

FREE LEGAL SERVICES AVAILABLE
FOR ELIGIBLE LOW-INCOME VETERANS

Veterans' Rights: Texas Benefits for Disabled Veterans

Information Needed When Applying for Services from Legal Aid:
Current Household Income Information
Social Security Number
Documents related to your case (to the extent possible)



Are there any tax exemptions for disabled veterans?

Sometimes. Disabled veterans who satisfy certain requirements, their surviving spouses and the spouses and minor children (unmarried children under 21) of a person who dies on active duty in the United States Armed Forces are eligible for property tax exemptions on the appraised value of their property. This exemption is mandatory and applies to taxes collected by all taxing authorities in the state of Texas. A veteran whose service-connected disabilities are rated less than 10% by the Department of Veterans Affairs, or a branch of the Armed Forces, is not entitled to a property tax exemption. For those rated 10% or more, the tax exemptions are as follows:

Disability Rating	Tax Exemption
10% through 30%	First \$5,000 of appraised value
31% through 50%	First \$7,500 of appraised value
51% through 70%	First \$10,000 of appraised value
71% or more	First \$12,000 of appraised value

Are there any housing or remodeling benefits for disabled veterans?

Yes. Veterans or servicemembers who have specific service-connected disabilities may be entitled to a grant from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for the purpose of constructing an adapted home or modifying an existing home to meet their adaptive needs. The goal of the Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) Grant Program is to provide a barrier-free living environment that affords the veterans or servicemembers a level of independent living he or she may not normally enjoy. Please see

<http://www.homeloans.va.gov/sah.htm>.

Are there any parking privileges for disabled veterans?

Sometimes. Vehicles displaying disabled plates, disabled veteran plates or permits are allowed to park in spaces clearly marked for the disabled.

For additional information on this topic, please see the following websites:

Disabled American Veterans
<http://www.dav.org>

Texas Veterans Commission
<http://www.tvc.state.tx.us>

VA Disability Benefits
http://www.transitionassistanceprgram.com/portal/transition/lifestyles/Disabled_Veterans/VA_Disability_Benefits

Veteran Organizations in Texas
<http://www.tvc.state.tx.us/HTML%20Pages%20for%20Frames/VetOrgn.htm>

The Association for Service Disabled Veterans
<http://www.asdv.org>

Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service
<http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre/vrs.htm>

For direct legal services, contact your closest Legal Aid:

Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas
(800) 955-3959
www.lanwt.org

Lone Star Legal Aid
(800) 354-1889
www.lonestarlegal.org

Texas RioGrande Legal Aid
(888) 988-9996
www.trla.org

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Do disabled veterans receive special employment consideration as new hires from Texas state agencies or offices?

Yes. A veteran will qualify for veteran's employment preference if the veteran (i) served in the military for at least 90 consecutive days during a national emergency declared in accordance with federal law or was honorably discharged from military service for an established service-connected disability, (ii) was honorably discharged from the military and (iii) is competent. Veterans qualify for preference in Texas government jobs over other non-veteran applicants for the same position.

Is an employer required to make any accommodations for my disability?

Yes. For reemployment/rehire of disabled veterans, employers must make reasonable efforts to accommodate the disability. Service members recovering from an injury received during service may have up to two years from the date of completion of service to return to their jobs or apply for reemployment. Under Texas law, if a veteran was a public employee prior to military service and cannot perform the duties of the position because of a disability sustained during the military service, the veteran is entitled to reemployment in a position that has like or nearest possible seniority, status and pay as the former position.

Are there any rehabilitation services for disabled veterans?

Yes. For veterans with service-connected disabilities so severe that they cannot immediately consider work, the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service (VR&E) offers services to improve their ability to live as independently as possible. Services that may be provided by VR&E include: comprehensive rehabilitation, evaluation to determine abilities, skills, interests, and needs, vocational coun-

seling and rehabilitation planning, employment services such as job-seeking skills, resume development, and other work readiness assistance, assistance finding and keeping a job, including the use of special employer incentives if needed, training such as On the Job Training (OJT), apprenticeships, and non-paid work experiences if needed, post-secondary training at a college, vocational, technical or business school supportive rehabilitation services including case management, counseling, and referral independent living services. The VR&E helps all veterans with service-connected disabilities to prepare for, find, and keep suitable jobs. Please see <http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre/vrs.htm>.

Can I get copies of my medical records for free?

Yes. Veterans are eligible to receive ONE copy of their personal medical records at no cost when they are requested to file a claim for disability against the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. Please see <https://www.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/vha-10-5345a-MHV-fill.pdf>.

Do disabled veterans receive free driver's licenses?

Yes. Texas driver's licenses are furnished free of charge to veterans who meet the following criteria: (i) the veteran was honorably discharged from service, (ii) the veteran has a service-related disability of at least 60%, (iii) the veteran receives compensation from the United States because of the disability, and (iv) the veteran is not subject to the sex offender registration requirements of Chapter 62 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. Please see http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/administration/driver_licensing_control/VetExempt.htm and <ftp://ftp.txdps.state.tx.us/forms/dl-49.pdf>.

Are disabled veterans entitled to receive special license plates?

Sometimes. Disabled Veterans, Former Prisoners of War, Pearl Harbor Survivors, Purple Heart and Medal of Honor plates are available to eligible veterans and their survivors. Disabled veterans must have a service-connected disability rating of 50% or more or 40% due to amputation of a lower extremity i.e. loss of leg. Fees vary based on the type of license plate. Information may be obtained from a vehicle title registration office or county tax office. Please see <http://www.traviscountytax.org/pdfs/DisabledVetApp.pdf>.

Do disabled veterans receive free fishing and hunting licenses?

Yes. Disabled veterans are eligible to receive special hunting and fishing licenses for no cost. A disabled veteran of the Armed Forces of the United States is one who has a service-connected disability, as defined by the Department of Veterans Affairs, consisting of the loss of use of a lower extremity (loss of leg) or a disability rating of 60% or more, and who is receiving compensation from the United States for the disability. Please see <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/publications/annual/general/licenses/index.phtml#combo> and <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/publications/annual/general/information/>.

Do disabled veterans receive free park admission at Texas state parks?

Yes. Disabled veterans who have a service-connected disability which is rated 60% or more by the Veterans Administration, or a service-connected disability which has resulted in the loss of a lower extremity/loss of leg, are eligible for free admission to Texas State Parks. Please see <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/spdest/parkinfo/passes/>.