



Mission Statement

The mission of the Department of Veterans' Services is to advocate on behalf of all the Commonwealth's veterans and provide them with quality support services and to direct an emergency financial assistance program for those veterans and their dependents who are in need.

Veterans Bill of Rights

- *M.G.L. ch. 115 and 108 CMR (Code of Massachusetts Regulations)*
- You have a right to:
- File a written application for veterans' benefits at any time. You can insist upon this right, even if told that you are not eligible. 108 CMR 4:02 (1)
- Receive assistance from your local veterans' agent in completing your application (M.G.L. ch. 115, s. 3)
- Receive a full explanation of the services and benefits available under M.G.L. ch. 115, as well as other available benefits
- Receive a written notice and explanation of the approval or denial of your application for benefits (108 CMR 8.02)

Veterans Bill of Rights cont.

- Be treated with dignity and respect and to receive accurate, courteous, and timely service
- Appeal and request a hearing if you disagree with any action taken in your case [108 CMR 8.07(1)]
- Expect confidentiality; personal information will not be collected or used except for the purpose of determining your eligibility for benefits (M.G.L. ch. 40, s.51)
- Receive fair and equal treatment without regard to sex, race, religion, handicap, ethnicity, or national origin (M.G.L. ch. 151B, s.3)
- Preference in public employment (M.G.L. ch.31, s.12, 26, 28 and ch. 41, s.112.)



Chapter 115

The Commonwealth is the only state in the Union that has made generous provisions by state law by providing to veterans in need.

Some of the benefits provided:



Chapter 115

- Financial Assistance with
 - Food,
 - Housing,
 - Clothing,
 - Medical and
 - Burial assistance
- Employment Assistance



Chapter 115

Eligibility

Veteran - Discharged under honorable conditions and a resident of Massachusetts with:

90 Days service during Time of War

180 Days service during Peace Time

Dependants:

Un-Remarried Spouse

Child

Parent (If supported by the veteran)



Chapter 115

Financial Eligibility

	Single	Married
Income	\$2,023	\$2,743
Assets	Less Than \$5,000	Less Than \$9,800

Further calculations are required to determine benefit level.
This is for reference only.



Chapter 115

A widow or widower of a veteran is eligible for the same benefits as their veteran spouse.



Chapter 115

Contact your local city or town
Director of Veterans'
Service/Veterans' Service
Officer.

**Every city and town has a
Veterans' Service Officer.**

Your Local VSO

- Assist with everything shown previously AND
- Chapter 115 Benefit Applications
- VA Applications
- Assist with discharge paperwork
- Property Tax Assistance
- Excise Tax Assistance
- Annuity Applications
- Record Retention

VA Services

Assist veterans with Federal VA Claims
Submission and Appeals for VA Compensations
and Pensions

DVS has filed claims worth \$28-\$30 Million per
year for the veterans of Massachusetts.

- Primary VA Contact Office in the JFK Building in Boston
- Secondary VA Contact Office in Providence RI

Both offices are accessible through the local
Veterans' Service Officer

FY17 Summary of Expenditures by State

Expenditures in \$000s

County/ Congressional District	Veteran Population*	Total Expenditure	Compensation & Pension	Construction	Education & Vocational Rehabilitation/ Employment	Loan Guaranty#	General Operating Expenses	Insurance & Indemnities	Medical Care	Unique Patients**
BARNSTABLE	18,552	\$ 115,174	\$ 62,359	\$ 81	\$ 7,688	\$ -	\$ 3,949	\$ 3,571	\$ 37,525	4,890
BERKSHIRE	8,781	\$ 59,487	\$ 27,606	\$ -	\$ 2,018	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,313	\$ 28,549	2,265
BRISTOL	29,840	\$ 238,009	\$ 116,530	\$ -	\$ 15,484	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,600	\$ 103,395	8,453
DUKES	903	\$ 3,770	\$ 2,299	\$ -	\$ 105	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 106	\$ 1,260	217
ESSEX	35,333	\$ 247,276	\$ 120,013	\$ -	\$ 25,731	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,069	\$ 97,464	8,896
FRANKLIN	4,949	\$ 41,388	\$ 18,583	\$ -	\$ 1,936	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 264	\$ 20,605	1,709
HAMPDEN	27,152	\$ 209,936	\$ 109,554	\$ -	\$ 14,362	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,338	\$ 83,682	8,060
HAMPSHIRE	9,194	\$ 102,094	\$ 38,946	\$ 663	\$ 4,538	\$ -	\$ 920	\$ 1,268	\$ 55,760	3,034
MIDDLESEX	59,998	\$ 545,491	\$ 214,528	\$ -	\$ 56,707	\$ -	\$ 1,527	\$ 10,435	\$ 262,295	14,669
NANTUCKET	560	\$ 768	\$ 451	\$ -	\$ 111	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 25	\$ 181	53
NORFOLK	30,921	\$ 283,390	\$ 120,451	\$ -	\$ 23,504	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6,012	\$ 133,424	7,995
PLYMOUTH	31,165	\$ 327,499	\$ 136,093	\$ -	\$ 19,750	\$ -	\$ 1,835	\$ 3,297	\$ 166,524	8,919
SUFFOLK	20,369	\$ 351,151	\$ 91,136	\$ 13,831	\$ 39,655	\$ -	\$ 17,864	\$ 2,565	\$ 186,099	6,122
WORCESTER	45,537	\$ 325,350	\$ 165,513	\$ -	\$ 24,471	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,623	\$ 130,743	11,365
MASSACHUSETTS (Total)	323,253	\$ 2,850,783	\$ 1,224,061	\$ 14,575	\$ 236,060	\$ -	\$ 26,096	\$ 42,487	\$ 1,307,505	86,647



Property Tax Exemptions

Between \$400 and total abatement depending upon disability or complete abatement for Gold Star Spouses

- Legal Resident of Massachusetts
- Occupy Property on July 1 of the tax year
- Resident of Massachusetts for at least six months prior to entering the service
- Resident of Massachusetts for five consecutive years prior to filing

Contact the local assessor's office to apply



Welcome Home Bonus

Veterans who served from Sept. 11, 2001 to the present:

1st time active service in Iraq, Afghanistan or other [Veterans' Bonus Imminent Danger List](#) (one time) \$1,000

1st time 6 continuous months active service within Continental United States (CONUS) or outside the continental U.S (OCONUS) other than Iraq, Afghanistan or other DoD designated imminent danger location (one time) \$500

Note: The law allows eligible individuals to receive only one initial \$500 bonus for CONUS or OCONUS service

If died while on active service \$1,000



Welcome Home Bonus cont.

Subsequent Deployment Bonuses

Subsequent deployment in Iraq, Afghanistan or other DoD designated imminent danger location \$500

Subsequent 6 continuous months CONUS or OCONUS deployment in direct support of Operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, Noble Eagle, Inherent Resolve, Freedom's Sentinel or any successor or related operation \$250



Other Bonuses

- **Vietnam**
 - In Country \$ 300.00
 - Or \$ 200.00
- **Korean**
 - Ninety days state side service \$ 100.00
 - Six continuous months of active service \$ 200.00
 - One or more days outside continental limits of the United States \$ 300.00
- **WWII**
 - One day to six months active service \$ 100.00
 - Six continuous months of active service \$ 200.00

Contact:

The State Treasurer (617) 367-9333 Ext. 539

Or www.mass.gov/treasury



Persian Gulf Bonus

Payment of Bonus, Eligibility.

- (a) \$500 to each such Persian Gulf War veteran who performed active service in the Persian Gulf area in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm and is in receipt of the Southwest Asia Service Medal established by executive order of the President on March 13, 1991;
- (b) \$300 to all other such Persian Gulf veterans who were called to active service in support of said operations as members of the Army National Guard or Air National Guard or as a reservist in the Armed Forces of the United States and served in an area other than the Persian Gulf area.



License Plates

- Massachusetts has a LONG list of plates
 - Standard Plate – Funds go to Soldier's Homes
 - Bronze Star and above – Plates are free
- Go to Registry or the Registry Web-Site

<http://www.mass.gov/rmv/veteran/vet.htm>



Do You know a Woman Veteran?

- Approximately 23,000 women veterans reside in Massachusetts
- Women are now roughly 15% to 17% of the Active-Duty population
- 20% of new recruits are female
- Women comprise 7.5% of the Veteran Population Nationwide
- Database of over 15,000 women veterans



Women Veterans' Outreach

- Direct assistance and referrals women veterans.
- Collaborative Steering committee
- Annual Women Veterans' Appreciation Day Event at State House (Just celebrated 14th Annual). The Deborah Sampson Award is presented on WVAD each year to an outstanding woman veteran
- Volunteer Women Veterans Speakers' Bureau
- Annual Conference for Women Veterans Free and open to the public.(Location TBD annually, 2019 will be 11th Annual)



STATEWIDE
ADVOCACY
— FOR —
VETERANS'
EMPOWERMENT

SAVE

The fundamental principle of the SAVE program is to advocate for veterans who are unable to obtain their deserved benefits because of either institutional deficiencies or personal barriers.



STATEWIDE
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VETERANS'
EMPOWERMENT

SAVE

The program's primary mission is the prevention of suicide, while simultaneously identifying the issues our veterans are facing as they return home from service.

Focus is on:

- Community advocacy
- Suicide prevention
- Mental health awareness
- Referrals
- Trial Court/Veteran Treatment Court Advocates/
and Jail Diversion Program



STATEWIDE
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— FOR —
VETERANS'
EMPOWERMENT

SAVE

SAVE Outreach Coordinators are in the field each week responding to the needs of veterans and their families.

Check out their YouTube Video:

[SAVE Saves Lives](#)



VALOR ACT

- VALOR Act On May 31, 2012, the Veterans Access, Livelihood, Opportunity and Recognition Act (the VALOR Act) into law (Chapter 108 of the Acts of 2012). Massachusetts is already a leader on providing outstanding benefits to its Servicemembers and Veterans. The VALOR Act expands upon those benefits by providing additional support for Veterans and their families in areas such as education; small business entrepreneurship; and workforce development. The Act also provides Massachusetts' criminal justice system with additional tools to address some of the underlying issues, such as PTSD, TBI and substance abuse, that many of our Veterans suffer from when they return home and that may result in involvement with law enforcement and the courts.



VALOR ACT II

- “An Act Relative to Veterans’ Allowances, Labor, Outreach and Recognition,” also known as the “VALOR Act II,” creates increased supports for workforce training for Veterans, continued access to Veterans’ services and increased protections for Servicemembers seeking higher education in the Commonwealth. The VALOR Act II was signed into law April 3, 2014.
- VALOR Act II provides \$350,000 for the training and certification of Veterans’ Services Officers (VSO) through the Department of Veterans’ Services (DVS) and will allow DVS to develop training and guidelines to ensure the Commonwealth has trained and qualified Veterans’ advocates at the community level. The Act will also ensure municipal compliance with Chapter 115 so that all Massachusetts Veterans have access to the highest quality assistance regardless of where they live.



VALOR ACT II cont.

- The Act also requires the Division of Professional Licensure to waive application fees for members of the armed forces for which the Division will accept education, training or service completed by the applicant toward qualification requirements to receive license or certification. The legislation also protects active military enrolled at public and private colleges and universities from academic or financial penalties by virtue of their service. A student who enrolls, but is unable to complete a course because he or she is called to active duty, can complete the course at a later date, or withdraw with a full refund of fees and tuition.



BRAVE ACT

- Designates April 5th as Gold Star Wives Day and the last Sunday in September as Gold Star Mothers and Families Day.
- Establishes a Massachusetts Veterans and Warriors Agriculture Program to enhance education, training, employment, income, productivity and retention of veterans working in or aspiring to work in the field of agriculture.
- Allows parents or surviving guardians of veterans, who died in service to the country, to receive a real estate credit on property beginning Jan. 1, 2019.
- Increases veterans' local property tax work-off program from \$1,000 to \$1,500.
- Allows Gold Star License Plates to be affixed to commercial vehicles.
- Provides time off for veterans for Veterans Day and Memorial Day, with or without pay, at the discretion of the employer.
- Requires the Department of Veterans' Services to maintain and publish a list of law firms and organizations that provide pro bono legal representation for veterans



Brave Act cont.

- Establishes a special commission to study cost and feasibility of exempting all cost to veterans of attending public higher education in Massachusetts.
- Directs the Executive Office of Health and Human Services in consultation with the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, to partner with a Massachusetts college or university to conduct a study relative to veterans and military members suffering from mental health or substance abuse issues related to their military service and their needs in the criminal justice system.
- Extends the veterans' bonus program administered by the Treasurer to allow for the maximum amount of benefits under the program, subject to appropriation, to those veterans who served during Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Noble Eagle, Operation Inherent Resolve and Operation Freedom's Sentinel.



Housing

- 10 Homeless Centers \$5,625,125
- 14 Outreach Centers \$5,284,262
- 77,846 units of services delivered to veterans in fiscal 2018.
- The veteran centric providers provide a full range of services to assist veterans and their families of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
- **professional and peer counseling**
 - access to state and federal benefits
 - linkages to community services and activities
 - permanent housing

Mass Hire



- **Veterans' Employment Representatives will:**
 - help you organize your job search,
 - work with you to design your own personal employment plan, a comprehensive and flexible way to help you manage your job search,
 - assist you with writing your resume, and
 - help you to develop your job leads.
- Visit your nearest One-Stop Career Center to talk to a veterans' specialist. You can also look for job leads in the state and across the country through [Massachusetts JobQuest](#).

Mass Hire cont.



- **Veterans' Employment Representatives**
- [Veterans' Employment Representatives \(VERs\)](#) are state employees located in the state's One-Stop Career Centers. Their job is to provide job search services to veterans by:
 - supervising the provision of all services to veterans including counseling, testing, and identifying training and employment opportunities;
 - monitoring job listings from federal contractors to see that eligible veterans get priority in referrals to these jobs;
 - promoting and monitoring the participation of veterans in federally-funded employment and training programs;
 - cooperating with the [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) to identify and aid veterans who need work-specific prosthetic devices, sensory aids or other special equipment to improve their employability; and
 - contacting community leaders, employers, unions, training programs and veterans' service organizations to be sure eligible veterans get the services to which they are entitled.
- For more information about U.S. Department of Labor employment and training programs for veterans, contact the [Veterans' Employment and Training Service](#) office nearest you, listed in the phone book in the United States Government under the Labor Department.

Mass Hire cont.



- **Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists develop job and training opportunities for veterans, with special emphasis on veterans with service-connected disabilities.**
- **How veterans' outreach can help you**
- **Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists** develop job and training opportunities for veterans, with special emphasis on veterans with service-connected disabilities.
- DVOP specialists provide direct services to veterans to help them to compete in the labor market. They provide outreach and offer assistance to disabled and other veterans by promoting community and employer support for employment and training opportunities, including apprenticeship and on-the-job training.
- DVOP specialists work with employers, veterans' organizations, the **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs** and the **U.S. Department of Defense**, and community-based organizations to link veterans with appropriate jobs and training opportunities.

Mass Hire cont.



- DVOP specialists serve as case managers for veterans enrolled in federally funded job training programs such as the Department of Veterans Affairs' Vocational Rehabilitation program, and other veterans with serious disadvantages in the job market. DVOP specialists are available to those veterans and their employers to help ensure that necessary follow up services are provided to promote job retention.
- The [U.S. Department of Labor](#) provides funding for DVOP specialist positions. These specialists are located in MassHire Career Centers across the state.
- DVOP specialists may also be stationed at regional offices and medical or veterans' outreach centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs, state or county veterans' service offices, community-based organizations, and military installations.

Mass Hire cont.



- **CONTACT FOR DISABLED VETERANS' OUTREACH PROGRAM (DVOP)**
- **MassHire Department of Career Services contact information**
- **Address**
- Main Office Charles F. Hurley Building, 19 Staniford St., Boston, MA 02114
- **Phone**
- [Call MassHire Department of Career Services contact information at \(617\) 626-5300](tel:(617)626-5300)
- 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. weekdays

One Stop Career Centers

Massachusetts Workforce Areas and One-Stop Career Centers



Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development
Department of Career Services

Additional Resources

- MassVetsAdvisor Web Portal:
www.massvetsadvisor.org
- Veterans' Laws and Benefits:
http://www.sec.state.ma.us/cis/cisvet/vetid_x.htm
- Attorney General's Veterans' Resource Guide:
http://www.mass.gov/Cago/docs/civilrights/vets_guide_120508.pdf

Contact Information

- Web Site: www.mass.gov/veterans
- S.A.V.E.: 1-888-844-2838 Option #2
- Web Portal: www.massvetsadvisor.org
- Address: Commonwealth of Massachusetts
- Department of Veterans' Services
- 600 Washington Street, 7th Floor
- Boston, MA 02111

Phone: 617-210-5480

- www.twitter.com/massdvs
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- YOUR LOCAL VETERANS' SERVICES OFFICER