

Louisiana State Veteran's Benefits

June 2017



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
- 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:

- 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.
- <http://www.vetaffairs.la.gov/Portals/1/LDVA%20Veterans%20Homes%20FAQ.pdf> for frequently asked questions about admission and services.
- http://www.vetaffairs.la.gov/Portals/1/PageContent_Documents/Veterans%20Homes/LDVA%20AppAdmiss%202015.pdf to download an application for residency in the LDVA Veterans Homes system.

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

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. Point of Contact is Mr. John Salter, Administrator Tel: (225) 634-5265 /4057F E-Mail: jon.salter@vetaffairs.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. Point of contact is Matt Duhon, Administrator, Telephone: (337) 824-2829/2581F E-Mail: matt.duhon@vetaffairs.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. Point of contact is Mr. Ken Houston, Administrator Telephone: (318) 362-4206/4241F E-Mail: ken.houston@vetaffairs.la.gov. The Northeast LA War Veterans Home's 2014-2019 Strategic Plan may be viewed at www.vetaffairs.la.gov/VeteransHomes/MonroeHome/MonroeNews.aspx.

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. Point of contact is Mr. Cleveland Obey, Telephone: (985) 479-4080/4090F E-Mail: cleveland.obey@vetaffairs.la.gov

Property Tax Exemptions

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.

Visit the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs website <http://vetaffairs.la.gov> for contact information and benefits assistance.

VETERAN FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Income Tax

Retired military pay is not taxed.

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.

Homestead Exemption

Qualifying Veterans can receive additional tax benefits on their homestead exemption. Additional special property tax exemptions are also assessed for some disabled veterans or active duty servicemembers killed in action. Additional eligibility requirements apply. Visit your local Parish Assessor's Office to learn more.

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 the Louisiana National Guard directly at: WO1 Kirby, Casualty Operations NCO, (504) 278-8369 OR NGLA-JPM-PS, Jackson Barracks, 6400 St. Claude Ave., New Orleans LA 70117.

EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

Transfer of Military Skills to Civilian Employment

Individuals with military training and experience will be granted professional licensure and/or certification when the service member has been awarded a military occupational specialty and performance in that specialty is at a level equal to or exceeding the requirements for said license and/or certification (provisions may apply). The same also allows for spouses of individuals with military training and experience will be granted a license, certification or registration to lawfully practice an occupation by the appropriate professional or occupational licensing board when the spouse meets certain conditions.

State Employment

Louisiana state and city civil service departments award a five point preference in original appointment to veterans who served honorably U.S. Armed Forces. They also award ten-point preference to each honorably discharged service-connected disabled veteran. 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

Dependents Educational Assistance

Section 288 of Title 29 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950 has been amended and re-enacted to provide financial aid for children and surviving spouses of certain veterans of this state who died in service in the Armed Forces of the United States or died of a service connected disability incurred during a wartime period.

The law provides the same benefits for those children of living veterans who are rated 90% or above disabled, including 100% individual unemployability, by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

"Schedule for Rating Disabilities", as a result of a disability or disabilities incurred in service in the Armed Forces of the United States.

The law further requires that the deceased veteran must have been a resident of the State of Louisiana for at least twelve months immediately preceding entry into service. The living veteran must have resided in the state not less than twenty-four months immediately preceding the child's admission into the Program. The surviving spouse must use this Program within ten years of the date eligibility is established. A child must be between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five.

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. The Adjutant General of Louisiana is responsible for the overall policies, guidance, administration, and proper utilization of this program.

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>.

Visit the [Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs](http://www.louisiana.gov/veterans-affairs) website for contact information and benefits assistance.

OTHER STATE VETERAN BENEFITS

Military Retiree Pay Tax Exemption

Military retirement benefits are exempt from Louisiana state taxes.

Free Hunting/Fishing Licenses

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 will also be granted resident status when purchasing hunting and fishing licenses. Applications may be obtained and certified by contacting the local Parish Veterans Service Office.

Free Entrance to State Parks

Eligible Veterans are exempt from paying the day-use entrance fee to any Louisiana state park. Contact your LDVA Parish Office for details.

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 <http://www.vetaffairs.la.gov/Programs/LAVeteransHonorMedal.aspx> or by downloading the hard copy at http://www.vetaffairs.la.gov/Portals/1/PageContent_Documents/LA%20Veterans%20Honor%20Medal/LA%20Honor%20Medals%20App.pdf

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%20Elibility%20Interment%202014.pdf>

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

- 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.
- Northeast Louisiana Veterans Cemetery, Rayville, LA (Anticipated Grand Opening - Spring 2016)
- Alexandria National Cemetery -Visitation Only (no new interments), 209 E. Shamrock Ave., Pineville, LA 71360.
- Baton Rouge National Cemetery - Visitation Only (no new interments), 220 North 19th Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70806.
- Port Hudson National Cemetery, 20978 Port Hickey Road, Zachary, LA 70791 Tel: (225) 654-1988

- Louisiana National Cemetery, 303 W. Mount Pleasant Road, Zachary, LA 70791 Tel: (225) 654-3767

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> JUN 2017 ++]

Military Discounts in Louisiana

1. MVDC has a list of close to 3,600 locations in Louisiana that have discounts for military personnel or veterans. Similar to businesses, the state provides discounts for its veterans and military population. If you are looking for business discounts use the search tool at <http://militaryandveteransdiscounts.com/location/louisiana.html> .

2. Veterans Designation on driver's license: Yes

3. Discounted Fees and Taxes

- Free hunting and fishing licenses for disabled veterans
- Military retirement exempt from state income tax
- Property assessment frozen under a certain income level for 50% service-connected disabled veterans

4. Education Discounts

- 100% tuition exemption at any state institution of higher learning (reservists)
- Tuition exemption for dependents of veterans with a severe service-connected disability or veterans who died during active duty during a war time period

[Source: <http://militaryandveteransdiscounts.com/location/louisiana.html> | JUN 2017 ++]