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***If Veterans don't help Veterans, who will?***

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# Illinois State Veteran's Benefits

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

- [Housing Benefits](#)
- [Financial Assistance Benefits](#)
- [Employment Benefits](#)
- [Education Benefits](#)
- [Other State Veteran Benefits](#)

## Illinois Veteran Housing Programs

### Illinois Veterans Homes

The State of Illinois runs 4 Veterans homes each providing long-term skilled care and services to residents. Quality nursing and health care services are provided to Illinois veterans with military service of one (1) day or more during any period of time now, or in the future recognized by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as a period of war. Monthly costs are based on income but are capped at \$1,429 per month. The State of Illinois also runs the Prince Home at Manteo which offers a residential program for homeless and disabled veterans, helping them cope with Post Traumatic Stress, substance abuse, and other challenges.

### Home Loans

Launched to honor those who sacrifice to safeguard our freedom, Welcome Home Heroes is open to all qualified Illinois veterans, active military personnel, reservists and Illinois National Guard members. An alternative to a federal VA loan, the Illinois Welcome Home Heroes home buyer financing package includes a \$10,000 forgivable loan over two years for down payment and closing cost assistance, a 30-year fixed rate mortgage that has an affordable interest rate, and an optional mortgage credit certificate to reduce federal income tax liability.

## Illinois Financial Assistance Benefits

### World War II Bonus Payment

A bonus of \$10 per month for domestic service and \$15 per month for foreign service is payable to a veteran who was a resident of Illinois at time of entering service, served at least 60 days on active duty between September 16, 1940 and September 3, 1945, and received an honorable discharge. Survivors are entitled to a benefit of \$1,000, if the veteran's death was service-connected and within the period specified.

### Korean, Vietnam, Persian Gulf, and Global War on Terrorism (OIF, OEF) Bonus

A \$100 bonus is payable for service during one of the following periods:

Korea - June 27, 1950 - July 27, 1953

Vietnam - January 1, 1961 - March 28, 1973

Vietnam Frequent Wind - April 29, 30, 1975

Persian Gulf - August 2, 1990 - November 30, 1995

Global War on Terrorism - September 11, 2001 - TBD

The claimant must also be in receipt of one of the following medals: Korean Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal Vietnam Era Southwest Asia Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, or the Afghanistan Campaign Service Medal; and have been a resident of Illinois for 12 months immediately prior to entering service and have received an Honorable Discharge.

### Vietnam Veteran Survivors Compensation

Survivors are entitled to a payment of \$1,000 if veteran's death is service-connected or is the direct result of service-connected disabilities incurred in the period specified. A separate application is required.

## **POW Compensation**

Persons on active duty with the Armed Forces of the United States or employed by the United States Government on, or after, January 1, 1961, who were residents of Illinois 12 months prior to entry, and who were taken and held prisoner by hostile forces in Southwest Asia, are entitled to \$50 for each month or portion thereof while being held captive.

## **Global War on Terrorism Survivors' Compensation**

A \$3,000 bonus is payable to survivors of certain persons killed by terrorist acts or hostile activities during performance of military service in periods recognized as wartime by United States campaign or service medals. Residency of 1 year in Illinois prior to entering military service is required.

## **Tax Exemption**

The **Specially Adapted Housing Tax Exemption** is allowed on the assessed value of real property for which federal funds have been used for the purchase or construction of specially adapted housing for as long as the veteran, or the spouse, or unmarried surviving spouse resides on the property.

The **Returning Veterans' Homestead Exemption** provides qualifying Veterans a one-time \$5,000 reduction to their home's equalized assessed value (EAV). Qualifying Veterans who return from active duty in an armed conflict involving the U.S. armed forces can file an application upon their return home to receive this exemption.

The **Disabled Veterans' Standard Homestead Exemption** provides a reduction in a property's EAV to a qualifying property owned by a Veteran with a service-connected disability certified by the U. S. Department of Veterans' Affairs. A \$2,500 homestead exemption is available to a Veteran with a service-connected disability of at least 50% but less than 75% or a \$5,000 homestead exemption is available to a veteran with a service connected disability of at least 75%. A disabled Veteran must file an annual application by the county's due date to continue to receive this exemption.

## **Tax Exemption for Mobile Home**

This exemption applies to the tax imposed by the Mobile Home Local Services Tax Act when that property is owned and used exclusively by a disabled veteran, spouse or unmarried surviving spouse as a home. The veteran must have received authorization of the Specially Adapted Housing Grant by the USDVA, whether benefit was used or not. Applicant must be a permanent resident of the State of Illinois on January 1 of the tax year for which the exemption is being claimed. Disabled veterans that now live in a mobile home and never received the Specially Adapted Housing Grant are not eligible. Please contact your local service office for more information.

## **Illinois Employment Benefits**

### **State Government/Employment Preference**

Preference is given in Central Management Services entrance examinations to honorably discharged veterans who served in times of hostilities and peacetime. The Department of Central Management Services also conducts a Veterans Outreach Program that provides professional counseling to Veterans seeking state employment with the 45 boards, agencies, and commissions under the Governor's jurisdiction. Interested Veterans may learn more about the program or to begin the process of state employment by calling 1-800-643-8138.

### **Jobs for Vets**

The Department of Employment Security/Illinois Job Service provides a trained "Veterans Representative" to help you get the training and job you need. An electronic statewide job search information system is available at different locations throughout the State of Illinois. Veterans should call 1-888-FOR-IETC to find their nearest Representative.

The Department of Human Services provides services for veterans with mental/physical disabilities that assist them in returning to gainful employment.

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs have a number of Small Business Administration loan and Job Training Programs.

## **Education Requirements for Illinois State Police, Conservation Police, Municipal Police & Firefighters**

The educational requirements needed to join the Illinois State Police will be waived for veterans who have been honorably discharged with a campaign service medal for Afghanistan or Iraq. The Illinois Conservation Police will waive their educational requirements for honorably discharged veterans who have certain campaign medals. The educational requirement of an Associate's or Bachelor's Degree will be waived for a firefighter or municipal police officer for veterans discharged honorably after 24 months of active duty or 180 days in combat.

## **Illinois Education Benefits**

### **Educational Opportunities for Children (10-18 Yrs)**

Financial aid is provided annually to each child between the ages of 10 and 18 years of a veteran who died or became totally disabled as a result of service in the Armed Forces during World War I, or II, the Korean and Vietnam Conflicts or beginning February 1, 1955, until such individuals are no longer eligible for induction under the Universal Military Training and Service Act. The financial aid applies to a state educational institution of elementary grade, high school or vocational training school.

### **MIA/POW Scholarship**

Dependents of a veteran who has been declared by the Department of Defense or U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to be a prisoner of war; missing-in-action; to have died as the result of a service-connected disability; or be permanently disabled from service-connected causes with 100% disability; and, who was an Illinois resident or was an Illinois resident within six months of entering service may be eligible for the scholarship. Eligible dependents are entitled to full payment of tuition and certain fees to any state supported Illinois institution of higher learning consisting of the equivalent of four (4) calendar years of full-time enrollment including summer terms (i.e., 120 points).

### **State Approving Agency**

Approves training for veterans in the areas of higher education, apprenticeship training, vocational training, and on the job training.

### **Veterans' Grant**

The Illinois Veteran Grant (IVG) Program pays tuition and certain fees at all Illinois state-supported colleges, universities and community colleges for Illinois residents. An individual must:

- be an honorably discharged veteran; and
- reside in Illinois six months before entering the service; and
- have at least one full year of active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces which includes veterans who were assigned to active duty in a foreign country in a time of hostilities in that country, regardless of length of service; and
- return to Illinois within six months of discharge from the service.

### **Illinois National Guard Scholarship**

Any enlisted person or Lieutenant or Captain with at least one year service in the Illinois Army/Air National Guard may participate. Available for eight semesters or twelve quarters of full-time or part-time undergraduate study or graduate study at any Illinois state-controlled university or community college. Recipient is entitled to payment of tuition and certain fees.

### **Children of Veterans Scholarship**

Each county in the state shall be entitled, annually, to one honorary scholarship at the University of Illinois, for the benefit of children of veterans of WWI, WWII, Korean War, the Vietnam Conflict and any time on or after August 2, 1990 and until those persons in service are no longer eligible for the Southwest Asia Service Medal. Preference is given to the children of deceased and disabled veterans. Such children shall be entitled to receive, without charge for tuition, instruction in any or all departments of the University for a term of at least four (4) consecutive years. Details may be obtained from the University's Financial Aid Office.

## **Other Illinois State Veteran Benefits**

### **Cartage Fees**

When the federal government has furnished a headstone or marker, the ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS shall pay up to the allowable reimbursement amount for the setting of such marker within Illinois. Currently, the maximum amount is \$100.00 payable upon approval of the application.

### **Graves Registration**

The Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs shall maintain a card file Roll of Honor of all veterans buried in the State of Illinois. Every person, firm or corporation owning or controlling any cemetery or burial place in this State is required to keep a permanent record of the burial of each U.S. war veteran or memorial marker erected for this purpose.

### **Indigent Veterans**

The county Veterans Assistance Commission shall provide burial for any honorably discharged indigent veteran, or their mothers, fathers, spouse or surviving spouse, or minor children without sufficient means to defray the funeral expenses. The expense of such burial shall not exceed the sum of \$600. Emergency food, transportation, etc. are provided in certain cases. Please contact your local county Veterans Assistance Commission for more information.

### **Camping & Admission Fees**

This benefit provides for the exemption of camping and admission fees for certain disabled persons and former prisoners of war who are Illinois residents and wish to camp in parks under the control of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Documentation is required.

### **Hunting and Fishing Privileges**

Fishing and hunting licenses are not required for disabled veterans receiving 10% or greater service-connected compensation, or total disability pension benefits. To acquire a permit, contact your local Veterans Service office.

### **State Fair**

Honorably discharged veterans of all ages and their families shall be admitted FREE, when they properly identify themselves, on Veterans' Day at the fair. Veterans Day includes a day-long program of drum corps, drill teams, and color guard competition. Admission is FREE to people 60 and older on Senior Day.

### **Necessary Documents to File Claims**

Certificate of Discharge DD 214, death certificate, marriage license, insurance policies and in some cases medical documentation.

Visit the [Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs](#) website for more information on any of these programs.