

Southern Arizona VA Health Care System

Southwestern Blind Rehabilitation Center Veterans Benefits Overview Panel Discussions



*To Care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for
his widow, and his orphan...Abraham Lincoln*



Introduction



VA Benefits and Services



Non-Service-Connected Pension



A monetary support benefit awarded to permanently and totally disabled, low-income veterans with 90 days or more of active military service of which occurred during a War Era.



VA Pension Continued



- Pension is a tax-free financial benefit paid to qualifying Veterans.
- The purpose of Pension is to provide supplemental income to achieve minimum pension threshold.
- Amount awarded depends on current income and presence of dependents (spouse, children).
- Information: Pension Factsheet
- Application: VA Form 21P-527EZ



NSC Pension/HB/A&A



•	BASIC							
•	Veteran							
•								
•	No Dependents	\$14,753	\$1,229	\$18,029	\$1,502	\$24,610	\$2,050	\$737
•	Vet+1 Dependent	\$19,320	\$1,610	\$22,596	\$1,883	\$29,175	\$2,431	\$966
•	Each Add Dependent	\$2,523.10						



Basic Pension Summary



- Must have served at least 90 days, with at least 1 day during wartime
 - World War II (December 7, 1941 to December 31, 1946)
 - Korean conflict (June 27, 1950 to January 31, 1955)
 - Vietnam War era (February 28, 1961 to May 7, 1975, for Veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam during that period. August 5, 1964 to May 7, 1975, for Veterans who served outside the Republic of Vietnam.)
 - Gulf War (August 2, 1990 through future date to be set by law/presidential proclamation)
- Must be at least age 65 OR have a permanently and totally disabling non-service-connected medical condition
- Must have income and estates under set financial threshold limits
 - [2023 VA Pension Rates For Veterans | Veterans Affairs](#)



Special Monthly Pension Summary



Special Monthly Pension (SMP)- Higher payment amount for Veteran's with non-service connected conditions

- **Aid & Attendance** – Veteran requires help with ADLs OR has visual acuity of 5/200 (20/800) or less or concentric contraction of visual field to 5 degrees or less in the better eye with best correction
- **Housebound** – Veteran who is confined to home OR has visual acuity of 20/200 or less or concentric contraction of visual field to 20 degrees or less in the better eye with best correction
- Information: Enhanced or Special Pension
- Application: VA Form 21-2680, (Veteran must also include VA Form 21P-527EZ if they do not already receive basic Pension)



COMPENSATION



A monetary benefit paid monthly to veterans who are disabled by an injury or illness that was incurred or aggravated during active military service



Basic Compensation Rates



•	Dependency										
•	Status	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%
•	Veteran	165. ⁹²	327. ⁹⁹	508. ⁰⁵	731. ⁸⁶	1041. ⁸²	1319. ⁶⁵	1663. ⁰⁶	1933. ¹⁵	2172. ³⁹	3621. ⁹⁵
•	V-S			568. ⁰⁵	812. ⁸⁶	1142. ⁸²	1440. ⁶⁵	1804. ⁰⁶	2094. ¹⁵	2353. ³⁹	3823. ⁸⁹
•	V-S-1C			612. ⁰⁵	870. ⁸⁶	1215. ⁸²	1528. ⁶⁵	1907. ⁰⁶	2212. ¹⁵	2486. ³⁹	3971. ⁷⁸



- 1K Award = \$128.⁶² (usually added to other rate or paid as the rate when percentage is zero)
- 1Q Award = \$67.⁰⁰ (paid in place of a rate)

Dependent

[illegible]



Special Monthly Compensation Summary

Special Monthly Compensation (SMC)- Higher payment for loss, or loss of use of, specific body parts for Veterans with service-connected disabilities

- Loss, or loss of use, of a hand or foot
- Immobility of a joint
- Paralysis
- Loss of sight of an eye (only seeing light)
- Loss, or loss of use, of a reproductive organ
- Complete loss, or loss of use, of both buttocks
- Deafness of both ears (no air and bone conduction)
- Inability to communicate by speech (complete organic aphonia)
- Loss of a percentage of tissue from single breast/both breasts, from mastectomy or radiation treatment

**VBA uses terms "Aid & Attendance" and "Housebound" for certain higher levels of SMC*



Compensation vs. Pension



Compensation

- Based on injuries or illness incurred during service
- No wartime period requirement
- May qualify for Special Monthly Compensation (SMC, A&A/HB) based on extent of SC disability

Pension

- Financial needs based (income & assets)
- Must be over 65 OR have a non-service connected disability
- Must have served during wartime period



Individual Unemployability



A Service-Connected veteran with a single disability rated at 60% or more, or more than one disability where at least one of the disabilities is rated at 40% and the additional disabilities provide a combined rating of 70% or more may be deemed unemployable.

[VA Individual Unemployability Factsheet](#)



Paired Organs



Compensation is payable for combinations of service connected and Non-service-connected injury or loss of paired organs, provided the non-service Connected disability is not the result of a veteran's willful misconduct.



Auto Grant



Financial assistance, in the form of a one-time grant, is available to purchase or modify a new or used automobile to accommodate a veteran with certain disabilities resulting from an injury or disease incurred or aggravated during active military service. The current grant amount is **2021 Rate: \$21,795.57** (one time).



Clothing Allowance



Any veteran who is service-connected for a disability for which he or she uses prosthetic or orthopedic appliances may currently receive an annual clothing allowance in the amount of **2021 Rate: \$830.56.**

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Chapter 35: Survivors' and Dependents' Education Assistance



Provides education and training opportunities to eligible dependents of certain veterans. This program offers up to 45 months of education support. Benefits may be used for degree and certificate programs, apprenticeship, and on-the-job training.



Vocational Rehabilitation Eligibility



- Vocational Rehabilitation [10% SC or higher]
 - Period of Eligibility: 12 years from date received notice
 - Date of separation from active military service
 - First VA SC disability rating
 - Information: [Eligibility for Veteran Readiness and Employment | Veterans Affairs \(va.gov\)](#)
 - Application: [How To Apply For Veteran Readiness And Employment | Veterans Affairs \(va.gov\)](#)



HISA Grant



- VA currently provides up to **2021 \$6,800 (SC)** lifetime benefit for service-connected veterans and up to \$2,000 for Non-service-connected veterans to make home improvements that are medically necessary or structural accommodations related to the service connected disability.

Allowable adaptations include :

- Entrance or exit from veteran's residence
- Essential lavatory and sanitary facilities
- Access to kitchen or bathroom sinks or counters
- Improving entrance paths or driveways
- Improving plumbing or electrical systems necessary for dialysis equipment in the home



VA Life Insurance



Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance

\$10,000 - \$40,000

- VA Life Insurance
 - Guarantees access to life insurance for SC Veterans
 - VA Life does not offer premium waivers
 - Information: [Veterans Affairs Life Insurance \(VALife\)](#)
 - Application: [VA Life Insurance | Veterans Affairs](#)
- Service-Disabled Veterans Life Insurance (S-DVI)
 - No longer accepting new applications (as of 12/31/22)
 - Cannot transfer waiver to VA Life



Special Housing Adaptations



2101a (Special Housing Adaptations): **2021 Rate:** **\$100,896 (total maximum amount)**

- **Eligibility:** Must meet both criteria below:
- Own or will own the home, **and**
- Have a qualifying service-connected (SC) disability, which includes:
 - The loss or loss of use of more than one limb
 - The loss or loss of use of a lower leg along with the residuals (lasting effects) of an organic (natural) disease or injury
 - **Blindness in both eyes (with 20/200 visual acuity or less, including visual field loss of 20 degrees or less)**
 - Certain severe burns
 - The loss, or loss of use, of one lower extremity (foot or leg) after September 11, 2001, which makes it so Veteran can't balance or walk without the help of braces, crutches, canes, or a wheelchair.

2101b (Specially Adapted Housing): **2021 Rate:** **\$20,215 (total maximum amount)**

- **Eligibility:** Must meet both criteria below:
- Own or will own the home, **and**
- Have a qualifying service-connected (SC) disability, which includes:
 - The loss or loss of use of both hands
 - Certain severe burns
 - Certain respiratory or breathing injuries.



CHAMPVA



- CHAMPVA: Dependents of 100% SC Veteran
 - The Civilian Health and Medical Program of the 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
 - Information: CHAMPVA - Community Care
 - Application: About VA Form 10-10d



Catastrophically Disabled



Catastrophically Disabled (CD)

VA Form 10-0383

More Information: Catastrophically Disabled Veterans Fact Sheet

Note: Catastrophically Disabled is a designation made by the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) that is based on a clinical decision. Veterans are considered CD when they have a severely disabling injury, disorder or disease that permanently compromises their ability to carry out the activities of daily living. A finding of Legal Blindness by an Eye Doctor is a qualifying condition. Special benefits include:

- Medical: Priority Group **4** (unless eligible for a higher priority group)
 - All VA medical care, excluding dental care unless otherwise eligible
 - Long-term care, including short-term (If space and resources are available) or indefinite nursing home care for veterans whose service-connected condition is clinically determined to require nursing home care)
- Exemption from copayments for the following care:
 - Inpatient care at VA facilities or at VA expense
 - Outpatient care at VA facilities or at VA expense
 - Prescription medication provided by VA pharmacy or VA expense
 - Non-institutional respite care
 - Non-institutional geriatric evaluation
 - Non-institutional adult day health care
 - Homemaker/Home Health Aide
 - Purchased skilled home care
 - Home Based Primary Care (HBPC)
 - Any other non-institutional alternative care services
- Copayments **STILL** apply for other extended care services (for example: Nursing Home Care)



Beneficiary Travel



- Beneficiary Travel - Reimbursement for mileage and other travel expenses to and from approved health care appointments. \$0.415/mile
 - Must meet at least one of the following:
 - 30% SC or higher
 - Traveling for treatment of SC condition, even if rated less than 30%
 - Receive VA Pension / have income below pension threshold
 - Traveling for scheduled VA compensation exam
 - Traveling to get a service dog
- BT for Blind Rehab- reimbursement for mileage/travel expenses to and from Blind Rehab
 - Must meet one of the following:
 - Need in-patient Blind Rehab care
 - Getting temporary lodging approved by VA



Special Mode Transportation



- Special Mode Transportation- ambulance, wheelchair van. Must meet all of the following:
 - Administratively eligible for travel (30% SC or below income)
 - VA health care provider determines medical necessity for SMT
 - Traveling for VA approved appointments
- **Special Mode Transportation - Veterans w Visual Impairments**
 - Regardless of Veteran's ability to move from one place to another, it is unsafe to access other forms of transportation
 - VA health care provider enters one of the vision impairment ICD-10 codes with note stating, "Veteran cannot safely ambulate due to no safe access to other types of transportation" (this satisfies medical justification)



Caregiver Support Program



Caregiver Support Program- Provides resources, education and support to caregivers of Veterans

- CSP Two Programs
 - Program of General Caregiver Support Services (PGCSS)
 - Service Connection not required
 - Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC)
 - Must be 70% SC
- Contact your **local Caregiver Support Coordinator** for local referral/application process



Refer to benefits experts!



- Veterans Service Organizations (VSO) & Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) have trained experts to aid Veterans in applying for benefits
 - **Find VBA Locations | Veterans Affairs**
 - Directory of Veterans Service Organizations (va.gov)
 - Blinded Veterans Association (bva.org)
 - DAV : Disabled American Veterans



Additional Information



- For more information on benefits
 - [Veterans Benefits Administration Home \(va.gov\)](#)
 - [Summary of VA Benefits](#)
 - [Disabled Veteran Benefits](#)
 - [Summary of Pension Benefits](#)
 - [Dependents & Survivors Benefits](#)
 - [Fact Sheets - Veterans Benefits Administration \(va.gov\)](#)



Exposure to Toxic Substances



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- **Veterans exposed to a toxic substance, radiation, or environmental hazard in the Persian Gulf (limited to certain disabilities) Recipients**
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- ○ Medical: Priority Group **6** (unless eligible for a higher priority group)
 - ● All VA medical care, excluding dental care unless otherwise eligible
 - ● Long-term care, including short-term (If space and resources are available) or indefinite nursing home care for veterans whose service-connected condition is clinically determined to require nursing home care)



Section 1151



- **Section 1151 of Title 38, US Code**
- **Disability resulting from VA medical care**
-
- **Note:** An 1151 claim for VA benefits allows veterans to receive compensation when a qualifying additional condition/disability or an existing injury or disease became worse resulting from the carelessness or negligence on the part of VA during medical care, or been caused by participation in a compensated work therapy program, such as vocational rehabilitation. Special benefits include:
 -
 - ○ Medical: Priority Group **3** (unless eligible for a higher priority group)
 - ● All VA medical care, excluding dental care unless otherwise eligible
 - ● Long-term care, including short-term (If space and resources are available) or indefinite nursing home care for veterans whose service-connected condition is clinically determined to require nursing home care)
 - ○ VA compensation and special benefits for the specific disability or appropriate for the percentage of service-connected disability awarded.



Military Retirees



Military Retirees

Based on 20 years of Active Military Service

- Medical: Priority Group can be assigned **1** through **8** and is determined by other eligibility factors (no special consideration)
- ● All VA medical care, excluding dental care (unless otherwise eligible)
 - Long-term care, including short-term (If space and resources are available) or indefinite nursing home care for veterans whose service-connected condition is clinically determined to require nursing home care)
- Department of Defense (DoD)
 - Combat Related Special Compensation (for certain qualifying military retirees only)
 - Survivors Benefit Plan (SBP) (for certain military retirees only)
 - Commissary and Exchange privileges
 - Lifetime Space-A (Space Available) travel benefits
 - Tricare healthcare benefits



Chapter 61-Medical Retirement



Military Retirees

Chapter 61-Medical Retirement

- Medical: Priority Group can be assigned **1** through **3** and is determined by other eligibility factors (no special consideration)
 - All VA medical care, excluding dental care (unless otherwise eligible)
 - Long-term care, including short-term (If space and resources are available) or indefinite nursing home care for veterans whose service-connected condition is clinically determined to require nursing home care)
- Department of Defense (DoD)
 - Combat Related Special Compensation (for certain qualifying military retirees only)
 - Survivors Benefit Plan (SBP) (for certain military retirees only)
 - Commissary and Exchange privileges
 - Lifetime Space-A (Space Available) travel benefits
 - Tricare healthcare benefits



Returning Service Members



Returning Service Members

Transition and Care Management Program (Post 9/11)

- Medical: Priority Group **6** (or higher if eligible)
 - 5 years of cost-free health care for any condition related to military service in a combat theater
 - 180 Day Dental Benefit: 1-time dental care (must apply within 180 days of separation date from active duty)
 - Vet Center Support: readjustment counseling and family support
 - Caregiver Support Program
- Department of Defense (DoD)
 - Combat Related Special Compensation (for certain qualifying military retirees only)
 - Survivors Benefit Plan (SBP) (for certain military retirees only)



Women Veterans



Women Veterans

- Medical: Priority Group is determined by other eligibility factors (no special considerations)
 - All VA medical care, excluding dental care (unless otherwise eligible)
 - Long-term care, including short-term (If space and resources are available) or indefinite nursing home care for veterans whose service-connected condition is clinically determined to require nursing home care)
 - Women's health specialty health care (e.g., advanced breast and gynecological care, maternity care, and some infertility treatments)
 - Women Veterans Program Managers are available to assist women Veterans at each VA Medical Center
- Other
 - Women Veterans Call Center: **1-855-VA-WOMEN** (1-855-829-6636)
 - For more information check the following: Women Veterans Health Care
 - Caregivers Support Line: (1-855-260-3274)



Homeless Veterans



Homeless Veterans

- Medical: Priority Group is determined by other eligibility factors (no special considerations)
 - All VA medical care, and possibly some limited dental care (unless otherwise eligible)
 - Long-term care, including short-term (If space and resources are available) or indefinite nursing home care for veterans whose service-connected condition is clinically determined to require nursing home care)
 - Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans (DCHV) Program
 - Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Program
 - Women Veterans Program Managers are available to assist women Veterans at each VA Medical Center
- Other
 - National Call Center for Homeless Veterans: **1-877-4AID-VET** (1-877-424-3838)
 - For more information check the following: [VA Homeless Programs](#)



Active-Duty Service Members



Active Duty Service Members

Note: Active-Duty Service Members can receive treatment in VA facilities and certain VA programs, including Blind Rehabilitation Service. The goal is early intervention and a smooth handoff between DoD and VA. Care managers in DoD are responsible to reaching out to VA facilities and program offices to initiate care request from VA. If VIST is contacted directly by the Service Member or their family they should be instructed to work with their DoD care manager to facilitate referral and appropriate handoff.

- Medical: Per special agreement/arrangement between VA and DoD. The level and type of care available can vary from one VA to another.
 - VA medical care, and possibly some limited dental care based on interagency agreement. This **does** include Blind Rehabilitation and Low Vision Services at VA facilities.
 - Prosthetic equipment prescribed by VA providers and therapists.
- VA Compensation if compensable disability exists once separated or retired from DoD
- Automobile Allowance/Grant (if eligibility criteria is met)
- Department of Defense (DoD)
 - Combat Related Special Compensation (for certain qualifying military retirees only)
 - Survivors Benefit Plan (SBP) (for certain military retirees only)
 - Commissary and Exchange privileges
 - Space-A (Space Available) travel benefits
 - DoD healthcare benefits



2023 VA SPECIAL & ANCILLIARY BENEFITS RATES



Automobile Grant (Eligibility-Auto Grant) effective 10/01/2022: **\$24,115.¹²** (one time)

HISA (SC): (Information on HISA) **\$6,800**

HISA (NSC): (Information on HISA) **\$2,000**

2101a (Specially Adapted Housing-SAH Grant): **\$109,986** (maximum)

Temporary Grant Rate for SAH: **\$44,299** (maximum)

2101b (Special Housing Adaptation-SHA Grant): **\$22,036** (maximum)

Temporary Grant Rate for SHA: **\$7,910** (maximum)

Beneficiary Travel: **\$0.415/mile (41.5 cents)**

Clothing Allowance (Eligibility-Clothing Allowance): **\$968.⁵²** (annual)

Paid on August 1, 2023 (starting in 2012 possible to receive more than one allowance)

Medal of Honor Pension: **\$1,619.³⁴** per month



VA Special Rates Continued



DIC (all surviving spouses of veterans who died on or before 01-01-1993
the rate payable is based on the veteran's pay grade) **\$1,562.⁷⁴ to \$3,580.⁸⁰ per month**

DIC (all surviving spouses of veterans who died on or after 01-01-1993) **\$1,562.⁷⁴ per month**

DIC Supplement (additional benefit to the basic rate if the deceased
veteran had been entitled to receive 100% SC compensation
for at least 8 years immediately preceding death AND the surviving
spouse was married to the veteran for the same 8 years) **\$331.⁸⁴ per month**

DIC (each dependent child under age 18): **\$387.¹⁵ additional/month**

DIC (surviving spouse in need of A&A): **\$387.¹⁵ additional/month**

DIC (surviving spouse deemed housebound): **\$181.¹⁷ additional/month**

DIC (2 year transitional benefit for one or more children under 18): **\$332.⁰⁰ additional/month**

K Award **\$128.⁶² per month**

Q Award **\$67 per month**

Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance (S-DVI) **\$10,000 - \$30,000**

DoD Concurrent Receipt Disability Pay Rates **Full Benefits (100% SC)**

Veterans eligible for military retirement and rated 50% or higher by
the VA are entitled to receive their military retirement in addition to VA Compensation. For more information check the following web site:
<http://militarypay.defense.gov/Pay/Retirement/Concurrent.aspx>

DoD Combat Related Special Compensation (CRSC)

Available to certain Military Retirees with combat or operations related disabilities that are rated compensable. For additional information please check the following



VA Enrollment Priority Groups



SOURCE: http://www.va.gov/HEALTHBENEFITS/resources/priority_groups.asp

Eight priority groups have been established to help ensure that VA resources are allocated to veterans with the highest priority for VA care. Priority Group 1 is the highest priority and Priority Group 8 is the lowest. Priority level funding may change from year to year, depending on congressional funding. If VA cannot renew your enrollment for the following year, you will be notified 60 days before your current enrollment period expires. Enrollment for VA health-care will occur based on the following priorities:

Priority Group 1

- Veterans with service-connected (SC) conditions who are rated 50% or more disabling
- Veterans determined by VA to be unemployable due to service-connected conditions
- Veterans that have received the Medal of Honor (MOH)

Priority Group 2

- Veterans with VA rated service-connected (SC) conditions who are rated 30% or 40% disabling

Priority Group 3

- Veterans who are Former Prisoners of War (POWs)
- Veterans who have received the Purple Heart medal
- Veterans with service-connected (SC) disabilities rated 10% or 20% disabling
- Veterans discharged from active duty for a disability that was incurred or aggravated in the line of duty
- Veterans awarded special eligibility classification under Title 38, U.S.C., Section 1151, "benefits for individuals disabled by treatment or vocational rehabilitation"

Priority Group 4

- Veterans who are receiving aid and attendance or housebound benefits from VA
- Veterans who have been determined by VA to be catastrophically disabled



Priority Groups Continued



- **Priority Group 5**

- ♦ Nonservice-connected (NSC) Veterans and non-compensable service-connected (SC) veterans rated 0% disabled by VA with annual income below the VA's and geographically (based on resident zip code) adjusted income limits
- ♦ Veterans receiving VA pension benefits (basic rate only)
- ♦ Veterans eligible for Medicaid programs

- **Priority Group 6**

- ♦ Compensable 0% percent service-connected (SC) veterans
- ♦ Veterans exposed to Ionizing Radiation during atmospheric testing or during the occupation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki
- ♦ Project 112/SHAD participants
- ♦ Veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam between January 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975
- ♦ Veterans of the Persian Gulf War who served between August 2, 1990 and November 11, 1998
- ♦ Veterans who served on active duty at Camp Lejeune for at least 30 days between August 1, 1953 and December 31, 1987
- ♦ Currently enrolled Veterans and new enrollees who serve in a theater of combat operations after November 11, 1998 and those who were discharged from active duty on or after January 28, 2003, are eligible for the enhanced benefits, for 5 years post discharge.



Priority Status Continued



Priority Group 7

Veterans with gross household income below the geographically-adjusted income limits (GMT) for their resident location and who agree to pay copays

Priority Group 8

Veterans with gross household income above the VA and the geographically-adjusted income limits for their resident location and who agree to pay copays

Veteran's ELIGIBLE for enrollment

Noncompensable 0% service-connected:

Subpriority a: Enrolled as of January 16, 2003 and who have remained enrolled since that date and/or placed in this sub priority due to changed eligibility status

Subpriority b: Enrolled on or after June 15, 2009 whose income exceeds the current VA or geographic income limits by 10% or less

Nonservice-Connected and:

Subpriority c: Enrolled as of January 16, 2003 and who have remained enrolled since that date and/or placed in this sub priority due to changed eligibility status

Subpriority d: Enrolled on or after June 15, 2009, whose income exceeds the current VA or geographic income limits by 10% or less

Veteran's NOT eligible for enrollment

Veterans not meeting the criteria above:

Subpriority e: Non-compensable 0% service-connected (eligible for care of their SC condition only)

Subpriority g: Nonservice-connected

NOTE-1: Veterans assigned to Priority Groups 8e or 8g are not eligible for enrollment as a result of the enrollment restriction which suspended enrolling new high-income veterans who apply for care after January 16, 2003.

NOTE-2: VHA Directive 2000-001, dated January 4, 2000 found that ALL legally blinded veterans will automatically be placed in priority category 4 or higher, if their VA rating qualifies for a higher Priority Group assignment.



Introduction



Non-VA Benefits and Services



State Veterans Benefits (Local Benefits and Services)



Each State manages its own benefits programs. These benefits may include educational grants and scholarships, special exemptions or discounts on fees and taxes, home loans, veteran's homes, free hunting and fishing privileges, and more.



Services Exclusively Available or Prioritized to Veterans



- Commissary and Exchange Privileges
- Savings on travel privileges with a military card
- Talking Book (preference goes to veteran's)
- License plates (depending on eligibility and state).
For example, Retired Military plate, Purple Heart Plate, Disabled Vet Plate, etc.
- Property Tax Exemptions (depending on eligibility and state law or local ordinance)



Services for Veterans (cont)



- College benefits (varies by state depending on eligibility and state law or college policy)
- Reduced entry fees for some parks, etc. (will vary greatly)
- Free Fishing/Hunting License (may extend to non-veteran disabled population)
- Free Drivers License (varies by state, etc.)
- Seeing Eye waives their admission fee for blinded veterans
- Free meal at Golden Corral Restaurants on Veteran's Day and/or Memorial Day



Veterans Consumer Organizations



- Blinded Veterans Association (BVA) -established specifically to help veterans and their families
- Blinded American Veterans Foundation (BAVF) - designed to become a focal point and clearinghouse for research, information dissemination and education efforts



Non-VA Consumer Organizations



- American Council of the Blind (ACB) - advocacy organization active in promoting the rights of people in the U.S.
- The National Federation of the Blind (NFB) – oldest and most active advocacy organization for the blind in the U.S



Other Services/Resources



- *American Foundation for the Blind (AFB)* –national non-profit organization devoted to ensure blind and visually impaired enjoy same rights and opportunities as other citizens.
- *State Commissions for the Blind* –offer services to help individuals regain independence and find employment.
- *The Hadley School for the Blind* - is the largest worldwide distance educator of blind and visually impaired people, their families and blindness service professionals.
- *Library Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped* – NLS administers a free library program of Braille and audio materials by postage free mail (aka Talking Books)



Other Services/Resources (cont)



- *Learning Alley formally Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic (RFB&D)* offers an online catalog of the best audio books and audio learning opportunities on the internet. They maintain a library of textbook recordings and will make audio recordings of textbooks for students, if instructors use texts that are not currently available. There is a registration fee for this service.
- *Dog Guide Schools* - anyone interested in training with a guide dog to research each of the programs listed in Guide Dog Schools in the U.S. link.
- *Radio Reading Services* - services provide audio access to information to people who cannot read print and the services can be accessed via radio, web or telephone.



Federal and State Resources



- *National Parks Pass Program* - A free, lifetime pass - available to U.S. citizens or permanent residents of the United States that have been medically determined to have a permanent disability.
- *Postage Free Matter for the Blind* - Pub. 347 - Mailing Free Matter for the Blind and Visually Handicapped Persons.
- *Handicapped Parking Permits* - Most states require a doctor's prescription along with an application form downloadable from the web.



Federal and State Resources (cont)



- *Social Security Administration (SSA)* - You may qualify for Social Security or SSI disability benefits if you are considered “legally blind.”
- *Voting Accessibility* - Accessibility to voting area and voting privately - Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA).
- *Income Tax Deductions* - If you are blind on the last day of the year and do not itemize deductions, you are entitled to a higher standard deduction.



Resources



LINKS



Compensation, Pension & Ancillary Benefits



- Patient Enrollment and the Privacy Act
www.va.gov/vhapublications/viewpublication.asp?pub_ID=1089
- Disability Compensation and Pension Benefits Payment Rate Tables
<http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/rates/>
- Benefits Fact Sheets
<http://www.vba.va.gov/vba/benefits/factsheets/>
- Chapter 31 Vocational Rehabilitation for Veterans
<http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre/index.htm>
- Chapter 35 Dependents' Educational Assistance Program (DEA)
https://www.gibill.va.gov/pamphlets/CH35/CH35_Pamphlet.pdf
- Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service Home Page
<http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre/>



Military Treatment Facilities, Transition Programs and Employment



- Career Connect – American Foundation for the Blind
<http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=7>
- Transition Assistance Program
<http://www.turbotap.org/register.tpp>
- Family Support Workbook from Wounded Warrior Resource Center
<http://www.woundedwarriorresourcecenter.com/files/kiat.pdf>
- US Department of Labor – Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS)
<http://www.dol.gov/vets/>
- Military Treatment Facilities – the Wounded Warrior Resource Center Website (WWRC)
<http://www.woundedwarriorresourcecenter.com/military-treatment>



MTFs, Transition & Employment (cont)



- Blind Rehabilitation Service Home Page (INTERnet)
<http://vaww.rehab.va.gov/brs/>
- Blind Rehabilitation Service Home Page (INTRAnet)
<http://vaww1.rehab.va.gov/brs/>
- Veterans Benefits Timetable for veterans recently separated from active duty
<http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-0501-ARE.pdf>
- Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents and Survivors handbook
http://www1.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book.asp
- What Can the VA Do For Me? Returning Servicemembers (OEF/OIF)
<http://www.oefoif.va.gov/WhatCanVADoForMe.asp>



Non-VA Benefits



- State Directory of Veterans Benefits
<http://www.military.com/benefits/veteran-benefits/state-veterans-benefits-directory>
- Library Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped
<http://www.loc.gov/nls/>
- Digital Resources and Collections through the Library of Congress
<http://www.loc.gov/library/libarch-digital.html>
- The Blinded Veterans Association
<http://www.bva.org/about.html>
- List of State Parks by State and Other Attractions
http://www.touristinformationdirectory.com/parks/state_park.htm



Non-VA Benefits (cont)



- The Hadley School for the Blind
<http://www.hadley.edu/default.asp>
- The American Council of the blind
<http://www.acb.org/profile.html>
- The National Federation of the Blind
<http://www.nfb.org/nfb/Default.asp>
- Postage – Free Matter for the Blind
<http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=3&TopicID=32&DocumentID=3528>
- Dog Guide Schools – a list with links
<http://www.gdui.org/schools.html>
- Handicapped Parking Permits – Links to Each State for Specifics
<http://arthritis.about.com/od/driving/a/handicapparking.htm>



Non-VA Benefits (cont)



- International Association of Audio Information Services – searchable website for radio reading and other audio resources
<http://www.iaais.org/>
- Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic
<http://www.rfbd.org/>
- Social Security & Blindness – search results page
http://search.ssa.gov/search?q=blind&output=xml_no_dtd&sort=date%3AD%3AL%3Ad1&ie=UTF-8&client=default_frontend&oe=UTF-8&proxystylesheet=default_frontend&proxyreload=1
- Voting Accessibility Key Links from the American Foundation for the Blind
<http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=3&TopicID=141&DocumentID=4158>



Non-VA Benefits (cont)



Links for information on taxes

- <http://turbotax.intuit.com/tax-tools/tax-tips/deductions-and-credits/5629.html>
- <http://www.taxfoundation.org/blog/show/24308.html>
- <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p501.pdf>



Non-VA Benefits (cont



Social Security links

- <http://ssa.gov/pubs/10052.html>
- <http://www.ssa.gov/dibplan/dqualify8.htm>
- <http://www.disabilitysecrets.com/social-security-disability-vision-loss.html>



Non-VA Benefits (cont)



- National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Annual Pass

<http://store.usgs.gov/pass/access.html>

- Site with links about a lot of subjects and resources

http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eohhs2terminal&L=5&L0=Home&L1=Consumer&L2=Disability+Services&L3=Services+by+Type+of+Disability&L4=Blind+Services&sid=Eeohhs2&b=terminalcontent&f=mcb_c_additional_benefits&csid=Eeohhs2



Questions/Panel Discussion

