

VA Benefits and Services for Selected Reserve and National Guard Members

- Health Care
- Disability Benefits
- Education & Training Benefits
- Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment
- Home Loans
- Life Insurance
- Burial Benefits
- Dependents' and Survivors' Benefits

Eligibility for Reservists/National Guard Members

The primary factor in determining basic eligibility to VA benefits is "veteran status," which is established by active military, naval, or air service and a discharge or release from active service under conditions other than dishonorable.

Reservists who served on active duty establish veteran status and may therefore be eligible for VA benefits, depending on the length of active military service and the character of discharge or release. In addition, reservists who are never called to active duty may qualify for some VA benefits.

National Guard members can establish eligibility for VA benefits only if the President activated them for federal duty.

Health Care

Generally veterans must be enrolled to receive health care services. Reservists and National Guard members activated for federal duty can qualify for a number of health care services provided by VA.

- Hospital, outpatient medical, dental, pharmacy and prosthetic services
- Domiciliary, nursing home, and community-based residential care
- Sexual trauma counseling
- Specialized health care for women veterans
- Health and rehabilitation programs for homeless veterans
- Readjustment counseling
- Alcohol and drug dependency treatment
- Medical evaluation for military service exposure, including Gulf War, Agent Orange, Ionizing Radiation, and certain other environmental hazards.

Health Care for Combat Veterans

VA has extended health care benefits for combat veterans. In 1998, VA was authorized to provide a broad range of health care services to U.S. veterans who served on active duty in a theater of combat operations during a period of war after the Persian Gulf War or in combat against a hostile force during a period of hostilities after November 11, 1998. Such veterans are eligible for 2 years after leaving the military for VA hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care for any illness, even if there is insufficient medical evidence to conclude that their illness was a result of their combat service.

Under this authority, health care may not be provided for any disability that is found to have resulted from a cause other than the service at issue; for example, conditions existing before military service and conditions that began following military combat, like broken bones occurring after separation from active duty.

Reservists and members of the National Guard who served on active duty in a theater of combat may be eligible for VA health care under this authority.

Veterans with health concerns that may be related to combat are encouraged to seek a medical evaluation at a local VA medical facility. The families of reservists' may also be eligible for counseling in the Readjustment Counseling Center Program.

Disability Benefits

VA administers two disability programs. Both are tax-free.

Compensation: VA pays monthly benefits for disabilities incurred or aggravated during *active duty* and *active duty for training*, and for heart attack or stroke incurred *during inactive duty for training*. Such disabilities are considered "service-connected." Additional benefits for the member and his/her dependents or survivors may apply.

Pension: This income-based benefit is paid to veterans with honorable war-time service who are permanently and totally disabled (or age 65 or older).

Education and Training

Selected Reserve and National Guard members may be entitled to up to 36 months of benefits under the Montgomery GI Bill – Selected Reserve (Chapter 1606). To qualify, the participant must:

- have a six-year obligation to serve in the Selected Reserve or National Guard (officers must agree to serve six years in addition to the original obligation)
- have completed initial active duty for training
- meet the requirements to receive a high school diploma or equivalency certificate before applying for benefits, and
- remain in good standing while serving in a Selected Reserve or National Guard unit.

Benefit entitlement ends 10 years from the date of eligibility for the program, or on the date of separation from service. Members whose eligibility began on or after October 1, 1992, have 14 years. If activated under title 10, the eligibility period is extended by the time on active duty plus 4 months. A separate extension applies for each activation. An extension is not available if activated under U.S.C. Title 32.

Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment

Service-disabled veterans may qualify for rehabilitation and employment assistance including: job search, vocational evaluation, career exploration, vocational training, education, and rehabilitation services. If enrolled in an education or training program, VA will pay for the participant's tuition, fees, books, tools, and other program expenses as well as provide a monthly living allowance.

Complete information is available at:
<http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre/index.htm>

VA Life Insurance

National Guard and Reserve Personnel are eligible to receive Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI), Veterans Group Life Insurance (VGLI), and Family Group Life Insurance (FGLI). They may also be eligible for Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance (RH) if called to active duty, injured, and have a service-connected disability.

Additional information may be obtained on-line at
<http://www.insurance.va.gov/>