

Wyoming
Incarcerated
Veterans Guide

Forward

This guidebook can be an important tool. Review all of the resources thoroughly to understand the opportunities available. When these programs are used properly, the benefits will be a minimization of the outside pressures you may be confronted with if released; social acceptance, economics, and re-establishment as a productive member of society. This booklet is a tool for veterans incarcerated and their families who wish access to services to support a new and better way of life. Be aware, this guidebook is designed to assist veterans incarcerated in the State of Wyoming, and their families, laws do vary from state to state. Therefore, check Wyoming State laws and regulations against this guide.

Agency staff names and addresses, phone numbers and website addresses change. If you attempt to contact one of the resources in this guidebook and it is not current, do your best to obtain the current information through phone information or a Google web search. To perpetuate the value of this document, we respectfully request that if you discover any incorrect, conflicting, or out-of-date information in this Guidebook please send the discrepancies, and updated information if you have it, to:

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Health Care for Reentry Veterans Specialist
Eastern Colorado HCS (116-A2)
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Denver, CO 80220

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USING THE GUIDEBOOK

This guide is for you to use to plan for your release and to keep as a reference after your release. It includes addresses, phone numbers, and web sites that you can use to find out about programs and other help available after your release. You may want to ask a friend or family member to help you find the information you need if you don't have phone or internet access. Keep in mind that **this guide does not include all of the services available**. What is available in one area may be different from what is available in another, so be sure to check with local resources to learn about services in your area. While you are in prison, find out which unit in your facility can help you plan for your release (often the education or transfer unit). Classes may be offered so you can work on skills development and prepare for life after release. **You don't want to risk homelessness once you are released, so take advantage of the opportunities available to you.**

Begin thinking about what specifically you will need upon release.

Ask yourself these kinds of questions:

1. Will I need housing?
2. Will I need medical, substance abuse, or mental health care?
3. Do I need to learn a job skill?
4. Do I have any other legal issues, such as child support?
5. How do I restart my VA checks or Supplemental Security Income (SSI)?

Make a list of your needs. Remember that this is just a tool to help you get organized. A sample list might look like this:

- I need a place to live.
- I need a job.
- I need clothing to wear to work.
- I need to find out what benefits I can get as a veteran.
- I want to get addictions treatment.
- I owe child support.

Think about your list as you read through this guide. Who do you think can help you with each of your needs? Is there one organization that may be able to work with you, on many different things, or do you need to contact several agencies? Keep track of the steps you take, including the dates and names of people you contact for information or assistance.

Although this guide provides national and state addresses for many organizations, we recommend you **check your phone book for local, county, and state agencies that know what help is available in your area.**

When writing a letter to request information, be clear.

Keep your letter short, to the point, and write legibly. Include the following information:

- Your name and contact information.
- A brief statement about your current situation.
- Your specific request.
- What you have done so far (Example: I have written to _____ organization and they suggested I contact you).
- Any restrictions for mailings (Example: Mail with staples or paper clips will not be accepted by my prison facility).

When contacting an agency for help by mail, email or phone, **be persistent and polite** in order to get results. Ask questions if information is not clear to you. Remember that many organizations are staffed by volunteers who are eager to help, but may not have the answers you are looking for. If **someone cannot help you, ask about who can.** The Internet can also be helpful to find information about VA benefits and community resources in your area. This guidebook includes web addresses, when available. If computer access is not available at your facility, you can visit the public library after release. Computer access may also be provided at the Wyoming Job Service Centers.

HELP FOR VETERANS

This section includes Wyoming's community resources that can assist you with getting your life back on track. Check the phone book for local, state, and federal agencies that know what services are available to you. **Start asking about services and any requirements for those services ASAP**, so that you will be better prepared when you are released.

TOLL-FREE NUMBERS

Crisis and other toll-free numbers are often listed in the front cover or first few pages of the phone book. You may also want to check under "Social Services" in the blue or yellow pages for hotlines and local numbers.

- **US Department of Veterans Affairs** — www.va.gov
 - ✓ Benefits: 1-800-827-1000,
 - ✓ Medical Centers: 1-877-222-8387, or <http://www.visn19.va.gov/>
 - ✓ Persian Gulf War Helpline: 1-800-749-8387
- **Focus On Recovery Helpline** - A 24-hour national alcohol and drug abuse addiction and treatment hotline: 1-800-888-9383
- **National AIDS Hotline** - Talk to someone who knows about HIV / AIDS and can tell you about AIDS services in your city or state: 1-800-822-7422
- **National Coalition for Homeless Veterans** — www.nchv.org, 1-800-838-4357
- **National Suicide Prevention Hotline** - 1-800- 273-TALK (8255)

WHERE TO START

Check the local phone book yellow pages under "Homeless" or "Social Service Organizations" for a list of many local organizations that offer different services, which may include clothing, public transportation tokens, emergency shelter, and more. You may need to contact several agencies to find all the services you need. Services provided by government agencies are listed in the blue pages found near the front of the phone book. Check with your local Family Services Office to find out what programs are available and what their guidelines are. We have included some guidance below, but your local organizations are your best resources.

Remember, it never hurts to ask!

Every VA Medical Center has a Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Coordinator who is responsible for helping homeless veterans access VA and community based care to end homelessness among veterans. The HCHV program provides outreach, clinical assessments and referrals for medical and mental health care, long-term transitional residential assistance, case management and employment

assistance with linkage to permanent housing. For information to the HCHV Coordinator call Cheyenne VAMC 1-307-778-7353 or Sheridan VAMC 307- 672-3473 ex 3823 or go to www.va.gov/homeless/page.cfm?pg=21.

Cheyenne VA medical Center & Cheyenne Regional Office provides assistance with Veterans benefits & entitlements information, VA claims process, representation and advocacy, Trauma (PTSD) counseling, Veterans Homes for those in need of nursing care, and employment assistance through federal funded reintegration projects. Call 1-307 778-7550 for the medical center and 1-800-827-1000 for the regional office.

ELIGIBILITY FOR VA BENEFITS WHILE INCARCERATED

Eligibility for VA Benefits During Incarceration

Veterans incarcerated and incarcerated dependents may apply for the same compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC) – service connected death benefits – and pension benefits as veterans who are not incarcerated. However, Congress restricts the amount of benefits that may be paid to a veteran or dependent while he or she is incarcerated. These benefits are institutionalized as part of law: 38 U.S.C Sec 5313 (a), 38 C.F.R., Sec. 3.665 (a), (d), which reads as follows:

If a veteran is incarcerated as the result of a “felony” conviction as defined by law: “Any offense punishable by death or imprisonment for a term exceeding one year, unless specifically categorized as a misdemeanor under the law of the prosecuting jurisdiction.”

Then, the amount paid to a veteran incarcerated for a service-connected disability is generally limited by law to the 10 percent disability rate, or half the amount of the ten percent rate if the veteran’s disability rating is 10 percent. (If the veteran is rated before incarceration as 20 percent disabled or higher, he will receive only the amount payable to a 10 percent disabled veteran.) Incarcerated DIC recipients will receive one-half the amount paid to a veteran receiving compensation payments for a 10 percent-rated disability.

A veteran may not receive non-service connected VA pension benefits, or any portion of these benefits, while incarcerated for a felony or misdemeanor. However, his family may receive an apportionment of such benefits under the procedure described above. (See 38 C.F.R. Sec.3.666)

One important requirement for eligibility for VA benefits is that the veteran has to have been issued either an honorable or general discharge, or would have received one if not for re-enlisting. If a veteran had two periods of service, one honorable and the other less than honorable, he may still be eligible for VA benefits based on the honorable period of service.

VA Medical Care can not be provided to veterans in prison, but VA health facilities may provide care to you after your release. Contact 1-877-222-8387 to find the medical center nearest you.

Benefits Payments While Incarcerated

There is a 60-day "grace period" following a conviction when you may still receive full benefits. To avoid an overpayment, it is important that you notify the VARO immediately when you go to prison if you are receiving payments. If you do not notify the VA and receive overpayment, you and your family will lose all financial payments until the debt is paid.

For example, Joe is a veteran who receives a VA pension. He commits a crime, is convicted, and is incarcerated, but doesn't tell the VA right away and keeps getting paid for 6 months. After serving his sentence of 18 months, he is released and applies to the VA to have his pension restarted. He will have an overpayment which must be recovered from the restarted benefits. Until the overpayment is recovered, Joe will have to go without that income.

Your award for compensation or pension benefits should resume from the date you are released, as long as the VA receives notice of release within one year. Form 21-4193, Notice to Department of Veterans Affairs of Veteran or Beneficiary Incarcerated in Penal Institution, available through your counselors should be completed before release, signed by a prison official and submitted to VA Benefits Administration.

Apportionment

Although legally, the veteran can only receive a portion of the full amount payable for his or her disability rating, the remaining balance may be "apportioned to the individual's dependent family". To apply for apportionment, the veteran must send a letter that identifies the veteran and the apportionment claimant and makes it clear they are requesting an apportionment of his VA benefits to the VA Regional Office (VARO) that has jurisdiction over the veteran's case. VA regulations clearly specify this apportionment amount will only go to family members if they can show financial need for such amount. This applies to the spouse, children, or dependent parents who are involved in the application.

In deciding whether any apportionment is appropriate, the amount of the apportionment, and to whom it will go, the following factors are considered:

- The family member's income and living expenses;
- The amount of compensation available to be apportioned;
- The needs and living expenses of other family members; and
- Special needs of any of the family members.

For example: a veteran incarcerated rated as 80 percent disability can only receive the amount he or she would get if he or she were 10 percent disabled. However, his or her family may be apportioned up to 70 percent, the difference of the 80 percent rating. (DIC may also be apportioned with similar restrictions.)

There is a 60-day "grace period" following conviction where the veteran, or Dependency or Indemnity Compensation (DIC) recipient, may still receive full benefits. If the veteran continues to receive benefits after the 60-day period, it will result in an "overpayment". The VA considers it to be the recipient's responsibility and fault if this occurs because the recipient failed to notify the VA of his or her incarceration. Attempts to obtain a waiver in these situations of overpayment are often unsuccessful. As a rule, the veteran loses most, if not all, financial benefits until the VA recovers the entire overpayment. It has also been a standard procedure

that the family will not be entitled to receive an apportionment until the debt is completely recovered.

For more information concerning VA debt collection rules that may affect the veteran incarcerated, telephone: 1-800-827-1000 and request a Veterans Service Organization representative or, write to a Veterans Service Organization.

One other relevant restriction on veteran's incarcerated eligibility for service connected disability compensation is that: "No total disability rating based on un-employability, may be assigned to an incarcerated veteran".

It is important to remember that most VA decisions, including those on apportionment, can be appealed to the Board of Veterans Appeals and, if need be, to the Court of Appeal for Veterans Affairs.

Re-starting Benefits at Release

It is important that each disabled veteran receiving compensation or DIC payments promptly notify the VARO. Regular full benefit payments should begin upon release, providing the VA is notified of the veteran's release, including placement within a community treatment center or halfway house in the community, within one year of release. VARO needs formal notification from the prison of your release in order to re-start benefits: The sooner that document is provided to VARO, the sooner VARO can begin to process your request.

Seeking Help After Release

If you would like to get benefits or think you have a pending claim before the VA, it is best to get professional help to assist you.

Many Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) have trained staff who can help you with your VA claim, and can legally represent your claim before the VA. Some also help homeless and at-risk veterans find the support services they need. You can contact any VSO listed in the Guidebook to learn an office near you.

Seeking Benefits On Your Own

Although we encourage you to seek the aid of a service representative, you may choose to apply for VA benefits on your own. Write your local VA Regional Office or find the forms online at: www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms1.htm. You can also apply for certain benefits online at: <http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/main.asp>.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Can a veteran receive VA benefits while in prison?

VA can pay certain benefits to veterans who are incarcerated in a Federal, state or local penal institution. However, the amount we can pay depends on the type of benefit and reason for incarceration. This fact sheet provides information about the benefits most commonly affected by imprisonment.

How will my imprisonment affect the payment of:

VA Disability Compensation?

Your monthly payment will be reduced beginning with the 61st day of your imprisonment for a *felony*. If your payment before you went to prison was \$188 or more, your new payment amount will be \$98. If you were getting \$98 before you were imprisoned, your new payment will be \$49.00.

Note: If you are released from incarceration – participated in a work release or half-way house program, paroled, and completed sentence, your compensation payments will not be reduced.

VA Disability Pension?

If you are imprisoned in a Federal, State or local penal institution as the result of conviction of a felony or misdemeanor, such pension payment will be discontinued effective on the 61st day of imprisonment following conviction.

Am I eligible for VA medical care while imprisoned?

While incarcerated veterans do not forfeit their eligibility for medical care, current regulations restrict VA from providing hospital and outpatient care to an incarcerated veteran who is an inmate in an institution of another government agency when that agency has a duty to give the care or services. However, VA may provide outreach services during incarceration and medical care once the veteran has been unconditionally released from the penal institution. Veterans interested in applying for enrollment into the VA health care system should contact the nearest VA health care facility upon their release.

Can my spouse, children or dependent parent(s) receive any of the money not paid to me because of imprisonment?

VA can take all or part of the amount of compensation you are not receiving and apportion it to your spouse, child or children and dependent parents on the basis of individual need. They should contact the nearest VA regional office for details on how to apply. They will be asked to provide income information as part of the application process.

Will my benefits be automatically resumed when I get out of prison?

Your award for compensation or pension benefits shall be resumed the date of release from incarceration if the Department of Veterans Affairs receives notice of release within 1 year from following release. Depending on the type of disability, VA may schedule you for a medical examination to see if your disability has improved. You will need to visit or call your local VA regional office for assistance.

Below are brief descriptions of forms needed to file for certain VA benefits. Be sure you use a return address where mail will get to you as quickly as possible. Make photocopies of all forms for your records before sending your packet to the VARO nearest you.

- VA Form 21-526 - Application for Compensation or Pension- must be filed to apply for compensation or pension. Mail your DD-214 and the following forms to the VARO nearest your release destination 30 to 45 days before your release.

- VA Form 21-4138 - Statement in Support of Claim - lets you explain why you deserve the benefits you are asking for because of your disability or disorder. It is best to have an experienced service representative help you complete the form.
- VA Form 21-4142 - Authorization for Release of Information - If you have received medical or mental health care, that may be relevant to your claim, from anyone other than a VA Medical Facility, you need to fill out a VAF 21-4142 giving permission for release of medical records to the VA.
- VA Form 10-10EZ - Enrollment for Medical Benefits - is used by the VA to determine if you can receive medical benefits. Complete the form and bring it with you to the VA medical facility where you will seek evaluation for treatment.
- VA Form 28-1900 - Vocational Rehabilitation for Disabled Veterans - is needed to apply for the vocational rehabilitation program to help veterans who were disabled during their service reach maximum independence in daily living, to learn the skills needed to get a job, and to find and keep a job. Send Form 28-1900 to the VARO in your area 10 to 15 days before your release.
- VA Form 70-3288 - Request for and Consent to Release of Information from Claimant's Records - is used to get records relevant to your claim from VA facilities (regional offices, medical centers, outpatient clinics, and vet centers). Request a fee waiver under section 38 C.F.R. Sec.1.526 (h), which requires the VARO to provide a veteran with one set of his or her records free of charge.

For More Information Call Toll-Free at 1-800-827-1000

WOMEN VETERANS

Most **VA Medical Centers** and readjustment offices have a designated Women Veterans Coordinator to assist women veterans in accessing VA benefit programs and healthcare services. Call 1-877-222-8387 or go to <http://www.va.gov> to find the medical center nearest you.

The **Cheyenne and Sheridan VAs and the Regional Office** have designated Women Veterans Coordinators to help women veterans. Call 1-800-827-1000 or go to www.va.gov.

CHEYENNE AND SHERIDAN VA HOSPITALS AND REGIONAL OFFICE INFORMATION

CHEYENNE VAMC	307-778-7550
ADDICTION TREATMENT PROGRAM	307-778-7349
MENTAL HEALTH	307-778-7349
SOCIAL WORK SERVICE	307-778-7314
WOMEN VETERANS CLINIC	307-778-7550
HOMELESS VETERAN SERVICE	307-778-7353
SHERIDAN VAMC	307-672-3473
SHERIDAN HOMELESS DOMICILIARY	307-672-3473 x3815
VETERANS INDUSTRIES CWT	307-672-3473 x3304
CHEYENNE VET CENTER 3219 E. Pershing Blvd.	307-778-7370 Cheyenne WY 82001
CASPER VET CENTER 1030 N. Poplar	307-261-5355 Casper WY 82601
FORT COLLINS VET CENTER 1100 Poudre River Drive	970-221-5176 Ft Collins CO 80524

OTHER VETERAN HELPFUL PHONE NUMBERS

HUD WYOMING - 307-261-6250

VA CLINIC - CASPER -307-235-4143

VA CLINIC RIVERTON – 307-857-1211

VA MEDICAL HELP LINE – 866-369-8020
HOME LOAN GUARANTEES – 800-827-1000
WYO VET AFFAIRS COMMISSION 307-265-7372
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS – 307-778-7340
AMERICAN LEGION – 307-307-433-2750
DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS – 307-433-2752
DAV TRANSPORTATION NETWORK – 307-778-7577
VET EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING – 307-261-5454
HOMELESS VETS CHEYENNE - 307-778-7353
HOMELESS VETS SHERIDAN – 307-672-3473 EX 3823

Wyoming Homeless Services

This web site has helpful information about housing, food, clothing and many other services for the homeless in Wyoming: <http://www.wch.vcn.com/wchsvcs.htm>.

LEGAL HELP

Veteran status issues:

You should talk to a **Veterans' Advocate Service Officer** for help with discharge upgrades, seeking benefits, and filing a VA claim. Veterans' service officers are located within both Wyoming VA medical centers. American Legion, Disabled American Veterans and Veterans of Foreign Wars all have officers within Wyoming.

Other legal issues:

Most law is state-specific. Most common legal problems are governed by the law in the state where you live or where the problem occurred. When looking for legal help, make sure that information you find applies to your state, or that the lawyer or other service provider is qualified to work in your state.

The **American Bar Association** has a web site with guidelines about free legal services and links to directories of legal aid offices and pro-bono programs.

Go to: www.abanet.org

Legal Services or Legal Aid offices have staff lawyers to provide free legal help to poor clients. The lawyers are usually experts in the types of problems that poor clients often have. Look in the yellow pages for a local Legal Aid office, check this guidebook, or check online for the program, nearest you. Check the yellow pages to contact your **Local Bar Association** to learn if there is a pro-bono program in your community, or go to www.abanet.org/barserv/stlobar.html.

LEGAL RESOURCES

Legal Aid offices in Wyoming

Legal Aid offices are located in the following communities.
Most offices are open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.
Some offices close from 12-1pm for lunch.

Please Note:

We are sorry, but we cannot respond to requests for legal assistance made by e-mail. Any information that you send to us by e-mail is not confidential and is not protected by the attorney/client privilege.

Casper Legal Aid Services

441 S. Center, Suite 200
Casper, WY 82601
(307) 9 237-5266

Cheyenne Legal Aid Services

1602 Capitol Ave
Suite 405
Cheyenne Wyoming 82001
(307) 634-1566

Lander Legal Aid Services

P.O. Box 1160
Lander WY 82520
(307) 332-6626

WYOMING PRO BONO PROGRAM

Wyoming does not have a Pro Bono program for criminal offenses. There may be assistance on a local basis with civil cases. Contact legal aid listed above to find local help if it is available.

HOUSING

It is important to know that you have a place to go when released. The first step in returning to the community is finding a place to stay. This section includes ways to locate emergency shelter, transitional programs, and permanent housing assistance. Transitional or temporary housing can serve as a step toward full independence upon your release. However, there are often waiting lists for housing assistance programs, so you should ask about applying as soon as possible. If you are released and find yourself homeless, emergency assistance may be available.

HOUSING OPTIONS

EMERGENCY SHELTERS

Casper, Cheyenne, Gillette, Riverton and Sheridan have emergency shelters.

Central Wyoming Rescue Mission 230 North Park, Casper Wyoming 82604

PO Box 3212 Casper Wyoming 82602

Phone Main Mission 307-265-2251, Admin Office 307-265-3002

Email: cwrm@cwrm.org

Website: www.cwrm.org

COMEA House 1504 Stinson (Stinson at W. Lincolnway) Cheyenne WY 82001

307-632-3174

Council Way Station, 114 4-J Road, Gillette, Wyoming 82718 307-686-2730

Freemont County good samaritan Center PO Box 1184, 917 east Washington,

Riverton Wyoming 82501 phone 307-856-5435

Sheridan Community Shelter, 1898 Fort Road, Building #24 (on the VA Hos-

Pital grounds) Box 6291 Sheridan WY 82801 Phone 307-67300025

Email shelter@voawy.org

ROOMS TO RENT: See local newspapers, printed or online.

SUBSIDIZED HOUSING: Contact local housing authority for both publicly owned and section 8 vouchers for privately owned subsidized housing

HOUSING FOR VETERANS: Contact VA Regional office in Cheyenne for home loan guarantee certificates if you want to purchase a home and have dependable income

Health Care for Homeless Veterans Programs at the Cheyenne and Sheridan VA hospitals may be able to help with referrals to local housing programs and treatment programs with housing.

CAMPING FACILITIES, RV PARKS AND SHOWERS

Local facilities can be located in phone books, tourist info sites and from case managers at the shelters.

SUBSIDIZED HOUSING

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) <http://www.hud.gov>

Casper Field Office

150 east B Street Room 1010

PO Box 11010

Casper WY 82602-5001

Phone (307) 261-6250

Fax (307) 261-6245

TTY (307) 261-6258

Jurisdiction; State of Wyoming

Contact:

HUD's mission is to make Americans a partner in the nation's economic progress by helping people create communities of opportunities. This mission requires HUD staff to work in close partnership with State and Local governments, non-profits, housing authorities, tribal entities, lenders and other organizations that are committed to community development. As a federal funding agency, HUD's program funds target low-to-moderate income residents by funding rental assistance, homeless support, and homeownership, housing opportunities, job training and other community needs.

Rental Assistance Programs: <http://www.hud.gov/fedrent.html>

- Public Housing is low-income housing that is actually operated by local housing authorities
- Section 8 Vouchers that allow you to go rent your own place to live, using the voucher to cover all or part of the rent

- Privately owned subsidized housing, where the government provides subsidies directly to the owner who then applies those subsidies to the rents he/she charges low-income tenants
- Other affordable housing programs, such as HUD's Home Program provides grants to state and local governments which may use them to offer rental assistance

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROGRAMS

The VA Health Care for Homeless Veterans Programs at the Cheyenne and Sheridan VA Hospitals Have transitional housing programs for homeless veterans. These treatment programs have varying admission and treatment requirements. Not all homeless veterans are eligible or appropriate for a particular program.

VETERAN HOUSING AND SERVICES

Dept. of Veterans Affairs Web Site <http://www.va.gov/>

1. Domiciliary Care Program

Contact: Director Homeless Veterans Domiciliary program
 Sheridan VA Medical Center
 1898 Fort Road
 Sheridan WY 82801
 Phone 307-672-3473

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs provides housing for 40 homeless veterans, male or female. There is no fee, but clients must be veterans who have an honorable discharge and are low income. The program goal is to graduate clients to independent living or supported housing. The estimated stay is six (6) months. Food, counseling, treatment, incentive therapy, compensated work therapy, and comprehensive case management are provided.

2. Health Care for Homeless Veterans Programs

Contact Larry Melka HCHV Coordinator
 Cheyenne VA medical Center
 2360 East Pershing Blvd.
 Cheyenne Wyoming 82001
 Phone 307-778-7353
 Fax 307-778-7512
larry.melka@va.gov

Contact Will Banks HCHV Coordinator
 Sheridan VA Medical Center
 1898Fort Road
 Sheridan WY 82801
 Phone 307-672-3473
 Fax 307-672-1905

william.banks@va.gov

HCHV programs provide long term transitional housing for homeless veterans. These programs focus on employment, group living skills and intensive case management. Length of stay is from one to two years. Individual programs have particular entrance requirements as defined by each grant recipients grant application. Residents are expected to pay up to 30 % of their gross income for participation in these programs. Not all veterans will qualify for admission to all programs.

EMPLOYMENT

FINDING & KEEPING A JOB

Finding a job may be hard and can seem overwhelming, but it is possible and very important! When released you may find that you are completely starting over. You should ask for job counseling and training while incarcerated so you are prepared to work when released. **Don't wait** until you get out to start thinking about what you will do. **Start planning now!**

Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) and **Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP)** specialists are assigned to help veterans find and keep jobs. LVERs are located with the local Workforce site or affiliate Job Service Centers (JSC). DVOP Specialists work under the supervision of the LVER to develop job and training opportunities for veterans with service connected disabilities, linking veterans with employers and making sure follow-up services are provided. To find a LVER or DVOP near you, visit your state employment service office listed in the phone book blue pages under "Department of workforce services".

Employment and training services are provided to homeless veterans to help them get back into the workforce through DOL-VETS funded **Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Projects (HVRP)**. HVRP assists veterans with job search preparation, vocational counseling, occupational skills training, on-the-job training, trade skills certification and licensing, and job placement assistance and referral to supportive services. To find out if you may be eligible and how to access HVRP contact the Wyoming VA Hospitals & Regional Office at 1-800-827-1000.

The VA's **Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment** services help veterans with **service-connected disabilities** by providing job training and counseling to those who have an employment handicap. Services include help finding a job, on-the-job training, job development, and vocational training. If you are not eligible for these services, a VA counselor may help you find other options, goals, or programs. Contact the Wyoming VA Hospitals & Regional Office at 1-800-827-1000.

Through its' **Veterans Industries and Compensated Work Therapy programs**, the VA offers structured work opportunities and supervised therapeutic housing for at-risk and homeless veterans with physical, mental health and addictions problems. VA

contracts with private industry and the public sector for work by these veterans, who learn job skills, re-learn successful work habits, and regain a sense of self-esteem. Veterans are paid for their work and given assistance with employment in the community. In Wyoming, the VA currently has Veterans Industries Programs located at the Sheridan VA Medical Center, Fort Road, Sheridan Wyoming 82801. Phone 307-672-3473.

The State of Wyoming has a **Vocational Rehabilitation** program that helps people with disabilities find and keep jobs. Apply for these services immediately after your release. Search the internet for "Wyoming Vocational Rehabilitation". There are offices in most areas of Wyoming. The department of workforce services runs the vocational rehabilitation service for Wyoming. The disability determination service is located at 821 West Pershing Blvd., Cheyenne, Wyoming 82001 Phone 777-7341. The employment center is located at 1510 East Pershing Blvd Cheyenne Wyoming 82001. This is the location for employment and job training services. They also have GED services for those wanting to study for or take the GED test.

WYOMING DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE SERVICES

Job centers are located in each Wyoming county and many counties have more than one. Your local phone book will have listings for job centers. Jobs training opportunities and much more can be found on the job service internet site

http://onestop.state.wy.us/appview/wjn_home.asp

Veterans' Preference for Employment

Since the time of the Civil War, Veterans of the Armed Forces have been given some degree of preference in appointments to Federal jobs. Recognizing that sacrifices are made by those serving in the Armed Forces, Congress enacted laws to prevent veterans seeking Federal employment from being penalized because of the time spent in military service.

By law, veterans who are disabled or who served on active duty in the Armed Forces during certain specified time periods or in military campaigns are entitled to preference over nonveterans both in hiring from competitive lists of eligibles and in retention during reductions in force.

Preference does not have as its goal the placement of a veteran in every vacant Federal job; this would be incompatible with the merit principle of public employment. Nor does it apply to promotions or other in-service actions. However, preference does provide a uniform method by which special consideration is given to qualified veterans seeking Federal employment.

Preference applies in hiring from civil service examinations, for most excepted service jobs, and when agencies make temporary appointments or use direct hire and delegated examining authorities from the U. S. Office of Personnel Management.

General Requirements for Preference

To be entitled to preference, a veteran must meet the eligibility requirements in section 2108 of title 5, United States Code. This means that:

- An honorable or general discharge is necessary.
- Military retirees at the rank of major, lieutenant commander, or higher are not eligible for preference unless they are disabled veterans.
- Guard and Reserve active duty for training purposes does not qualify for preference.
- When applying for Federal jobs, eligible veterans should claim preference on their application or resume. Applicants claiming 10-point preference must complete form SF-15, Application for 10-Point Veteran Preference.

TYPES OF PREFERENCE:

5-Point Preference

Five points are added to the passing examination score of a veteran who served:

- During the period December 7, 1941, to July 1, 1955; or
- For more than 180 consecutive days, any part of which occurred after January 31, 1955, and before October 15, 1976; or
- During the Gulf War from August 2, 1990 through January 2, 1992; or
- In a campaign or expedition for which a campaign medal has been authorized, including El Salvador, Grenada, Haiti, Lebanon, Panama, Somalia, Southwest Asia, Bosnia, and the Global War on Terrorism.

Medal holders and Gulf War veterans who enlisted after September 7, 1980, or entered on active duty on or after October 14, 1982, must have served continuously for 24 months or the full period called or ordered to active duty. The service requirement does not apply to veterans with compensable service-connected disabilities, or to veterans separated for disability in the line of duty, or for hardship.

10-Point Preference

Ten points are added to the passing examination score of:

- A veteran who served any time and who (1) has a present service-connected disability or (2) is receiving compensation, disability retirement benefits, or pension from the military or the Department of Veterans Affairs. Individuals who received a Purple Heart qualify as disabled veterans.
- An unmarried spouse of certain deceased veterans, a spouse of a veteran unable to work because of a service-connected disability, and
- a mother of a veteran who died in service or who is permanently and totally disabled.

PREFERENCE IN EXAMINATION

Veterans meeting the criteria for preference and who are found eligible (achieve a score of 70 or higher either by a written examination or an evaluation of their experience and education) have 5 or 10 points added to their numerical ratings depending on the nature of their preference. For scientific and professional positions in grade GS-9 or higher, names of all eligibles are listed in order of ratings, augmented by veteran preference, if any. For all other positions, the names of 10-point preference eligibles who have a compensable, service-connected disability of 10 percent or more are placed ahead of

the names of all other eligibles on a given register. The names of other 10-point preference eligibles, 5-point preference eligibles, and non-veterans are listed in order of their numerical ratings.

Entitlement to veterans' preference does not guarantee a job. There are many ways an agency can fill a vacancy other than by appointment from a list of eligibles.

FILING APPLICATIONS AFTER EXAMINATIONS HAVE CLOSED

A 10-point preference eligible may file an application at any time for any positions for which a non-temporary appointment has been made from a competitive list of eligibles within the past 3 years.

In addition, a person who is unable to file for an open competitive examination because of military service may file after the closing date. In either of the above situations, the veteran should contact the agency that announced the position for further information.

POSITIONS FOR PREFERENCE ELIGIBLES ONLY

Certain examinations are open only to preference eligibles as long as such applicants are available. These are custodian, guard, elevator operator and messenger.

SPECIAL COMPLAINT PROCEDURES FOR VETERANS

Veterans who believe that they have not been accorded the preference to which they are entitled may file a complaint with the U. S. Department of Labor's Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS).

The Department of Labor's Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy and Veterans' Employment and Training Service developed an "expert system" to help veterans receive the preferences to which they are entitled. Two versions of this system are currently available, both of which, help the veterans determine the type of preference to which they are entitled, the benefits associated with the preference and the steps necessary to file a complaint due to the failure of a Federal Agency to provide those benefits. The Internet address for the veterans' preference program is <http://www.dol.gov/elaws/vetspref.htm>. (State Employment Service Offices have veteran representatives available to assist veterans in gaining access to this information.)

Wyoming Community Resources

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

FAMILY SERVICES has offices throughout Wyoming. The easiest and most accurate way to find your local office is to go to their web site <http://dfsweb.state.wy.us/>

FAMILY FINANCIAL EDUCATION FOUNDATION

1-877-292-8444

A nonprofit consumer credit counseling organization
724 front street Evanston. Wyoming
www.FFEF.org

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

1-307-772-2135

5353 Yellowstone road Cheyenne Wyoming

Social Security has offices in Casper, Cheyenne, Cody, Riverton, Rock Springs and Sheridan. A call to any social security office will give you the current address and phone or you can visit their web site at http://www.sa.gov/denver/st_wy.htm.

Community Action

Community Action agencies are located in Casper and Cheyenne. They are multi service centers which can help with many housing and self sufficiency issues.

Community Action Partnership of Natrona County
800 Werner Court, Suite 201
Casper, Wyoming 82601
Phone 307-232-0124
Fax 307-232-0145
Email cap@natronacounty-wy.gov
Website: www.capnc.org
Office hours 8am to 5pm Monday through Friday

Community Action of Laramie County
1620 Central Ave. Suite 200
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82001
Phone 307-635-1671
Fax 307-635-1671
Email wcap@wyoming.com
Website www.wcaa.ws

FOOD ASSISTANCE

All emergency shelters provide food. Several towns have Salvation Army food programs which provide both hot meals and surplus commodities. Some churches have soup kitchens. Some community agencies will also assist with food. Inquire locally as to days and times of meals and distribution. Most surplus commodity distribution requires registration and eligibility determination before distribution is made.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT PROGRAMS (NON-VA)

Local Mental Health Centers are the tax supported sources for detox and substance abuse treatment in Wyoming. Hospitals also provide medical detox and treatment.

The Wyoming association of Mental Health and substance abuse centers web site provides up to date and accurate information on Wyoming mental health and substance abuse treatment centers on their web site. www.wamhsac.org

STATE OF WYOMING VETERAN'S BENEFITS

Frequently Asked Questions

Where do I get a copy of my DD 214?

When you left the military, If you registered your DD214 with a Wyoming county Clerk, you can contact that county clerk for a copy of your DD214. Additionally, a copy of your entire military record including your DD 214 is stored at the National Personnel Records Center, 9700 Page Boulevard, St. Louis, Missouri, 63172. Their web site is:

<http://www.nara.gov/regional/stlouis.html>

How do I get a copy of something from my military record?

A copy of your entire military record is stored at the National Personnel Records Center, 9700 Page Boulevard, St. Louis, Missouri, 63172. Their web site is:

<http://www.nara.gov/regional/stlouis.html>

Who can I call if I am having difficulty obtaining my V.A. benefits?

In addition to contacting the V.A., veterans service organizations have service officers at both VA hospitals in Wyoming to assist veterans and their dependents and survivors throughout the State in filing and obtaining claims for VA entitlements and benefits and to provide general assistance and advocacy. The Cheyenne Service Officers are:

- o Veterans of Foreign Wars Service Officer – 307-778-7340
- o American Legion Service Officer – 307-778-
- o Disabled American Vets Service Officer -

What benefits does the State of Wyoming provide to veterans?

Wyoming Veterans Commission

The Wyoming Veterans Affairs Commission main concern is taking care of our state's veterans.

The commission's duties are spelled out in Wyoming statute and include: study of state and federal legislation affecting veterans, acting as liaison between veterans and government agencies, informing veterans of available benefits, and making recommendations to the governor and legislature about veterans' concerns.

The commission has a full-time director and 12 members located around Wyoming and appointed by the governor to two year terms.

To learn more about benefits available to veterans in Wyoming, you can read the Veterans' Benefit Handbook on the state Web site at <http://www.wy.ngb.army.mil/PAO/VetBenefitbook06.pdf>.

Read the current edition of the retiree and veteran newsletter at:
<http://www.wy.ngb.army.mil/PAO/retiree.pdf>.

CONTACT THE COMMISSION

Wyoming Veterans Commission

5905 CY Ave
Casper, WY 82604
(307) 265-7372 Office
800-833-5987 Office
(307)265-7392 Fax
wvac@bresnan.net

STATE STAFF Director: Don Ewing, cell phone (307) 259-3487, dewing@state.wy.us
State Veterans Service Officer: Barry Gasdek, cell phone: (307) 262-2481
Veterans Outreach Supervisor: Mark Hicks, (307) 265-7372
Administrative Assistant: Kathy Jacobs, (307) 265-7372

COMMISSIONERS Chairman: Patty Burgin, (307) 352-6641, pburgin@co.sweet.wy.us
Vice-Chairman: Jana Howard-Ginter, (307) 640-9217, ginternetj@purecode.com
Secretary: Pete Quinnell, (307) 660-0221, pbquin@acn.com

MEMBERS Lee Alley, (307) 331-8902, leeballey@yahoo.com
Bob Craft, (307) 778-7340, bob.craft@vba.va.gov
Robert DeBernardo, (307) 258-4097, wydm@aol.com
Al Ellefson, (307) 680-0698, vfwhq@vcn.com
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Scott B. Smith, P.E., (307) 721-2209, sbsmith@uwyo.edu
James Washam, (307) 360-6760, ehubbard@vcn.com
Ronald Wood, (307) 752-1428, wood337@bresnan.net

VETERAN SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS:

Veteran Affairs www.va.gov
Veterans of Foreign Wars www.vfw.org
American Legion www.legion.org
Disabled American Veterans www.dav.org
Military Officers Association of America www.moaa.org
Air Force Association www.afa.org
Association of the United States Army www.ausa.org
Surface Navy Association www.navysna.org
Navy Mutual Aid Association www.navymutual.org
Navy League www.navyleague.org
Marine Corps Association www.mca-marines.org
Coast Guard Combat Veterans www.coastguardcombatvets.com
Coast Guard Chief Petty Officers Association www.uscgcpoa.org
Reserve Officers Association www.roa.org

Army Reserve Association www.armyreserve.org
 Navy Enlisted Reserve Association www.nera.org
 National Guard Association www.ngaus.org

Are there any death or burial benefits?

Most of the veteran death or burial benefits are federal benefits.
[\(http://www.cem.va.gov/\)](http://www.cem.va.gov/).

Are there any State of Wyoming Education benefits for veterans?

No, all education benefits for veterans are federal programs. Each University or Community College campus has information about U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs education benefits.

Veteran Benefits Timetable

Time	Benefits	Where To Apply
90 days	Reemployment	Former Employer
Limited time	Unemployment - The amount of benefit and payment period varies among states. Apply soon after separation.	Unemployment Insurance Call Center
120 days up to one year if totally disabled	INSURANCE: Servicemen's Group Life Insurance may be converted to Veterans Group Life Insurance.	Office of SGLI 213 Washington St. Newark, NJ 07102-9990
Two years from date of notice of VA connected disabilities.	Disability Insurance Life Insurance (up to \$10,000) is available for veterans with service-connected disabilities. Veterans with ratings of totally disabled may apply for a disability waiver of premiums on these policies.	Any VA Office
10 years from release	Education - Educational assistance depends upon period of service.	Any VA Office
12 years from date of discharge	Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment Services for veterans holding a VA rating of 10% or greater. 10% veterans may have limited services available. 12-year date may be waived if seriously handicapped. Goal of program is suitable employment or, if unable to work, then identifying services to increase independence. If training is necessary to obtain suitable employment, then VR&E covers the	Any VA Office

	cost of tuition, fees, required books, and other required program expenses and a monthly training allowance.	
No time limit	GI Home Loans - VA will guarantee a loan for the purchase of a home, farm with a residence, manufactured home or condominium.	Any VA Office

HUD Veteran Resource Center (HUDVET)

The **HUD Veteran Resource Center (HUDVET)** was created for you as a result of a unique partnership between National Veteran Service Organizations and HUD. This directory is designed to increase your knowledge of and participation in the wide variety of HUD homeless assistance programs and services for veterans and other individuals who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

HUD's **Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD)**, in consultation with national veteran service organizations, has established a Veteran Resource Center (HUDVET)

Checklist

- Ask about classes or resources to help you plan for your release.
- Make a list of your needs.
- Make a list of who may be able to help you.
- Write letters and/or contact organizations by phone or email.
- Write down the steps you take so that you do not repeat them.
- Know where to call toll-free for help.
- Contact organizations about what services they have to offer.
- Think about your housing needs and gather information about what is available locally.
- Learn about job resources and create a plan to find a job.
- Learn about health issues, and what services are available.
- Learn about the resources available for substance abuse and mental health treatment in your area.
- Learn about your options to get financial help.
- Begin to take care of other legal issues.
- Learn about homeless veterans services.
- Learn about resources for women veterans
- If you are not currently receiving benefits, find out if you can or should be.
- If you are receiving benefits, notify the VA when you go to prison to avoid an overpayment.
- Contact a veteran service representative to represent you and help you file a claim.
- Apply for apportionment so that some of the money withheld may be given to eligible family members.