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

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# Georgia State Veteran's Benefits

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

- Housing Benefits
- Tax Benefits
- Employment Benefits
- Education Benefits
- Other State Veteran Benefits

## Georgia Veteran Housing Programs

### War Veterans Homes

Treatment is provided at no charge to all honorably discharged war Veterans in the Georgia War Veterans Home, Milledgeville, and in the Georgia War Veterans Nursing Home in Augusta. The term "war Veteran" for this benefit means any Veteran who served on active duty in the armed forces of the United States, or on active duty in a reserve component, including the National Guard, during wartime or during the period January 31, 1955, through May 7, 1975. To determine eligibility for admission, see your local SDVS office.

## Georgia Veterans Tax Benefits

### Exemption from Homestead Tax

Homestead Tax: Certain disabled veterans and certain widows/widowers, or minor children are allowed the maximum amount which may be granted under United States Code.

### Exemption from Sales Tax on Vehicles

A disabled Veteran who receives a VA grant for the purchase and special adapting of a vehicle is exempt from paying the state sales tax on the vehicle (only on the original grant).

### Ad Valorem Tax on Vehicles

Exemption for Veterans who are verified by VA to be 100 percent totally and permanently service-connected disabled and Veterans who are receiving or who are entitled to receive statutory awards from VA for: (1) loss or permanent loss of use of one or both feet; (2) loss or permanent loss of use of one or both hands; (3) loss of sight in one or both eyes; or (4) permanent impairment of vision of both eyes to a prescribed degree. Exemption is granted on the vehicle the Veteran owns or leases and upon which the free Disabled Veterans (DV) Motor Vehicle license plate is attached.

### Exemption from State Income Tax

The period of time military personnel served on active duty as members of the armed forces of the United States in combat activities during a period designated by the President plus the next 180 days thereafter are disregarded in determining whether any filing requirement has been performed within the time limit prescribed for filing.

For individuals who are hospitalized as a result of an injury or confined as a prisoner-of-war, the period of service in the combat zone, plus the period of confinement and the next 180 days there after shall be disregarded in determining whether any filing requirement has been performed within the time limit prescribed for filing.

### Certificate of Exemption

Disabled Veterans are exempt from payment of occupational taxes, administration fees, and regulatory fees imposed by local governments for peddling, conducting a business, or practicing a profession or semi profession.

Eligibility: Veterans must (1) be discharged under honorable conditions from the armed forces of the United States; (2) have 10 percent physical disability for certain wartime Veterans or a 25 percent service-connected physical disability for peace time-only Veterans; and (3) have an income that is not liable for state income taxes.

## **Abatement of State Income Taxes**

Georgia law provides that service personnel who die as a result of wounds, disease or injury incurred while serving in a combat zone as a member of the armed forces of the United States, are exempt from all Georgia income taxes for the taxable year of his or her death, nor shall such taxes apply for any prior taxable year ending on or after the first day he/she served in the combat zone.

[Learn more about Georgia State Veterans Tax Benefits](#)

## **Georgia Employment Benefits**

### **Employment Preference**

Extended to Veterans employed under the State Merit System.

(a) Any veteran who has served on active duty as a member of the armed forces of the United States for a period of more than 180 days, not counting service under an initial period of active duty for training under the six-months' reserve or National Guard programs, any portion of which service occurred during a period of armed conflict in which any branch of the armed forces of the United States engaged, whether under United States command or otherwise, and who was honorably discharged there from shall be entitled to and shall have five points added to his passing score on any competitive civil service examination for employment with the state government or any political subdivision thereof; provided, however, that such veteran is not already eligible for veterans preference under Article IV, Section III, Paragraph II of the Constitution of Georgia.

(b) Notwithstanding the 180 day minimum active duty requirement of subsection (a) of this Code section, the five-point preference granted to veterans under said subsection shall apply to any member of the National Guard or armed forces reserve who served on active duty for any length of time during any portion of the time the armed forces of the United States were engaged in Operation Desert Shield or Operation Desert Storm if such service occurred in an area of imminent danger as defined by the United States Department of Defense.

(c) Any veteran, as above, who has at least a 10 percent service connected disability, as rated and certified by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, shall be entitled to and shall have ten points added to his passing score on any competitive civil service examination, said ten-point preference being in lieu of and not in addition to any other similar preference accorded by law.

### **Employment Assistance**

State employees receive 18 days of military leave per year.

Eligibility: Georgia National Guard member.

[Learn more about Georgia State Veterans Employment Benefits](#)

## **Georgia Education Benefits**

### **1. Georgia Military Scholarship**

The State of Georgia offers 39 "Full Ride" scholarships per year to attend North Georgia.

The scholarship pays for room, meals, tuition, uniforms, and fees. It also provides a \$375 a semester stipend for books.

In addition, GMS recipients receive National Guard weekend drill pay, GI Bill, GI Bill "kicker", pay for attending Army basic and advanced training, an enlistment bonus of up to \$20,000, and Army ROTC contract pay (upon contracting at the beginning of the sophomore year).

After graduating college you will receive a \$10,000 commissioning bonus.

In order to be considered for the scholarship, you must be nominated by your local Georgia state assemblyman. Deadline for the application is March 15.

#### Scholarship Requirements:

1. Be a resident of Georgia.
2. Receive a nomination by a State Legislator.
3. Have a minimum critical reading score of 480 and math of 440 on the SAT, have a 3.0 cumulative GPA on a 4.0 scale, and graduate high school with a college prep or dual seal diploma.
4. Meet Army National Guard mental and physical standards.
5. Agree to serve as an enlisted member in the Georgia Army National Guard while a student at North Georgia.
6. Agree to accept a commission upon graduation from North Georgia and serve four years as a commissioned officer in the Georgia Army National Guard.

### [Learn more about Georgia State Veterans Benefits](#)

#### **Tuition Assistance (Georgia Air National Guard)**

Up to 100% tuition is paid, not to exceed \$2,790 per school year, \$1,395 per semester or the rate of \$116.25 per semester hour. Rate per quarter hour not to exceed \$77.40.

Eligibility: Georgia Air National Guard member.

#### **The National Guard Service Cancelable Loan Fund**

Provides up to 100% of the tuition charges; not to exceed the current academic year "per semester maximum." Soldiers with a baccalaureate degree are not eligible for this program.

Eligibility: Must be a legal resident of Georgia and be a member in good standing of the Georgia National Guard. Loan is repaid through continued membership and good standing in the Guard.

#### **Georgia HERO Scholarship**

The Georgia HERO (Helping Educate Reservists and their Offspring) Scholarship Program was created to provide educational grant assistance to members of the Georgia National Guard and U.S. Military Reservists who served in combat zones or the children of such members of the Georgia National Guard and U.S. Military Reserves. The grant is to attend an approved school for a maximum of up to four award years in the sum of \$2,000.00 per award year. No person shall be eligible to receive grant assistance provided under this subsection in excess of \$8,000.00.

### **Other Georgia State Veteran Benefits**

#### **Hunting and Fishing Licenses**

Any veteran who is a legal resident of Georgia, who files with the Game and Fish Division, Department of Natural Resources a letter from VA or a certificate from the Social Security Administration, Medicaid, Medicare, Railroad Retirement System or a unit of federal, state or local government recognized by the Board of Natural Resources by rule or regulation stating that he/she is a totally and permanently disabled veteran, is entitled to a lifetime honorary hunting and fishing license allowing the veteran to fish and hunt within the state without the payment of any fee. Persons who are at least 65 years old or who are rated totally blind also qualify.

#### **Honorary Veteran's Hunting/Fishing License**

The One-Time Honorary Veterans License is valid for 12 months from the date of issue. The Honorary Veterans License covers all recreational hunting and fishing licenses (except Federal Duck Stamp).

This specifically includes: Alligator, Hunting, Primitive Weapons, Big Game, WMA, Georgia Waterfowl Conservation, Fishing and Trout licenses. It does not include commercial licenses.

Applicants for the Honorary Veterans License must be military veterans who meet all of the following criteria:

- - Have not previously received this license.
  - Served on active Federal duty for 90 or more days.
  - Discharge date is July 1, 2005 or later (veterans discharged before July 1, 2005 are not eligible for this license).
  - Currently reside in Georgia.

Visit the [Georgia Wildlife website](#) for application and further details. (PDF)

In addition Veterans have the benefit of purchasing a Georgia State Sportsman's Lifetime License at a reduced cost of \$400. [Learn more.](#)

### **Veterans Drivers' Licenses**

Issued at no charge to eligible Veterans and National Guard or Reservists with 20 or more years of service.

Eligibility: Driver's license issued without charge to: (1) Veterans who were residents of Georgia at the time of enlistment or commissioning and are residents at the time of application for the license or who have been residents of Georgia for at least two years immediately preceding the date of application for the license. Individuals must have served on active duty in the armed forces of the United States or on active duty in a reserve component, including the National Guard, during wartime or any conflict when personnel were committed by the President, except for periodic transfer from reserve status to active duty status for training purposes, and who were discharged or separated under honorable conditions. The individual need not have been assigned to a unit or division which directly participated in such war or conflict. (2) any member or former member of the National Guard or reserve forces who has 20 or more years creditable service.

### **Honorary Driver's License**

Issued without charge to: (1) any Georgia resident who is the surviving spouse of a Veteran who was eligible for a Veteran's license, so long as the surviving spouse does not remarry; or (2) any resident of Georgia who is the spouse of a Veteran who would qualify for a Veteran's license were it not for the Veteran's permanent disabilities which preclude the operation of a motor vehicle.

### **Vehicle License Tags**

Medal of Honor Tags: Special license plates are issued without charge to a Veteran who is a legal resident of Georgia and who is a Medal of Honor recipient. Two distinctive license plates will be issued to be placed on the front and rear of the motor vehicle owned by the Medal of Honor recipient.

Free Disabled Veteran Tags (Automobile/Motorcycle): Provided at no charge to: (1) any Veteran who was separated under honorable conditions and who served on active duty in the armed forces or on active duty in a reserve component, including the National Guard, and who is receiving or entitled to receive a statutory award from VA for (a) loss or permanent loss of use of one or both feet; (b) loss or permanent loss of use of one or both hands; (c) loss of sight in one or both eyes; or (d) permanent impairment of both eyes to the extent that there is central visual acuity of 20/200 if there is a field defect in which the peripheral field has contracted to such an extent that the widest diameter of visual field subtends an angular distance no greater than 20 degrees in the better eye; or (2) any Veteran separated under honorable conditions and verified by VA as receiving or entitled to receive compensation at the 100 percent rate as a result of being totally disabled permanently or totally disabled non-permanently.

Georgia law allows a disabled Veteran to obtain only one license plate at no charge. It can be placed on either a leased or owned vehicle.

Paid Disabled Veteran Tags: Disabled Veteran tags are available to Veterans who were separated under honorable conditions and who meet the same degree of disability which is required for the issuance of Free DV tags, but are unable to qualify for a free license plate. These DV tags are not issued free but may be purchased at regular license plate rates.

POW Tags: One license plate will be issued at no charge to any Veteran who is a former prisoner-of-war, who was discharged under honorable conditions, and who is a legal resident of Georgia. Former prisoners-of-war are exempt from paying ad valorem taxes for state, county, municipal and school purposes on the vehicle on which they place the no charge POW license plate. Additional plates may be purchased upon payment of the appropriate taxes and registration

fees. A widow/widower of a deceased former POW is eligible for the issuance of a free POW tag so long as they remain unmarried.

**Purple Heart Tags:** Recipients of the Purple Heart medal are entitled to one license plate at no charge. Additional tag(s) can be obtained by paying the regular license fees plus a manufacturing fee.

**Pearl Harbor Tags:** Veterans of the armed forces of the United States who survived the attack on Pearl Harbor are eligible to receive a special and distinctive vehicle license plate upon application and payment of an additional fee.

**Veterans License Tags:** Retired personnel of the U.S. Armed Forces or individuals who served during WWI, WWII, Korean War, Vietnam War, Operation Desert Shield/Storm, Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Iraqi Freedom are eligible to purchase special and distinctive vehicle license plates. All requests must be accompanied by payment of the appropriate taxes, registration fees and manufacturing fees. Motor Vehicle owners who retired from active duty with the Armed Forces of the United States shall be issued one retired tag at no charge upon applications.

### **ID Cards**

Personal identification cards are available to Veterans who do not have a motor vehicle driver's license and who would, otherwise, be entitled to issuance of a Veteran's driver's license.

### **Reduced Fees for Disabled Veterans**

Any service connected disabled Veteran who was discharged under honorable conditions can visit/use state parks historical sites and recreational areas at reduced rates. A 25% reduced fee for all facilities, lodging, and any recreational activities in the State of Georgia will be granted by the park upon presentation of the entitlement card.

**Eligibility:** Veteran who is a legal resident of the State of Georgia and has been certified by DVA as a disabled veteran. For this purpose, a disabled veteran is a veteran who has been discharged under honorable conditions from any branch of the armed forces of the United States and has a physical disability that was incurred during the period of service in the armed forces.

### **Veterans License Plates**

Retired personnel of the U.S. Armed Forces or individuals who served during WWI, WWII, Korean War, Vietnam War, Operation Desert Shield/Storm, Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Iraqi Freedom are eligible to purchase special and distinctive vehicle license plates. All requests must be accompanied by payment of the appropriate taxes, registration fees and manufacturing fees. Motor Vehicle owners who retired from active duty with the Armed Forces of the United States shall be issued one free tag upon applications.

### **Handicapped Parking**

Holders of DV license tags are authorized to park their vehicles displaying such tags in parking areas designated for the handicapped without obtaining special handicapped parking area permits. This does not apply to federal parking areas.

### **Motor Fuel Service to Handicap**

When there is an option on the price of fuel at a full-service/self-service facility, a station employee, upon request will dispense fuel at the lower price from the self-service pump into vehicles bearing HV or DV license tags if: (1) the handicapped/disabled Veteran is driving the vehicle into which fuel is to be dispensed; and (2) the Veteran is not accompanied by a person at least 16 years of age who is not blind or has impaired mobility.

### **Guardianship**

The Uniform Guardianship Act provides for appointment of a guardian for incompetent Veterans and for Veterans' children when VA benefits are involved. These appointments are made on the basis of certificates issued only by VA.

### **Vital Statistics**

Veterans, dependents, VA or Veterans' organizations, may obtain copies of marriage, divorce, birth and death documents without charge, through the Department of Veterans Service, provided the copies are to be used for establishing disability or death claims with VA, and the request is in writing.

**Service Records**

There is no charge for recording of Veterans' discharge certificates (DD Form 214) in county Superior Courts.

**Assistance**

All Georgia Veterans and their dependents are urged to visit the nearest office of the Georgia Department of Veterans Service for complete information on benefits for which they may be eligible as well as professional assistance in obtaining them.

**Cemeteries**

Any member of the Armed Forces who is a veteran under the rules established by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and was separated under other than dishonorable conditions, and who has been a resident of Georgia for at least two years immediately preceding his/her death is eligible for burial in the Georgia Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Milledgeville or in the Georgia Veterans Memorial Cemetery that will open soon in Glennville.

[Learn more about Georgia State Veterans Benefits](#)