

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

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California Veteran Reintegration Program Fact Sheet

California State Benefits

COLLEGE TUITION FEE WAIVER FOR VETERAN DEPENDENTS

The College Tuition Fee Waiver for Veteran Dependents benefit waives mandatory system-wide tuition and fees at any State of California Community College, California State University, or University of California campus. This program does not cover the expense of books, parking or room and board. There are four plans under which dependents of veterans may be eligible.

Who is Eligible?

Plan A

- The child of a veteran who is totally disabled due to service-connected disabilities or whose death was officially rated as service-connected is eligible. The child must be over 14 years old and under 27 years old to be eligible. If the child is a veteran, then the age limit is extended to age 30;
- The spouse or Registered Domestic Partner (RDP) of a wartime veteran who has been rated as service-connected totally disabled is eligible. There are no age limit restrictions;
- The unmarried surviving spouse or RDP of a wartime veteran whose death has been rated as service-connected is eligible. There are no age limit restrictions;
- Any dependent of any veteran who has been declared missing in action, captured in the line of duty by hostile forces, or forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by a foreign government or power is eligible.

The veteran must have served at least one day of active duty during a period of war as declared by the U.S. Congress, or during any time in which the veteran was awarded a campaign or expeditionary medal. Concurrent receipt of benefits under Plan A and VA Chapter 35 benefits is prohibited. To receive benefits under Plan A, a dependent must sign an "election" statement acknowledging this fact. There are no income restrictions under this plan. To be eligible, the event which caused basic entitlement to benefits (i.e., the date the veteran died of service-connected causes or the date the VA rated the veteran as totally disabled as a result of service-connected disabilities) must have occurred prior to the child's 21st birthday.

Plan B

The child of a veteran who has a service-connected disability, or had a service-connected disability at the time of death, or died of service-related causes is eligible. The child's annual income, which includes the child's adjusted gross income, plus the value of support provided by a parent, may not exceed the annual income limit. The current academic year entitlement is based upon the previous calendar year's annual income. To view this year's income limit, go to <https://www.calvet.ca.gov/VetServices/Pages/College-Fee-Waiver.aspx>.

Under Plan B, wartime service is not required and there are no specific age requirements. Children are the only dependents eligible under this plan. There is no prohibition against receiving concurrent VA Chapter 35 benefits.

Plan C

Any dependent of any member of the California National Guard, who in the line of duty while on active service to the state, was killed, died of a disability resulting from an event that occurred while in active service to the state, or is permanently disabled as a result of an event that occurred while in the service to the state is eligible. Surviving spouses or RDPs who have not remarried are also eligible.

"Active service to the state," for the purpose of this benefit, means a member of the California National Guard activated pursuant to Section 146 of the Military and Veterans Code. A copy of those orders pursuant to Section 146, not Section 143, must be furnished to establish eligibility.

Plan D

Medal of Honor recipients and children of Medal of Honor recipients under the age of 27 may qualify. Benefits under Plan D are limited to undergraduate studies only, and applicants are subject to both income and age restrictions. There is no prohibition against receiving concurrent VA Chapter 35 benefits.

Note: All applicants must meet California residency requirements.

How to Apply

To apply, contact the local County Veterans Service Office www.cacvso.org or the Admissions Office of any California college system campus. For more information about the college fee tuition waiver and to download an application, go to www.cacvso.org.

MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATION FEES WAIVED

This benefit waives registration fees and provides a free license plate for one passenger motor vehicle, one motorcycle, or one commercial motor vehicle of less than 8,001 pounds unladen weight.

Who is Eligible?

Medal of Honor recipients, American Ex-Prisoners of War and disabled veterans are eligible.

How Do I Apply?

To apply, Medal of Honor recipients should complete a Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)

Form REG 17A, and proof of receipt of the Medal of Honor. Ex-Prisoners of War should complete a DMV Form REG 17, and provide proof of their former POW status. To download DMV Form REG 17 and 17A, go to www.dmv.ca.gov. Veterans may also call (800) 777-0133 to request a mailed copy. Mail the application and necessary documentation to:

Department of Motor Vehicles
Special Processing Unit, MS D238
P.O. Box 932345
Sacramento, CA 94232-0001

VETERANS LICENSE PLATE PROGRAM

The California's Veterans License Plate Program allows current service members, veterans, family members, and supporters of veterans the opportunity to proudly display their support for those men and woman that served in the United States Armed Forces. The program has over 100 different emblems and logos to choose from and place on the automobile's license plate.

FISHING AND HUNTING LICENSES

This benefit reduces annual fees for fishing and hunting licenses for disabled veterans.

Who is Eligible?

Any honorably-discharged veteran with a 50% or greater service-connected disability is eligible. There is no residency requirement to obtain a reduced annual fishing or hunting license fee.

How Do I Apply?

To apply, download and complete a reduced-fee fishing or hunting license application from the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) website at <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Licensing/Hunting#994193-reduced-fee> or call (916) 928-5805 to request an application be mailed.

First-time applicants must submit proof of their service-connected disability from the VA. For subsequent annual licenses, a copy of a previous year's California reduced fee sport fishing or hunting license is required.

After a veteran purchases their first sport fishing license from a DFW License Sales Office, they may purchase subsequent licenses from any license agent. Hunting licenses, however, are only available at DFW License Sales Offices.

Mail the application with VA proof of service-connected disability (if required) to:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife
License and Revenue Branch
1740 N. Market Boulevard
Sacramento, CA 95834

or any Department of Fish and Wildlife Office.

STATE PARKS AND RECREATION PASS

The Distinguished Veteran Pass entitles the holder to the use of all basic State Park System operated facilities, including camping and day use, at no further charge. The pass is not valid at units operated by local government, private agencies, or concessionaires and it is not valid for special events, group campsites, and commercial use or for supplemental fees. The pass cannot be used in conjunction with any other pass and/or discount.

Who is Eligible?

Any honorably discharged war veteran who is a resident of California with a 50% or more service-connected disability, or was held as a prisoner of war by forces hostile to the United States, or recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor.

How Do I Apply?

Download and complete a Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) application found at www.parks.ca.gov/pages/737/files/dpr619.pdf. Submit proof of service-connected disability rated at 50% or greater or provide documentation showing status as a former Prisoner of War or Medal of Honor recipient status along with a copy of the veteran's California Driver's License and a completed DPR Form DPR 619, found at www.parks.ca.gov/pages/737/files/dpr619.pdf.

Veterans may apply in person at:

Park Pass Sales Office
1416 9th Street, Room 114
Sacramento, CA 95814

Veterans may also apply by mail. Send completed applications and required documentation to:

California State Parks
Attn: Distinguished Veteran Pass Program
P.O. Box 942896
Sacramento, CA 94296-0001

Please allow 4-6 weeks for processing. Once the pass is received, veterans may use it for reservations and applicable benefits. The pass holder is required to present the Distinguished Veteran Pass and a valid California Driver License or other suitable photo identification, along with any campsite reservation or tour ticket, and to pay any supplemental fees at the park.

BUSINESS LICENSE, TAX, AND FEE WAIVER

The Business License, Tax, and Fee Waiver benefit waives municipal, county, and state business license fees, taxes, and fees for veterans who hawk, peddle, or vend any goods, wares, or merchandise owned by the veteran, except spirituous, malt, vinous, or other intoxicating liquor, including sales from a fixed location.

Who is Eligible?

Honorably discharged veterans who engage in sales (not services) activities may be eligible. Eligibility criteria will differ based upon local jurisdiction.

How Do I Apply?

Bring proof of honorable discharge to the local appropriate county/city licensing authority.

PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS

California has two separate property tax exemptions: one for veterans and one for disabled veterans.

Veterans Exemption

The California Constitution provides a \$4,000 real property (e.g., a home) or personal property (e.g., a boat) exemption for honorably discharged veterans or the spouse or pensioned-parent of a deceased, honorably discharged veteran. Most persons, however, are disqualified from this exemption due to restrictions on the value of property a claimant may own. A person who owns property valued at \$5,000 or more (\$10,000 or more for a married couple or for the unmarried surviving spouse of a qualified veteran) is not eligible for this exemption. Thus, a veteran who owns a home would most likely not qualify for the veterans' exemption.

Disabled Veterans Exemption

The California Constitution and Revenue and Taxation Code Section 205.5 provides a property tax exemption for the home of a disabled veteran or an unmarried spouse of a deceased disabled veteran.

There is a basic \$100,000 exemption or a low-income (less than \$52,470) \$150,000 exemption available to a disabled veteran who, because of an injury incurred in military service:

- is blind in both eyes; or
- has lost the use of two or more limbs; or
- is totally disabled as determined by the VA or by the military service from which the veteran was discharged.

An unmarried surviving spouse may also be eligible if the service person died as the result of a service-connected injury or a disease incurred while on active duty or as the result of active duty. In other words, a veteran may not have been eligible during his or her lifetime, but the surviving spouse may become eligible for the exemption upon the veteran's death.

Unlike the veterans' exemption, the disabled veterans' exemption has no personal wealth restriction. The exemption is only available on a veteran's principal place of residence. The home may only receive one property exemption. Thus, if a homeowner's exemption has been granted on a property and the owner subsequently qualifies for the disabled veterans' exemption, the homeowner's exemption should be cancelled to allow for the disabled veterans' exemption as it provides the greater benefit.

The issues regarding these exemptions are complex, and the eligibility requirements are specific. Consult the local assessor's office for detailed requirements regarding these exemptions.

Note: Both exemption amounts are annually adjusted for cost of living index; as of January 1, 2013, the exemption amounts are \$122,128 and \$183,193, respectively.

How Do I Apply?

Eligible veterans or surviving spouses may apply for an exemption at their local County Assessor's Office. A listing of County Assessor's Office may be found in the county government section of the telephone book or at www.boe.ca.gov/proptaxes/assessors.htm. Veterans may also request more information from their local County Veterans Service Office www.cacvso.org/.