

State of Wisconsin

Military Benefits Fact Sheet

Summary: Wisconsin offers special benefits and services for its military service members and veterans in order to supplement and complement those provided to veterans by the federal government. These include benefits, programs, and services to assist Wisconsin veterans in enhancing their education and employment, purchasing or remodeling a home in Wisconsin, traveling to federal VA medical appointments, obtaining needed health care services not provided by federal VA health care, overcoming barriers to employment, and obtaining needed subsistence assistance in emergency situations, assistance in discharge upgrades, obtaining medals that were not issued or lost, among many others. A second outreach effort new in 2004, entitled "Mission: Welcome Home," is aimed at newly returning veterans, informing them of earned and available benefits, programs, and services.

State Benefit Highlights and Eligibility

State Taxes:

Veterans and Surviving Spouses Property Tax Credit: A program that provides a refundable property tax credit for the primary residence (in-state) via the state income tax form.

Eligibility: Eligible veterans age 65 or older who entered service from Wisconsin and have a combined VA service-connected disability rating of 100%, an un-remarried surviving spouse of an eligible veteran and the un-remarried surviving spouse of a veteran who entered active duty as a Wisconsin resident, died in the line of duty, and was a Wisconsin resident at the time of death.

Individual Income Taxes – Mobilized Reserve/Guard Pay Exemption: For taxable years beginning in 2004 and thereafter, military pay received by certain members of the Reserves and National Guard may also be exempt for Wisconsin tax purposes.

Eligibility: Military pay must have been received from the federal government after being called into active federal service or into special state service authorized by the federal Department of Defense and have been for a period of time during which the Reserve or National Guard member was on active duty. This exemption does not apply to military pay that members of the Reserves or National Guard receive during their weekend and two-week annual training.

Individual Income Taxes – Combat Pay Exemption: Military pay that is exempt from federal taxation, such as combat pay or hazardous duty pay is also exempt from state taxation.

Individual Income Taxes – Death Gratuity Exemption: The death gratuity paid to the surviving dependent in the event of a line of duty death of a military service member is exempt from Wisconsin individual income taxes.

Retirement Income Taxes: All retirement payments from the U.S. military employee retirement system and the Coast Guard are exempt.

Retired Military Pay: All military retirement pay is exempt.

Military Disability Retired Pay: Disability Portion - Length of Service Pay; Member on September 24, 1975 - No tax; Not Member on September 24, 1975 - Taxed, unless combat incurred. Retired Pay - Based solely on disability: Member on September 24, 1975 - No tax; Not Member on September 24, 1975 - Taxed, unless all pay based on disability and disability resulted from armed conflict, extra-hazardous service, simulated war, or an instrumentality of war.

VA Disability Dependency and Indemnity Compensation: Not subject to federal or state taxes

Education Benefits:

Wisconsin G.I. Bill Tuition Remission Program: The Wisconsin G.I. Bill provides a waiver ("remission") of tuition for eligible veterans and their dependents for up to 8 full-time semesters or 128 credits at any [University of Wisconsin System](#) or [Wisconsin Technical College System](#) institution. The tuition remission is a full 100% of tuition and fees. (In accordance with 2005 Wisconsin Act 468, signed into law by Governor Jim Doyle on Memorial Day 2006 and effective with the 2007-08 academic year.)

Eligibility: The veteran must have entered service as a Wisconsin resident and the benefit recipient must reside in Wisconsin. Character of service and active duty service requirements apply.

For veterans, there is no post-service time limitation (such as the federal Montgomery G.I. Bill 10-year delimiting date) on the use of the benefit. The veteran may attend full- or part-time. The benefit may be used for continuing education, or for study at the undergraduate or graduate level.

Wisconsin G.I. Bill Tuition Remission Program for Dependents: A 100% remission is provided to the qualifying dependents of an eligible veteran. For qualifying spouses, the benefit must be used within 10 years of the date of death or the initial disability rating of 30% or greater. The spouse, or unremarried surviving spouse, may attend full- or part-time. For qualifying children, the benefit is available from ages 18 through 25. The child must attend full-time.

Eligibility: The benefit recipient must reside in Wisconsin. The qualifying Wisconsin veteran must have been a Wisconsin resident at the time of entry onto active duty. Character of service and active duty service requirements apply. The qualifying Wisconsin veteran must be 1) currently rated by the federal VA with a combined service-connected disability of 30% or greater; 2) died in the line of duty while on active, Reserve, or Guard duty; 3) died as the direct result of a service-connected disability, as determined by the federal VA.

Veterans Education Reimbursement Grant: Provides a reimbursement grant to veterans based on a credit-bank system that is determined by length of active duty military service for the reimbursement of tuition and fees following successful course completion at an eligible University of Wisconsin, technical college, or approved private institution of higher learning.

Eligibility: A veteran who is a Wisconsin resident and has not yet been awarded a bachelor's degree.

Personal Loan Program (PLP): Veterans may qualify for low interest rate personal loans with up to 10 years repay. The Personal Loan Program may be used for the education of veterans, their spouses, and children. The veteran's spouse must be a co-applicant, and all loans require security of either a mortgage or a guarantor. There is no maximum limit on the PLP.

Eligibility: Unremarried spouses and dependent children of deceased veterans who were eligible for the PLP may also be eligible for personal loans. In addition, a remarried spouse of a deceased eligible veteran may be eligible for a PLP for the education of the veteran's children.

Tuition Residency for Wisconsin Veterans: Under state law, veterans who entered active duty as a Wisconsin resident retain permanent eligibility for in-state tuition at University of Wisconsin System institutions.

Academic Credit for Military Experience: Service members, reservists, and veterans pursuing a college education may be able to obtain academic credit for military courses they have completed through the military. Prior to enrollment individuals should discuss possible credit with the Veterans' Coordinator at the college or university they plan to attend; credit received may reduce attendance time and cost.

Wisconsin National Guard Tuition Grant Program: The Tuition Grant Program helps to pay for courses completed under both full and part-time study. Wisconsin National Guard service members are eligible for a maximum of 8 semesters of full-time study. The program pays a grant to soldiers of up to 100% of the actual tuition charged by a qualifying school (current limit is \$3,000.12). The Grant may be used at approved WI schools or schools approved under Minnesota-Wisconsin student reciprocity agreement.

Eligibility: All Warrant Officers and enlisted members in good standing are eligible while attending a qualifying school for undergraduate studies. The program may be used at any school eligible for Federal Financial Aid. The application for the program must be received at State Headquarters within 90 days of the end of the semester or class. These benefits are available to our members after completion of basic training (boot camp) and technical school. If you have prior military service, you must complete any technical school requirements and have used all active duty Montgomery GI bill benefits you are entitled to prior to receiving Air National Guard educational benefits. This program is a non-contributory benefit, meaning no payment or reduction in pay is required from you to receive these benefits (upon receiving bachelor's degree eligibility terminates).

Retraining Grants: A veteran who is unemployed or underemployed may be eligible for up to \$3,000.00 per year, for a maximum of two years, if they have a financial need while being retrained for new employment. The amount of the grant is determined by the applicant's financial need as calculated by the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA).

Eligibility: The veteran must have been involuntarily laid off or discharged (not due to willful misconduct) within a period beginning one year before the date that the WDVA receives the application. The veteran must have been employed for at least six consecutive months with the same employer or in the same or similar occupations. At least one day of that employment must have been within the period beginning one year before the date that the WDVA receives the application. An underemployed Veteran must have current annual income from employment that does not exceed federal poverty guidelines. The veteran must be currently enrolled in a technical education program or engaged in a structured on-the-job training program that will be completed within two years of the date that the application is received by the WDVA. The program must reasonably be expected to lead to employment.

Employment Benefits:

State Employment Benefit: State employees receive 30 days military leave per year for military duty away from work, includes annual training.

Eligibility: National Guard (Air and Army) service member.

Veterans Hiring Preference Information - Civil Service Preference (State): Veterans and the spouses of disabled veterans may qualify for preference in Wisconsin's civil service system: 10-Point Hiring Preference may be added to a veteran's passing state civil service test score. 15-Point Hiring Preference may be added to a disabled veterans' passing score whose service-connected disability is rated less than 30%.

20-Point Hiring Preference may be added to a disabled veterans' passing score whose service-connected disability is rated 30%.

Promotional Exam Preference may be added to a disabled veteran's passing score whose service-connected disability is 70% or more.

10-Point Hiring Preference may be added to the passing score of the **spouse** of a disabled veteran whose service-connected disability is rated 70% or more.

10-Point Hiring Preference may be added to the passing score of the unremarried **spouse** of a veteran who was killed in action or who died of a service-connected disability.

Veterans with a 30% or greater SCD may be hired for a permanent, entry-level position with the State of Wisconsin on a noncompetitive basis.

Special Vehicle License Plates: Special license plates are available to veterans, retired military service members, medal recipients, and members of the active or reserve military. For additional information on any of these plates, contact the Division of Motor Vehicles, or visit the Web site of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WISDOT): www.dot.state.wi.us or the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs: www.dva.state.wi.us.

Driver Licensing and Motor Vehicle Registration for Active Duty Military: When the U.S. is involved in a military conflict, anyone who is a member of the military and stationed outside of Wisconsin is considered to be on "**active duty**" for the purposes of eligibility for modified procedures for the following driver licensing and registration measures: Driver license renewal; duplicate driver license; insurance information; suspended or revoked license reinstatement; medical report; vehicle registration renewal; dealer and salesperson licenses; motor carrier fees and reports; and special license plates.

Wisconsin Salutes Veterans: This license plate, new in 2006, is available to anyone who wants to show their support for those who served in the U.S. Armed Forces. The attractive new plate is modeled after the federal VA's logo and shows a bald eagle holding crossed U.S. and Wisconsin flags. The \$15.00 issuance / reissuance fee is a tax-deductible donation to the Veterans Trust Fund and directly benefits disabled and other eligible veterans and qualifying military family members.

Veterans/Military license plates: Special vehicle license plates are available for veterans and members of the military, including branch of service (Army, Navy, etc.) wartime service (WWII, Vietnam, etc.), and military medals (Silver Star, Air Medal, etc.). In all, more than 51 different service and medal designations are available.

Eligibility: A service member of the Active, Reserve, a Veteran, Retired Military or Medal Recipient who is a qualified vehicle owner, lessee, or trust beneficiary. The \$15 issuance/reissuance fee is a tax-deductible donation to the state's Veterans Trust Fund, which provides relief to veterans and the immediate families of service members who die in the line of duty or as a result of service-connected disabilities, deployed service members, and eligible disabled veterans. Plates are transferable to surviving spouse.

Wisconsin National Guard License Plates: Guard plates have a \$15.00 issuance/reissuance fee for non personalized plates. Personalized plates with one to seven letters or numbers are available for \$15.00 plus annual registration.

Eligibility: Wisconsin residents who are current or retired members of the Wisconsin National Guard (Air and Army). If membership in the NG is not maintained (except due to retirement), the plates must be disposed of and regular replacement plates obtained. these plates may be transferred to a surviving spouse. No special parking privileges are provided with these plates.

Disabled Veteran License Plates: Veterans with disabilities that impair the ability to walk may be eligible for special parking privileges. While there is no reduction in the registration fee for Disabled Veteran License Plates, privileges of the plate include parking in disabled parking spaces, exemption from time limitations and payment in metered parking in parking places with a half-hour or more limit. The plates are transferable to surviving spouse.

Eligibility: Disabled veteran of the United States Armed Forces.

Gold Star License Plates: Special Gold Star license plates are available to the immediate family members of a service member who has died in combat while serving in the U.S. Armed Forces. Individual family members include the deceased servicemember's spouse, child/stepchild, parent/stepparent, sibling, grandparent or grandchild, and the spouse of a child/stepchild, parent/stepparent, sibling, grandparent or grandchild. While annual registration fees apply, there is no issuance fee. If you wish to personalize the plate, you will pay an additional \$15.00 each year. No special parking privileges are provided with the Gold Star Plate.

Ex-Prisoner Of War License Plates: The first license plate is issued at no charge, a second or subsequent plates have an additional \$15.00 issuance fee plus the annual registration fee.

Eligibility: Proof of eligibility from your Orders or DD214 (Discharge document) and must be renewed annually even if no fee is required. Plates may be transferred to surviving spouse.

Medal of Honor License Plates: A special non-expiring license plate is issued to any Wisconsin resident awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. There are no issuance or renewal fees required. When the vehicle is sold, the plate stays with owner (or the lessee if vehicle is leased), and may transfer to another qualifying vehicle. Plates may be transferred to surviving spouse and still remain at no fee. If the plate had been returned to the department or surrendered to another state, no issuance fee will be charged to reactivate the plate.

Eligibility: Proof of eligibility from your Orders or DD214 (Discharge document)

Veterans Motorcycle License Plate: Plates may be personalized with one to four characters. Personalized plates have a biannual fee of \$30.00. Regular numbered plates have an issuance/reissuance fee of \$15. No special parking privileges are provided with Veteran Motorcycle plates.

Eligibility: Veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Health and Insurance Benefits:

Medical Benefits: National Guard service members are entitled to same benefits as State employees.

Eligibility: National Guard (Air and Army) service member activated for state active duty.

Group Insurance: Offered at \$10,000.00-\$45,000.00/\$3.66-\$17.35 month based on amount and age of insured. Options are also available for spouse and dependants. For Army National Guard: Bonuses to \$76,500.

Eligibility: National Guard (Air and Army) service member.

Workers' Compensation: National Guard service members are entitled to same workers' compensation benefits as State employees.

Eligibility: National Guard (Air and Army) service member activated for state active duty.

Hunting and Fishing Licenses:

Military Free Fishing and Small Game Hunting License: Wisconsin Resident members of the Armed Forces with proof that they are on leave/furlough are eligible for free fishing and small game hunting licenses.

Eligibility: Members of the Armed Forces stationed in Wisconsin should contact the nearest DNR Service Center for information on eligibility.

Disabled Veterans Reduced-Fee Fishing License: Wisconsin disabled veterans with a combined service-connected disability rating by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) of 70% or greater are eligible for a disabled veteran reduced-fee fishing license.

Eligibility: The fishing license must be renewed annually, and does not exempt the holder from the need to purchase required fishing stamps. When purchasing the license at a DNR or County Clerk's office, the applicant must provide a copy of a letter from the VA that indicates receipt of VA disability benefits and specifies the percentage of disability.

Miscellaneous Benefits:

Transportation to VA Medical Appointments: Wisconsin veterans may use one of two programs that assist veterans who need help getting to VA medical appointments. The Wisconsin Department of the Disabled American Veterans operates several vans around the state that normally stop at predetermined locations and then transport to the various medical centers. Please see the Wisconsin DAV web site at: www.davwi.com/Transportation.html

Eligibility: These rides are free of charge and available to all veterans based on financial need - you do not have to be disabled or belong to the DAV to get a ride on this network.

Assistance to Needy Veterans and Family Members: A grant program provides limited financial assistance to those in need and who have exhausted all other sources of aid. The grants may be used for specified health care and subsistence needs or economic emergency assistance for spouses and dependents of activated or deployed service members, up to maximum grant limits. There is a lifetime cumulative grant award limit per veteran of \$5000.00.

Eligibility: A veteran or the un-remarried surviving spouse with dependent children of an eligible veteran who died in the line of duty while on active duty or inactive duty for training or the spouse with dependent children of an eligible service member who is currently activated or deployed. Must have applied for and been denied or determined to be ineligible for all other applicable aid programs, including Unemployment Insurance, Medicaid, Medicare, BadgerCare, and Federal VA health care.

Laundry and Some Recreation Items: Laundry and cleaning expenses reimbursed, certain recreation fees for physical fitness, vehicle mileage when authorized, telephone calls, and tolls.

Eligibility: National Guard (Air and Army) service member activated for state active duty.

Legal Fees: State defends National Guard members sued as result of military duty. Exempt from civil prosecution while on state active duty.

Eligibility: National Guard (Air and Army) service member activated for state active duty.

Legislation: To qualify for most Wisconsin state veterans' benefits, programs, or services, a veteran must first establish general eligibility for Wisconsin state veterans' benefits. Eligibility criteria for Wisconsin state veterans' benefits, programs, and services, including exceptions to minimum military service requirements, are set in state law ([Wis. Stats. Ch. 45](#)).

Military Installations and Veterans Affairs Facilities in Wisconsin

Active Duty:

Army

Fort McCoy: <http://www.mccoys.army.mil/>

Services provided include DEERS applications, military ID cards, Post Exchange and Commissary shopping.

National Guard:

Wisconsin National Guard: <http://dma.wi.gov/Unit.asp?unitid=5>

Wisconsin Army National Guard: <http://dma.wi.gov/section.asp?linkid=16&locid=12>

Wisconsin Air National Guard: <http://hq.wimadi.ang.af.mil/>

Volk Field Air National Guard Base: <http://www.volkfield.ang.af.mil/>

Camp Williams: http://www.volkfield.ang.af.mil/Camp_Williams.htm

United States Army Reserve (USAR):

Regional Readiness Command (RRC) Headquarters, 88th RRC:

http://www.usarc.army.mil/retn/RTD/selres_poc.htm#99

Veterans Administration (VA) Medical Facilities in Wisconsin:

<http://www1.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isFlash=1>

VA Medical Centers

Madison: [William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital](#)

Milwaukee: [Clement J. Zablocki Veterans Affairs Medical Center](#)

Tomah: [Tomah VA Medical Center](#)

Outpatient Clinics

Appleton: [Appleton Clinic](#)

Baraboo: [Baraboo Clinic](#)

Beaver Dam: [Beaver Dam Clinic](#)

Cleveland: [Cleveland \(East Central\) Clinic](#)

Green Bay: [Green Bay Clinic](#)

Janesville: [Janesville Clinic](#)

Kenosha: [Kenosha Clinic](#)

La Crosse: [River Valley Clinic](#)
Loyal: [Loyal Clinic](#)
Rhinelander: [Rhinelander Clinic](#)
Union Grove: [Union Grove Clinic](#)
Wausau: [Wausau Clinic](#)
Wisconsin Rapids: [Wisconsin Rapids Clinic](#)

Community Based Outpatient Clinics

Chippewa Falls: [Chippewa Valley CBOC](#)
Hayward: [Hayward CBOC](#)
Rice Lake Clinic: [Rice Lake Clinic](#)
Superior: [Twin Ports VA Clinic](#)

Resources

<http://www.military.com/Education/Content?file=ncenplns.htm%23Wisconsin>

http://dva.state.wi.us/Ben_education.asp

http://dma.wi.gov/devops/section_detail.asp?linkcatid=398&linkid=63

http://dva.state.wi.us/Ben_Supermarket.asp

<http://www.goang.com/benefits/> (click on state benefits for WI)

<http://www.1800goguard.com/benefits/state.php>

<http://www1.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isFlash=1>

<http://www.defenselink.mil/specials/outreachpublic/wi.html>

<http://www.retirementliving.com/RLstate3.html#WISCONSIN>

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