



State Provided Service Member Benefits

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With our economy struggling through a recession, it is important to not only be aware of but take full advantage of every benefit available to veterans. In spite of budget cuts, many states, commonwealths and counties provide grants, loans and assistance that go unused.

Available Service Member Benefits Overview:

Grants

Several states have enacted programs that provide basic subsistence grants to eligible *Operation Enduring Freedom* or *Operation Iraqi Freedom* veterans. Family members are eligible to apply if the grant will directly or indirectly aid or provide care for a veteran. The grants are designed to assist with emergencies or problems in which assistance is unavailable from regular social agencies.

The grant programs are designed to assist veterans with:

- Temporary subsistence pending disability claim approval.
- Eviction, mortgage and foreclosure problems.
- Basic subsistence.
- Caregiver expenses when traveling to a distant medical facility.
- Funds to re-start or reinvigorate a business.

Hunting and Fishing Licenses

Almost all states have enacted programs providing free and reduced annual fee hunting and fishing licenses. Many of the programs apply to both permanent residents and service members on leave within the state for 30 days or less. Disabled veterans, based upon their disability rating, may be entitled to discounted and no-cost fishing and hunting licenses.

License Plates

Numerous states provide veterans with discounted and free license plates. Eligibility applies to service members who are:

- Recipients of the Medal of Honor, Distinguish Service Cross, Navy Cross, Air Force Cross or the Purple Heart
- Pearl Harbor survivors and ex-prisoners of war
- Disabled veterans

Income Tax Exemption

Several states have enacted laws precluding all retirement or compensation received as retirement benefits by a retired service member from state, county or municipal income tax. Other states exempt combat zone income from state income taxes.

Veteran Employment Programs

Many states offer honorably discharged veterans with extra points (ranging between five to 15

points) on civil service examinations. Spouses and widows of disabled or deceased veterans will also have bonus points extended to them and added to any earned ratings.

Property Tax Exemptions

Several states and counties have established grant programs to assist with the payment of ad-valorem property taxes. The programs assist deployed service members with the support of their families and homes. Grants range from \$600 to \$1,500 a calendar year. A widow may also be eligible for program benefits based on their spouse's service.

Travel and Leisure

Although not the most convenient, space-available travel is an option for service members traveling on leave and vacations. In 2007, these benefits were expanded to allow spouses and children of deployed personnel to utilize military transport in CONUS, to/from CONUS, and within/between theater. Service members may also utilize the Armed Forces Recreation Centers for luxurious accommodations at affordable prices throughout the world.

Every state provides differing benefits to service members. It is important to check with your respective states Department of Veterans Administration to learn about what you may qualify to receive.

Don't pass them up!