

**MASSACHUSETTS  
VETERANS  
BENEFITS**

# WHAT STATE BENEFITS MAY BE AVAILABLE TO YOU

- LOW INCOME FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
- BURIAL BENEFITS
- PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION
- 100% SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABLED VETERAN ANNUITY
- WELCOME HOME BONUS
- RMV BENEFITS
- BRAVE ACT
- SPEED ACT

# CHAPTER 115 FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

- Non-taxable monetary assistance for low income veterans and their eligible survivors
- Administered by VSO in applicant's community of residence
- Must meet income and asset limits
  - Income limits: Single \$2,265 / Married \$3,052
  - Asset limits: Single \$8,400 / Married \$16,600
- Must apply for all sources of income (SSA, SSI, SSP, SSDI, MHBI, etc.)
- Can assist with shelter, heat, and/or medical expenses (insurance premiums, co-pays for doctors, prescriptions, radiology testing, lab work)
- May also assist with hearing aids, glasses, and dental, but not vision/dental premiums

# BURIAL BENEFITS

- If low income and without means to pay for burial, Chapter 115 can pay up to \$4,000 of burial expenses for veteran and spouse for a burial that costs no more than \$5,000 - do not have to be receiving Ch. 115 benefits
- Two Veterans Memorial cemeteries - Winchendon & Agawam
  - Veteran and spouse eligible if veteran was honorably discharged and lived in Mass. for at least one day throughout lifetime
  - Nominal fee for burial of spouse

# PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS

Clause	Eligible Recipients	Amount
22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ 10% - 90% service-connected disability rating from VA</li><li>▪ Purple Heart recipient</li></ul>	\$400
22A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Loss or loss of use of one hand above the wrist, or one foot above the ankle, or one eye</li><li>▪ Congressional Medal of Honor recipient</li><li>▪ Distinguished Service Cross, Navy Cross, or Air Force Cross recipient</li><li>▪ Former POW</li></ul>	\$750
22B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Loss or loss of use of both hands or both feet</li><li>▪ Loss or loss of use of one hand and one foot as described above</li><li>▪ Loss or loss of use of both eyes (blind)</li></ul>	\$1,250
22C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Rated by the VA to be permanently &amp; totally disabled and have specially adapted housing</li></ul>	\$1,500

# PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS (CONTINUED)

Clause	Eligible Recipients	Amount
22D	▪ Un-remarried surviving spouse of veteran whose death is rated as service-connected by the VA	100%
22E	▪ 100% service-connected disability rating from VA (including through Individual Unemployability)	\$1,000

- All exemptions apply to the spouse of a qualified veteran who resides in the home owned by the spouse and to the un-remarried surviving spouse of the qualified veteran who remains the owner and occupant of a domicile subject to the exemption.
- These are the amounts allowed by Mass. law, but communities have the option to give a higher exemption. Westport does not allow for a higher exemption currently.

# DISABLED VETERAN ANNUITY

- Eligibility:
  - Massachusetts resident
  - Veteran is 100% service-connected disabled by VA (including IU)
  - Un-remarried surviving spouse of service member/veteran whose death is rated as service-connected by the VA or occurred on active duty
  - Parent of service member whose death occurred on active duty
- Filing Deadlines & Payments:
  - December 31<sup>st</sup> and June 30<sup>th</sup>
  - Only need to apply one time
  - \$1,000 in February and August

# WELCOME HOME BONUSES

- Must have lived in *Massachusetts* for at least the 6 months immediately prior to entry into military or activation
- Discharge must be under Honorable conditions

Era	Criteria	Amount
World War II (9/16/1940 - 7/25/1947)	▪ Active service overseas or died while on active duty	\$300
	▪ Six months or more active service stateside	\$200
	▪ One day to six months active service stateside	\$100
Korea (6/25/1950 - 1/31/1955)		
Vietnam (7/1/1958 - 5/17/1975)	▪ Vietnam service (in-country) or died while on active duty	\$300
	▪ Six continuous months of active service other than Vietnam	\$200



# WELCOME HOME BONUSES (CONTINUED)

Era	Criteria	Amount
Persian Gulf (8/2/1990- 4/10/1991)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Active service in the Persian Gulf war zone or contiguous waters &amp; awarded the Southwest Asia Service Medal</li> </ul>	<b>\$500</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ At least 30 days active service other than the Persian Gulf</li> </ul>	<b>\$300</b>
Global War on Terror (9/11/2001 - present)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Service in Iraq, Afghanistan, or other DOD-designated imminent danger location or died while on active service (1<sup>st</sup> deployment)</li> </ul>	<b>\$1,000</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Subsequent deployment to above locations</li> </ul>	<b>\$500</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Six months of continuous active service within CONUS or OCONUS other than Iraq, Afghanistan, or other imminent danger location</li> </ul>	<b>\$500</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Subsequent six months of continuous active service as above in direct support of GWOT operation</li> </ul>	<b>\$250</b>

# WELCOME HOME BONUSES (CONTINUED)

Other Bonuses	Criteria	Amount
Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="550 315 2142 525">▪ Awarded the AFEM for participation in combat operations when no other bonus was available (main years were 1976-1990 and 1992-2000)</li></ul> View eligible operation locations and inclusive dates at <a data-bbox="550 619 2074 758" href="https://www.mass.gov/service-details/armed-forces-expeditionary-medal-afem-eligible-locations-and-dates">https://www.mass.gov/service-details/armed-forces-expeditionary-medal-afem-eligible-locations-and-dates</a>	\$300
National Guard COVID Activation (3/10/2020-present)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="550 865 2211 1003">▪ Activated in response to the state of emergency declared by the governor on 3/10/2020 (1<sup>st</sup> activation)</li></ul>	\$500
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="550 1036 1969 1175">▪ Subsequent activations in response to the state of emergency declared by the governor on 3/10/2020</li></ul>	\$250

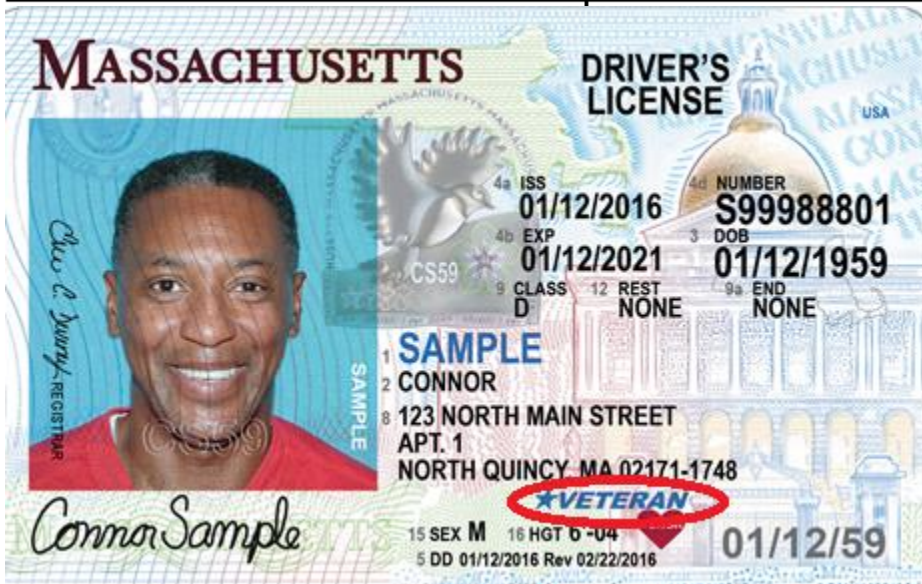
# RMV BENEFITS

- “VETERAN” DESIGNATION ON DRIVER’S LICENSE OR ID
- VETERAN LICENSE PLATE
- NATIONAL GUARD LICENSE PLATE
- VETERAN SERIES LICENSE PLATES
  - EXEMPTION OF REGISTRATION FEE
- DISABLED VETERAN LICENSE PLATE
  - EXEMPTION OF NUMEROUS FEES

# “VETERAN” DESIGNATION ON LICENSE/ID

- Honorable discharge only
- Must provide DD214 (long form showing character of discharge), or DD215 showing correction to character of discharge, or Honorable discharge form
- Complete the “Driver’s License, Learner’s Permit or ID Card Application” and check the box in Section D

Military Status (documentation is required if checked – visit [mass.gov/rmv](http://mass.gov/rmv) for acceptable documents)



If you are a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces, do you want the word “VETERAN” printed on your ID?

# VETERAN LICENSE PLATE

- \$100 registration fee for 2 years (vehicle) or \$40 for motorcycles
- Discharge under Honorable conditions
- Can get generic Veteran plate or get a sticker with your branch of service
- Complete the “Application for Veterans’ Plates with Branch of Service Decal or Flag Image” and check the decal or flag choice in Section B
- Can also choose up to 4 wartime service decals for conflicts in which you served (Grenada, Iraq, Korea, Lebanon, Panama, Persian Gulf, WW II, Vietnam, or WAAC (Women’s Army Corps))



# NATIONAL GUARD LICENSE PLATE

- \$100 registration fee
- Currently serving in National Guard or retired after 20 or more years of service
- Complete the “Application for Massachusetts National Guard Plates” and have the Mass. National Guard complete their certification



# VETERAN SERIES LICENSE PLATES

- Registration fee is exempted for the following license plates
- Complete the “Application for Awarded Medal Veterans’ Plate”
  - Bronze Star
  - Silver Star
  - Purple Heart
  - Legion of Valor\*
  - Distinguished Flying Cross
  - Congressional Medal of Honor\*
  - Pearl Harbor Survivor
  - Ex-POW

\* One year registration for passenger plate.

Motorcycle plates are all one year registration.

# VETERAN SERIES LICENSE PLATES





# DISABLED VETERAN LICENSE PLATE

- Must have a VA service-connected disability rating of at least 60% AND
- Service-connected condition qualifies for DV plate per RMV-specified medical conditions
- One passenger vehicle or pick-up owned by veteran and not used for commercial purposes.
- If approved for DV plate, exemptions include:
  - Registration fee
  - Driver license fee
  - Excise tax
  - (Must only be approved for above, but do not have to obtain plate)
  - Sales Tax (Must be approved and obtain plate)



# DISABLED VETERAN LICENSE PLATE (CONTINUED)

- Qualifying conditions for DV plate:
  - Cannot walk 200 feet without stopping to rest
  - Cannot walk without the assistance of another person, prosthetic aid, or other assistive device
  - Restricted by lung disease to such a degree that your forced (respiratory) expiratory volume (FEV) in one second, when measured by spirometry, is less than one (1) liter
  - Use portable oxygen
  - Have a Class III cardiac condition according to the standards set by the AHA
  - Have a Class IV cardiac condition according to the standards set by the AHA\*
  - Have a Class III or Class IV functional arthritis according to the standards set by the American College of Rheumatology
  - Have been declared legally blind\*
  - Have lost or lost use of one or more limbs

\* A veteran in this classification must surrender his or her license

# BRAVE ACT OF 2018

Veterans **B**enefits, **R**ights, **A**ppreciation, **V**alidation, and **E**nforcement

1. Allows time off to veterans on Memorial Day and Veterans Day to participate in ceremonies in their community (with or without pay at discretion of employer)
2. Requires DVS to create and maintain a list of law firms and organizations that provide pro bono legal representation to veterans
3. Allows municipalities to create “Veteran” parking at their city or town hall (this was done in Westport in 2019 at both Town Hall & Annex)
4. Requires cities & towns to charge the resident rate for shellfish licenses to veterans who reside within the Commonwealth
5. Allows for screening of defendants for veteran status for possible diversion program (exceptions apply)

# **BRAVE ACT OF 2018 (CONTINUED)**

6. Allows property tax exemption for a domicile owned by a trustee, conservator, or other fiduciary if the property would be eligible under one of the property tax exemption clauses (local option adopted in Westport)
7. Allows full property tax exemption for surviving parents or guardians of service member or veteran who died during active duty or from service-connected condition (local option not yet adopted in Westport)
8. Establishes a *Mass. Veterans and Warriors to Agriculture Program Fund* to enhance the education, training, employment, income, productivity and retention of veterans currently working or aspiring to work in the field of agriculture in the commonwealth
9. Allows Gold Star Family plates to be assigned to commercial vehicles provided that there are no distinctive promotional or advertisement markings visible and the vehicle is primarily used by the Gold Star family

# SPEED ACT OF 2022

Military **S**pouse-Licensure **P**ortability, **E**ducation, and **E**nrollment of **D**ependents

1. Establishes a Medal of Fidelity for the next of kin of a service member or veteran who died as the result of a service-connected disability due to exposure to harmful toxins, PTSD, and TBI
2. National Guard members may split their NG education benefits between dependents, NTE 130 semester hours total
3. Prevents Assessors from requesting further evidence of facts after issuing an exemption under Clause 22 for property tax exemption unless disability is reduced below 10%
4. Designates a school as a Purple Heart campus by meeting certain criteria

# **SPEED ACT OF 2022 (CONTINUED)**

5. Expedites re-licensure or re-certification to military spouses relocating to Mass. due to transfer of service member
6. Requires funeral directors to make available information regarding funeral and burial benefits for veterans before an agreement of the price of merchandise or services is made, and have written statements signed by the client and funeral director or agent
7. Develop written materials about health effects for chemicals and airborne hazards in overseas military deployments (burn pits) and distribute said material to health care providers, VSOs, and veterans organizations
8. Create a database of self-identifying service members or veterans who have been exposed to burn pits

# **SPEED ACT OF 2022 (CONTINUED)**

9. Businesses in *Mass.* with not more than 100 employees shall be allowed a tax credit equal to \$2,000 for each member of the NG (*Mass.* resident) hired and \$2,000 in subsequent year subject to continued employment
10. Establishes a commission to study and report on a suitable memorial to commemorate Deborah Samson
11. Establishes a commission to study and report on limited slot machine licenses for veterans organizations

# RESOURCES

Topic	Website
Chapter 115	<a href="http://www.mass.gov/service-details/financial-help-for-veterans-and-family-members">www.mass.gov/service-details/financial-help-for-veterans-and-family-members</a>
Burial Benefits	<a href="http://www.mass.gov/massachusetts-veterans-memorial-cemeteries">www.mass.gov/massachusetts-veterans-memorial-cemeteries</a>
Property Tax Exemptions	<a href="http://www.sec.state.ma.us/cis/cisvet/vetprptax.htm">www.sec.state.ma.us/cis/cisvet/vetprptax.htm</a>
Annuity	<a href="http://www.mass.gov/service-details/veteran-annuity-payment">www.mass.gov/service-details/veteran-annuity-payment</a>
RMV Exemptions	<a href="http://www.mass.gov/military-and-veteran-rmv-information">www.mass.gov/military-and-veteran-rmv-information</a>
BRAVE Act	<a href="http://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2018/Chapter218">malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2018/Chapter218</a>
SPEED Act	<a href="http://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2022/Chapter154">malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2022/Chapter154</a>



# RESOURCES

<b>Welcome Home Bonuses</b>	<b>Website</b>
WW II / Korea / Vietnam	<a href="http://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-a-vietnam-conflict-korean-war-world-war-ii-veterans-bonus">www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-a-vietnam-conflict-korean-war-world-war-ii-veterans-bonus</a>
Persian Gulf	<a href="http://www.mass.gov/persian-gulf-war-veterans-bonus">www.mass.gov/persian-gulf-war-veterans-bonus</a>
GWOT	<a href="http://www.mass.gov/global-war-on-terrorism-welcome-home-bonus-post-911-servicemembers">www.mass.gov/global-war-on-terrorism-welcome-home-bonus-post-911-servicemembers</a>
AFEM	<a href="http://www.mass.gov/armed-forces-expeditionary-medal-afem-bonus-1976-2001">www.mass.gov/armed-forces-expeditionary-medal-afem-bonus-1976-2001</a>
National Guard COVID Activation	<a href="http://www.mass.gov/massachusetts-covid-19-bonus-for-mass-national-guard">www.mass.gov/massachusetts-covid-19-bonus-for-mass-national-guard</a>
Bonus Inquiry	<a href="http://www.mass.gov/service-details/veterans-bonus-inquiry">www.mass.gov/service-details/veterans-bonus-inquiry</a>