

# South Dakota State Veteran's Benefits & Discounts



The state of South Dakota provides veteran benefits. This section offers a brief description of each of the following benefits.

- Veteran Housing Benefits
- Veteran Financial Assistance Benefits
- Veteran Education Benefits
- Other State Sponsored Veteran Benefits

## **South Dakota Veteran Housing Programs**

### **State Veterans Home**

The Michael J. Fitzmaurice Veterans Home at 2500 Minnekahta Avenue, Hot Springs, SD 57747 is located at the southern edge of the beautiful Black Hills in western South Dakota. It sits on a hill overlooking downtown Hot Springs, facing the Veterans Affairs Medical Center on the opposite hill. Hot Springs is twelve miles south of Wind Cave National Park, the home of deer, antelope, buffalo and elk. It is twelve miles north of Lake Angostura, a manmade prairie lake providing excellent boating and fishing, and three miles from Cold Brook Canyon, a trout fishing location. The current home has 132 residents living in spaces ranging from nursing homes to apartment-style living. It's close to full and generally has stayed that way. The new building will

have 100 beds and will join about 50 remaining units from the current setup. To obtain information on the home call (605) 745-5127 or email [Larry.Wilcox@state.sd.us](mailto:Larry.Wilcox@state.sd.us).

The mission of the home is To provide a quality living environment, along with adequate medical support, in an independent living and long-term care setting for eligible South Dakota veterans and their spouses, widows, or widowers; and, to provide administration, maintenance, management, medical care, and other services necessary to meet or exceed state and federal requirements.



**The 124 year old Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home medical center slated for replacement**



To qualify for admission you must be a resident of South Dakota, be an honorably discharged Veteran or the spouse or widow of such a Veteran, be ambulatory and be able to care for self and living area. Cost is Single Veterans - 50% of gross income and Married Couples - 55% of combined gross income. For Nursing Care - the fee is based on ability to pay and eligibility for Medicaid. Maximum fees, based on actual cost of care, are established annually, and your fees will not exceed that maximum. Fees cover room and 3 meals per day, medical care, laundry, medication, social services, activities, and pastoral care. For more information, please contact your County or Tribal Veterans Service Officer who can be located at <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov/veteransserviceofficers/locatevso.aspx>. Services available at the home include:

- **Complete Medical Services.** A local physician comes to the Veterans Home regularly and is on call for other medical services. The nursing staff of the Nursing Care Unit, continuously supervised by Registered Nurses, provides whirlpool baths, assistance in activities in daily living, supervised medications, and other personal services.
- **Pharmacy Services.** Prescribed medications are available to members without extra charge at the Veterans Home pharmacy operated by our own registered pharmacist.
- **Therapy Provided by Trained Staff.** Physical therapy and occupational therapy departments work toward the fullest possible rehabilitation of every resident. The staff achieves restoration of targeted functions through supervised exercise and training, using advanced appropriate techniques and equipment. Activities are individualized to achieve optimal results. The therapy staff offers a broad range of intensive therapeutic services designed to maximize the functional capabilities of our residents. Our goal is to enable them to reach their highest level of independence as quickly as possible.
- **24-Hour Professional Nursing Team Care.** Our excellent, highly trained staff provides specialized care and treatment for our residents. The plan of care that is created for implementation for each resident addresses the medical, dietary, social and spiritual needs of the resident.
- **Planned, Supervised Recreational Programs.** Recreational activities are based on each resident's personal lifestyle. We promote the concept of a community where a diverse number of veterans can maintain the lifestyles to which they are accustomed. Areas are available for socializing and engaging in hobbies. Facilities and equipment are available for independent activities such as craft work, bingo, billiards and reading. Click on the activities button to see a detailed list of activities.
- **Meals.** Nutritious meals are prepared under the watchful eye of a professional food service manager and a clinical dietitian. Therapeutic diets are created to meet the assessed needs of each resident.
- **Social Services.** A staff of certified professionals from the Department of Social Services and the Department of Labor are located on the campus and are available for counseling and guidance
- **Spiritual Guidance.** The Chaplain conducts church services, hymn services, Bible study, funerals and other religious activities. Catholic and Protestant services are held

weekly with additional services on special holidays. The Chaplain and a social worker are available for counseling services.

- **Transportation Services.** Vans and buses transport residents to local community activities. Van transportation for residents is scheduled to downtown Hot Springs.
- **Veterans Service Technician.** Professionally trained staff member to assist resident veterans with benefit issues.

### **South Dakota Financial Assistance Programs**

#### **Property Tax Exemption for Veterans and Their Widow or Widower**

Dwellings or parts of multiple family dwellings which are specifically designed for use by paraplegics as wheelchair homes and which are owned and occupied by veterans with the loss, or loss of use, of both lower extremities, or by the unremarried widow or widower of such veteran, are exempt from taxation. The dwelling must be owned and occupied by the veteran for one full calendar year before the exemption becomes effective. The term "dwelling" generally means real estate in an amount not to exceed one acre upon which the building is located.

#### **Property Tax Exemption for Veterans and Their Widow or Widower**

\$100,000 of the full and true value of a dwelling that is owned and occupied by a veteran who is rated permanently and totally disabled from a service connected disability(ies) is exempt from taxation. The dwelling must be owned and occupied by the veteran. Application for the exemption is made through the county assessor. The surviving spouse of veteran who was rated as permanently and totally disabled from a service connected disability qualifies for the same property tax exemption.

#### **Property Tax Refund for Aged and Disabled Persons**

Certain low income property owners are eligible for a property tax refund and should check with their county treasurer for details and assistance in making application. To qualify the following conditions must be met:

1. The head of the household must be sixty-five years of age, or older, or shall be disabled prior to January first of the year in which taxes are levied;
2. The applicant must have owned the property for at least three years or, have been a resident of this state at least five years if not qualified under the three year ownership criteria.

#### **Sales Tax Refund for Certain Elderly and Disabled Persons**

Certain low income persons who are sixty-five, or older, or who are disabled, may qualify for a sales tax refund. Applicants should check with their county treasurer for details and assistance.

Note: No individual may receive both a property tax and sales tax refund in the same year.

## South Dakota Education Assistance Programs

### **State Approving Agency**

Each State has a State Approving Agency (SAA) and a few states have two or three. Some states have one agency to approve all school programs, another agency to approve all on-the-job training programs, and then possibly a third agency to approve the flight schools. Congress determined that each State should create an agency to approve the programs within their borders and to determine in which programs it was appropriate for veterans to enroll, in order for them to utilize their VA educational benefits. The first State SAA's were formed for veterans after World War II. After a few years states realized that a National Association was needed and in 1948 it was formed.

The National Association of State Approving Agencies (NASAA) assisted states in coordinating their efforts to do a better job for the veterans. Also, it was a tool to resolve mutual problems. In many ways, the fundamental role of state approving agencies is the same today as it was when they were founded. As state entities acting on behalf of the Federal Government, the SAA's have been an outstanding example of the workability of the State-Federal partnership, allowing Federal interests to be pursued at the local level while preserving the identity, interests, and sovereignty of States' Rights in education.

The primary responsibility and focus of the SAA's continues to be the review, evaluation and approval of quality programs of education and training under State and Federal criteria. SAA's continue to conduct on-site supervisory visits to approved institutions and schools seeking approval. They continue to provide technical assistance to all interested parties and are engaged in outreach activities to foster the usage of the GI Bill. Further, they continue to act as state liaison in assisting military installations to provide base personnel with quality educational offerings. Yet, while the fundamental role of the SAA has remained the same, the SAA's have grown with the changes in our society over the past fifty years. They have become advocates for quality education and training for Veterans and other eligible persons. They have become educational partners with the institutions themselves, facilitating even greater and more diverse educational opportunities for Veterans. They have become strong advocates for the usage of the GI Bill and have developed a working partnership with the Federal government, which other Federal agencies have tried to emulate.

The programs that can be approved are found in institutions of higher learning (colleges and universities), non-degree institutions (vocational and technical schools), apprenticeship programs, other on-the-job training programs, and flight training schools. Each state reviews the appropriateness of each program as to its own standards and laws in addition to VA rules and regulations along with any other applicable laws and/or regulations. Then it is either approved or disapproved; continuous supervision is required of approved programs.

The approval process is ongoing and involves regular monitoring of the programs. South Dakota has approximately 2,100 eligible people enrolled in programs. The programs are found in 47 schools and 192 training establishments and businesses.

The South Dakota State Approving Agency is located in Pierre with the Department of Veterans Affairs and it approves all programs. For information or assistance call (605) 773-3269 or 773-3648 (school programs) or 773-3565 (training programs). For information on the GI Bill refer to <http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill>

### **On the Job Training**

OJT is training you receive while performing a job and earning wages. This program can range from 6 – 24 months. This requires the employee to be full-time and have GI Bill eligibility. Examples are police officer, correctional officer, shop technician, chef, highway maintenance worker, farmer, buildings engineer, veterans benefits representative, service technician, highway patrol trooper, wellness instructor, information technology specialist, surface maintenance repairer, deputy sheriff, plant operator, truck driver, or bakers assistant. For more information or assistance call (605) 773-3269 or 773-3565.

### **Apprenticeship Training**

An apprenticeship training program is training you receive while performing a job and earning wages. This program can range from 24 – 48 months and may include supplemental training. This requires the employee to be full-time and have GI Bill eligibility. Examples are plumber, electrician, carpenter, mechanic, firefighter/medic, sheet metal apprentice, power plant mechanic, lineman, welder, fire sprinkler installer, power plant operator, machinist, or stone mason. For more information or assistance call (605) 773-3269 or 773-3565.

### **Free Tuition for Veterans**

Certain veterans are eligible to take undergraduate courses at a state supported university without the payment of tuition provided they are not eligible for educational payments under the GI Bill or any other federal educational program. To qualify the veteran must:

- Have been discharged under Honorable conditions
- Be a current resident of South Dakota and qualify for in-state tuition
- Meet one of the following criteria
- Served on active duty at any time between August 2, 1990 and a date to be determined
- Received an Armed Forces Expeditionary medal, or other United States campaign or service medal for participation in combat operations against hostile forces outside the boundaries of the United States
- Has a service connected disability rated 10%, or more, disabling.

Eligible veterans may receive one month of free tuition for each month of "qualifying service" with a minimum of one, up to a maximum of four, academic years. Qualifying service is defined as: **the amount of time served on active duty between the beginning and ending dates of the particular period of conflict or hostilities during which the veteran earned eligibility for this program.**

Under the free tuition program, the veteran has twenty (20) years from the ending date of the specific period of service during which he or she served and met the eligibility criteria, or, twenty (20) years after the date that he or she was rated 10%, or more, disabled by the DVA. The Application for Free Tuition is available at the schools' financial aids, veterans representative or registrars offices or, they can be obtained from the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. The completed application, along with a copy of the veteran's DD-214 must be submitted to the Sioux Falls VA Regional Office (address shown on the reverse side of the form) and then returned to the school.

#### **Free Tuition for Children of Veterans Who Die During Service**

Children who are under the age of 25, are residents of South Dakota, and whose mother or father was killed in action or died of other causes while on active duty, are eligible for free tuition at a state supported school, if the deceased parent was a bona-fide resident of this state for at least six (6) months immediately preceding entry into active service.

The Application for Free Tuition is available at the schools' financial aids, veterans representative or registrars offices or, they can be obtained from the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs.

#### **Free Tuition for Dependents of POW's and MIA's**

Children and spouses of prisoners of war, or of persons listed as missing in action, are entitled to attend a state supported school without the payment of tuition or mandatory fees provided they are not eligible for equal or greater federal benefits.

The Application for Free Tuition is available at the schools' financial aids, veterans representative or registrars offices or, they can be obtained from the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs.

#### **Reduced Tuition for South Dakota National Guard members.**

Guard members, who meet the requirements for admission, are eligible for a fifty percent (50%) reduction in tuition charges at any state supported school for undergraduate programs up to 128 credits and graduate programs up to 32 credits. OR, one program of study, approved by the state Board of Education, at any state vocational school upon payment of fifty percent (50%) of the tuition charges.

The receipt of federal educational benefits does not affect eligibility for this program. To qualify the guardmember must:

1. Be a resident of this state and a member of the SD Army or Air Guard throughout each semester or vocational program for which he or she applies for benefits

2. Have completed required active duty for training
3. Attend 90% of drills and training periods and maintain a satisfactory academic grade level
4. Provide proper notice to the institution at time of registration for the term in which benefits are sought.

**Free tuition to child or spouse of National Guard member disabled or deceased in line of duty.**

Any resident of this state who is less than twenty-five years of age and whose parent has died or has sustained a total disability, permanent in nature, resulting from duty as a member of the South Dakota National Guard, while on state or federal active duty or any authorized training duty, is entitled to tuition without cost and is entitled to attend any course or courses of study in any state educational institution under the control and management of the Board of Regents. Any person who is a resident of this state whose spouse has died or has sustained a total disability, permanent in nature, resulting from duty as a member of the South Dakota National Guard, while on state or federal active duty or any authorized training duty, is entitled to tuition without cost and is entitled to attend any course or courses of study in any state educational institution under the control and management of the Board of Regents. The application and receipt of the benefits of this section are governed by the provisions of §§ 13-55-6 to 13-55-9, inclusive.

**Honorary High School Diplomas.**

Honorary high school diplomas for veterans who served during certain wartime periods. Eligible veterans include anyone who served on active duty at any time during the periods: December 7, 1941 to September 2, 1945; June 25, 1950 to July 31, 1953; or February 28, 1961 to May 7, 1975. As stated in the law, the school district selected by the veteran shall award the diploma to the veteran.

Visit the South Dakota Dept. of Veterans Affairs website [http://mva.sd.gov/state\\_vet\\_home.html](http://mva.sd.gov/state_vet_home.html) for contact information and benefits assistance.

**Other South Dakota State Veteran Benefits**

**Veterans Bonus**

South Dakota is paying a bonus to members of the Armed Forces who were legal residents of the state for no less than *six months immediately preceding* their period of active duty and who served on active duty during one or more of the following periods.

1. August 2, 1990 to March 3, 1991 - All active service counts for payment.
2. March 4, 1991 to December 31, 1992 - Only service in a hostile area qualifying for the Southwest Asia Service Medal counts for payment.



3. January 1, 1993 to September 10, 2001 - Only service in a hostile area qualifying for any United States campaign or service medal awarded for combat operations against hostile forces counts for payment.

4. September 11, 2001 to a date to be determined - All active service counts for payment.

***Veterans with qualifying service before Dec 31, 1992 and after Jan 1, 1993 may receive two separate bonuses of up to \$500.00 each!***

***Applicants living outside of South Dakota*** may obtain an application by email at +

Please include your branch of the military and dates of service. If you do not have email you may request an application and instructions by writing SD Veterans Bonus, 425 E. Capitol, Pierre, SD 57501 or by calling 605-773-7251.

***Applicants living in South Dakota*** may apply through the nearest County or Tribal Veterans Service Officer. Refer to <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov/veteransserviceofficers/locatevso.aspx>

### **Free Certified Copies of Veterans Records**

South Dakota counties may not charge for certified copies of birth, death, marriage, adoption, divorce, guardianship or conservatorship papers when such records are required in support of a claim against any agency of the federal or state government by, or on behalf of, a servicemember or veteran, or the spouse, surviving spouse or dependents of a servicemember or veteran.

### **Burial Allowance for Veterans, Wives or Widows**

A payment of up to \$100 may be paid by the state to help defray the burial and funeral expenses of any honorably discharged veteran or the wife, widow or widower of a veteran when the estate, or immediate family, of the deceased is lacking in funds to pay the expenses. The veteran must have been a citizen of the United States for one year preceding entrance into military service or one year preceding the death. This payment CANNOT be made to another unit of government. The surviving spouse, or relatives, must furnish an affidavit to the C/TVSO that sufficient funds are not available for payment of the expenses. Application for the Burial Allowance and a copy of the funeral bill must be submitted to the Pierre office within one year from the date of the burial.

### **Headstone Setting Fee**

The state will pay \$100 towards the cost of setting a government headstone or marker at the grave of a veteran who was a resident of this state for one year preceding entrance into the military service or one year preceding death. Application for the Headstone Setting Fee must be submitted to the Pierre Office within one year from the date of setting of the headstone or marker.

### **Special License Plates**

Special distinctive license plates are available for veterans who are residents of South Dakota. The fee for the special plates is \$10.00 per set, in addition to registration fees. A \$5.00 mailing fee required for each set of car or motorcycle license plates to be mailed. No special plate renewal fee is charged, but registration fees apply.

For additional information on eligibility and application procedures, visit the SD Department of Revenue and Regulation website [http://dor.sd.gov/Motor\\_Vehicles](http://dor.sd.gov/Motor_Vehicles).

**For more information, click on each respective listing below.**

[Air Force Cross](#)



[Bronze Star](#)



[Medal of Honor](#)



[Navy Cross](#)



[Silver Star](#)



[Distinguished Flying Cross](#)



[Distinguished Service Cross](#)



[Bronze Star with Valor Device](#)



[Pearl Harbor Survivor](#)



[Prisoner of War](#)



[Disabled Veteran](#)



[Purple Heart](#)



[Gold Star](#)



**Military License Plates - Veterans**

	Vehicle Plate	Motorcycle Plate
<b>Air Force</b>		
<b>Army</b>		
<b>Coast Guard</b>		
<b>Marine</b>		
<b>Navy</b>		



### Military License Plates - Active Duty

	Vehicle Plate	Motorcycle Plate
<b>Air Force</b>		
<b>Army</b>		
<b>Coast Guard</b>		
<b>Marine</b>		
<b>Navy</b>		

#### Veterans Designation on Drivers License or ID Card

Veterans who have been honorably discharged from the military have the option of adding the word "Veteran" to the front of their South Dakota drivers license or identification card. Veterans who wish to add the designation to their driver license or non-driver ID card may visit any South Dakota driver license office. They will need to present their DD-214, which shows their honorable discharge status from active duty, or present a certificate signed by a county or tribal veterans service officer verifying their status. They will also need to provide the other documents required of any applicant and pay the appropriate duplicate or renewal fee.

#### Hunting and Fishing Cards for Disabled Veterans

For a \$10 fee, eligible veterans may receive a hunting and fishing card which is valid for four years. This card is the equivalent of the resident fishing and small game license. To be eligible the veteran must:

- Be rated as totally disabled from service connected injuries OR,
- Be in receipt of the VA "K" award OR,
- Have been held as a Prisoner of War OR,

- Be in receipt of Social Security benefits because of a total disability.

Application forms are available from the Game, Fish and Parks Regional Office. The application, along with verification of eligibility, are submitted to Game, Fish and Parks, 412 West Missouri, Pierre, SD 57501

### **Free Admission and Reduced Camping Fees for Veterans**

Certain resident veterans may obtain free admission to any South Dakota state park and are eligible for a fifty percent discount on any camping fee or associated electrical fee. To qualify the veteran must:

1. Be totally disabled from service connected disabilities or,
2. Be in receipt of the VA "K" award OR,
3. Have been held as a Prisoner of War.

Application forms may be obtained from the local park manager or through the Game, Fish and Parks office in Pierre.

[Source: <http://www.military.com/benefits/content/veteran-state-benefits/south-dakota-state-veterans-benefits.html>  
Dec 2011 ++]

## **Military Discounts in South Dakota**

1. MVDC has close to 800 business locations in South Dakota that have discounts for military personnel and veterans. In addition to businesses providing discounts, the state also provides discounts for those that have served. To find business discounts, enter your zip code and category in the search box at <http://militaryandveteransdiscounts.com/location/south-dakota.html>.

2. **Veterans Designation on drivers license:** Yes

3. **State Discounted Fees and Taxes for veterans.**

- \$10 hunting and fishing license for totally disabled veterans and former POWs.
- Fee waived for hunting and fishing for residents on active duty who are stationed out of state.
- Free certified copies of birth, death, marriage, adoption, divorce, and guardianship or conservatorship papers.
- Free admission and reduced camping fees for certain eligible veterans.

4. **Property tax and Financial Benefits**

- Dwellings or parts of multiple family dwellings which are specifically designed for use by paraplegics as wheelchair homes and which are owned and occupied by veterans with the loss, or loss of use, of both lower extremities, or the unremarried widow(er), are exempt from taxation.
- \$100,000 of the full and true value of a dwelling that is owned and occupied by a veteran who is rated permanently and totally disabled from a service-connected disability, or the unmarried surviving spouse, is exempt from taxation

## **5. Education Discounts**

- Free tuition at a state supported school for certain eligible children of veterans who were killed in action, or died while on active duty.
- Free tuition for dependents of POWs and MIAs.
- Certain veterans are eligible to take undergraduate courses at a state supported university without payment of tuition provided they are not eligible to receive education benefits under the GI Bill or any other federal education program.
- Reduced tuition for eligible National Guard members at state educational institutions.
- Free tuition to child or spouse of National Guard member disabled or deceased in the line of duty

**6.** To find businesses that provide military and veteran discounts refer to <http://militaryandveteransdiscounts.com>.

[Source: <http://militaryandveteransdiscounts.com/location/south-dakota.html> Jan 2014 ++]