

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

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 newly designed Michael J. Fitzmaurice South Dakota Veteran's Home is a 133,000-square-foot stacked two-story building with a lower level walkout main entrance. The 100-bed facility is used to serve South Dakota veterans and will contain 76 skilled nursing beds on the main level and 24 non-skilled living beds on the upper level. The living spaces are broken into eight neighborhoods housed in eight wings. Each neighborhood includes a living room, dining room and kitchen area that provide a home-like environment to the 12-13 occupants housed in each neighborhood. The design incorporates residential type furnishings and finishes, and warm, welcoming colors to give the spaces a more comforting feel.

The facility contains energy efficient heating and cooling systems, low flow-fixtures to reduce water consumption, as well as many windows to bring natural light to the interior spaces. The biomass boiler system uses local wood chips as a fuel source which will reduce the annual fuel cost. In January of 2016 residents were moved into the new home and a groundbreaking ceremony was held in March. The new building will joins about 50 remaining units from the former setup. To obtain information on the home call (605) 745-5127 or email 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.



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. The home is not staffed for, and does not receive aid for veterans from the

Veterans Administration in an assisted living community. The costs for Residential Living and Nursing Care at the home are:

- Residents living in an Independent Living Neighborhood (Residential Living Service - RLS) that have assets above \$50,000 pay \$109.34 per day per person.
- Below \$50,000 in assets a single resident pays 50% of their gross income. Couples pay 55% of their combined income.
- The cost for Nursing Care at the Home is \$284.29 per day.

Fees cover room and 3 meals per day, medical care, laundry, medication, activities, social services, and pastoral care. 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 the facility's 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.

Applications and assistance can be obtained by calling or visiting your Tribal/County Veterans Service Officer (refer to <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov/veteransserviceofficers/locatevso.aspx> to locate) or by contacting/visiting the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home. Once approved, if there is not an apartment available, there a waiting list for each level of care. Smoking and pets are prohibited on campus grounds. Residents are allowed one vehicle and two storage totes for off season clothing and extra items. For more information, please contact your County/Tribal Veterans Service Officer or check out <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov/veteranshome/Features.aspx> .

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. In addition veterans that have been rated as permanently and totally disabled as the result of a service connected disability may be eligible for up to \$100,000 of their property value to be exempt from property taxes. Go to <http://dor.sd.gov/Taxes/Property Taxes/Property and Sales Tax Relief Programs.aspx> for more information.

Property Tax Exemption for Veterans and Their Widow or Widower

Up to \$100,000 of the full value of a home that is owned and occupied by a permanently and totally disabled veteran is exempt from taxation. The surviving spouse may also be eligible. 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. For more information refer to <http://dor.sd.gov/Taxes/Property Taxes/Property and Sales Tax Relief Programs.aspx>

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.

Go to http://dor.sd.gov/Taxes/Property_Taxes/Property_and_Sales_Tax_Relief_Programs.aspx for more information.

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 Veterans Bonuses

South Dakota currently offers a bonus of up to \$500 for current or former eligible 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 meet certain criteria during one or more of the following periods:

- August 2, 1990 to March 3, 1991 – All active service counts for payment.
- March 4, 1991 to December 31, 1992 – Only service in a hostile area qualifying for the Southwest Asia Service Medal counts for payment.
- 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.
- September 11, 2001 to a date to be determined – [OIF/OEF] All active service counts for payment.

Veterans living in South Dakota may apply through the nearest County or Tribal Veterans Service Officer.

Veterans Preference

Federal Government Employment

When applying for federal employment, honorably separated men and women of the Armed Forces, and veterans' widows (or widowers), spouses and mothers are entitled to certain benefits. Preference points (either 5 or 10) are added to passing grades earned in examinations for entrance into federal employment. Thus, veterans and other eligible persons receive preference, but are not guaranteed employment. A Standard Form (SF) 15 must be completed and submitted with supporting documentation. If you have questions, complaints or concerns regarding preference in federal employment, contact the South Dakota State Director of Veterans' Employment and Training (DVET) at 605.626.2325.

State and Local Government Employment

South Dakota defines an eligible veteran as:

- Honorably discharged.
- A citizen of the United States.
- Having served under qualifying conditions (see South Dakota Codified Law (SDCL) 33A-2).

Eligible veterans receive preference for appointment, employment and promotion at all levels of government, including state, counties, municipalities and school districts. If the applicant possesses at least the minimum qualifications necessary to fill the position, the veteran shall be granted an interview.

They may not be disqualified by their age, by loss of a limb or by any other physical impairment which is not incapacitating. However, they must possess the qualifications necessary to do the job in question. A veteran disabled due to a service-connected cause is given preference over a non-disabled veteran.

Unmarried Spouse of Deceased Veteran

The unmarried spouse of an eligible veteran who died while in service, or died later from a service-connected cause, is entitled to the same preference as an eligible veteran, provided the spouse possess the qualifications necessary to do the job in question.

Spouse of Disabled Veteran

If a disabled eligible veteran is unable to exercise his or her right to a veteran employment preference due to the disability, the veteran's spouse is entitled to the same preference, provided the spouse has the qualifications to do the job in question.

Education Assistance Programs

Free Tuition for Veterans

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

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 months immediately preceding entry into active service. SDDVA form E-12 "Application for

Free Tuition at State Supported Institutions" is available at the schools' financial aids, veterans representative or registrars offices or, they can be obtained from the Division 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. SDDVA form E-12 "Application for Free Tuition at State Supported Institutions" is available at the schools' financial aids, veterans representative or registrars offices or, they can be obtained from the Division of Veterans Affairs.

Reduced Tuition for South Dakota National Guardmembers

Guard members, who meet the requirements for admission, are eligible for a fifty percent reduction in undergraduate tuition charges at any state supported school for up to a maximum of four academic years or one program of study, approved by the state Board of Education, at any state vocational school upon payment of fifty percent of the tuition charges. The receipt of federal educational benefits does not affect eligibility for this program.

Other State Veteran Benefits

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.

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.

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.

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
Air Force		
Army		
Coast Guard		

Marine		
Navy		

[National Guard](#)



Military License Plates - Active Duty

	Vehicle Plate	Motorcycle Plate
Air Force		
Army		
Coast Guard		
Marine		
Navy		

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

Certain resident veterans may receive a hunting and fishing card which is valid for four years. Upon purchase of an annual basic game and fish license, the card becomes the equivalency of a resident fishing license, small game stamp and habitat stamp until the expiration of the basic game and fish license. To qualify 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.

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:

- be totally disabled from service connected disabilities or,
- be in receipt of the VA "K" award OR,
- 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.

Special Provisions for Handicapped Hunters

Individuals who are missing an upper limb, or are physically incapable of using an upper limb or who are confined to a wheelchair may use a crossbow to take game birds and animals once they have obtained a disabled hunter permit.

A legally blind, legally licensed individual who possesses a disabled hunter permit and who is physically present and participating in the hunt may claim game birds and animals taken by a designated hunter in accordance with the license or licenses possessed by the handicapped hunter.

Applications are obtained from the Game, Fish and Parks office in Pierre or from a game warden.

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.

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.

Visit the South Dakota DVA website <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov/aboutsddva/History.aspx> for more information on any of these programs.

[Source: <http://www.military.com/benefits/content/veteran-state-benefits/south-dakota-state-veterans-benefits.html> | December 2016 ++]

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> | December 2016
++]