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Florida Veteran Financial Benefits

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Florida Veteran Financial Benefits

- **Income Tax:** There is no income tax for the state of Florida.
- **Retirement Income:** There is no state retirement income tax for the state of Florida.
- **Property Tax:** Any honorably discharged Veteran that has a 10% disability rating by the VA are eligible for up to a \$5,000 deduction in the assessed value of their home. An un-remarried surviving spouse of a Veteran who is qualified for at least 5 years is also eligible for this exemption.
- **Homestead Tax Exemptions for Veterans:** Any real estate owned and used as a homestead by a Veteran who has been certified as having a service-connected, permanent, and total disability is exempt from taxation. Veterans must have been honorably discharged and have a 100% rated service-connected, permanent and total disability; the Veteran must also be a permanent resident of the state on January 1 of the tax year for which exemption is being claimed.
- **Homestead Tax Exemptions for a Veteran's Surviving Spouse:** If, upon the death of the Veteran, the Spouse holds the legal or beneficial title to the homestead and permanently resides there, the exemption from taxation carries over to the benefit of the Veteran's Spouse until such time as he or she remarries, sells, or otherwise disposes of the property. If the spouse sells the property, an exemption not to exceed the amount granted from the most recent ad valorem tax roll may be transferred to the new residence as long as it is used as the primary residence and the Spouse does not remarry.
- **Homestead Property Tax Discount for Veterans Age 65 and Older with a Combat-Related Disability:** A Veteran who is disabled, 65 or older, and owns homestead property may qualify for a property tax discount based on their percentage of disability. This discount is in addition to any other exemptions Veterans now receive. To be eligible, the Veteran must have been honorably discharged from military service and be partially disabled with a permanent service-connected disability, at least part of which is combat-related.
- **Homestead Tax Exemptions for Surviving Spouse of Member of Armed Forces Who Died from Service-Connected Causes While on Active Duty:** Any real estate owned and used as a homestead by the surviving spouse of a member of the Armed Forces who died from service-connected causes while on active duty is exempt from taxation if the member was a permanent resident of this state on January 1 of the year in which the member died.
- **Real Estate Tax Exemption for Disabled Veterans:** Veterans who are paraplegic, hemiplegics, permanently and totally disabled and must use a wheelchair for mobility, or are legally blind, are exempt from real estate taxation if gross annual household income does not exceed the adjusted



maximum allowed. Check with the local property appraiser to determine if gross annual household income qualifies. The Veteran must be a resident of the State of Florida to qualify. Certificate of such disability from two licensed doctors from Florida or from the VA or an award letter from the Social Security Administration to the property appraiser is prima facie evidence of entitlement to such exemption.

- **Local Business Tax Exemption for Veterans, Spouses of Veterans and Certain Service Members:** Veterans, Spouses of Veterans and certain servicemembers, are entitled to an exemption from a business tax and any fees imposed under the Florida Business Tax Statutes, Chapter 205. The following are eligible for the exemption:
 - A Veteran of the United States Armed Forces who was honorably discharged upon separation from service, or the spouse or un-remarried surviving spouse of such a Veteran.
 - The Spouse of an active duty military service member who has relocated to the county or municipality pursuant to a permanent change of station order.

Sales Tax:

- Statewide: 6.0%
- Municipalities: can levy a sales tax of no more than 2.5%
- Current average sales tax (with local taxes included): 7.046%

Recreation

State Park Admission: Honorably discharged Veterans are eligible for a 25% discount for an annual pass to all state parks. Veterans with service-connected disabilities, and their spouses or surviving spouses, get a free lifetime pass.

County and Municipal Parks: Honorably discharged Veterans and their spouses, along with active-duty military members are eligible for a free or reduced entrance pass to any county and/or municipal park.

Hunting and Fishing License: Active-duty and retired military Florida residents can get a Military Gold Sportsman's License for \$20. The license covers hunting, freshwater and saltwater fishing, and a variety of associated permits at a greatly reduced cost. Veterans who are 100% permanently and totally disabled are eligible for a free five-year hunting and fishing license.

Education Programs

Florida Congressman C.W. Bill Young, Veteran Tuition Waiver Program: Waives out-of-state tuition and fees for an honorably-discharged Veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces, to include the Reserve or National Guard. The program will cover up to 110% of the required credit hours for the degree or certificate program in which the Veteran enrolls. A Veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces, U.S. Reserve Forces or the National Guard who was honorably discharged or is using their earned G.I. Bill benefits and physically resides in the state while enrolled in a Florida College System institution is eligible to receive the fee waiver.

Florida Educational Dollars for Duty (EDD): The Florida National Guard (FLNG) Educational Dollars for Duty (EDD) program in the State of Florida, legislatively directed and funded, education tuition assistance resource that is exclusively available to qualified Florida Army and



Air National Guard Servicemembers to complete authorized postsecondary education opportunities that include vocational/technical, industry certification, continuing education and academic (i.e., certificate, associate, bachelor, and master) degree programs and support success completion of authorized professional license and industry certification exams. EDD may also reimburse approved books and instructional material costs. The EDD program is a State of Florida privilege, not an entitlement that is always dependent on Servicemember qualification, available state appropriation and program law/directive as established by the appropriate authority.

Florida Scholarships for Children and Spouses of Deceased or Disabled Veterans and Service Members (CSDDV): The Scholarships for Children and Spouses of Deceased or Disabled Veterans and service members (CSDDV) provides scholarships for dependent Children or un-remarried Spouses of Florida Veterans or Service members who died as a result of service-connected injuries, diseases, or disabilities sustained while on active duty or who have been verified by the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs as having service-connected 100% permanent and total disabilities. CSDDV also provides funds for dependent children whose parent is classified as a prisoner of war or missing in action by the Armed Forces of the United States or as civilian personnel captured while serving with the consent or authorization of the United States Government during wartime service.

Florida Tuition Waiver for Recipients of Purple Heart or Superior Combat Decorations: Provides a tuition and fee waiver to recipients of the Purple Heart or other combat decoration superior in precedence if the recipient is enrolling in a Florida public community college or state university and provided he or she meets specific criteria. This waiver is applicable for 110 % of the number of required credit hours of the degree or certificate program for which the student is enrolled.

Florida High School Diplomas for Eligible Wartime Veterans: In 2013, legislation was passed that states the Commissioner of Education may award a standard high school diploma to any honorably-discharged Veteran who has not completed high school graduation requirements.

Florida Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children: It is the purpose of this compact to remove barriers to educational success imposed on children of military families because of frequent moves and deployment of their parents by:

- Facilitating the timely enrollment of children of military families and ensuring that they are not placed at a disadvantage due to difficulty in the transfer of educational records from the previous school district or variations in entrance or age requirements
- Facilitating the student placement process through which children of military families are not disadvantaged by variations in attendance requirements, scheduling, sequencing, grading, course content or assessment
- Facilitating the qualification and eligibility for enrollment, educational programs, and participation in extracurricular academic, athletic and social activities
- Facilitating the on-time graduation of children of military families
- Providing for the promulgation and enforcement of administrative rules implementing the provisions of this compact



- Providing for the uniform collection and sharing of information between and among member states, schools and military families under this compact
- Promoting coordination between this compact and other compacts affecting military children
- Promoting flexibility and cooperation between the educational system, parents and the student in order to achieve educational success for the student

Housing: The following are the sites for Veterans Homes

Florida State Veterans Home at Daytona Beach

Florida State Veterans Home at Land O' Lakes

Florida State Veterans Home at Pembroke Pines

Florida State Veterans Home at Panama City

Florida State Veterans Home at Port Charlotte

Florida State Veterans Home at St. Augustine

Eligibility for admission:

- Veterans must have served in the Armed Forces (deployment necessary)
- Discharged other than on dishonorable accounts
- Resides in Florida for at least 12 months prior to the date of application
- Must be referred by a licensed VA physician
- Must be in need of skilled nursing care
- Must be disabled by reason of age, disease, or other reasons determined through a physical exam

Employment and Job Training: Veterans Preference

All honorably discharged Veterans can have 5 points added to any state employment examination scores. Those with a VA service-connected disability will get 10 points added to their score. Veteran's names of all the preference-eligible applicants shall be placed on all employment lists, beginning with Veterans who have a disability rating of 30% or more. Followed by all other preference-eligible applicants in the order of their augmented ratings. A Veteran can file a complaint with the FDVA when a non-preference applicant has been employed instead of an equally qualified Veteran.

Burials and Memorials

Please note that your preference regarding burial in a national cemetery and use of a headstone provided by VA should be documented and kept with your paperwork and medical records. Eligibility for interment in the State Veterans Cemetery follows National Cemetery Administration eligibility requirements.

National Cemeteries include:



Pensacola: [Barrancas National Cemetery](#)

St. Petersburg: [Bay Pines National Cemetery](#)

Mims: [Cape Canaveral National Cemetery](#)

Bushnell: [Florida National Cemetery](#)

Jacksonville: [Florida National Cemetery](#)

Sarasota: [Florida National Cemetery](#)

Lake Worth: [South Florida National Cemetery](#)

St. Augustine: [South Florida National Cemetery](#)

Tallahassee: [South Florida National Cemetery](#)

Florida VA Benefit Resources

Florida provides Veterans with a Regional Benefits Office and VA Medical Centers.

Florida VA Regional Benefits Office

- St. Petersburg: [St. Petersburg Regional Office](#)

Florida VA Medical Centers

- Gainesville: [Malcom Randall VAMC, NF/SGVHS](#)
- Lake City: [Lake City VAMC, NF/SGVHS](#)
- Miami: [Miami VA Healthcare System](#)
- Orlando: [Orlando VA Medical Center](#)
- Tampa: [James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital](#)
- Tampa: [James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital Primary Care Annex](#)
- West Palm Beach: [West Palm Beach VAMC](#)

Important information for Florida Veteran Benefits:

For Veterans applying for VA benefits for the first time, you must submit a copy of your DD 214 (discharge paperwork). This will provide your discharge status, along with your full name, social security number, branch of service, and dates for which you served. Honorable and general discharges qualify a Veteran for most VA benefits.

You should always keep your paperwork, along with your medical records, in a safe place where you and your family can have access to them. It is imperative to have it in a location where it cannot be destroyed or tampered with, which includes a safe.

Your eligibility for most VA benefits is based upon discharge from active military service under other than dishonorable conditions. Active service means full-time service as a member of the



Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, or as a commissioned officer of the Public Health Service, the Environmental Services Administration or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Any Veteran discharged from the military under the conditions of “Dishonorable” due to bad conduct discharges issued by general courts-martial may bar VA benefits. Veterans in prison and parolees may be eligible for certain VA benefits. VA regional offices can clarify the eligibility of prisoners, parolees, and individuals with multiple discharges issued under differing conditions.

*This information is accurate as of December 2019