



# **State Benefits for Veterans**



## **A Comprehensive Guide**

#4009 - 08-10





## ★ PERSONAL ★

### **Veterans Emergency Assistance**

This assistance provides aid on an emergency and temporary basis (not to exceed three months in a 12-month period) for the necessities of life (food, shelter, fuel and clothing) to honorably discharged veterans who served in the U.S. Armed Forces during established war service dates or during peacetime hostile fire or terrorist attack as determined by the PA Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. Widows, infant children or dependents who are sick, disabled or without means are also eligible.

The applicant must be a legal, permanent resident of Pennsylvania. Upon the recent death of a veteran, his or her widow or orphan children are eligible provided the veteran would have qualified prior to death. For more information, contact your county director of veterans affairs.

### **Real Estate Tax Exemption**

Any honorably discharged Pennsylvania resident veteran who has a 100 percent service-connected disability rating by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as a result of wartime military service shall be exempt from the payment of all real estate taxes levied upon the building and the land occupied by the veteran as a principal dwelling.

The dwelling must be owned by the veteran outright or through an estate either independently or with a spouse. The need for the exemption from real estate taxes must have been determined by the State Veterans' Commission. Under the law, applicants with an annual income of \$79,050 or less are presumed to have such a need. Applicants with annual income in excess of \$79,050 must show that eligible expenses exceed income.

Upon the death of a qualified disabled veteran, the tax exemption may pass on to the unremarried surviving spouse if the need can be shown. For more information, contact your county director of veterans affairs.





- Must be honorably discharged; and,
- Must be a Pennsylvania resident.

Applications are processed on a “first come, first served” basis. For more information or applications, contact your county director of veterans affairs or one of the following:

**Department of Military Affairs**  
Veterans Homes System  
Annville, PA 17003  
(717) 861-8906 or 1-800-547-2838

**Hollidaysburg Veterans’ Home**  
P.O. Box 319 • Hollidaysburg, PA 16648  
(814) 696-5201

**Gino J. Merli Veterans’ Center**  
401 Penn Avenue • Scranton, PA 18503  
(570) 961-4300

**Pennsylvania Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Home**  
560 East Third Street • Erie, PA 16507  
(814) 871-4531

**Southeastern Veterans’ Center**  
One Veterans Drive  
Spring City, PA 19475  
(610) 948-2400

**Southwestern Veterans’ Center**  
7060 Highland Drive  
Pittsburgh, PA 15206  
(412) 665-6706

**Delaware Valley Veterans’ Home**  
2701 Southampton Road • Philadelphia, PA 19154  
(215) 965-5900

Statements in this pamphlet are intended for general information and do not have the effect of law or regulation.

## **Birth and Death Records**

Certified copies of birth and death records are issued to veterans and their dependents without cost by contacting the Division of Vital Records at P.O. Box 1528, 101 South Mercer Street, New Castle, PA 16103, or call (724) 656-3100.

## **★ PENSIONS ★**

### **Paralyzed Veterans’ Pension**

Requirements to receive a monthly pension are as follows:

- Honorably discharged;
- Resident of Pennsylvania upon entering military; and,
- Suffered an injury or disease resulting in the loss of or use of two or more extremities (arms/hands or legs/feet) during an established period of war, armed conflict or combat-related activities in peacetime.

For further information, contact your county director of veterans affairs.

### **Blind Veterans’ Pension**

Requirements to receive a monthly pension are as follows:

- Honorably discharged;
- Gave Pennsylvania as his or her place of residence at the time of entering the military or naval forces of the United States; and,
- Suffered an injury or incurred a disease at the time of service which resulted in blindness to the extent that he or she has 3/60 or 10/200 or less normal vision, in the better eye, or includes circumstances where the widest diameter of the visual field of the better eye has contracted to an angular distance of not greater than 20°.

For further information, contact your county director of veterans affairs.





## ★ RECREATION ★

### Free Fishing Licenses for Certain Disabled Veterans

To be eligible for a free fishing license, a veteran:

- Must be a resident of Pennsylvania who has a disability incurred in war or armed conflict; and,
- Must have suffered the loss of or loss of use of one or more limbs, total blindness, or who is certified by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as being 100 percent disabled during service duty.

The applicant must show he or she is a qualified disabled veteran. The only acceptable documentation is written certification from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs that the applicant has a qualifying disability incurred in any war or armed conflict.

### Reduced Fees for Fishing Licenses for Former Prisoners of War

A former prisoner of war who meets the qualifications shall be entitled to purchase a reduced-fee resident fishing license. The term “former prisoner of war” means an individual who was imprisoned by enemy forces while in the service of the Armed Forces of the United States as certified by the appropriate branch of the Armed Forces of the United States.

### Reduced Fees for Fishing Licenses for PA National Guard and Reserve Armed Forces

A reduced-fee fishing license is available to qualified residents who within the previous 24 months were deployed overseas for a period of 180 consecutive days or more or were released early from such

information. For more information, contact your local Employment Security Office at [www.pacareerlink.state.pa.us](http://www.pacareerlink.state.pa.us)

### State Retirement

Honorably discharged veterans employed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for a period of three years may be eligible to purchase credit for active military duty time (not to exceed five years) for retirement purposes.

Contact a State Employees’ Retirement System (SERS) Counselor to determine your eligibility. If you call SERS toll-free (1-800-633-5461) from a location in Pennsylvania, you will be automatically connected to the Retirement Counseling Center serving the county from which you are calling.

## ★ ASSISTANCE AGENCIES ★

### PA Bureau for Veterans Affairs

Toll-Free Numbers

Ft. Indiantown Gap - 1-800-547-2838

Philadelphia - 1-866-754-8637

Pittsburgh - 1-866-754-8636

### Miscellaneous

#### Indiantown Gap National Cemetery

Fort Indiantown Gap

Anville, PA 17003-5002

Phone: (717) 865-5254

#### Vietnam Veterans of America

#### General Information Line

Toll-Free 1-800-882-1316

### State Veterans Homes

To be eligible, a veteran, spouse or surviving spouse of an eligible veteran:

- Must have served in the U.S. Armed Forces or PA National Guard;





## **Purple Heart Recipient/ Ex-Prisoner of War License Plates**

Any former POW or Purple Heart recipient owning a vehicle may apply for these plates. The plates may be used for a passenger car or truck with a registered gross weight of not more than 9,000 lbs.

When registering a vehicle, the applicant must pay a nominal fee to cover the cost of processing for issuing or renewing the registration.

## **Parking Placard**

No fee is charged to a veteran with a disability certified by the U.S. Department of Veterans Administration as service-connected for a parking placard designating the vehicle as used by a disabled person.

Applications for any of the special license plates/parking placard can be obtained from any county director of veterans affairs office or by calling the PA Department of Transportation at 1-800-932-4600.

# ★ **EMPLOYMENT** ★

## **Civil Service Preference**

Honorably discharged veterans receiving a passing score on a PA State Civil Service examination are given an additional ten points on initial appointment only. Widows of veterans and wives of disabled service-connected veterans are also extended the same preferential rating. For more information, contact the PA State Civil Service Commission, P.O. Box 569, 320 Market Street, Harrisburg, PA 17108, or call (717) 783-3058.

## **Veterans Employment**

Veterans employment representatives are located at all PA CareerLink offices or participating agencies providing free job counseling and placement

service because of an injury or disease incurred in the line of duty. Only one reduced-fee license may be issued for each qualifying deployment.

Applicants must provide a valid military ID card, individual or unit orders showing the return date from overseas and proof of residency/home of record.

## **Lifetime Fishing Licenses**

If a disabled veteran who qualifies for issuance of a free resident fishing license and presents documentation to show that the qualifying disability is permanent, the commission or county treasurer shall issue a disabled veteran lifetime fishing license.

A former prisoner of war who meets the required qualifications shall be entitled to purchase a senior resident lifetime fishing license at a reduced fee upon application.

*Applications for a fishing license may be made to a County Treasurer's office or the PA Fish and Boat Commission's Harrisburg office, or one of its six regional law enforcement offices.*

## **Free Hunting Licenses for Certain Disabled Veterans**

To be eligible for a free hunting license, a veteran:

- Must be a qualified Pennsylvania resident;
- Disability must consist of the loss of one or more limbs, or the loss of use of one or more limbs or the applicant must present a certification from the Veterans Administration indicating total disability; and,
- Disability must be service connected and the applicant must be a veteran of any war or armed conflict. Discharge papers may also be required.

*...continued on next page*





To be eligible for a resident disabled veteran lifetime license, the qualified veteran must meet one of the criteria shown above and, if qualifying under loss of use of one or more limbs or certification from the Veterans Administration indicating total disability, present documentation that the condition(s) is permanent.

### **PA National Guard and Reserve Armed Forces Hunting Licenses**

A reduced-fee general hunting license is available to qualified residents who within the previous 24 months were deployed overseas for a period of 180 consecutive days or more or were released early from such service because of an injury or disease incurred in the line of duty. Only one reduced-fee license may be issued for each qualifying deployment. Applicants must provide a valid military ID card, individual or unit orders showing the return date from overseas and proof of residency/home of record.

### **Prisoner of War Hunting Licenses**

A reduced-fee general hunting license is available to qualified residents who were imprisoned by enemy forces while in the service of the Armed Forces of the United States as certified by the appropriate branch of the Armed Forces of the United States. Applicants must provide a copy of their orders showing the award of the Prisoner of War Medal or a DD 214 stating prisoner of war status, and proof of residency.

### **Antlerless Deer License**

Qualifying disabled veterans who are residents of Pennsylvania can receive an antlerless deer license upon application to the county treasurer of their choice, regardless of the county allocation. The fee for this guaranteed disabled veteran antlerless deer license is the same as the regular or military antlerless deer.

*Hunting licenses are available through County Treasurer and Game Commission offices.*

## **★ EDUCATION ★**

### **Grants for Veterans and POW/MIA Dependents**

Qualified veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces are eligible for consideration for state grants while they are full-time undergraduate students. Veterans must be Pennsylvania residents and meet other PHEAA eligibility requirements.

Dependent children of members or former members of the U.S. Armed Forces who served on active duty after January 31, 1955 who are listed as missing in action and who were residents of Pennsylvania for at least 12 months prior to active duty are eligible for undergraduate state grants. For more information, call toll-free 1-800-692-7392.

### **Educational Gratuity**

Payments of educational gratuities are for children of honorably discharged veterans who have been certified by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as having wartime service-connected disabilities rated as totally and permanently disabled or children of veterans who die and have died of war service connected disabilities. For more information, call (717) 861-9410.

## **★ MOTOR VEHICLES ★**

For requests and questions on the following information, call toll-free 1-800-932-4600.

### **Vehicle Registration**

On the application of a disabled veteran whose service-connected disability is certified at 100 percent by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the PA Department of Transportation will issue a special registration plate designating the vehicle as belonging to a disabled veteran or a severely disabled veteran.

