Voices for Veterans

South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs

Welcome Home Resource for Veterans

South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs

425 E. Capitol

Pierre, SD 57501

605.773.3269

http://vetaffairs.sd.gov

Date: 1/1/18

Message from Secretary Zimmerman

The primary mission of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs is to advocate with purpose and passion for South Dakota's veterans and link them to superior services, benefits, and support. Our team is at the forefront of the most demanding challenges confronting our state's veterans, whether they are veterans from the World War II generation, Korean War, Vietnam War, Cold War, or veterans who most recently served in support of Desert Storm, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, or Operation New Dawn.

Our team at the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (SDDVA), believes it is a privilege and an honor to serve our veterans and their family members. On a daily basis, our team labors tirelessly to ensure that the State of South Dakota preserves our reputation as "a veteran friendly state."

Larry Zimmerman, Secretary
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs

Table of Contents

Message from Secretary Zimmerman	page 2
Table of Contents	page 3
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs	page 4
County and Tribal Veterans Service Officers	page 5
VA Healthcare Centers	page 6
Community Based Outpatient Clinics	page 7
Mental Health	page 8
Disability Claims	page 9-12
Compensation	page 13-14
Healthcare	page 15-20
Burial Benefits	page 21-25
Dependency and Indemnity Compensation	page 26
Benefits for Service Connected Disabled Veteran	page 27-32
VA Pension	page 33
Services for Combat Veterans	page 34
Bonus Program	page 35
Presumptive Conditions Due to Exposure	page 36-40
PTSI and TBI	page 41-42
ID Cards	page 43-44
Housing/Stand Downs	page 45
Military Records	page 46
Veterans Preference	page 47
Voc Rehab	page 48-49
Education Benefits	page 50-57
License Plates	page 58-59
Veterans Courts	page 59
Tax Benefits	page 60-61
Game Fish and Parks Licenses and Benefits	page 62-63

425 East Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501
605.773.3269
http://vetaffairs.sd.gov

Secretary: Larry Zimmerman
Deputy Secretary/Director: Aaron Pollard
Pierre Program Manager: Erin Brown
Sioux Falls Program Manager: Heather Bullerman
Education Program Manager: Shane Olivier
(shane.olivier@state.sd.us)
OJT & Apprenticeship: Ryan Fowler
(ryan.fowler@state.sd.us)

State Field Officers
Western—William Huffmon: (william.huffmon@state.sd.us)
Central—Kevin Bowen: (kevin.bowen@state.sd.us)
Northeast—Kevin Swanson (kevin.swanson@state.sd.us)
Southeast—Michael Maske (michael.maske@va.gov)

Claims Director: Aaron Pollard (aaron.pollard@state.sd.us)
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs
Claims Office - c/o VA Regional Office
2501 W. 22nd Street
Sioux Falls, SD 57117-5046
605.333.6869

What is a Veterans Service Officer

The County or Tribal Service Officer provides information, assistance, counseling and referrals on a wide range of subjects, benefits, and veteran programs.

Each County or Tribal Veterans Service Officer receives training from our Department on a wide range of topics. The topics are not limited to the ones listed here but these do indicate the variety of issues in which they might work with. This list includes VA Home Loans, compensation, pensions, education (On-The-Job Training and Apprenticeship Training), rehabilitation, medical and dental treatment, hospitalization, outpatient treatment, nursing home care, state benefits, Social Security, alcoholism and drug dependency treatment, employment, small business loans, military records, discharges, burial expense reimbursement, obtaining flags, as well as veterans' preferences.

It is each veteran's responsibility to know who his Service Officer is and how to contact him or her. The Service Officers are a veteran's friend and they are willing to assist.

Click here to locate a Veterans Service Officer near you
(click control and enter)

Sioux Falls VA Healthcare System
2501 West 22nd Street
Sioux Falls, SD 57117-5046
Toll Free Number: 1.800.316.8387
Switchboard: 605.336.3230

Fort Meade VA Medical Center
113 Comanche Road
Fort Meade, SD 57741-1099
Toll Free Number: 1.800.743.1070
Switchboard: 605.347.2511

Hot Springs VA Medical Center
500 North 5th Street
Hot Springs, SD 57747-1497
Toll Free Number: 1.800.764.5370
Switchboard: 605.745.2000

Fargo VA Medical Center
2101 N. Elm
Fargo, ND 58102
Toll Free Number: 1.800.410.9723

Community Based Outpatient Clinics

The VA currently has over 800 Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC). VHA implemented these clinics to make access to health care easier. These clinics provide the most common outpatient services, including health and wellness visits, without the hassle of visiting a larger medical center. VHA continues to expand their network of CBOCs to include more rural locations, making access to care closer to home. To find a CBOC nearest to you please visit: **http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/Allstate_flsh.asp?dnum=1**

SOUTH DAKOTA
COUNCIL OF MENTAL HEALTH CENTERS, INC.
Terrance L. Dosch, Executive Director
P.O. Box 532
2520 East Franklin Street
Pierre, South Dakota 57501-0532
Phone: (605-) 224-0123 (Voice & FAX)
E-Mail: tladosch@dakota2k.net
Web: www.sdmentalhealth.org

A complete listing of community mental health centers in South Dakota can be found at the following link:

https://dss.sd.gov/behavioralhealth/community/centers.aspx

Step 1: File a Claim

Filing for veterans benefits is a free service provided by the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs and local County and Tribal Veteran Service Officers (CTVSOs). Claims can also be filed by National Service Offices such as: Vietnam Veterans of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Paralyzed Veterans of America, and Disabled American Veterans (DAV), etc. The disability claim process begins the moment you file a claim. To file, veterans must sign a power of attorney (POA) which authorizes our team to act on your behalf when preparing, presenting and prosecuting your claim for any and all benefits from the VA.

Step 2: Submit Evidence

You must submit evidence to support your disability claim. Evidence submitted at the time of the filing will help expedite your claim. Your disability evaluation will be based on the evidence so it is essential that the information is accurate and complete. Our staff or the CTVSOs can assist you in this process.

Step 3: Get a VA Physical Exam

The exams that the VA requests will depend on your claim and treatment history. Your nearest VA Medical Center will schedule the exam and contact you to let you know when and what exams are scheduled. After the exams, a report will be prepared and sent to a rating board. You can help the process go faster by keeping your appointments.

(Continued on next page)

Step 4: Obtain VA Decision

The VA will consider all evidence submitted and make a decision about whether or not the claim supports injuries and disabilities chronically incurred, aggravated or contains certain presumptive conditions while in service. If the VA approves the claim, then a rating is decided based on how severe your conditions are. The rating is defined and set based on federal law.

Options For Denied Claims or if you Disagree With a Decision

If the VA denies your claim you may appeal the decision. You may also appeal if your claim was approved, but you disagree with any part of the rating. An appeal involves many steps, some of which are optional, some that are required. The appeals process has strict time limits that include:

1. Notice of Disagreement (NOD)
2. Statement of Case (SOC)
3. Hearing (Optional)
4. Formal Appeal (Form 9)
5. Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA)
6. U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC)

Unfortunately, this process can take years to come to a final decision, but once a decision has been made, you will be notified by mail.

Note: Before you file an appeal, consider obtaining **new & material evidence** and request your denied claim be reconsidered. This can save time and effort. Talk to your local Veterans Service Officer before you file an appeal.

Tips to Assist you in being prepared to file your claim

- **Bring** a copy of your DD 214 and evidence that supports your claim. Never assume the VA has the necessary information on file.

- **Be Sure** your VA file number is included on every page of your correspondence and documentation.

- **Respond** quickly and completely to the VA's request for further information.

- **Keep** all scheduled medical appointments.

- **Notify** the VA immediately if your address or phone number changes.

- **Know** your service dates and Social Security number. If you are a spouse of a deceased veteran, you should know this information, along with any previous marital status of your veteran.

- **Consider** using direct deposit to receive VA payment and be prepared to provide a voided check.

Veterans claims and advocacy for veterans, their survivors and dependents—

The Federal VA benefit system actually is a legal system. In order to qualify for benefits, veterans must file a claim against the United States proving they are eligible for these benefits through the submission of legal, military and medical evidence. SDDVA employs federally accredited and state certified Veterans Service Officers (VSOs) who are subject matter experts in Federal VA law (Chapter 38 United States Code and Chapter 38 Code of Federal Regulations) and are allowed to practice by taking Power of Attorney for veterans seeking benefits. These VSOs represent veterans, their dependents and survivors before the Federal VA in their claims and appeals.

With its County Veteran Service Officer and National Service Officer partners, SDDVA provides claims and counseling advocacy and representation to South Dakota's 75,000 veterans.

In addition to claims work, VSOs regularly help veterans and their families learn about other benefits that they may be eligible for. VSOs are knowledgeable about the many resources available within the state and can usually assist in finding help and solutions to issues that you may be facing.

Compensation is a monetary benefit paid to veterans who are disabled by an injury or illness incurred or aggravated during active military service. These disabilities are considered to be service connected.

Military Retired Pay

Historically, veterans have not been permitted to receive full military pay and VA compensation for benefits at the same time. Veterans who were entitled to both have had to either waive a portion of their retirement equaling the amount of awarded VA compensation or elect not to receive VA compensation at all. Receiving both benefits and retirement pay is commonly known as "concurrent receipt."

In 2004, Congress passed the Concurrent Retired and Disability Pay and Combat Related Special Compensation Acts, allowing many veterans to receive 100 percent of the military retirement and VA compensation.

Disability Compensation

Disability compensation is paid monthly and varies with the degree of disability, the impairment to a veteran's earning capacity and the number of dependents. Veterans with certain severe disabilities may be eligible for additional special monthly compensation. These benefits are not subject to federal or state income tax.

National Guard/Select Reserve

Reservists who serve on active duty establish veteran status and may be eligible for the full range of VA benefits, depending on the length of active military service and a discharge or release from active duty under conditions other than dishonorable. In addition, reservists not activated may qualify for some VA benefits. National Guard members can establish eligibility for VA benefits if activated for federal service during a period of war or domestic emergency. Activation for other than federal service does not qualify guard members for all VA benefits. Claims for VA benefits based on federal service filed by National Guard members should include a copy of their military orders, presidential proclamation or executive order that clearly demonstrates the nature of their federal service.

Aid and Attendance (A&A)

An A&A benefit can be paid in addition to monthly pension or compensation. A&A is allowed if the veteran: requires the aid of another person in order to perform his or her daily living activities; is bedridden; is a patient in a nursing home due to mental or physical incapacity; or has corrected visual acuity of 5/200 or less, in both eyes, or concentric contraction of the visual field to 5 degrees or less.

Housebound Benefits

Qualifying veterans must have a single permanent disability (rated 100 percent disabled), and need assistance, or have a single permanent disability (100 percent disabled) and another disability, or disabilities, evaluated as 60 percent or more disabling. A veteran cannot receive both A&A and Household Benefits at the same time.

A person who served in the active duty military and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable may qualify for VA health care benefits.

Reservists and National Guard members also may qualify for VA health care benefits if they were called to active duty (other than for training only) by a federal order and completed the full period for which they were called or ordered to active duty.

Veterans who enlisted after Sept. 7, 1980, or who entered active duty after Oct. 16, 1981, must have served 24 continuous months or the full period for which they were called to active duty in order to be eligible. This minimum duty requirement may not apply to veterans discharged for hardship, early out, or a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty.

Enrollment

For most veterans, entry into the VA health care system begins by applying for enrollment. To apply, complete VA Form 10-10EZ, Application for Health Benefits, which may be obtained from a VA health care facility or regional benefits office, online or by calling VA. Once enrolled, veterans can receive health care at VA health care facilities anywhere in the country. Veterans enrolled in the VA health care system are afforded privacy rights under federal law. During enrollment, each veteran is assigned to a priority group based on their service connected disability rating and other factors. VA uses priority groups to balance demand for VA health care enrollment with resources.

Standard Benefits

VA's medical benefits package provides the following healthcare services to all enrolled veterans:

Preventive Care Services
Ambulatory (Outpatient) Diagnostic and Treatment Services
Hospital (Inpatient) Diagnostic Treatment
VA prescribed Medications and Supplies
Acute Care Services
Ambulance service
Dental Care
Durable Medical equipment
Eyeglasses
Hearing Aids
Home Health Care Services
Non-VA Health Care Services
Orthopedic, Prosthetic, and Rehabilitative Devices
Rehabilitative Services
Readjustment Counseling
Sexual Trauma Counseling

Military Sexual Trauma

Military Sexual Trauma (MST) is the term that the Department of Veterans Affairs uses to refer to sexual harassment that occurred while the veteran was in the military. It includes any sexual activity where someone is involved against his or her will—he or she may have been pressured into sexual activities (for example, with threats of negative consequences for refusing to be sexually cooperative, implied faster promotions, or better treatment in exchange for sex), and may have been unable to consent to sexual activities (for example, when intoxicated), or may have been physically forced into sexual activities. Other experiences that fall into the category of MST include unwanted sexual touching or grabbing; threatening, offensive remarks about a person's body or sexual activities; and/or threatening or unwelcome sexual advances.

Both women and men can experience MST during their service. All veterans seen at Veterans Health Administration's facilities are asked about experiences of sexual trauma because they know that any type of trauma can affect a person's physical and mental health, even many years later. People can recover from trauma and the VA has free services to help veterans do this. You do not need to have a VA disability (service connected) rating to receive these services and may be able to receive services even if you are not eligible for other VA care. You do not need to have reported the incident(s) when they happened or have other documentation that they occurred.

For more information, veterans can speak with a VA healthcare provider, contact the MST Coordinator at their nearest VA Medical Center, or contact their local Vet Center. More MST information can be found at **mentalhealth.va.gov.**

Women Veterans Healthcare

Women veterans are eligible for the same VA benefits as male veterans. Comprehensive health services are available to women veterans including primary care, mental health care and reproductive health care services. VA provides management of acute and chronic illnesses, preventive care, contraceptive services, menopause management, cancer screenings, including pap smear, mammograms, and gynecology.

Maternity care is covered in the medical benefits package to include care for newborn children of women veterans for up to 7 days after birth. VA is also mandated to implement pilot programs to provide child care to women veterans receiving medical care, and to provide readjustment services to women veterans. Infertility evaluation and limited treatments also are available.
Women Veterans Program Managers are available at all VA facilities to help veterans seeking treatment and benefits.

Sioux Falls VA Health Care System Women Veterans Program Manager
Brenda Fredericks—605-336-3230 Ext. 6250

VA Black Hills Health Care System Women Veterans Program Manager
Jessica Drenning—605.720.7422

Online Management

Managing your health information appointments, prescriptions, labs, blood tests and even exchanging messages with your health care team has never been easier. My HealtheVet, your online Personal Health Record, helps you gain a better understanding of your health status and allows you to explore a variety of ways to monitor and improve your health, 24 hours a day/7days a week. To get the most out of My HealtheVet, veterans are urged to visit their local VA health care facility to get an upgraded account, known as In-Person Authentication (IPA). This simple process allows you to use My HealtheVet to:

- View your VA appointments
- Access VA wellness reminders
- Communicate online through secure messaging
- View laboratory results and more

To begin using My HealtheVet, register today at **www.myhealth.va.gov**.

ChampVA and TriCare

The Civilian Health and Medical Program of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA) is a comprehensive health care program in which the VA shares the cost of covered health care services and supplies with eligible beneficiaries. The program is administered by Health Administration Center. Due to the similarity between CHAMPVA and the Department of Defense (DOD) TRICARE program (sometimes referred to by its old name, CHAMPUS) the two are often mistaken for each other. CHAMPVA is a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) program whereas TRICARE is a regionally managed health care program for active duty and retired members of the uniformed services, their families, and survivors. In some cases a veteran may look to be eligible for both/either program on paper. However, if you are a military retiree, or the spouse of a veteran who was killed in action, you are and will always be a TRICARE beneficiary.

Choice

Requires VA to offer an authorization to receive non-VA care to any veteran who is enrolled in the VA health care system as of August 1, 2014, or who is a newly discharged combat veteran if such veteran is unable to secure an appointment at a VA medical facility within 30 days (or a future published goal established by VA) or resides more than 40 miles from the nearest VA medical facility, with certain exceptions.

Requires VA to provide a Veterans Choice Card to eligible veterans to facilitate care provided by non-VA providers.

Provides $10 billion for the newly-established "Veterans Choice Fund" to cover the costs of this increased access to non-VA care. Choice program authority would end when funds are exhausted or three years after enactment, whichever occurs first.

Requires an independent assessment of VA medical care and established a Congressional Commission on Care to evaluate access to care throughout the VA health care system.

Extends the ARCH (Access Received Closer to Home) pilot program for two years.

Extends for three years a pilot program to provide rehabilitation, quality of life, and community integration services to veterans with complex-mild to severe traumatic brain injury.

Improves the delivery of care to veterans who have experienced military sexual trauma as well as care for Native Hawaiian and Native American veterans.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Benefits Administration oversees a burial benefits program designed to assist claimants in meeting the funeral and burial costs of a deceased veteran. The VA does not make funeral arrangements with a funeral provider or cremation office. You should advise your family of your wishes and where your discharge papers are kept. These papers are very important in establishing your eligibility. You may wish to make pre-need arrangements with a funeral home.

Service Connected Death

If a veteran's death is service-connected, the VA will pay burial allowance of up to $2,000 for deaths on or after Sept. 11, 2001. If the veteran is buried in a VA national cemetery, some or all of the cost of moving the veteran's body to the national cemetery nearest the veterans home may also be reimbursed. There is no time limit for applying for a service- connected burial allowance. The person who bore the veteran's burial expense may claim reimbursement from any VA regional office.

Non—Service Connected Death

If a veteran's death is not service-connected, there are two types of payments the VA may make: Burial and plot expense allowances. The VA will pay a burial and plot allowance if the veteran was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable and the veteran was in receipt of VA pension or compensation at the time of death. If a veteran died while in a VA facility or as a patient at an approved state nursing home, the VA may also pay this allowance.

Burial Plot Allowance

When a veteran is buried in a cemetery that is not under the U.S. government jurisdiction, the VA may also pay a plot allowance, provided that the veteran was discharged under a condition other than dishonorable; and met other qualifications similar to that of a non-service-connected death.

Filing a Claim for Reimbursement of Expenses

To file for reimbursement of burial expenses, an Application of Burial Allowance form must be submitted to the VA. The person filing the claim must also provide a certified copy of the veteran's death certificate and proof of the veteran's military service (Form DD-214), and itemized bills of the funeral and burial expenses.

Burial Flag

A United States flag is provided, at no cost, to drape the casket or accompany the urn of a deceased veteran who served honorably in the U.S. Armed Forces. It is furnished to honor the memory of a veteran's military service to his or her country. When burial is in a national, state or post cemetery, a burial flag will automatically be provided. When burial is in a private cemetery, the funeral director will generally help the next of kin with this process.

Military Funeral Honors Stipend Reimbursement

The 2015 South Dakota Legislature approved funding for a $50 reimbursement to congressionally chartered veterans service organizations for their services in conducting military funeral honors on or after July 1, 2015. Forms must be submitted, by the veterans service organization, after services have been performed. Forms must be submitted to the: South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (425 E. Capitol, Pierre, SD 57501). Reimbursement will be paid quarterly.

Headstone and Markers

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) furnishes upon request, at no charge to the applicant, a Government headstone or marker for the unmarked grave of any deceased eligible veteran in any cemetery around the world, regardless of their date of death. For eligible veterans that died on or after Nov. 1, 1990 and whose grave is marked with a privately purchased headstone, VA may also furnish a headstone or marker to supplement the grave or a medallion to be affixed to the privately purchased headstone. Eligible veterans are entitled to either a Government-furnished headstone or marker, or the new medallion, but not both.

Bronze Medallions for Headstone and Markers

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) may also provide a medallion, by request, to be affixed to an existing privately purchased headstone or marker to signify the deceased's status as a veteran. If requested, the medallion is furnished in lieu of a traditional Government headstone or marker for veterans that died on or after Nov. 1, 1990, and whose grave is marked with a privately purchased headstone or marker.

Burial at Sea

If The VA National Cemetery Administration cannot provide burial at sea. For information, contact the U.S. Navy Mortuary Affairs office toll free at: (866) 787-0081.

Presidential Memorial Certificates

A Presidential Memorial Certificate (PMC) is an engraved paper certificate, signed by the current president, to honor the memory of honorably discharged deceased veterans.

National Veterans Cemetery in South Dakota

Black Hills National Cemetery
20901 Pleasant Valley Drive
Sturgis, SD 57785
Phone: 605-347-3830
FAX: 605-347-0269
http://www.cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/blackhills.asp

Burial Allowance for Veterans and Survivors

A payment of up to $100 may be paid by the state to help defray the burial and funeral expenses of any honorably discharged veteran or the wife, widow or widower of a veteran when the estate, or immediate family, of the deceased is lacking in funds to pay the expenses. The veteran must have been a citizen of the United States for one year preceding entrance into military service or one year preceding the death. This payment CANNOT be made to another unit of government. The surviving spouse, or relatives, must furnish an affidavit to the C/TVSO that sufficient funds are not available for payment of the expenses. Application for the Burial Allowance must be submitted to the Pierre office within one year from the date of the burial.

Headstones and Markers

The state will pay $100 towards the cost of setting a government headstone or marker at the grave of a veteran who was a resident of this state for one year preceding entrance into the military service or one year preceding death. Application for the Headstone Setting Fee must be submitted to the Pierre South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs Office within one year from the date of setting of the headstone or marker.
Spouses and dependents are not eligible for a Government-furnished headstone or marker unless they are buried in a national cemetery, state veteran's cemetery, or military post/base cemetery.

Dependent Burial Benefits

Dependents and surviving spouses of an eligible veteran are eligible to be buried in national cemeteries. When a death occurs and eligibility for interment in a national cemetery is determined, grave space is assigned by the cemetery director in the name of the veteran or family member. One gravesite is permitted for the interment of all eligible family members, unless soil conditions or the number of family decedents necessitate more than one grave. There is no charge for burial in a national cemetery.

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation

(DIC) is a monthly monetary benefit payable to surviving dependents of a deceased veteran. This benefit is payable if the veteran died on active duty or in the line of duty and the death was not due to willful misconduct. Or, if death was after service, the death was caused by or attributed to a service -connected disability, or, if service member was rated 100% compensation for certain statutory time limits. The current basic monthly rate of DIC is $1254 for an eligible surviving spouse. The rate is increased for each dependent child, and also if the surviving spouse is housebound or in need of aid and attendance. VA also adds a transitional benefit to the surviving spouse's monthly DIC if there are children under age 18. The amount is based on a family unit, not individual children.
For further rates information visit:
www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/current_rates_dic.asp

Death Pensions

Survivors' (Death) Pension is a needs-based benefit paid to a surviving spouse, or an unmarried child, (who meets certain age or disability requirements), of a deceased wartime veteran. In order to qualify for a VA Death Pension, the VA calculates income received from most sources by the surviving spouse and any eligible children. It includes earnings, disability and retirement payments, unemployment insurance payments, interest and dividends payments, and net income from farming, business or rental property. If the income is below a certain level, the dependent or surviving spouse may be eligible for this pension.

Additional Benefits

The following Benefits are available to all veterans with a 0% Service-Connected Disability and Higher:

•Home Guaranty Certificate of Eligibility.

•Service Disabled Veterans Life Insurance. Must file within 2 years from initial notice of service connected disability. (Insurance only.)

•Outpatient treatment for: (1) service-connected conditions, and (2) for all medical conditions if enrolled in VA healthcare program. Co-payment for treatment may apply for non-service-connected conditions.

•Travel allowance for scheduled appointment for care of service-connected conditions at VA Medical Centers, and out patient clinics. (Eligibility based on the distance traveled 25 miles or more or a veteran's income.)

•Medical treatment for any condition: Enrollment in a VA healthcare program is encouraged but not required for treatment of a service connected condition. (A co-payment will apply for treatment of non-service connected conditions and prescription drugs.)

•Prosthetic Devices: for service-connected conditions, to include but not limited to wheelchairs, canes, crutches, hospital beds, Nebulizer, oxygen tanks, and electric scooters. The issue of any prosthetic devices requires a VA Doctor's prescription.

•Medical Treatment in non-VA facilities for service connected conditions may be authorized by the VA Medical Center. (Certain restrictions apply.)

•Ten Point Civil Service Preference. (10 points added to Civil Service test score only after veteran achieves at least 70 on a test.)

- Annual Clothing Allowance is available for veterans with a service-connected condition that requires the use of a prosthetic or orthopedic appliance (artificial limbs, braces, wheelchairs) or use prescribed medications for a skin condition which tends to wear, tear, or soil clothing. The items used must be prescribed and dispensed at a VA Medical Center.
- Temporary ratings of 100%, based on the hospitalization for a service-connected disability requiring at least one month of convalescence or immobilization by cast.
- Dental treatment for: (1) service-connected dental condition, or (2) follow- up dental treatment which has begun while hospitalized at a VA Medical Center, or any former Prisoner of War with 90 consecutive days or more of confinement. Some restrictions may apply.
- Home Improvement and Structural Alteration Grant Program is administered by the Prosthetics Department at VA Medical Facilities for medically required improvements and/ or structural changes to the veteran's residence. This Grant requires a VA Doctor's prescription. Service-connected veterans can receive up to a $6,800 grant. Non- service-connected veterans may receive a grant up to $2,000. The grant is to be used for allowing entrance or exit improvements for residence, essential lavatory and sanitary facilities, and kitchen and bathroom accessibility to sinks and counters. This grant is not for complete remodeling of a veteran's bath or kitchen.

10% Service Connected and Higher, All of the Above Plus:

- Vocational Rehabilitation which includes full medical and dental care (dental if determined to be essential to finish training), a subsistence allowance in addition to disability payments, payment for all required school -related supplies and direct payment of tuition. Funding fee waived for Homeloan Guarantee loans.
- Annual eye exams and prescribed eye wear.
- Eligible for hearing aids.

30% Service Connected and Higher, All of the Above Plus:

- Additional compensation for dependents (spouse, children, adopted children, and dependent parents).
- Non-Competitive Civil Service appointment: Job appointment without the requirement of an interview.
- Affirmative action in employment: A disabled veteran cannot be passed over to hire a nondisabled veteran or non-veteran unless at least three interviews have been conducted by the employer.
- Additional allowance for a spouse who is a patient in a nursing home: (Helpless or blind, or so nearly helpless as to require the aid and attendance of another person.)

40% Service Connected and Higher, All of the Above Plus:

- Automobile Grant: (A one-time payment up to $20,114) Veteran must have a service-connected loss of one hand, or one foot, or permanent loss of use of one hand or one foot, or a permanent impairment of vision of both eyes. A veteran must be rated for loss of use before this is granted.
- Payment of special adaptive automobile equipment: In addition to the automobile grant. Veteran must be entitled to the automobile grant as outlined above, or have a service-connected ankylosis (immobility) of one knee or one hip. (This requires a VA doctor's prescription for the adaptive equipment and can include; an automatic transmission, air conditioner, hand controls, power brakes, hand brakes, cruise control, ramps or wheelchair lifts, and any other adaptive equipment the doctor may deem necessary.)

50% Service Connected and Higher, All of the Above Plus:

- Medical treatment for any condition at VA Medical Centers: Enrollment in a VA health care program is encouraged but not required for treatment of a service-connected condition. No copayments for treatment of non-service-connected care or non-service-connected prescription drugs.
-

60-90% Service Connected and Higher, All of the Above Plus:

- Individual unemployability (increased compensation) payable at the 100% rate based on the inability to work due to service-connected disability plus:
- Dental treatment if S/C for Dental Claim.
- Specially Adapted Housing Program information can be found at this link: **http://www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/sahat.asp**
- Home Loan information can be found at this link: **http://www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/sahat.asp**
- Veterans Mortgage Life Insurance: Decreasing term mortgage insurance up to $200,000 for veterans who have received a Specially Adaptive Housing grant and have an existing mortgage.
- Waiver of cost of Service Disabled Life Insurance: and additional $20,000 of life insurance at cost to veteran. Veteran must have applied for insurance within two years of initial disability rating or within two years of a new disability rating. An increase in a disability rating does not qualify as a new disability.
- Emergency treatment in non-VA facilities: if VA facilities are not available.

Compensation Higher Than the 100% Rate:

- Special Compensation: Veteran must be rated for Special Compensation due to the loss of limbs, eyesight, aid and attendance, housebound, or two separate medical conditions that are rated 60% each or 100% each.
- If retired Military, and rated 70-100% within four years of a 20 or more year retirement retiree receives, 70-80% - $100.00, 90%-$200, 100%- $300. This compensation is paid from the retiree's military service branch.
- Educational Assistance for Dependents: (under chapter 35).
- Free entry into State Parks.
- Commissary and Exchange privileges for veteran and dependents: The veteran must request a letter from the VA specifying veteran is in receipt of 100% disability, and then applies for a military ID card at the nearest DEERS Station (see page 43).

VA Disability Pension Benefits for Wartime Veterans

A non-Service Connected Disability VA Pension is a benefit paid to wartime veterans who have limited or no income, and who are age 65 or older, or under 65 and are permanently and totally disabled, a patient in a nursing home or are receiving Social Security disability payments.

The amount that's payable depends upon the type and amount of income the veteran and family members receive from other sources.

Veterans who are more seriously disabled may qualify for Aid and Attendance or Housebound benefits. These benefits are paid in addition to the basic pension rate. Monthly payments are made to qualified veterans to bring their total income to a congressionally established support level (including other retirement and Social Security income).

South Dakota Vet Centers

The Vet Center Combat Call Center is an around the clock confidential call center where combat veterans and their families can call to talk about their military experiences or any other issues they are facing in their readjustment to civilian life. The staff is comprised of combat veterans from several eras, Services provided at the Vet Center include bereavement and readjustment counseling to individuals, groups, couples, and families. If you served in a combat zone and received a campaign ribbon, you and your family are eligible for Vet Center services. In addition, parents, siblings, spouses and children of any active duty service member who dies while on active duty are eligible for bereavement counseling services. Services are also provided to any veteran who experienced military related sexual trauma while on active duty.

Sioux Falls Vet Center
3200 W. 49th Street
Sioux Falls, SD 57106
Phone: 605.330.4552

Rapid City Vet Center
621 6th Street—Suite 101
Rapid City, SD 57701-2790
Phone: 605.348.0077

Mobile Vet Center
621 6th Street—Suite 101
Rapid City, SD 57701-2790
Phone: 605.348.0077

South Dakota is paying a bonus to members of the Armed Forces who were legal residents of the state for no less than six months before their period of active duty and who served on active duty during one or more of the following periods.

1. August 2, 1990 to March 3, 1991 - All active service counts for payment.
2. March 4, 1991 to December 31, 1992 - Only service in a hostile area qualifying for the Southwest Asia Service Medal counts for payment.
3. January 1, 1993 to September 10, 2001 - Only service in a hostile area qualifying for any United States campaign or service medal awarded for combat operations against hostile forces counts for payment.
4. September 11, 2001 to a date to be determined - All active service counts for payment.

Veterans with qualifying service from August 2, 1990, to December 31, 1992, (Desert Storm) may receive one bonus of up to $500. Veterans with qualifying service after January 1, 1993, may receive another bonus of up to $500. Active Duty for training is not allowed for Bonus purposes. Only Federal Active Duty is applicable for Bonus purposes.

Applicants living outside of South Dakota may request an application and instructions by writing SD Veterans Bonus, 425 E. Capitol, Pierre, SD 57501 or by calling 605-773-3269.

Applicants living in South Dakota may apply through the nearest County or Tribal Veterans Service Officer.

Presumptive Health Conditions

Veterans and service members who were close to burn pit smoke or exposed for longer periods may be at greater risk for health problems. Health effects from burn pit exposure will vary and depend on a number of factors such as the kind of waste being burned, pre-existing conditions, and wind direction. Veterans and service members can use the registry questionnaire to report exposures to airborne hazards (such as smoke from burn pits, oil-well fires, or pollution during deployment), as well as other exposures and health concerns. Registry participation is open to any Veteran or Service Member who served in: OEF/OIF/OND or in Djibouti, Africa, after September 11, 2001, or Operations Desert Shield or Desert Storm or the Southwest Asia theater of operations after August 2, 1990. The Southwest Asia theater of operations includes the following locations: Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman, Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, waters of the Persian Gulf, Arabian Sea, and the Red Sea, and the airspace above these locations. For more information and to register visit: **www.veteran. mobilehealth.va.gov/AHBurnPitRegistry**

There are three categories in which veterans may qualify for service-connected disability based on a condition to be presumed by military service. These groups are:

1) veterans who were diagnosed with a chronic disease such as arthritis, diabetes, or hypertension within one year of being released from active duty;

2) veterans diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) anytime after discharge of service and have at least 90 days of continuous service; and

3) veterans who served in the conflicts / geographic regions associated with those diagnosed conditions identified below. For more information on presumptive health conditions, please contact a VSO.

Former POW's Imprisoned for not less than 30 days and a disability of at least 10 percent disabling.

Vietnam Veterans [Exposed to Agent Orange] Served in the Republic of Vietnam between Jan. 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975.

Atomic Veterans [Exposed to Ionizing Radiation] Participated in atmospheric nuclear testing; occupied or was a POW in Hiroshima or Nagasaki; service before Feb. 1, 1992 at diffusion plant in Paducah, KY, Portsmouth, OH, or Oak Ridge, TN; or service before Jan. 1, 1974 at Amchitka Island, AK.

Gulf War Veterans Served in the Southwest Asia Theater of Operations during the Gulf Wars with conditions that are medically unexplained, including chronic multi-symptom illnesses defined by a cluster of signs or symptoms that have existed for six months or more.

Camp Lejeune [Exposure to Contaminated Drinking Water at Camp Lejeune] There is limited and suggestive evidence of an association between certain diseases and the chemical compounds found at Camp Lejeune during the period of contamination. VA will consider disability compensation claims based on exposure to the contaminated water at Camp Lejeune on a case-by-case basis. The water systems were contaminated from August 1953 through December 1987.

Agent Orange Registry—Health Exam for Veterans

VA's Agent Orange Registry health exam alerts Veterans to possible long-term health problems that may be related to Agent Orange exposure during their military service. The registry data helps VA understand and respond to these health problems more effectively. This comprehensive health exam includes an exposure history, medical history, physical exam, and any tests if needed. A VA health professional will discuss the results face-to-face with the Veteran and in a follow-up letter. Contact your local VA Environmental Health Coordinator about getting an Agent Orange Registry health exam.

Gulf War Registry Health Exam for Veterans

VA's Gulf War Registry Health Exam alerts Veterans to possible long-term health problems that may be related to environmental exposures during their military service. The registry data helps VA understand and respond to these health problems more effectively. This comprehensive health exam includes an exposure and medical history, laboratory tests, and a physical exam. A VA health professional will discuss the results face-to-face with the Veteran and in a follow-up letter. Important points about registry health exams:

- Free to eligible Veterans and no co-payment
- Not a disability compensation exam or required for VA benefits
- Enrollment in VA's health care system not necessary
- Based on recollection of service, not on their military records
- Veterans can receive additional registry exams, if new problems develop
- Veterans' family members are not eligible for registry exams

Veterans who served in the Gulf during Operation Desert Shield, Operation Desert Storm, Operation Iraqi Freedom, or Operation New Dawn are eligible for the Gulf War Registry exam. You do not need to be enrolled in VA health care to take part.

Depleted Uranium

The U.S. military uses tank armor and some bullets made with depleted uranium (DU) to penetrate enemy armored vehicles, and began using DU on a large scale during the Gulf War. The process of manufacturing enriched uranium from natural uranium used in nuclear reactors or weapons leaves "depleted" uranium. DU has 40 percent less radioactivity, but the same chemical toxicity as natural uranium. If you think you were exposed to depleted uranium during your service, talk to your local VA Environmental Health Coordinator. Ask to be screened for depleted uranium exposure, and ask about the Depleted Uranium Follow-up Program.

How Veterans May Have Been Exposed

When a projectile made with DU penetrates a vehicle, small pieces of DU can scatter and become embedded in muscle and soft tissue. In addition to DU in wounds, Service members exposed to DU in struck vehicles may inhale or swallow small airborne DU particles. Some Gulf War, Bosnia, Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), and Operation New Dawn (OND) Veterans who may have been exposed to DU are those who were: on, in or near vehicles hit with friendly fire; entering or near burning vehicles; near fires involving DU munitions; or salvaging damaged vehicles.

Depleted Uranium—Health Problems Associated with Depleted Uranium

DU is a potential health hazard if it enters the body, such as through embedded fragments, contaminated wounds, and inhalation or ingestion. Simply riding in a vehicle with DU weapons or DU shielding will not expose a Service member to significant amounts of DU or external radiation. The potential for health effects from internal exposure is related to the amount of DU that enters a person's body. If DU enters the body, it may remain in the body. Studies show high doses may especially affect the kidneys. So far no health problems associated with DU exposure have been found in Veterans exposed to DU. Researchers and clinicians continue to monitor the health of these Veterans. Go to the Department of Defense's Depleted Uranium (DU) Library to learn about results of medical and scientific research and other DU topics.

Health Concerns?

If you are concerned about depleted uranium exposure during service, talk to your health care provider or local VA Environmental Health Coordinator. Veterans who served in the Gulf War, Bosnia, OEF, OIF, or OND may be eligible for the Depleted Uranium Follow-up Program at the Baltimore VA Medical Center, a program to screen and monitor health problems associated with depleted uranium exposure. VA offers a variety of health care benefits to eligible Veterans. Not enrolled in the VA health care system? Find out if you qualify for VA health care.

Compensation Benefits for Health Problems

Veterans may file a claim for disability compensation for health problems they believe are related to exposure to depleted uranium during service. VA decides these claims on a case-by-case basis. File a claim online. Learn more about VA benefits. - See more at: **http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/depleted_uranium/index.asp#sthash.wm9wtIm5.dpuf.**

Post Traumatic Stress (PTS) is a mental health issue that can occur after someone goes through a traumatic event such as war, assault, disaster, or a car accident. Most people have some stress reactions after a trauma. Each service member will have their own experiences. However, understand that almost all service members will need time to readjust after being in a war zone. This can be especially intense during the first months at home. Common stress reactions are a normal part of readjustment. The stigma of mental health issues can be a huge barrier for people who need help, but knowing when and how to get help is actually part of military training.

Visit your local Vet Center if you would like to talk to someone about what you are experiencing. You can learn more about PTS at **ptsd.va.gov**.

PTS Coach has now been downloaded over 100,000 times in 74 countries around the word. The PTS Coach app can help you learn about and manage symptoms that commonly occur after trauma. Features include: Reliable information on PTS and treatments that work; Tools for screening and tracking your symptoms; Convenient, easy-to-use skills to help you handle stress symptoms; and direct links to support and help. Together with professional medical treatment, PTS Coach provides you dependable resources you can trust. If you have, or think you might have PTS, this app is for you. Family and friends can also learn from this app. Free PTS Coach download from: iTunes (iOS)* and Google Play (Android)*. Also see PTS Coach ONLINE: 17 tools to choose from available for desktop. PTS Coach was created by the VA's National Center for PTS and the DoD's National Center for Telehealth and Technology

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Major advancements in protective and medical technology have vastly increased survivability rates among wounded U.S. service members. They have also introduced new challenges to care for increasing numbers of veterans and service members with extremely complex injuries, particularly polytrauma and traumatic brain injury. A Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) happens when something outside the body hits the head with significant force.

This could happen when the head hits a windshield during a car accident, when a piece of shrapnel enters the brain, or during an explosion of an improvised explosive device (IED). Individuals who sustain a TBI may experience a variety of effects, such as an inability to concentrate, an alteration of the senses (hearing, vision, smell, taste, and touch), difficulty speaking, and emotional and behavioral changes. If you experienced head trauma during your service, please contact the VA to schedule an examination. To learn more about TBI, visit **www.polytrauma.va.gov**

ID Cards

If you are an Active Duty, Reserve or National Guard service member, dependent, or retiree, you can get a Military ID at any DEERS location within South Dakota. Veterans receiving VA benefits may be able to get an ID card (medical benefits card) at VA Medical Centers or Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC). If you are not receiving benefits, you can choose to place your veteran status on your South Dakota Drivers License.

Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS)

Facility	Address	Phone Number
Brookings Armory	300 5th Street South	605.696.5442
Camp Rapid	2823 W. Main Street	605.737.6632
Ellsworth AFB	1958 Spaatz Drive	605.385.2427
Huron Armory	309 W. 3rd Street	605.353.7327 (Ext. 2210, 2209)
Mitchell Armory	5501 Airport Road	605.995.1656
Pierre Armory	3440 HWY 34	605.773.3449 (Ext. 7242)
Rapid City Duke Corning Armory	2823 W. Main Street	605.737.6332
Sioux Falls Armory	801 N. National Guard Drive	605.357.2900
Sturgis Armory	E. Hwy 34	605.737.6400
Watertown Readi-ness Center	1951 N. Highway 20	605.882.9330

Veteran ID on Drivers License

Veterans who have been honorably discharged from the military have the option of adding the word "Veteran" to the front of their South Dakota drivers license or identification card. Veterans who wish to add the designation to their driver license or non-driver ID card may visit any South Dakota driver license office. They will need to present their DD-214, which shows their honorable discharge status from active duty, their DD Form 2 (Retired), their DD Form 2A (Reserve Retired), or present a certificate signed by a county or tribal veterans service officer verifying their status. They will also need to provide the other documents required of any applicant and pay the appropriate duplicate or renewal fee.

Click here for more information.

Click here for sites.

HUD-Vash

This joint Supportive Housing Program with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides permanent housing and ongoing case management treatment services for homeless veterans who would not be able to live independently without the support of case management.
HUD's Section 8 Voucher Program has designated more than 10,000 Vouchers to Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) throughout the country for veterans who are homeless. This program allows veterans to live in veteran selected apartment units with a Housing Choice voucher.
These vouchers are portable so that veterans can live in communities served by their VA medical facility where case management services can be provided. See your local county social services office for more information.

Stand Downs

Stand Downs are one-to three-day events that provide homeless veterans a variety of services and allow VA and community-based service providers to reach more homeless veterans in a temporary refuge where they obtain food, shelter, clothing and a range of community and VA assistance. In many locations, Stand Downs provide health screenings, referral and access to long- term treatment, benefits counseling, ID cards and access to other programs to meet their immediate needs. For more information on Stand Down dates and locations, please contact the Homeless Veterans Programs Office at 1-877-4AIDVET or visit www.va.gov/HOMELESS.

Military Records and Medals

Veterans or their next of kin who need assistance in obtaining service records, a DD-214, or replacement awards and medals must formally request them through the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC). The NPRC is the records custodian for most discharged and retired members of all branches of service. The fastest way to obtain a copy is through their website. If you do not have access to the internet, you can order a copy by mailing or faxing a Standard Form 180. The forms are available in any CVSO office or online at: **www.archives.gov/veterans.**

Veterans Records

South Dakota counties may not charge for certified copies of birth, death, marriage, adoption, divorce, guardianship or conservatorship papers when such records are required in support of a claim against any agency of the federal or state government by, or on behalf of, a service member or veteran, or the spouse, surviving spouse or dependents of a service member or veteran. Veterans are encouraged to register their discharge papers with their local county Register of Deeds.

Veterans Preference

State and Local Government Employment

South Dakota defines an eligible veteran as:

Honorably discharged.

A citizen of the United States.

Having served under qualifying conditions (see South Dakota Codified Law (SDCL 33A-2).

Eligible veterans receive preference for appointment, employment and promotion at all levels of government, including state, counties, municipalities and school districts. If the applicant possesses at least the minimum qualifications necessary to fill the position, the veteran shall be granted an interview. They may not be disqualified by their age, by loss of a limb or by any other physical impairment which is not incapacitating. However, they must possess the qualifications necessary to do the job in question. A veteran disabled due to a service-connected cause is given preference over a non-disabled veteran.

Unmarried Spouse of Deceased Veteran

The unmarried spouse of an eligible veteran who died while in service, or died later from a service-connected cause, is entitled to the same preference as an eligible veteran, provided the spouse possess the qualifications necessary to do the job in question.

Spouse of Disabled Veteran

If a disabled eligible veteran is unable to exercise his or her right to a veteran employment preference due to the disability, the veteran's spouse is entitled to the same preference, provided the spouse has the qualifications to do the job in question.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Professional Rehabilitation Counselors provide guidance and deliver services that allow consumers to select occupations of their own choosing. The counselor and consumer jointly develop a plan that will result in employment. SBVI can pay for training and employment preparation costs that lead to meaningful employment in a broad range of careers for blind citizens. Services are available to individuals who have a visual disability that interferes with obtaining or retaining employment. The individual must be able to benefit from services in terms of an employment outcome and must require vocational rehabilitation services to achieve that outcome.

All services must be part of an Individualized Plan for Employment and must be jointly agreed to by the consumer and counselor. Services may include, but are not limited to:

- Throughout the process, a skilled counselor, knowledgeable about disability issues, will assist you in planning for the future and help you resolve problems along the way.
- In order for people to become employed they must have vocational skills needed by employers. If lacking such skills, training may be provided on-the-job, through supported employment, at a vocational technical school, or at a college or university.
- SBVI staff are trained to assist individuals who are blind or visually impaired in the areas of orientation and mobility (independent travel), communications (Braille, money identification, writing guides), computers, and home making (cooking, cleaning).

(continued)

•For some individuals, special equipment or changing the way the job is done will be necessary in order to meet the work requirements of an employer. This may involve purchasing special equipment or redesigning a work area for an employer.
•Medical services such as laser treatment or corrective surgery may be needed for an individual to obtain work or maintain employment.
•The focus of all services is to enable individuals to get or keep a quality job. Individuals and their counselor will develop a placement plan that will help in finding a job in the work force.
•Many employers have questions about how best to accommodate the needs of a worker with a disability. Free technical assistance is available to employers in our state.

Contact Information:
Twyla Eggers, Deputy Division Director
SBVI Vocational Rehabilitation
Hillsview Plaza—3800 East Highway 34
Pierre, SD 57501-5070
Phone: 605-773-4644
E-mail: twyla.eggers@state.sd.us

The Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) VetSuccess Program assists veterans with service-connected disabilities to prepare for, find, and keep suitable jobs. For veterans with service-connected disabilities so severe that they cannot immediately consider work, VetSuccess offers services to improve their ability to live as independently as possible. Eligibility and entitlement for VR&E are two different things. You may meet eligibility criteria, yet not be entitled to services. The first step in the VR&E process is to be evaluated upon application to your local VA Regional Office, to determine if you qualify for services. Please contact your local service officer for further assistance.

Education Benefits

As a veteran, there are education benefits available which you may use for a wide variety of approved education and training programs, including: apprenticeship, on-the-job training, college degree and certificate programs, flight training, and correspondence courses. Each State has a State Approving Agency (SAA). Some states have one agency to approve all school programs, another agency to approve all on-the-job training programs, and then possibly a third agency to approve the flight schools.

In many ways, the fundamental role of state approving agencies is the same today as it was when they were founded. As state entities acting on behalf of the Federal Government, the SAA's have been an outstanding example of the workability of the State-Federal partnership, allowing Federal interests to be pursued at the local level while preserving the identity, interests, and sovereignty of States' rights in education. The primary responsibility and focus of the SAA's continues to be the review, evaluation and approval of quality programs of education and training under State and Federal criteria. SAA's continue to conduct on-site supervisory visits to approved institutions and schools seeking approval. They continue to provide technical assistance to all interested parties and are engaged in outreach activities to foster the usage of the GI Bill®. Further, they continue to act as state liaison in assisting military installations to provide base personnel with quality educational offerings. Yet, while the fundamental role of the SAA has remained the same, the SAA's have grown with the changes in our society over the past fifty years. They have become advocates for quality education and training for Veterans and other eligible persons. They have become educational partners with the institutions themselves, facilitating even greater and more diverse educational opportunities for veterans.

They have become strong advocates for the usage of the GI Bill and have developed a working partnership with the Federal government.

The programs that can be approved are found in institutions of higher learning (colleges and universities), non-degree institutions (vocational and technical schools), apprenticeship programs, other on-the-job training programs, and flight training schools. Each state reviews the appropriateness of each program as to its own standards and laws in addition to VA rules and regulations along with any other applicable laws and/or regulations. Then it is either approved or disapproved; continuous supervision is required of approved programs.

The approval process is on going and involves regular monitoring of the programs. South Dakota has approximately 2,100 eligible people enrolled in programs. The programs are found in 47 schools and 192 training establishments and businesses.

The South Dakota State Approving Agency is located in Pierre with the Department of Veterans Affairs and it approves all programs. For information or assistance call (605) 773-3269 or 773-3648 (school programs) or 773-3565 (training programs).

Click here for information about the GI Bill: http://benefits.va.gov/gibill/

On the Job Training

On the Job Training or OJT - is training you receive while performing a job and earning wages. This program can range from 6 – 24 months. This requires the employee to be full-time and have GI Bill® eligibility.

Examples are police officer, correctional officer, shop technician, chef, highway maintenance worker, farmer, buildings engineer, veterans benefits representative, service technician, highway patrol trooper, wellness instructor, information technology specialist, surface maintenance repairer, deputy sheriff, plant operator, truck driver, or bakers assistant.

For more information or assistance call (605) 773-3269 or 773-3565.

Post 9/11 GI Bill

The Post-9/11 GI Bill provides financial support for education and housing to honorably discharged veterans with at least 90 days of aggregate service on Title 10 Active Duty or Title 32 Active Guard Reserve Duty after Sept. 10, 2001, or individuals discharged with a service-connected disability after 30 days. The Post 9/11 GI Bill will pay eligible individuals full tuition and fees directly to the school for all public school in-state students, attending classes at a greater than halftime rate. A Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) based on the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) for an E-5 with dependents is also provided. Distance learning enrollee's housing allowance is equal to half the national average BAH for an E-5 with dependents. An annual books and supplies stipend is paid proportionately based on years of active duty service.

Montgomery GI Bill

Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) benefits are available for service members and veterans to help with education and training costs. MGIB can be used to pay for many different programs including the following degrees; business, technical or vocational courses, distance learning including correspondence courses, apprenticeship/job training, flight training, licensing and certification exams. VA educational benefits may be used while the service member is on active duty or after the service member's separation from active duty with a fully honorable military discharge. Discharges "under honorable conditions" and "generally" discharges do not establish eligibility. Eligibility general expires ten years after the service member's discharge. However, there are exceptions for disability, re-entering active duty and upgraded discharges.

Free Tuition for Veterans

SDCL 13-55-2 to 13-55-5 Provides for certain veterans who are eligible to take undergraduate courses at a state supported university without the payment of tuition provided they are not eligible for educational payments under the GI Bill or any other federal educational program. To qualify the veteran must:

- have been discharged under Honorable conditions
- be a current resident of South Dakota and qualify for in-state tuition
- meet one of the following criteria
- served on active duty at any time between August 2, 1990 and a date to be determined
- received an Armed Forces Expeditionary medal, or other United States campaign or service medal for participation in combat operations against hostile forces outside the boundaries of the United States
- has a service connected disability rated 10%, or more, disabling.

Eligible veterans may receive one month of free tuition for each month of "qualifying service" with a minimum of one, up to a maximum of four, academic years. Qualifying service is defined as: the amount of time served on active duty between the beginning and ending dates of the particular period of conflict or hostilities during which the veteran earned eligibility for this program.

The Application for Free Tuition is available at the schools' financial aids, veterans representative or registrars offices.

The completed application, along with a copy of the veteran's DD-214 must be submitted to Shane Olivier at the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, 425 E. Capitol Avenue, Pierre, SD 57501.

Free Tuition for Children of Veterans Who Die During Service

SDCL 13-55-6 to 13-55-9 Provides that children who are under the age of 25, are residents of South Dakota, and whose mother or father was killed in action or died of other causes while on active duty, are eligible for free tuition at a state supported school, if the deceased parent was a bona-fide resident of this state for at least six (6) months immediately preceding entry into active service. The Application for Free Tuition is available at the schools' financial aids, veterans representative or registrars offices.

Free Tuition for Dependents of POWs and MIAs

SDCL 13-55-9.2 to 13-55-9.6 Provides for children and spouses of prisoners of war, or of persons listed as missing in action, are entitled to attend a state supported school without the payment of tuition or mandatory fees provided they are not eligible for equal or greater federal benefits. The Application for Free Tuition is available at the schools' financial aids, veterans representative or registrars offices or, they can be obtained from the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs.

Reduced Tuition for South Dakota National Guards Members

SDCL 33-6-5 - 33-6-8.1 Provides for Guard members, who meet the requirements for admission, are eligible for a fifty percent (50%) reduction in tuition charges at any state supported school for undergraduate programs up to 128 credits and graduate programs up to 32 credits.

OR,

one program of study, approved by the state Board of Education, at any state vocational school upon payment of fifty percent (50%) of the tuition charges.

The receipt of federal educational benefits does not affect eligibility for this program. To qualify the guard member must:

1. Be a resident of this state and a member of the SD Army or Air Guard throughout each semester or vocational program for which he or she applies for benefits
2. Have completed required active duty for training
3. Attend 90% of drills and training periods and maintain a satisfactory academic grade level
4. Provide proper notice to the institution at time of registration for the term in which benefits are sought.

Free Tuition to Child or Spouse of South Dakota National Guards members Disabled or Deceased in the Line of Duty

SDCL 33-6-10 Provides for free tuition to child or spouse of National Guard member disabled or deceased in line of duty. Any resident of this state who is less than twenty-five years of age and whose parent has died or has sustained a total disability, permanent in nature, resulting from duty as a member of the South Dakota National Guard, while on state or federal active duty or any authorized training duty, is entitled to tuition without cost and is entitled to attend any course or courses of study in any state educational institution under the control and management of the Board of Regents. Any person who is a resident of this state whose spouse has died or has sustained a total disability, permanent in nature, resulting from duty as a member of the South Dakota National Guard, while on state or federal active duty or any authorized training duty, is entitled to tuition without cost and is entitled to attend any course or courses of study in any state educational institution under the control and management of the Board of Regents.

Veterans Recognition License Plates

Special distinctive license plates are available for veterans who are residents of South Dakota. For additional information on eligibility and application procedures, visit the SD Department of Revenue and Regulation website.

For more information, click on this link. http://dor.sd.gov/Motor_Vehicles/License_Plates/Military_Plates/Military_Plates.aspx

MILITARY LICENSE PLATES - GENERAL

Air Force Cross
Bronze Star
Bronze Star with Valor Device
Disabled Veteran
Distinguished Flying Cross
Distinguished Service Cross
Gold Star
Medal of Honor
Navy Cross
Service Organization
Pearl Harbor Survivor
Prisoner of War
Purple Heart
Silver Star

MILITARY LICENSE PLATES - VETERANS

Air Force
Army
Coast Guard
Marine
National Guard
Navy

MILITARY LICENSE PLATES - ACTIVE

Air Force
Army
Coast Guard
Marine
National Guard
Navy

Veterans Courts

There is a growing effort nationally to institute Veterans Courts or dockets to allow district attorneys to send military members and veterans into treatment, rather than jail, when they commit a non-violent offense. These courts are staffed by people who take into consideration charges and challenges facing veterans who return home from war. They may allow some military members to enter into mental health diversion programs as treatment for non-violent infractions as opposed to automatically jailing the offender.

The law relies on the judgment of a prosecutor, who will determine, on a case-by-case basis, which defendants may be eligible for diversion. These prosecutors must consider, for example, whether a veteran who spent four years at a military base should be offered the same diversion opportunity as one who deployed twice to combat situations in Afghanistan or Iraq. Prosecutors must decide how serious the crime must be before diversion is taken off the table and must consider the victim of the offense.

South Dakota currently has Veterans Court programs in Codington, Pennington and Minnehaha Counties.

Property Tax Exemption for Veterans and their Widow or Widower

SDCL 10-4-24.10 states that dwellings or parts of multiple family dwellings which are specifically designed for use by paraplegics as wheelchair homes and which are owned and occupied by veterans with the loss, or loss of use, of both lower extremities, or by the unremarried widow or widower of such veteran, are exempt from taxation. The dwelling must be owned and occupied by the veteran for one full calendar year before the exemption becomes effective. For purposes of this statute, the term "dwelling" generally means real estate in an amount not to exceed one acre upon which the building is located.

Click here for more information. http://dor.sd.gov/Taxes/Property_Taxes/Property_and_Sales_Tax_Relief_Programs.aspx

Totally Disabled Veterans

SDCL 10-4-40 and 10-4-41states that $100,000 of the full and true value of a dwelling that is owned and occupied by a veteran who is rated permanently and totally disabled from a service connected disability(ies) is exempt from taxation. The dwelling must be owned and occupied by the veteran. Application for the exemption is made through the county assessor. The surviving spouse of veteran who was rated as permanently and totally disabled from a service connected disability qualifies for the same property tax exemption.

Click here for more information. http://dor.sd.gov/Taxes/Property_Taxes/Property_and_Sales_Tax_Relief_Programs.aspx

Property Tax Refund for Aged and Disabled Persons

SDCL 10-18A-1 to 10-18A-7 states that certain low income property owners are eligible for a property tax refund and should check with their county treasurer for details and assistance in making application. To qualify the following conditions must be met:

1. The head of the household must be sixty-five years of age, or older, or shall be disabled prior to January first of the year in which taxes are levied;
2. The applicant must have owned the property for at least three years or, have been a resident of this state at least five years if not qualified under the three year ownership criteria.

Click here for more information. http://dor.sd.gov/Taxes/Property_Taxes/Property_and_Sales_Tax_Relief_Programs.aspx

Sales Tax Refund for Certain Elderly and Disabled Persons

SDCL 10-45A-2 to 10-45A-16 states that certain low income persons who are sixty-five, or older, or who are disabled, may qualify for a sales tax refund. Applicants should check with their county treasurer for details and assistance.

NOTE: No individual may receive both a property tax and sales tax refund in the same year.

Click here for more information. http://dor.sd.gov/Taxes/Property_Taxes/Property_and_Sales_Tax_Relief_Programs.aspx

Hunting and Fishing Cards for Disabled Veterans

For a $10 fee, eligible veterans may receive a hunting and fishing card which is valid for four years. This card is the equivalent of the resident fishing and small game license. To be eligible the veteran must:

- Be rated as 40% disabled from service connected injuries OR,
- Be in receipt of the VA "K" award OR,
- Have been held as a Prisoner of War OR,
- Be in receipt of Social Security benefits because of a total disability.

Application forms are available from the Game, Fish and Parks Regional Office. The application, along with verification of eligibility, are submitted to Game, Fish and Parks, 412 West Missouri, Pierre, SD 57501.

Military General Hunting and Fishing License

Residents who are serving on Active Duty and stationed at a location outside of the state may fish and hunt small game without payment of a fee or the applicable hunting and fishing license. If the resident is hunting migratory birds, the federal migratory bird stamp and the migratory bird certification permit must be purchased.

Click here for more information. **http://gfp.sd.gov/hunting/accessibility/reduced-fees.aspx**

Special Provisions for Handicapped Hunters

Individuals who are missing an upper limb, or are physically incapable of using an upper limb or who are confined to a wheelchair may use a crossbow to take game birds and animals once they have obtained a disabled hunter permit.

A legally blind or quadriplegic, legally licensed individual who possesses a disabled hunter permit and who is physically present and participating in the hunt may claim game birds and animals taken by a designated hunter in accordance with the license or licenses possessed by the handicapped hunter.

Applications are obtained from the Game, Fish and Parks office in Pierre or from a game warden.
Click here for more information. http://gfp.sd.gov/hunting/accessibility/

State Parks—Free Admission and Reduced Camping Fees for Veterans

Certain resident veterans may obtain free admission to any South Dakota state park and are eligible for a fifty percent discount on any camping fee or associated electrical fee. To qualify the veteran must:

1. Be totally disabled from service connected disabilities or,
2. Be in receipt of the VA "K" award OR,
3. Have been held as a Prisoner of War.

Application forms may be obtained from the local park manager or through the Game, Fish and Parks office in Pierre.

Click here for more information. http://gfp.sd.gov/hunting/accessibility/reduced-fees.aspx

South Dakota's
Voice for Veterans

South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs

425 E. Capitol

Pierre, SD 57501

605.773.3269

http://vetaffairs.sd.gov