

A Message from Governor David A. Paterson



On behalf of all New Yorkers, I am honored to have this opportunity to express our appreciation for your patriotic and dedicated service to this great State and Nation. I value your service as the most cherished form of citizenship that any individual can demonstrate and have long admired the integrity that comes with selfless service to our Nation and its Armed Forces. You have earned our collective respect and now it is our turn to do something on your behalf.

As a Veteran living in New York State, you may be eligible for a variety of economic, medical and social benefits, including compensation, health care, vocational

rehabilitation and training, tuition assistance for higher education, and real property tax exemptions.

These benefits, however, are not automatic, you must apply for them. In New York State, the Division of Veterans' Affairs along with county and city Veterans service agencies are ready to assist you in determining your options or applying for a specific benefit. Our toll-free number -- **1-888-VETS NYS (1-888-838-7697)** - will link you to the NYS Division of Veterans' Affairs counseling office nearest you. This information is also available on the Division of Veterans' Affairs' Internet web site at: **www.veterans.state.ny.us**.

Thank you again for your great personal sacrifice, vigilance and commitment to ensuring the security of our homeland and the preservation and promotion of freedom and justice for all people.

Sincerely,

David A. Paterson

Governor



New York State Division of Veterans' Affairs
5 Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 12223-1551

Recently Discharged From The Military?

What's Next?



How do I get my benefits?
Where do I go for help?
Is my spouse eligible for help?
Am I eligible for a loan?
Is my spouse eligible for health care?
What about a home for a home?
How do I get health care?
What about my family?
How do I get my benefits?

4 Steps to be on your way to receiving everything you've earned

- Secure your discharge certificate (DD Form 214)
- Enroll in VA health care within your first 12 months from separation. Steps include:
 - Visiting the closest VA facility & Veteran Service Center
 - Fill out the form (10 10 EZ)
- Visit your nearest New York State Veterans Counselor or County Veteran Service Agency*
 - Before visiting, gather as much information as possible, including, but not limited to:
 - DD 214
 - Medical Records
 - Bank Account Information
 - Dependent Information
- If you need help obtaining your DD Form 214, or any other necessary documents, call us at 1-888-838-7697. We can help you create your "veterans' portfolio" of essential documents for safekeeping.

*To locate a veterans counselor visit www.veterans.state.ny.us or Call 1-888-838-7697

"You Served Our Country, Now Let New York State Division Of Veterans' Affairs Serve You!"

Did you know? All of our counselors are veterans!

Health Care

As a recently discharged service member, one of the first steps in transitioning to "civilian" life is to ensure you enroll in VA Health Care as close to your actual separation-from-service date as possible. Combat veterans who were discharged or released from active service on or after January 28, 2003, are now eligible to enroll in the **VA Health Care System** for five years from the date of discharge or release. You can apply for VA Health Care by completing VA Form 10-10EZ, Application for Health Benefits. Be sure you sign and date the application. You can obtain this form by accessing the VA web site, www.va.gov, or visiting, calling or writing any VA Health Care Facility or Veterans Benefits Office, or calling the VA's Health Benefits Service Center, toll free at **877-222-VETS (8387)**, Monday through Friday between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.

Education

You may be eligible for educational benefits due to your service in the armed forces; The **New York State Combat Veterans Tuition Award** can be awarded for full and part-time study at any public or private institution of higher learning here in New York. New York's Military Service Recognition Scholarships provide financial aid to veterans, children, spouses, and financial dependents of members of the US Armed Forces who died or became severely and permanently disabled. The New York State Regents Award for Children of Deceased & Disabled Veterans provides up to \$450 per year to students. For more information visit Higher Education Services Corp. at www.hesc.com. Federal veterans' education benefits may cover the cost of education at any public school in the country and many private schools, depending upon the length and period of your service. The VA's Vocational Rehabilitation Program is designed to help veterans with service-connected disabilities become employed, maintain employment, or achieve independence in daily living. And these are only a few of the opportunities that may be available to you!

Employment

Do you need a Job? **New York State's Department of Labor** oversees the implementation and development of New York's workforce development system and administers programs that support veteran job seekers. Check out the Workforce New York Website at www.workforcenewyork.org. Need your resume converted into "civilian language"? Translating your military skills is critical to get the job you want. Go to www.military.com. Are you a disabled veteran? The Governor's Program to Hire Veterans with Disabilities ("55c") may be of interest to you. This program coordinates efforts to place individuals with disabilities in entry-level State jobs. How do you apply for eligibility under Section 55c? Visit www.cs.state.ny.us for more information.

Financial

Unemployed? You're eligible for up to 26 weeks of unemployment benefits if you completed the first full term of enlistment, or as a reservist, at least 90 days of continuous active duty and were discharged under honorable conditions. Additional unemployment benefits may be available. Contact the New York State Department of Labor at **1-888-209-8124** for more information. Looking for financial help to buy a home? The State of New York Mortgage Association's (SONYMA) Homes for Veterans Program offers fixed-rate mortgages & closing cost assistance with no points to eligible veterans. Contact **SONYMA** at **1-800-382-4663**. Already own a home? You may be eligible for the NYS Veterans' Property Tax Exemption, which provides a partial exemption on real property taxes to eligible veterans and certain dependents based on time of service. Information and applications can be obtained from the **NYS Office of Real Property Services** at: www.orps.state.ny.us. Veterans with a service connected disability of 40% or more can get reduced fee hunting and fishing licenses from the **NYS Department of Conservation**. Visit them at www.dec.ny.gov for more information.

For Links Seen Here & More Information Visit Our Website @
www.veterans.state.ny.us/whatsnext.html
Or Call 1-888-VETS NYS (1-888-838-7697)