

Texas State Veteran's Benefits

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

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

Texas Veteran Housing Programs

Texas Veterans Land Board Programs

The Texas Veterans Land Board (VLB), a division of the Texas General Land Office, administers three veterans' loan programs:

- The Land Loan Program;
- Veterans Housing Assistance Purchase Program; and
- Veterans Home Improvement Loan Program.

Additional information on these programs is available on the VLB website <http://www.glo.texas.gov/vlb/veterans-benefits/veteran-loans/eligibility.html>.

Texas Financial Assistance Programs

Tax Exemption for Veterans

Disabled veterans who meet certain requirements, their surviving spouses and the spouses and minor children of a person who dies on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces are eligible for property tax exemptions on the appraised value of their property. The exemption is mandatory and applies to taxes levied by all taxing authorities in the State. A veteran, whose service-connected disabilities are rated less than 10% by the Department of Veterans Affairs, or a branch of the Armed Forces, is not entitled to a property tax exemption.

Visit the Texas Veterans Commission website <http://www.tvc.state.tx.us/> for contact information and benefits assistance.

Texas State Veteran Education Benefits

The Hazlewood Act

Wartime veterans who were legal residents of Texas at the time they entered military service, and *Home of Record is listed as Texas* on the DD214, are entitled to a waiver of tuition and some fees at State-supported/public (taxpayer

supported) colleges and universities. This benefit is also available to children of Texas servicemen and women who died or were killed in military service, and to children of Texas military personnel who are shown to be missing in action or prisoners of war. Also eligible are children of members of the Texas National Guard or the Texas Air National Guard killed since January 1, 1946, while on active duty either in service of Texas or the United States. Learn more about Texas Education Benefits (the Hazlewood Act) at <http://texas-veterans.com/education/hazlewood>

Texas Veteran Employment Programs

Veterans Preference

Wartime veterans have preference in employment with State agencies or offices, as do widows and children of those killed on active duty. State agencies must practice veterans' preference until they have reached 40% veteran employment. Non-retired veterans who are employed by the State of Texas are entitled to claim their active duty military time toward retirement, provided they present a proper request and pay to the Retirement System the specified amount of retirement contribution for up to 60 months' military credit. Such contribution is paid at the rate which was applicable at the time the employed veteran first was covered by the state Retirement System, plus any accrued interest. A link to the State Law regarding veterans' preference laws is <http://texas-veterans.com/employment/veterans-preference>.

Additionally, a veteran is entitled to reemployment rights with his last employer when he is released from the Armed Forces of the United States, providing his absence is not longer than four years. The right of reemployment is available regardless of whether the veteran was, prior to service, employed by the State, county or city government, or by private industry. Reemployment rights of veterans are now provided by both State and Federal laws.

Visit the Texas Veterans Commission website <http://www.tvc.state.tx.us/> for contact information and benefits assistance.

Other Texas State Veteran Benefits

Texas State Cemetery Program

In the November 2001 statewide elections, voters overwhelmingly approved Proposition 7, a constitutional amendment that authorized the creation of up to seven state cemeteries for veterans and their eligible dependents. The cemeteries will be built and operated through a partnership between the Texas Veterans Land Board (VLB) and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA). The USDVA will fund up to 100 percent of the construction and equipment costs. The state will own and operate the cemeteries and fund most of the cost of operations.

Visit the Texas Veterans Commission website <http://www.tvc.state.tx.us/> for contact information and benefits assistance.

No-Cost Medical Records

Under the Health and Safety Code, Chapter 161.201 Subchapter M, Medical or Mental Health Records, Texas veterans are eligible for no cost medical records when they are obtained to file a claim for a disability against the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA). The health care provider or health care facility is not required to provide more than one complete record for the patient or former patient without charge. Also, it should be noted, that some medical facilities will charge a small administrative fee for obtaining the records.

Free Drivers License for Disabled Veterans

Under Texas Transportation Code Title 7, Chapter 521, Section 521.426, Texas drivers licenses may be furnished free of charge to veterans who have service-connected disabilities rated 60% or more by the VA or by a branch of the Armed Forces of the U.S. Application must be made prior to the time present drivers license expires. Application forms may be obtained from Department of Public Safety's license examining offices located throughout the State. A link to the the Texas Department of Public Safety's **Drivers License information** website is <http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/DriverLicense/index.htm>. Application forms should be completed by the veteran and forwarded to the VA for verification of service-connected rating of 60% or more. If a veteran was disability-retired from military service and has no VA claim file, proof of disability must come from their respective branch of military service.

Fishing and Hunting Licenses for Disabled Veterans

Disabled veterans are eligible for special hunting and fishing licenses, at a reduced cost. A disabled veteran of the Armed Forces of the United States is one who has a service-connected disability, as defined by the Department of Veterans Affairs, consisting of the loss of use of a lower extremity or of a disability rating of 60% or more, and who is receiving compensation from the United States for the disability. A resident veteran as described in the law may hunt wild turkey and deer without a resident hunting license if he has acquired a resident exemption hunting license. A link to the Texas Parks and Wildlife website is <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/>.

Free Park Admission for Disabled Veterans

Free admission to Texas State Parks is available to any veteran who has a service-connected disability, which is rated 60% or more by VA, or a service-connected disability, which has resulted in the loss of a lower extremity. Application may be made at the headquarters office of any Texas State park by providing satisfactory evidence of service-connected disability. If such evidence is not readily available, it can be obtained from the VA regional office where the claims folder is located. The Texas State Parklands Passport is available to any veteran who meets the disability requirements, whether or not he or she resides in Texas. The Passport provides only free admission to the State parks, and does not exempt anyone from payment of other charges, such as camping fees, etc. A link to the Texas Parks and Wildlife website is <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/>.

Free Recording of Discharges

Under Texas State law, Local Government Code Sec. 0192.002, the County Clerk in each County is required to record, free of charge, the official discharge of each veteran who served in the Armed Forces of the United States of America. This free service is very important as it provides veterans with a ready source from which they can obtain a certified copy of their discharge whenever it is needed. **It is the veteran's responsibility to have the DD214 or Discharge recorded. Please also note that if you do record your DD214 with the County Clerk, it then becomes a public record. See "Safeguard Your Discharge (DD214)" at <http://www.tarrantcounty.com/eveterans/cwp/view.asp?A=776&Q=432386>.** Also note that the Texas Veterans Commission does not keep a record of your DD214 or Discharge.

Special License Plates

Disabled Veterans, Former Prisoners of War, Pearl Harbor Survivors, Purple Heart and Medal of Honor plates are among the special license plates available to eligible veterans and their survivors for personal use on their automobile or light commercial vehicle of one ton or less. Disabled veterans must have a service-connected disability rating of 50% or more or 40% due to amputation of a lower extremity. Former prisoners of war are eligible if they were captured or incarcerated by an enemy of the United States during a period of conflict with the United States and at the time of the capture, were citizens of the United States. Eligibility is for both former members of the Armed Forces and civilian U.S. citizens who were captured by an enemy of our government. For further information, contact either the nearest vehicle title registration office or your county tax office. We have provided a link to the **Texas Department of Transportation's** website <http://www.dot.state.tx.us> for your convenience.

Visit the Texas Veterans Commission website <http://www.tvc.state.tx.us/> website for benefits assistance.

[Source: <http://www.military.com/benefits/content/veteran-state-benefits/texas-state-veterans-benefits.html> Jan 2012 ++]