be used for food, fuel, shelter, wearing apparel, funeral, medical, and surgical items. Application must be made through the County Service Officer or post Service Officer of any recognized veterans' organization in the county nearest the applicant's place of residence and submitted to the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Homestead Exemption

A homestead exemption provides relief from property taxes by exempting all or a portion of the valuation of the homestead from taxation. The maximum exemption is the taxable value of the homestead up to \$40,000 or 100 percent of the county's average assessed value of single-Family residential property, whichever is greater. The homestead maximum value is \$95,000 or 200 percent of the county's average assessed value of single-Family residential property, whichever is greater. The exempt value will be reduced by ten percent for each \$2,500 the assessed value exceeds the maximum value. If the assessed valuation exceeds the maximum value by \$20,000 or more the homestead is not eligible for exemption. A Veteran must have received an honorable discharge or general discharge under honorable conditions.

Nebraska Education Benefits

Waiver of Tuition

The University of Nebraska, the state colleges, and community colleges on behalf of any eligible child, spouse, widow or widower that meets the following requirements may waive tuition. He or she is a resident of this state and meets the appropriate institutions requirements for paying in-state tuition. He or she has a parent, stepparent or spouse who was a member of the armed forces of the United States and who: (1) Died of a service connected disability; (2) Died subsequent to discharge as a result of injury or illness sustained while in service; (3) Is permanently and totally disabled as a result of military service; (4) Is classified as missing in action or as a prisoner of war during armed hostilities after August 4, 1964. The waiver shall be valid for one degree, diploma, or certificate from a community college and one baccalaureate degree. Applications are submitted to the Department of Veterans' Affairs by contacting the County Veterans Service Officer nearest the applicant's place of residence.

Reservist Tuition Credit

Nebraska residents who are enlisted members of a Nebraska-based unit of the Active Selected Reserve may be eligible for a 50% tuition credit to the University of Nebraska campuses, Nebraska state colleges and Nebraska community colleges. This program is allowed 200 new applicants each calendar year.

Recreation Benefits

Hunting & Fishing Licenses

- Nebraska resident veterans who are at least 50 percent disabled can get free lifetime hunting & fishing licenses.
- Any veteran 64 and older can get a hunting & fishing license for \$5.
- Active duty members stationed in Nebraska for 30 days or more can buy hunting & fishing licenses at the resident rate.

Deployed Military Permit

Nebraska residents who have been deployed out of the state within the last 12 months can get an Annual Small Game Hunt/Fish Permit on a one time basis for \$5. This permit includes all state stamps. For more info refer to

- <http://outdoornebraska.gov>
- <http://outdoornebraska.gov/fishing>
- <http://outdoornebraska.gov/parks>

Other Nebraska State Veteran Benefits

State Employment Veterans Preference

Honorably discharged veterans may be eligible for a five percent addition to their score on employment testing. Disabled veterans get another five percent on top of that. Spouses of active duty members, those separated within 180 days, and spouses of 100 percent disabled veterans may also qualify. This preference is for all state, county, and municipal jobs.

Nebraska Veteran' Service Office

The function of the State Service Office is to interview military veterans, their spouses, and dependents to establish tentative eligibility for veterans' benefits provided by federal and state laws; to advise applicants with claims before the US Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA); and to assist them in the accurate completion of application forms and transmit them to the proper federal or state agency for processing. State Service Officers are recognized representatives for the Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs, American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Vietnam Veterans of America, American Ex-POWs, Military Order of the Purple Heart, the Retired Enlisted Association and the National Association of County Service Officers and are authorized to accept Power of Attorneys from claimants on behalf of the organizations. State Service Officers are located at the VA Regional Office, Lincoln. <https://www.benefits.va.gov/ROLINCOLN/services-offered.asp>

Grave Registration

The Department of Veterans' Affairs shall preserve a permanent registry of the graves of all persons who shall have served in the Armed Forces of the U.S. in time of war and whose mortal remains rest in Nebraska. Information concerning the registry can be obtained from the Department of Veterans' Affairs or a County Service Officer.

Nebraska Veterans Cemetery

The State of Nebraska operates a veterans cemetery in Alliance. Veterans and their dependents are eligible for burial at no charge. Eligibility requirements are the same as federal veterans cemeteries. Visit the Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs website <https://veterans.nebraska.gov> for more information about any of these programs.



2610 County Road 57 (PO Box 718), Alliance, NE 69301-0718 Phone: (308) 763-2958/2963F or Toll-Free: (877) 420-7990

Nebraska Military Vehicle Plates

To obtain go to the following websites:

- Disabled American Veteran - <http://www.dmv.nebraska.gov/dvr/military/dav.html>
- Ex-Prisoner of War - <http://www.dmv.nebraska.gov/dvr/military/expow.html>
- Pearl Harbor Survivor - <http://www.dmv.nebraska.gov/dvr/military/pearlhrbr.html>
- Purple Heart - <http://www.dmv.nebraska.gov/dvr/military/purplehrt.html>
- Military Honor Plates - www.dmv.nebraska.gov/dvr/pdf/militaryhonor_message.pdf

Operation Recognition

Operation Recognition was a joint effort between the Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs and the Nebraska Department of Education, to award Honorary High School Diplomas to veterans that left school to serve their country during WW II and the Korean War and did not complete their education after their release from service. Since the implementation of the program in 1999, more than 1700 Honorary Diplomas have been awarded to eligible veterans. Eligibility criteria is:

- Honorably Discharged
- World War II Qualifying Dates of Active Service: 9/16/1940 - 12/31/1946
- Korean War Qualifying Dates of Active Service: 6/25/1950 - 1/31/1955
- Veterans currently living out of state are eligible if they are a former Nebraska resident.

Submit a completed [Operation Recognition Application](#), along with a copy of the veteran's discharge papers to: Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs, ATTN: Operation Recognition, PO Box 95083, Lincoln NE 68509

Veterans Advisory Committee

The Veterans' Advisory Commission investigates the handling of veterans affairs under the Director of Veterans' Affairs. The commission also acts as an appeal board for the Nebraska Veterans' Aid Fund. (State Statute 80-401.09). Mail correspondence to: NDVA Veterans' Advisory Commission, PO Box 95083, Lincoln NE 68509.

County Veterans Service Offices

At https://veterans.nebraska.gov/sites/veterans.nebraska.gov/files/doc/CVSODirectory_11222019.pdf is a listing of Nebraska County Veteran Service Offices inclusive of email addrees and telephone numbers of personnel.

Veteran Service Organizations

At <https://veterans.nebraska.gov/veterans-organizations> is a listing of Nebraska Veteran Service Organizations inclusive of contact data and websites.

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Visit the [Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs](https://veterans.nebraska.gov) website <https://veterans.nebraska.gov> for more information about any of these programs.

[Source: <http://www.military.com/benefits/veteran-state-benefits/nebraska-state-veterans-benefits.html>
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