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

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# Mississippi State Veteran's Benefits

The state of Mississippi 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](#)

## Mississippi Veteran Housing Programs

### Mississippi Veterans' Home Purchase Board

The Veterans Home Purchase Board provides low interest mortgage loans for eligible veterans and unmarried surviving spouses to purchase an existing single family home or to construct a new home.

Eligibility requires that the veteran be a Mississippi resident prior to entering military service or be a resident for two (2) consecutive years prior to applying for the loan. The veteran must have or obtain a Certificate of Eligibility for Home Loan Guaranty from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and be discharged from extended active duty under honorable conditions. The unmarried surviving spouse of eligible persons who died as a result of service or service-connected injuries qualifies, as well as the unremarried spouse of any eligible veteran who has not purchased a home since the veteran's death are eligible.

### State Veterans Nursing Homes

Each of the four State Veterans Nursing Homes has 150 beds and provides skilled nursing home care for eligible Veterans and spouses. Eligibility for admission to the Homes requires that a serviceman/woman be or have been a Mississippi resident, have qualifying military service, have been discharged under other than dishonorable conditions, or be the spouse of a Veteran who resides in one of the Veterans Homes. Out of state Veterans may be admitted to the Homes if there are no Mississippi residents waiting to accept a bed. Applicants must have a medical need for nursing home care and must be able to pay the applicable daily charge for care in the Home.

## Mississippi Financial Assistance Benefits

### Privilege Tax

Persons who are 65 or older, blind, deaf, dumb, or with loss of hand or foot, or loss of use of the hand or foot or who can provide documentation that they are 50% disabled to perform physical labor and whose annual gross income is \$900.00 or less are exempt from payment of privilege tax for specified businesses.

### Ad Valorem Tax

Any Veteran having a service-connected, total disability and who has been honorably discharged from military service shall be exempt from all Ad Valorem taxes on the assessed value of homestead property and to extend such exemption to un-remarried surviving spouses of such veterans

## Mississippi Employment Benefits

### Employment Preference

The State Personnel Board grants each veteran who is fully qualified preference over other applicants for initial or promotional appointments (5 points). Disabled veterans are given additional preference (10 points). In state layoffs, veterans are granted preference and additional preference is given disabled veterans.

## **State Retirement**

Members of the State Public Employees Retirement System who served in the Armed Forces of the United States or who served in Maritime Service during periods of hostility in WWII shall be entitled to up to four (4) years credit for active duty in the Armed Forces or in such Maritime Service, provided they entered State Service after discharge from the Armed Forces or after completion of such Maritime Service. Credit may be extended beyond four (4) years for those persons who can provide positive proof that they were retained in the Armed Forces or such Maritime Service during WWII by causes beyond his control and without opportunity for discharge.

## **Mississippi Education Benefits**

### **Educational Assistance**

Children of any member of the armed services whose official home of record and residence is within the State of Mississippi and who is officially reported as being either a prisoner of a foreign government or missing in action can receive an eight-semester scholarship, without cost, exclusive of books, food, school supplies, materials and dues or fees for extracurricular activities at any state supported college or university within the State.

The Adjutant General is authorized to pay the tuition for any member in good standing with the active Mississippi National Guard who is enrolled within the State of Mississippi in an accredited institution of higher learning and who is not eligible for GI Bill educational assistance and who meets requirements specified in Mississippi law.

Military personnel stationed in Mississippi are classified as state residents for the purposes of payment of tuition at state colleges and universities.

### **Mississippi Employment Security Commission**

Veterans seeking assistance regarding employment or unemployment insurance benefits should contact their local Mississippi Employment Security Commission Office for assistance. MS Employment Security Commission offices are located in larger cities and towns throughout the state.

## **Other Mississippi State Veteran Benefits**

### **Documents**

The State Bureau of Vital Statistics is to furnish, without charge, copies of birth and death certificates when they are needed to establish claims for dependency, disability, or survivors benefits for any veterans who are legal residents of the State of Mississippi or their claimants.

The State Bureau of Vital Statistics is to furnish, at no expense, and immediately upon application a certified copy of birth certificates for any person volunteering for service in one of the armed forces of the United States.

Chancery and Circuit Clerks are to furnish, without charge, copies of marriage licenses, divorce decrees, adoption decrees and any and all other records when the same are needed to establish claims for dependency, disability or survivors benefits for any veterans who are legal residents of the State of Mississippi or their claimants.

Chancery Clerks shall record, without cost whatsoever to any person of the Armed Forces of the United States residing in the same county, all honorable discharges and all certificates of service of any and all members of the Armed Forces of the United States. Certified copies will be furnished free without cost to the soldier, sailor, marine, coast guardsman, or nurse.

### **Hunting and Fishing Licenses**

Veterans who have a total service-connected disability from the Veterans Administration are not required to purchase a hunting or fishing license, but must have on their person proof of age, residency and disability status while engaged in hunting or fishing.

### **Concealed Weapon Permit Fee Exemption**

Any Veteran having a service-connected disability shall be exempted from concealed weapon permit fees and renewal fees. The Veteran must be a resident of the state for 12 months or longer immediately preceding the filing of the application. However, this residency requirement may be waived, provided the applicant possesses a valid permit from another state, is active military personnel stationed in Mississippi, or is a retired law enforcement officer establishing residency in the state.

### **Vehicle License Plates**

The following are special vehicle military license plates issued to eligible persons in Mississippi:

- Active Reserve
- Afghanistan Veteran
- Air Medal
- Bronze Star
- Disabled Veteran
- Distinguished Flying Cross
- Former Prisoner of War
- Gold Star Family
- Iraq Veteran
- Killed In Action
- Marines
- Medal of Honor
- National Guard
- Navy & Marine Corps
- Pearl Harbor Survivors
- Purple Heart
- Retired Armed Forces
- Retired Armed Forces, Air Force
- Retired Armed Forces, Army
- Retired Armed Forces, Coast Guard
- Retired Armed Forces, Merchant Marines
- Retired Armed Forces, National Guard
- Retired Armed Forces, Navy
- RAF Reserve
- Silver Star
- Veteran
- Vietnam Veteran
- Iraq Veteran
- Afghanistan Veteran

### **State Veterans Memorial Cemetery**

The Mississippi Veterans Memorial Cemetery is open for in-ground burials and accepts cremains for both in-ground or columbarium interment. The cemetery is located approximately three (3) miles east of Newton on Highway 80. Veterans, their spouses and eligible dependent children can be buried in the Cemetery. Burial for Veterans is at no cost unless the burial involves re-interment from another cemetery and the VA burial allowance has previously been paid. A fee must be paid to bury non-Veteran spouses and eligible dependent children. The VA provides a free grave marker and perpetual care is provided at no cost. Contact your funeral director or the cemetery office for information.

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