

Your Ultimate Guide to 2022 Veteran Benefits in Florida



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There are many Florida veteran benefits and exemptions provided by the state to current and former members of the U.S. military.

Florida is ranked #3 in the country for veteran population by state, with over 1.4 million veteran residents! With such a large veteran population, it's no wonder that Florida veteran benefits are so plentiful.

Florida offers property tax exemptions, no income tax, excellent tuition waivers, free and discounted recreational programs, an extensive employment assistance program, veterans' homes, and motor vehicle benefits to its veteran population.

An excellent resource for veterans is the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs, which administers many Florida veteran benefits. Make sure to compare the different types of exemptions you may qualify for as a veteran, especially regarding property tax exemptions and scholarships and tuition waiver opportunities.

VA Claims Insider has built this complete guide of Florida veteran benefits to help Florida veterans find all the benefits you earned!

PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR VETERANS IN FLORIDA

Disabled Veteran Property Tax Exemptions

There are three types of property tax exemptions for disabled veterans in Florida:

- Disabled veterans with a 10 percent or greater disability
- P&T disabled veterans or veterans confined to a wheelchair
- Disabled veterans aged 65 and older

Disabled wartime veterans with a combat-related disability of 10 percent or more are eligible for an exemption of up to \$5,000 on their homestead property.

Veterans with a P&T disability rating or those confined to a wheelchair are eligible for a full property tax exemption.

Disabled veterans aged 65 or older are also eligible to receive a property tax exemption discount equal to the percentage of their disability rating.

Unremarried surviving spouses of disabled veterans are also eligible for these exemptions.

To apply for an exemption, complete the application with your local County Assessor by March 1. You only have to file for this exemption once unless you move to a new residence.

Deployed Military Property Tax Exemption

If you're a military member who resides in Florida and you deploy, you're eligible for a property tax exemption based on the amount of time you were deployed. You'll receive an exemption for the percentage of time you deployed during the previous year. If you deployed for six months, you'd receive a 50 percent exemption.

To qualify, you must deploy outside the U.S. on an active or reserve component of the Armed Forces.

You can apply for this exemption by completing the application by March 1 with your local County Assessor.

Property Tax Exemption for Surviving Spouses of Service Members Killed on Active Duty

Surviving spouses of service members who die from service-connected causes are exempt from paying property tax on their homestead.

Apply for this exemption by March 1 with your local County Assessor.

If you believe you overpaid property taxes due to any exemptions, you can also apply for a refund by completing an Application for Refund of Ad Valorem Taxes.

FLORIDA VETERAN INCOME TAX

Great news for all veterans—Florida does not impose a personal income tax.

WHAT ARE THE BEST FLORIDA VETERAN BENEFITS FOR EDUCATION?

Florida's educational benefits are excellent for veterans and their families, augmenting the federal education support available to all U.S. veterans.

There are also many military-friendly colleges in Florida. According to the VA, in 2017, 596 Florida schools received Post 9/11 GI bill funds for over 54,000 students totaling over \$378 million.

Resident College Tuition Rates in Florida for Veterans

The C.W Bill Young Veteran Waiver Program waives all out-of-state tuition and fees for veterans with an honorable discharge! All eligible veterans receive in-state tuition in Florida colleges and universities. To qualify, you must reside in Florida throughout your course of study.

In addition, service members stationed in Florida and their dependents are eligible for in-state tuition at a public college or university if they reside in Florida or attend college within 50 miles of a military installation.

To apply, contact your admissions office.

College Credit in Florida for Military Training

All universities and local community colleges in Florida use the recommendations made by the American Council on Education to award academic credit toward a degree for education and training received in the military.

To claim college credit for military training, request a transcript from your military service branch. Army, Navy, Marines, Space Force, and Coast Guard members can request a Joint Services Transcript. Air Force members should request a Community College of the Air Force transcript. Both methods let service members order online copies of their transcripts. Each service branch will provide official copies to schools at no charge.

Tuition Waivers for Purple Heart Recipients

If you're a veteran awarded the Purple Heart or combat decoration superior in precedence, you may be eligible for a full tuition waiver towards your college degree. Decorations considered superior include:

- Medal of Honor
- Distinguished Cross of Service
- Distinguished Service Medal with Combat "V Device"
- Silver Star
- Legion of Merit with Combat "V Device"
- Distinguished Flying Cross
- Bronze Star with Combat "V Device"

The waiver covers tuition for up to 110 percent of the hours required for your degree or certification. You must reside in Florida and be enrolled and attending school at least part-time to qualify.

Contact your institution's financial aid department to apply.

Scholarships for Veteran Dependents in Florida (Children and Spouses of Deceased or Disabled Veterans and Service Members)

Florida's scholarship program for dependents of disabled veterans, POW/MIA, or members who die due to service-connected causes is an excellent benefit to utilize towards your children's or spouse's education. The CSDDV program provides a scholarship worth up to 110 percent of the required credit hours towards a bachelor's degree.

To qualify, the veteran must have been a Florida resident for at least one year before the time of death and received a 100 percent disability rating (or POW/MIA status).

Dependents must be Florida residents to use this scholarship benefit. They must also not hold a bachelor's degree and take a minimum of six credit hours per semester. Eligible children must be younger than 23 to enroll.

For spouses to be eligible, they must be unremarried or remain married, have been married for at least one year before the service member's death or disability, and must apply within five years of the service member's death.

Complete a Florida Financial Aid Application by April 1 before the fall term to apply for scholarship benefits.

Tuition Assistance for Florida National Guard Members (Educational Dollars for Duty)

Members of the Florida National Guard could receive up to \$6,900 per year to cover the cost of tuition and fees to pay for a college degree, vocational or technical school, or professional license. This benefit provides tuition and fees up to the highest Florida public college in-state tuition rate, currently based on the New College of Florida.

The EDD program offers tuition assistance for a master's degree. Florida National Guard members can even use tuition assistance for approved private institutions in Florida.

You must be at least 17 years old in good standing with the Florida National Guard to qualify.

To apply for tuition assistance, sign up for an account through Florida's Virtual Education Center.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR VETERANS IN FLORIDA

Florida Active Duty Service Member Death Benefit

The state of Florida honors the sacrifice of active duty service members killed in the line of duty by paying a \$75,000 death benefit to their families. If a service member dies from a non-line of duty cause, their families receive \$25,000.

Service members must have been Florida residents or stationed in Florida at the time of death. Unfortunately, veterans who commit suicide do not qualify. The benefit is paid to the designated beneficiary. If no beneficiary is designated, the benefit is split equally between children and the surviving spouse.

For more information, contact the Florida Department of Military Affairs Military Department at 904-823-0364.

HIRING AND EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS FOR FLORIDA VETERANS

Several Florida veteran benefits offer support with employment, and many resources are available to help veterans and their families find jobs and advance their careers.

Veterans' Employment Preference for Florida Veterans

Florida recognizes those who have served by offering employment preference to veterans and their family members when they apply for federal, state, county, and local government jobs in Florida.

Veterans with an honorable discharge receive ten points added to their civil service exam as long as they're qualified for the position. Unremarried surviving spouses of service members who die due to service-connected disability and Gold Star parents also receive ten points.

Florida disabled veteran benefits are even better: 15 total points for disabled veterans with any disability rating. If the disabled veteran cannot work, the spouse is eligible to receive employment preference instead. Spouses of POW/MIA service members also receive 15 points.

Florida also rewards Reservists for their service, as Reservists receive five points added to their passing score.

Florida State Employment Veterans' Promotion Preference

Service Members are also eligible for promotion preference in state jobs if they're deployed under Title 10 orders which cause a break in state employment. They must return to the same Florida state employer and are eligible for one promotion opportunity for each deployment.

Florida Veterans Employment Program

The Florida Veterans Employment Program helps veterans and spouses seek employment throughout the state. Local CareerSource centers across the state are staffed with Veterans Employment Representatives to provide veterans with priority service to find jobs, acquire skills and education, plan a career, attend workshops, and take advantage of many other resources. Specialists can help you translate your military job skills to civilian terms and connect you with federal contractors and other employers committed to hiring veterans.

Job seekers can find a list of job openings and programs available for veterans with Employ Florida.

Business Tax Exemption for Veterans in Florida

Many cities require a business tax to operate a business in Florida. Veterans, their spouses, and certain service members are eligible for a business tax exemption. You must have an honorable discharge to qualify. Contact your local tax authority to determine how to file the exemption.

HOUSING BENEFITS FOR VETERANS IN FLORIDA

Florida State Veterans' Homes

Florida veteran benefits include eight veterans' homes in the state. Seven of the locations are dedicated to skilled nursing, and one is an assisted living facility. Each home prides itself on the quality of care and services offered to veterans. The goal of each home is to increase veteran quality of life while preserving veteran dignity.

To be eligible, veterans must have an honorable discharge and must be residents of Florida when they apply. There must also be a medical requirement for assisted living or skilled nursing care.

To learn more about each veterans' home and how to apply, read the respective homes' brochure:

- Alexander "Sandy" Nininger Veterans' Nursing Home in Pembroke Pines
- Ardie R. Copas State Veterans' Nursing Home in Port St. Lucie
- Baldomero Lopez State Veterans' Nursing Home in Land O' Lakes
- Clifford C. Sims State Veterans' Nursing Home in Panama City
- Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans' Nursing Home in St. Augustine
- Douglas T. Jacobson State Veterans' Nursing Home in Port Charlotte
- Emory L. Bennett State Veterans' Nursing Home in Daytona Beach
- Assisted Living Facility: Robert H. Jenkins Jr. Veterans' Domiciliary in Lake City

List of VA Locations in Florida

- Bay Pines, Bay Pines VA Healthcare System
- Boca Raton, Boca Raton CBOC
- Bradenton, Bradenton Community-Based Outpatient Clinic
- Brooksville, Brooksville CBOC
- Cape Coral, Lee County VA Healthcare Center
- Clearwater, Clearwater Vet Center
- Clermont, Clermont Community Based Outpatient Clinic
- Clermont, Clermont Vet Center
- Daytona Beach, William V. Chappell, Jr., VA OPC
- Daytona Beach, Daytona Beach Vet Center

- Deerfield Beach, Deerfield Beach VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic
- Delray Beach, Delray Beach CBOC
- Deltona, Deltona Community Based Outpatient Clinic
- Eglin AFB, Eglin CBOC
- Ft. Myers, Fort Myers Vet Center
- Ft. Pierce, Fort Pierce CBOC
- Gainesville, North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System
- Gainesville, Malcom Randall VAMC, NF/SGVHS
- Gainesville, Gainesville Vet Center
- Greenacres, Palm Beach Vet Center
- Hollywood, Hollywood VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic
- Hollywood, Pembroke Pines VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic
- Homestead, Homestead VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic
- Jacksonville, Jacksonville Navy VA Medical Center
- Jacksonville, Jacksonville OPC
- Jacksonville, Southpoint Clinic
- Jacksonville, Jacksonville, FL Vet Center
- Jupiter, Jupiter Vet Center
- Key Largo, Key Largo VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic
- Key West, Key West VA Outpatient Clinic
- Kissimmee, Kissimmee CBOC
- Lake City, Lake City VAMC, NF/SGVHS
- Lakeland, Lakeland CBOC
- Lakeland, Lakeland Vet Center
- Lauderdale Lakes, Fort Lauderdale Vet Center
- Marianna, Marianna CBOC
- Melbourne, Melbourne Vet Center

- Miami, Miami VA Healthcare System
- Miami, Healthcare for Homeless Veterans
- Miami, Healthcare for Homeless Veterans
- Miami, Miami Vet Center
- Middleburg, Middleburg VA Clinic
- Naples, Naples Community-Based Outpatient Clinic
- Naples, Naples Vet Center
- New Port Richey, New Port Richey OPC
- New Port Richey, Pasco County Vet Center
- Ocala, Ocala CBOC
- Ocala, Ocala Vet Center
- Okeechobee, Okeechobee CBOC
- Orlando, Orlando VA Medical Center
- Orlando, Lake Baldwin OPC
- Orlando, Orlando Vet Center
- Palatka, Palatka CBOC
- Palm Harbor, Palm Harbor Community-Based Outpatient Clinic
- Panama City, Bay County Vet Center
- Panama City Beach, Panama City Outpatient Clinic
- Pensacola, Joint Ambulatory Care Center
- Pensacola, Pensacola Vet Center
- Perry, Perry CBOC
- Pompano, Pompano Beach Vet Center
- Port Charlotte, Port Charlotte Community-Based Outpatient Clinic
- Port St Lucie, Port St. Lucie VA Specialty Clinic
- Sarasota, Sarasota Community-Based Outpatient Clinic
- Sarasota, Sarasota Vet Center

- Sebring, Sebring Community-Based Outpatient Clinic
- Shalimar, Okaloosa County Vet Center
- St. Augustine, Leo C. Chase, Jr. VA Clinic
- St. Petersburg, St. Petersburg Community-Based Outpatient Clinic
- St. Petersburg, RCS Southeast District 2 District Office
- St. Petersburg, St. Petersburg Vet Center
- St. Petersburg, VISN 8 VA Sunshine Healthcare Network
- Stuart, Stuart CBOC
- Sunrise, William Bill Kling VA Clinic
- Tallahassee, Sergeant Ernest I. “Boots” Thomas VA Clinic
- Tallahassee, Tallahassee Vet Center
- Tampa, James A. Haley Veterans’ Hospital
- Tampa, James A. Haley Veterans’ Hospital Primary Care Annex
- Tampa, James A. Haley Veterans’ Hospital Primary Care Annex
- Tampa, Tampa Vet Center
- Tavares, Tavares Community Based Outpatient Clinic
- The Villages, The Villages OPC
- Vero Beach, Vero Beach CBOC
- Viera, Viera OPC
- West Palm Beach, West Palm Beach VAMC
- Zephyrhills, Zephyrhills CBOC

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<http://VACIFREE30.com>**

FLORIDA VETERANS VEHICLE AND DRIVER'S LICENSE BENEFITS

Florida Veteran Designation on Driver License or Identification (ID) Cards

Any honorably discharged veteran can request a Veteran designation on the front of a Florida driver's license or ID card free of charge.

The word "Veteran" printed on the lower right corner of a license allows Florida veterans to validate their honorable service with a government-issued ID card.

Florida 100 Percent Disabled Veteran ID Card

If you're a 100 percent disabled veteran, Florida makes it easy to prove eligibility for the many state benefits you qualify for by adding a 100 percent disabled veteran endorsement to your driver's license.

To apply for Florida veteran benefits through the Florida Department of Motor Vehicles, bring your DD214 to a local service center near you.

Free License Plates for Florida Disabled Veterans

Florida offers veterans 40 different license plates to honor their service and sacrifice to our nation, most of which are available at your local Motor Vehicle Service Center. Veterans with a 100 percent disability rating or those who have received assistance from the VA with purchasing or altering their vehicle are eligible for a free Florida license plate.

Veterans with a disabled veteran license plate receive free parking in metered or timed parking on public streets.

To qualify, you must have been a resident for the previous five years when you apply. You can only apply for one license plate.

You can apply at your local Tax Collector office or license plate agency with Form HSMV 83007 and Form HSMV 83039. percent disabled veteran endorsement to your driver's license.

Florida Toll Permits and Exclusions for Veterans and Service Members

Florida offers a free toll permit to all disabled veterans driving a specially adapted vehicle who cannot place coins in a toll basket. Veterans must be certified by the VA or a doctor that they cannot use toll baskets due to their disability.

Florida veteran benefits also include a toll exclusion on Florida highways for service members while traveling on official military business.

VETERANS BENEFITS IN FLORIDA FOR RECREATION

Free Hunting and Fishing for Disabled Veterans

This is one of the most popular Florida disabled veteran benefits for recreation. Florida honors veterans who have sacrificed their health for our nation by offering them free hunting and fishing licenses. The Disabled Hunting and Fishing License is a no-cost five-year license that allows 100 percent P&T disabled veterans to fish both saltwater and freshwater fish with snook and lobster permits, along with many hunting licenses. These include:

- Deer
- Wildlife Management Area
- Archery season
- Muzzleloading gun season
- Crossbow season
- Turkey
- Florida waterfowl

Military Gold Sportsman's License

The Military Gold Sportsman's License also provides the same licenses as the Disabled Hunting and Fishing License for a \$20 fee. If you're on active duty stationed in Florida, in the Florida National Guard, the Reserves, or retired and claim Florida as your primary residence, you're eligible for this license.

Florida residents stationed outside the state don't need a general license to hunt and fish when they're home on leave. Just be sure to carry your leave papers with you while hunting and fishing.

If you're stationed in Florida as a non-resident, you and your family are all eligible for resident hunting and fishing licensing prices. Bring your military orders showing a Florida duty assignment with you when applying.

You can apply for a no-cost, discounted license or resident license at your local County Tax Collector's office or online using the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission License Portal.

Florida State Park Discounts

Florida wants to help you spend more time enjoying the outdoors! If you have a service-connected VA disability rating, you're eligible for a free lifetime military entrance pass into Florida State Parks. Surviving spouses of service members killed in combat and Gold Star parents are also eligible for free lifetime entrance passes.

The state also offers a 25 percent discount on annual passes to Florida State Parks for all honorably discharged veterans and service members.

Brian Reese

Founder and CEO

Brian Reese is a VA benefits expert, author of the #1 Amazon Bestseller *You Deserve It: The Definitive Guide to Getting the Veteran Benefits You've Earned*, and founder of VA Claims Insider, the most trusted name in education-based resources for veterans.

His frustration with the VA disability claims process led him to create VA Claims Insider, which provides U.S. military veterans with tips, strategies, and lessons learned for successfully submitting or re-submitting a winning VA disability compensation claim.

Brian is also the CEO of Military Disability Made Easy, the world's largest free searchable database for all things related to DoD disability and VA disability claims. MDME has served more than 6 million military members and veterans since its founding in 2013.

His eBook *9 Secret Strategies for Winning Your VA Disability Claim* has been downloaded more than 300,000 times in the past three years and is the #1-rated free VA disability claims guide for veterans.

He is a former active-duty Air Force officer with extensive experience leading hundreds of individuals and multi-functional teams in challenging international environments, including a combat tour to Afghanistan in 2011 supporting Operation ENDURING FREEDOM.

Brian is a Distinguished Graduate of Management from the United States Air Force Academy, and he holds an MBA from Oklahoma State University's Spears School of Business, where he was a National Honor Scholar. He was also a U.S. Air Force Academy NCAA Division I hockey player.

About VA Claims Insider

VA Claims Insider is an education-based coaching/consulting company for disabled veterans who are exploring eligibility for increased VA disability benefits. VACI was founded in 2016 by Brian Reese, Air Force service-disabled veteran and former U.S. Air Force Captain.

VACI currently serves more than 300,000 unique veterans per month across its websites and membership programs. VACI's Mission is "Veterans helping veterans access education-based resources to get the VA disability rating and compensation they deserve." VACI fulfills our mission by offering disabled veterans a suite of digital products and services inside our education-based membership programs.

VACI also connects veterans with vetted medical professionals in an independent referral network for medical examinations, disability evaluations, and credible medical nexus letters for a wide range of disability conditions.

VACI is not an accredited agent, Veterans Service Organization (VSO), attorney, or entity recognized by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and is not affiliated with the VA in any way. VACI does not assist veterans with the preparation, presentation, or prosecution of VA disability claims for VA benefits. Veterans prepare and file their own claim or work with an accredited representative, many of which offer services for free.

Want support with your claim?

Book a complimentary
discovery call with a
VA Claims Insider team
member and learn more
about increasing
your VA rating.



TALK TO A VA CLAIMS "INSIDER" AND START WINNING TODAY!

- Discover the simplest strategies to increase your VA rating FAST
- Spot the gaps in your claim that may lead to denial
- Learn what medical evidence will service-connect your disability

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