



Pennsylvania Guidebook for Incarcerated Veterans



VISN 4

Serving those who served

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Forward

This handbook is intended to provide current information to assist incarcerated veterans in accessing benefits through the Veterans Administration. Information for housing, treatment for substance abuse, mental health, medical, employment information and more is included in this booklet. Since it will take a significant amount of time to gather all the necessary documents it is recommended that the veteran begin immediately. To help the veteran develop this plan, phone numbers, addresses and web sites are included.

We would like to recognize and thank:

1) the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans which provided basic concepts and core information for this guide through its "Planning for Your Release" guide funded by the U.S. Department of Labor; 2) the Veterans Incarcerated Workgroup of Walla Walla, Washington, for the concept of state-specific information in its "Guidebook for Incarcerated Veterans" and for allowing the use of its guide as a template for this publication; 3) Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. for developing the first incarcerated veterans guidebook, which has inspired and informed subsequent efforts; and 4) any public domain and agency resources included in the guidebook.

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. If you discover any incorrect, conflicting, or out-of-date information in this Guidebook please send the discrepancies, and updated information if you have it, to:

Otis R. Nash
VISN 4 Health Care for Re-Entry Veterans Coordinator
Department of Veterans Affairs (680)
1700 South Lincoln Avenue
Lebanon, PA 17042
Otis.Nash@va.gov

SECTION I

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

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. Because you may not have phone or internet access, you will need to get assistance from your assigned counselor or ask a friend or family member to help you find the information you need. 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 incarcerated, find out which unit in your facility can help you plan for your release (often the education or transfer unit). Take advantage of the any classes that are offered, to work your on skills development and prepare your self for life after release. You don't want to be at risk of homelessness at release, 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: Will I need housing? Will I need medical, substance abuse, or mental health services? Do I need to learn a job skill? Do I have any other legal issues, such as child support? 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 access to benefits

- I need work clothes and tools
- I need medical care
- I want mental health and or substance use treatment
- I owe child support or have other legal problems

Think about your list as you read 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 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 if they know who can.

The Internet can also be helpful to find information about VA benefits and community resources in your area. This guide includes web addresses, when available. If computer access is not available at your facility, you can visit the public library after release.

Success depends upon you working with the system. That means work with the Department of Corrections (DOC) counseling staff and your Community Corrections Officer. This resource book will not work unless you make an effort to work with the resources that are offered you by DOC.

VA ELIGIBILITY

To determine eligibility for VA health care, contact the Health Revenue Center at 1-877-222-8387. For VA benefits eligibility, contact a VA benefits office at 1-800-827-1000 from any location in the United States.

Eligibility for most VA benefits is based upon discharge from active military service under other than dishonorable conditions. Active service means full-time service as a member of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard.

Honorable and general discharges qualify a veteran for most VA benefits. Dishonorable and bad conduct discharges issued by general courts-martial may bar VA benefits. Veterans in prison and parolees may be eligible for certain VA benefits. VA regional offices can clarify the eligibility of prisoners, parolees and individuals with multiple discharges issued under differing conditions. VA benefits will not be provided to any veteran or dependent wanted for an outstanding felony warrant.

Those seeking a VA benefit for the first time must submit a copy of their service discharge form (DD-214, DD-215, or for WWII veterans, a WD form), which documents service dates and type of discharge, or give their full name, military service number, branch and dates of service.

To apply for services veterans must complete a VA Form 10-10EZ, Application for Health Benefits. The form may be obtained from any VA health care facility or regional benefits office, or by calling the VA Health Benefits Service Center toll-free at 1-877-222-VETS (8387). It is also available through the World Wide Web (<http://www.va.gov/1010ez.htm>). Veterans may complete the form in person at a VA health care facility, or at home and mail it to a local VA health care facility for processing. Once enrolled, a veteran is eligible to receive services at VA facilities anywhere in the country. Additional information can be found on the VA Web site <http://www.va.gov/elig/>

SEEKING FEDERAL BENEFITS

The Department of Veterans Affairs publishes a booklet called "**Federal Benefits for Veterans and Their Dependents**" that describes the types of benefits available and lists the addresses and phone numbers for VA facilities nationwide. Write the VA Regional Office (VARO) to request a copy. This handbook contains important information, phone numbers and explanations regarding benefits. The VA Federal Benefits booklet and other VA information is available at <http://www.va.gov/>.

Philadelphia Regional Office and Insurance Center
5000 Wissahickon Avenue
Philadelphia , PA 19101
Phone: 1-800-827-1000

Pittsburgh Regional Office
1000 Liberty Avenue
Pittsburgh , PA 15222
Phone: 1-800-827-1000

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 has greatly restricted 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. 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 reenlisting. 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** is not provided to veterans in prison, but VA health facilities may provide care to you after your release. To find the nearest Medical Center near you, contact 1-877-222-8387 or go to <http://www.starsandstripes.med.va.gov/visn4/>

How to Reach VA

VA Regional Office and Insurance Center (Philadelphia)
5000 Wissahickon Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19144

VA Regional Office and Insurance Center (Pittsburgh)
1000 Liberty Place
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
1-800-827-1000

To contact the nearest VA Regional Office from anywhere in the United States, dial toll free **1-800-827-1000**. To check on the status of a disability claim, furnish the five-digit extension for the team that is processing the claim. The five-digit extension can be found in VA's letter acknowledging receipt of the claim.

VA Medical Centers



VA Medical Centers in Pennsylvania:

Philadelphia	1-800-949-1001
Coatesville	1-800-290-6172
Lebanon	1-800-409-8771
Wilkes-Barre	1-877-928-2621
Altoona	1-8777-626-2500
Pittsburgh	1-866-482-7488
Butler	1-800-362-8262
Erie	

Other Useful Numbers & contact information:

National Suicide Prevention Hotline	1-800-273-8255
Mammography Hotline	1-888-492-7844
Health Benefits	1-877-222-8387
VA Benefits	1-800-828-1000
Health Care	1-877-222-8187
Life Insurance	1-800-669-8477
Education	1-888-GI BILL-1 (442-4551)
Income Verification	1-800-929-8387
Monthly Certification of attendance	1-877-VAE CERT (823-2378)
Direct Deposit	1-877-838-2778
Loan Guaranty Certificate	1-888-244-6711
Headstones	1-800-697-6947
CHAMPVA	1-800-733-8387
Gulf War Helpline	1-800-PGW VETS (749-8387)
Hearing Impaired	1-800-829-4833
Means Testing Center	404-235-1257
Philadelphia Web Site	www.vaphilly.com
VA's Web Site	www.va.gov

To learn more about local VA programs in Pennsylvania go to
<http://www.starsandstripes.med.va.gov/visn4>

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>.

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 (attention SR list). 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. 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.

Debt Reduction

To avoid an overpayment of VA benefits and creation of a debt, beneficiaries must report immediately to VA any change in their status, such as the amount of their income or net worth, the number of dependents, divorce, or withdrawal from school.

All debts must be repaid to VA. VA may assess interest and administrative fees, which will be added to the original amount of the debt until the debt is cleared.

Failure to repay a debt will affect one's credit. Collection of the debt may be turned over to a collection agency, or the debt may be offset by withholding federal income tax refunds or other federal payments, including federal pay and pension.

Gulf War Veterans

Gulf War Period: Beginning August 2, 1990, and ending on a date to be established by Presidential proclamation or by law. Active-duty personnel and reservists called to active duty during this period are eligible for the full range of wartime benefits after 90 days of active duty service.

Compensation: Gulf War veterans with an undiagnosed illness of at least six-month duration that manifests itself by Dec. 31, 2006, may be eligible for compensation.

VA will compensate Gulf veterans who served anytime from Aug 1, 1990, through July 31, 1991, in the Southwest Asian theater of operations of the Gulf War and develop amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (Lou Gehrig's disease).

Pension Eligibility: Provides that service in the Gulf satisfies the service requirements for VA pension program, a needs-based benefit for wartime veterans who are not able to work, and for the needy survivors of wartime veterans. (See pages 12-14.)

Veterans Health Benefits:

Three environment referral centers at VA medical centers have been established to treat Gulf War veterans with unusual symptoms possibly related to environmental contaminants.

Readjustment counseling is offered to Operation Desert Storm/Shield veterans.

Gulf War veterans are eligible for one-time treatment of dental conditions after discharge from service if they have 90 days of active duty.

Veterans Housing Loans

Programs:

Provides VA guaranteed home loan eligibility after 90 days for active-duty members and members of the Reserves and National Guard activated in connection with the Gulf War.

Pension

Benefit:

Pension is payable to wartime veterans with limited income and assets who are permanently and totally disabled from non service-connected causes. Veterans age 65 or over need not meet the disability requirement.

VA AND SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS SUMMARY

How working affects Veterans financial benefits?

Service Connected (SC) Compensation: A service-connected disability is an entitlement program that once received is guaranteed for life REGARDLESS OF EMPLOYMENT STATUS. The only exception to this employment status rule involves an individual who has IU (Individual Unemployability) who is paid at 100%, but in actuality is NOT 100% SC. A vet sometimes receives IU after an exhaustive investigation and verification of their inability to work as a result of their high SC plus environmental and/or burden on community resources (high uses of public funding such as section 8 or other state/local resources). If a Veteran with IU works in the community (outside CWT/SE), the difference in their 100% and their actual SC% money will be reduced. The math is complicated, but a vet can find out exactly how much money they will lose by working, either by contacting the VA at 1 (800) 827- 1000 or else hear this directly by Veteran Service representatives (VSR) at VARO.

Non-Service Connected (NSC) Pension: NSC is an eligibility (unlike entitlement) program based on both needs of individual vets, as well as their year(s) in service. They must either have served during a wartime era, or have a severe disability which renders them unemployable based on medical records to that affect. Sometimes a veteran will choose to take the Non-Service Connected Pension (NSC) if it pays them more than a low SC compensation (10-30%) will pay. If a vet chooses to receive the NSC pension (as opposed to a low SC disability compensation such as 10-20%), then working in the community (taking a real job) their NSC pension will be reduced dollar for dollar, but their SC% check will automatically be reinstated. There are currently no incentives to return to work in the community with the NSC Pension. If a veteran works more than 20 hours per week, even at minimum wage, they would earn more than they would by maintaining the pension. VACO has recently acquiesced to allow vets to work in the community if they are participating in our new supported employment programs, but vets must be involved in CWT/SE in order to remain exempt. Therefore, the same protection will apply for these vets that the CWT/IT programs offer. See website for the applicable law: <http://vaww1.va.gov/vitraining>

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

To be eligible for SSDI, a person must:

- Have worked and paid Social Security taxes (F.I.C.A.) for enough years to be covered under Social Security. Some of the taxes must have been paid in recent years;
- Be considered medically disabled; and not be working or working but earning less than the substantial gainful activity (SGA) level.

Work incentives provide support over a period of years to allow the disability beneficiary to test their ability to work and gradually become self-supporting and independent. In general, a person has at least 4 years to test their ability to work. The person continues to have Medicare coverage during this time.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

To be eligible for SSI based on a medical condition, a person must:

- Have little or no income or resources (refer to the Glossary on website below for definitions of income and resources);
- Be considered medically disabled; and initially not be working or working but earning less than the SGA level. Once on the rolls, work activity does not affect a person's continuing eligibility. Work activity does not affect initial or continuing eligibility for a person who is blind. Once a person begins to receive SSI, work activity will not cause SSI to stop as long as the person is still disabled. Even if the person cannot receive SSI checks because of the amount of earnings, eligibility for Medicaid may continue indefinitely. In many cases, if a person loses his/her job or is unable to continue working, he/she can begin receiving checks again without filing a new application. Over 4.4 million Americans receive SSI because of a disability. Many of these people would like to work but are afraid that if they do, they will lose their SSI checks and Medicaid coverage. The SSI work incentives offer these people ways to continue receiving their SSI checks and/or Medicaid coverage while they work. Some of the incentives can increase their net income to help cover special expenses they may have in order to work, to train for a job or to set up their own business.

SSDI/SSI Work Incentives

SSDI: The SSDI work incentives are:

- Impairment-Related Work Expenses;
- Trial Work Period;
- Extended Period of Eligibility;
- Continuation of Medicare Coverage;
- Medicare for People With Disabilities Who Work; and
- Continued Payment Under a Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

SSI: The SSI work incentives are:

- Impairment-Related Work Expenses;
- Earned Income Exclusion;
- Student Earned Income Exclusion;
- Work Expenses for persons with blindness
- Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS);
- Property Essential to Self-Support;
- Section 1619 Work Incentives; and
- Continued Payment Under a Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

* Above Source directly from: http://www.empowermentzone.com/ss_incen.txt

Pension Programs: Public Law 73-2, *Old Law*.
Public Law 86-211, *Protected Pension*, effective June 1, 1960.
Public Law 95-588, *Improved Pension*, effective Jan. 1, 1979.
- any application for pension after Jan. 1, 1979, comes under the Improved Pension law.

Global War on Terrorism/ Operation Enduring Freedom /Operation Iraqi Freedom Initiative

HEALTH CARE SERVICES FOR RETURNING COMBAT VETERANS

The **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)** provides needed health care, benefits, and support for returning service members.

VA Healthcare – VISN4 is part of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. We provide health care and social services to veterans in Pennsylvania, Delaware, and several counties in West Virginia, Ohio, New Jersey and New York. There are 10 hospitals and nearly 50 community-based outpatient clinics in our network.

This Program is for: Veterans, including activated Reservist members of the National Guard, are eligible if they served on active duty or in a theater of combat operations during a period of War after the Gulf War and have been discharged under other than dishonorable conditions. (Service after 9/11/2001)

Services Offered

- Case Management
- Compensation and Pension
- Counseling Services
- Dental Services
- Domiciliary Programs
- Education
- Enrollment services
- Mental Health
- Primary Care
- Pharmacy
- Physical Therapy
- Prosthetics
- Social Work Services
- Women's Health
- Substance Abuse

- Sexual Trauma Services
- Stress Management
- Urgent Care

Dental Care

If a veteran did not receive a pre-separation dental exam from the military, then the veteran is eligible to receive a dental examination from VA within 180 days.

Establishing Combat Veteran Eligibility

VA has promoted new eligibility rules that provide Active Component and Reserve Component personnel who served in designated combat zones (since 11/11/98). Note that free care refers to all service related to the veteran's combat experience, even if there is insufficient medical evidence to conclude that such a condition is attributable to such service. Co-payments may be charged for treatment of non-combat related conditions. The President has signed the National Defense Authorization Act into Law (1/29/08). Combat veteran eligibility has been expanded from two years post discharge to five years post discharge. Contact your local VA for additional information.

Combat Stress Can Remain Even After You Return Home

Even after returning from a theater of combat, stress can significantly interfere with a veteran's ability to relate to family, friends, and work. It can also affect other areas of daily functioning. The lingering effects of stress can be expressed as hostility, anger, trouble sleeping, and emotional numbing. Often times, work suffers due to absenteeism, fatigue, or impaired concentration. If you feel you may be experiencing any symptoms related to combat stress or military sexual trauma, please contact your nearest VA health care facility.

VA Centers in our Network

There are twelve VA Vet Centers in our service area which may also be of assistance to returning service members. Vet Centers provide such services as neighborhood counseling for individuals and groups, and housing assistance. To find the closest VA Center, please contact the nearest VA medical center or check online at: www.visn4.va.gov.

VA HEALTH CARE COMBAT VETERAN ELIGIBILITY

Enhanced Eligibility for Health Care Benefits:

On January 26, 2008, "Public Law 110-181" titled the "National Defense Authorization Act of 2008" was signed into law. Section 1707 amended Title 38, United States Code (U.S.C.) Section 1710(e)(3), extending the period of eligibility for health care for veterans who served in a theater of combat operations after November 11, 1998, (commonly referred to as combat veterans or OEF/OIF veterans). Under the "Combat Veteran" authority, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides cost-free health care services and nursing home care for conditions possibly related to military service and enrollment in Priority Group 6, unless eligible for enrollment in a higher priority to:

- **Currently enrolled veterans and new enrollees who were discharged from active duty on or after January 28, 2003**, are eligible for the enhanced benefits, for 5 years post discharge.
- **Veterans discharged from active duty before January 28, 2003, who apply for enrollment on or after January 28, 2008**, are eligible for the enhanced benefit until January 27, 2011. Combat veterans, while not required to disclose their income information, may do so to determine their eligibility for a higher priority status, beneficiary travel benefits and exemption of co-pays for care unrelated to their military service.

Who's eligible: Veterans, including activated Reservists and members of the National Guard, are eligible if they served on active duty in a theater of combat operations after November 11, 1998, and have been discharged under other than dishonorable conditions.

Documentation used to determine service in a theater of combat operations:

- Military service documentation that reflects service in a combat theater, or
- Receipt of combat service medals and/or,
- Receipt of imminent danger or hostile fire pay or tax benefits

Health benefits under the "Combat Veteran" authority:

- Cost-free care and medications provided for conditions potentially related to combat service.
- Enrollment in Priority Group 6 unless eligible for enrollment in a higher priority group.
- Full access to VA's Medical Benefits Package.

What happens after the enhanced eligibility period expires:

Veterans who enroll with VA under this authority will continue to be enrolled even after their enhanced eligibility period ends. At the end of their enhanced eligibility period, veterans enrolled in Priority Group 6 may be shifted to Priority Group 7 or 8, depending on their income level, and required to make applicable co-pays.

What about combat veterans who do not enroll during their enhanced eligibility period:

For those veterans who do not enroll during their enhanced eligibility period, eligibility for enrollment and subsequent care is based on other factors such as:

- A compensable service-connected disability
- VA pension status
- Catastrophic disability determination
- The veteran's financial circumstances.

For this reason, combat veterans are strongly encouraged to apply for enrollment within their enhanced eligibility period, even if no medical care is currently needed.

Co-pays:

Veterans who qualify under this special eligibility are not subject to co-pays for conditions potentially related to their combat service. However, unless otherwise exempted, combat veterans must either disclose their prior year gross household income OR decline to provide their financial information and agree to make applicable co-pays for care or services that the VA determines are clearly unrelated to their military service.

Note: *While income disclosure by a recently discharged combat veteran is not a requirement, this disclosure may provide additional benefits such as eligibility for travel reimbursement, cost-free medication and/or medical care for services unrelated to combat.*

Dental Care:

Eligibility for VA dental benefits is based on very specific guidelines and differs significantly from eligibility requirements for medical care. Combat veterans may be authorized dental treatment as reasonably necessary for the one-time correction of dental conditions if:

- Application for VA dental treatment is made within 180 days of discharge or release

Additional information: is available at the nearest VA medical facility. VA facilities listing and telephone numbers can be found on the internet at www.va.gov/directory or in the local telephone directory under the “U.S. Government” listings. Veterans can also call the Health Benefits Service Center toll free at 1-877- 222-VETS (8387) or visit the VA health eligibility website at www.va.gov/healtheligibility .

*Above source directly from:

<http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility/Library/pubs/CombatVet/CombatVet.pdf>;
[Global War on Terrorism/ Operation Enduring Freedom /Operation Iraqi Freedom Initiative info/GWOT/OEF/OIF Coordinator. 061908]

HELP SEEKING BENEFITS

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** 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. For more information regarding Veterans Service Organizations contact the Regional Office.

Department of Veterans Affairs

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

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.

Resource Addresses/Sites

US Dept of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) www.va.gov/

Veterans Health Administration – VISN
<http://www.starsandstripes.med.va.gov/visn4/>

The American Legion - Dept of PA <http://www.pa-legion.com/>

Disabled American Veterans – Dept of PA
http://www.dav.org/membership/dept_chapt_links.html /

Veterans of Foreign Wars – Post Locations
www.vfw.org/

Vietnam Veterans of America – Pennsylvania State Council
http://www.vva.org/map2/PA_3.html

Social Security Administration www.ssa.gov/

National Coalition for Homeless Veterans www.nchv.org/index.cfm

FINANCIAL HELP

- The American Legion provides **Temporary Financial Assistance**, (TFA) from its national headquarters to help maintain a stable environment for children of veterans. To obtain an application, look in the phone book to contact a local post, or contact the National Headquarters to find the post nearest you.
- If you are unemployed with little or no income, you may be able to get **food stamps**. A person may normally qualify for \$85 to \$100 worth of food stamps per month. Call the toll-free information number at 1-800-221-5689, or find a list of food stamp hotlines for each state at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/>. You can also contact the local Department of Human Services, many drop-in shelters, or legal aid services to ask for an application.
- **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)** benefits can be applied for before your release, even though you won't receive the benefits until after you are released. Food Stamps can be applied for together with SSI. Normally, it takes about three months to review an application, so apply well before your release date. It is best to get help filling out the application. For detailed information or assistance, call 1-800- 772-1213, call or your local social security administration office listed in the phone book blue pages, or go to: <http://www.ssa.gov/notices/supplemental-security-income/>.
- **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)** has a program called Emergency Food and Shelter Program to help prevent homelessness. Contact the local Office of the Mayor *or* United Way to ask who awards this money in your area and what the rules are.

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.

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 or check online for the program nearest you.
- **Pine Tree Legal Assistance** has an online list of organizations across the nation that provides free legal help to clients who qualify. Go to www.ptla.org/links/services.htm.
- Lawyers in private practice sometimes volunteer in "pro-bono" programs to take cases for poor clients free of charge. 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.
- **Veterans Law Clinic - Widener University School of Law (Harrisburg)**
3800 Vartan Way, Harrisburg, PA 17110
717-541-3900
<http://www.law.widener.edu/vetclinic/index.shtml>

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.starsandstripes.med.va.gov/visn4/>, to find the medical center nearest you.

SECTION II

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 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. In Pennsylvania the VA Medical Centers have residential rehabilitation and transitional housing programs that can assist with your adjustment to the community. Each program is unique and you will want to contact the homeless coordinator to learn more about admission criteria to either our Homeless Domiciliary Programs or our Grant & Per Diem Programs and other VA Residential Rehabilitation Services. Contact information for the individual homeless coordinators can be found at:

<http://www.starsandstripes.med.va.gov/visn4/>

Emergency and Transitional Housing

The best idea is to never need emergency shelter and work closely with the DOC counseling staff as you make a community re-entry plan. If you need emergency shelter, you can find it several ways. One is to look in the local yellow pages under mission or shelter. Another source is to use the First Step web site. This web site not only helps with housing, but is a wealth of information on income assistance, food, employment services, child care, mental health and counseling services, health care assistance, alcohol and drug abuse treatment, life skills and HIV/AIDS services. The web site is aspe.hhs.gov/homeless/index.shtml.

- To find out if there are homeless veteran service providers in your area, call 1-800- VET-HELP, write to NCHV, 333½ Pennsylvania Ave., SE Washington, DC 20003-1148, or go to www.nchv.org. Look in the phone book yellow pages under "Social Service Organizations" for local shelters or organizations that may be able to help.
- Look in the front of the phone book under local, city, or county government Department of Social Services or "Human Services" or call the County Commissioner's Office for information about local low-income housing coalitions or homeless advocacy groups who may know what is available.

- To find a list of emergency shelters for men, women and families in every state, check the **Department of Housing and Urban Development** online at www.hud.gov/homeless/hmlsagen.cfm.

HUD-VASH

This joint Supported Housing Program with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides permanent housing and ongoing case management treatment services for homeless veterans who would not be able to live independently without the support of case management. HUD's Section 8 Voucher Program has designated over 10,000 vouchers to Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) throughout the country for veterans who are homeless. This program allows veterans to live in veteran selected apartment units with a "Housing Choice" voucher. These vouchers are portable so that veterans can live in communities served by their VA medical facility where case management services can be provided. HUD- VASH services include outreach and case management to ensure integration of services and continuity of care.

Other Helpful Resources

This section includes resources that can help you get back on your feet. Remember to check the phone book for local, county, and state agencies that know what services are available in the area to assist you. Some organizations may have waiting lists, require an interview, or have specific rules about whom they serve. It is best if you **start asking about services and requirements now**, so that you will be prepared when you are released. You may even ask if your name can be put on a waiting list when you get closer to your release date. **Just for Veterans.**

Helpful 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.starsandstripes.med.va.gov/visn4/>
- 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)

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION
PSYCHOSOCIAL REHABILITATION
OFFICE OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

Mission:

The mission of the VA's Psychosocial Rehabilitation (PSR) Programs is to provide a supportive, stable, structured environment; it utilizes work based individualized rehabilitation treatment to facilitate and strengthen vocational identity to maximize a veteran's potential based on skills, abilities and rehabilitation needs. These programs assist participating veterans by improving their overall quality of life.

History:

Under the Office of Mental Health Services (116) of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Psychosocial Rehabilitation offers a variety of vocational programs authorized by 38 U.S.C. 1718 and are designed to return handicapped veterans to the highest level of functioning living and working as productive members of the community. To that end, we offer a continuum of work for pay transitional employment services and direct job placement efforts.

PSR Vocational Programs:

Incentive Therapy Program:

PSR Incentive Therapy (IT) is a pre-employment program that provides a diversified "real life" work experience in the VA medical center for veterans who exhibit exceptional severe mental illness and/or physical disabilities. IT services extend for an indefinite period of time, as is clinically appropriate, and may consist of full or part time work. Each participant in the IT program has an individual treatment or service plan, case manager and treatment team to monitor clinical services and work.

CWT/Transitional Work Program:

Compensated Work Therapy/Transitional Work (CWT/TW) is a preemployment vocational assessment program that operates in the VA medical center and

community. CWT/TW participants are screened by vocational rehabilitation staff and matched to a work assignment for a limited time as is clinically appropriate. CWT/TW functions like a “real” job, is supervised by work site staff, and places the same job expectations and demands on the veteran that are experienced by other non-CWT workers in the company. Every CWT/TW participant has an Individual Treatment or Service Plan and is case managed by a VA Vocational Specialist. Each participating veteran must be physician referred to PSR vocational services and should have some type of mental or physical disability. As such, veterans enrolled in PSR vocational programs are not considered employees of the VA or participating company and receive none of the traditional employee benefits. There are no direct government entitlements that subsidize the veteran’s earnings in CWT/TW programs.

CWT/Supported Employment Program:

The Compensated Work Therapy/Supported Employment (CWT/SE) program consists of competitive employment with therapeutic supports. The focus of CWT/SE is to assist veterans with psychosis and other serious mental illness gain access to meaningful gainful employment. Veterans unable to participate in CWT/SE due to complex treatment demands may engage at a full and part time level utilizing various adaptations to customized employment and/or community-based transitional work as the primary model. CWT/SE may continue indefinitely but generally participation and supports are phased out after the veteran is able to function independently and it is deemed clinically appropriate. The implementation of Public Law 108-170, the *Veterans Health Care, Capital Asset, and Business Improvement Act of 2003*, section 104, “Enhancement of Rehabilitative Services,” expands rehabilitation services provided by the CWT program as authorized under 38 U.S.C. 1718. This law allows CWT to provide job development, job placement, supported employment, and community services to veterans. These services commonly describe a clinical model of vocational rehabilitation termed Supported Employment that helps individuals with serious mental illness engage in competitive employment in the community.

CWT and VA Benefits:

Participation in the Incentive Therapy, or CWT Transitional or Support Employment programs cannot be used to reduce, deny, or discontinue VA compensation or pension. Pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 1718(g), a veteran's participation in or receipt of a distribution as a result of participation in an activity carried out under 38 U.S.C. 1718 may not be considered as a basis for denial or discontinuance of a rating of total disability for the purposes of compensation or pension based on the veterans inability to secure or follow a substantially gainful occupation as a result of disability. Pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 1718(g) (1) and (g) (2), 38 CFR 342(b) (4) (ii), 38 CFR 3.343(c) (1), and 38 C.F.R. 4.16(a) neither participation in, nor the receipt of remuneration as a result of participation in, a

therapeutic or rehabilitation activity under 38 U.S.C. 1718 shall be considered evidence of employability. Pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 1718(g) (3) and 38 CFR 3.272(l), for the purposes of 38 U.S.C. chapter 15, Pension For Non-Service-Connected Disability, a distribution of funds and a payment made to a veteran under a program of rehabilitative services authorized by 38 U.S.C. 1718, are considered to be a donation from a public or private relief or welfare organization, and are not included in determining annual income.

Non-Service Connected Pension:

For some veterans receiving a non-service connected pension, an Eligibility Verification Report (EVR) must be completed annually. The EVR Instructions (VA Form 21-0510) details the process for reporting income. Incentive Therapy and/or CWT income should be specifically reported.

Service-Connected Disability Compensation and Individual Unemployability:

There are two ways for a veteran to achieve a total disability rating. The first possibility is to qualify for a 100 percent rating under the rating schedule set forth in part 4 of 38 C.F.R. The second possibility is to meet the standards of the regulations governing "individual unemployability" (IU). IU exists as a concept to cover the situation in which a service connected disability makes the veteran unemployable, even though an average person with a similar impairment could secure and retain substantial gainful employment. Since the rating schedule focuses on the average person, the concept of IU is necessary to take into account circumstances such as education and past employment history that are peculiar to the claimant and to implement "the established policy of the Department of Veterans' Affairs that all veterans who are unable to secure and follow a substantially gainful occupation by reason of service-connected disabilities shall be rated totally disabled. For some veterans receiving service-connected compensation at the 100 percent level based Individual Unemployability, an Employment Questionnaire (VA Form 21-4140-1) must be completed annually (see website). Incentive Therapy and/or CWT employment should be reported on the Employment Questionnaire, and the type of employment should be specified.

IT/CWT Letter to VBA:

Attached is a template letter to be completed by IT or CWT staff on behalf of participating veterans documenting participation in a Veterans Health Administration (VHA) vocational program operated under the auspices of 38 U.S.C. 1718 which may be entered into patient's medical record and sent to the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) if veteran requests and signs a Release of Information to VBA.

For IU recipients:

If the veteran is an IU recipient, send the letter to the veteran's regional office; go to <http://www1.va.gov/OPA/feature/> or for the Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents Pamphlet for the facilities addresses or go to map to determine correct regional office at http://vaww1.va.gov/directory/guide/division_flsh.asp?dnum=3.

**For More Information on VHA's Psychosocial Rehabilitation Programs
Call Toll Free 1-800-355-8262 or www.va.gov/vetind**

Source directly from following Attachments:

CWT/VBA Template Letter

VA Form 21-4140-1 Employment Questionnaire (IU)

VA Form 21-0510 EVR Instructions (Pension)

VA Form 21-0516-1 EVR (for veterans with no children)

VA Form 21-0517-1 EVR (for veterans with children)

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 Public Assistance 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. To locate your nearest HCHV Coordinator call:

VISN 4 HOMELESS COODINATOR – Lovetta Ford, 412-822-3299

Altoona VAMC - Karen Vislosky, LSW, 814-943-8164 x 7640

Butler VAMC - Dan Slack, LSW, 724-285-2514

Clarksburg VAMC - Tammy Fumich, 304-623-3461 x 3583

Coatesville VAMC - Steve Chambers, Psy.D, 610-384-7711 ext. 5610

Erie VAMC - Laryssa Stolar, 814-860-2481

Lebanon VAMC - Keisha Kerr, 717-272-6621 x 4196

Philadelphia VAMC - Emmanuel Estacio, MSW, 215-823-5800 x 6860

VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System - Gary Glacken, LCSW, 412-822-1325

Wilkes-Barre VAMC - David Warke, LCSW, 717-824-3521, ext. 7956

Wilmington VAMC - Tracy Polk, MSW, 302-383-8672

- **Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA)** 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 1-800-562-2308 or go to www.va.gov.
- **Coalition for the Homeless** has a directory of shelters and homeless assistance programs online. This does not list every program in the country, be sure to check your phone book for local programs. The following are those listed for the State of Pennsylvania.

Directory of Local Homeless Service Organizations

CENTRAL SUSQUEHANNA VALLEY

Haven Ministry Inc.

1043 South Front Street R R 3
 Box 1-A-1 Sunbury, PA 17801
 Phone: 570-286-1672
 Fax: 570-286-3065

ERIE

The Community of Caring

245 East 8th St
 Erie, PA 16503-1003
 Phone: 814-456-6661

PHILADELPHIA

The Employment Project

246 Arch Street
 Philadelphia, PA 19106
 Phone: 215-923-1694
 Fax: 215-923-5960

Housing Association of Delaware Valley

1500 Walnut Street, Suite 601
Philadelphia, PA 19102
Phone: 215-545-6010

Fax: 215-790-9132

Project H.O.M.E.

1515 Fairmount Ave.
Philadelphia, PA 19130
Phone: (215) 232-7272
Website: www.projecthome.org

PITTSBURGH

Community based Partners of VAPHS' Healthcare for Homeless Veterans
Program include:

Shepherd's Heart

13 Pride Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Veterans Leadership Program

2417 East Carson Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15203, Phone: 412/481/8200

Veterans Place

945 Washington Boulevard
Pittsburgh, PA 15206, Phone: 412/363/8761

St. Joseph House of Hospitality

1635 Bedford Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15219, Phone: 412/471/0666

Mechling-Shakley Veterans Center

1413 State Route 268
Cowansville, PA 16218
Phone: 724/545/9016

Operation Safety Net

1515 Locust Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
Phone: 412/232/5739
Fax: 412/232/3726

Pleasant Valley Shelter (men)

1601 Brighton Road (North side)
412/321/4272
(first come, first served)

East End Cooperative Ministries (men)

3-6 pm. M-F Drop-In Center
412/661/6149
5450 Roupe Street (Roupe & Friendship)
Shelter (Presbyterian Church @ Penn and Highland)

Light of Life (men)

10 East North Avenue (North side)
412/803/4120
(first come, first served)
YMCA McKeesport (men & women)
523 Sinclair Street
412/664/9168
(by appointment only)

Wood Street Commons (men & women)

301 Third Avenue (Downtown)
9-10 am Intake Mon. – Wed.
412/765/2532
Private rooms/can take up to 8 weeks to get a room.
Paid and non-paid rooms

Bethlehem Haven (single women)

905 Watson Street (Behind Duquesne University)
412/391/1348 Extension 140/141

Women's Space East (women & children)

412/765/2661 Extension 2665

Women's Center and Shelter

412/687/8005

Women's Place McKeesport
412/678/4616

Alle-Kiski Hope Center Hotline (women and children)
1/888/299/4673

New Beginnings (women & children)
412/371/3475 412/244/5144

Salvation Army Family Crisis (women & children)
412/394/4817 Extension 4800, Social Services

SCRANTON

St. Francis of Assisi Kitchen

500 Penn Ave.
Scranton, PA 18509
Phone: 570-342-5556
Fax: 717-963-8832

YORK

Helping Hand for the Homeless, Inc.

The Helping Hand for the Homeless was established in 1989 to serve homeless people in York County, Pennsylvania. Helping Hand provides hot meals, sleeping bags, clothing, hygiene kits, and access to temporary day work.

413 W. King Street
York, PA 17404
Phone: 717-846-9275

Directory of Homeless & Housing Advocacy Coalitions.

The following is a list of Homeless and Housing Advocacy Coalitions for the State of Pennsylvania. Not all of these coalitions provide direct services, but they may be able to tell you about local programs or services.

People's Emergency Center

325 North 39th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104
Tel: 215-382-7522
Fax: 215-386-6290
www.pec-cares.org

Coalition for Immigrants Rights

140 Roosevelt Ave; #202
York, PA 17404
717/845-5509
717/845-5499
circleyork@aol.com
<http://members.aol.com/cicleyork/>

Housing Assistance & Resources Program

39 N. 12th St.
Lebanon, PA 17046
717/273-9328
717/273-9936

Pennsylvania Coalition to End Homelessness

315 Peiffer Street
Harrisburg, PA 17102
717/233-3072
717/233-3261

Department of Veterans Affairs Philadelphia Veterans Administration Medical Center Homeless Outreach Team

Team Locations:

Philadelphia Veterans Administration Medical Center
38th St. and Woodland Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19104
Homeless Outreach Office, 7th Floor Behavioral Health
215/823/4077
Monday through Friday, 8:00 am. to 4:30 pm.

Philadelphia Veterans Multi-service and Education Center
The Perimeter- 3rd floor
Drop in Center for Homeless Veterans

213-217 N. 4th St. (Next to the Benjamin Franklin Bridge, on corner of N. 4th and Florist St.)

Philadelphia, PA 19106

215/923/2600

Monday through Friday, 8:30 am. to 3:30 pm.

Shelters:

Sunday Breakfast Mission

302 N. 13th St. (Corner of 13th and Vine Sts.)

Bed sign up at 5 pm. (Must attend)

Chapel at 6 pm. (Must attend)

Stay limited to 20 Days

Philadelphia Residency Not Required

215-922-6400

Ridge Shelter

1360 Ridge Avenue. (1/2 Block

Open 24hrs. – 7 Days a week.

Philadelphia Residency Required

(Will accept non-resident during evening and nights.)

215/236/0909

Women- Go to the Office of Supported Housing (OSH) at 1430 Cherry Street during daytime. OSH contact numbers are: 215/686/6775, 7150, 7151, and 7152. Evening and Nights, women are to go to the Eliza Shirley Shelter at 1329 Arch Street.

Please note: This list of shelters is NOT meant to be a complete list.

CHESTER & LANCASTER COUNTY

Atkinson Shelter- Accepts men; able to admit for substance abuse issues.

810 Diamond Street

Coatesville, PA 19320

(Mailing address: 827 Chestnut Street)

Phone: 610/383/4443 (pay phone); 610/380/6195 (office phone)

City Gate Mission- Emergency shelter is provided for men who must be in shelter by 5 pm. Religious services are conducted; able to admit for substance abuse issues.

17 North 7th Avenue

Coatesville, PA 19320

Phone: 610/383/6915

Friends Association /Care & Protection of Children - Accepts families with children; will refer out to substance abuse facility.

206 North Church Street

West Chester, PA 19381

Phone: 610/431/3598

Good Samaritan Shelter- Accepts men and women.

141 High Street

Phoenixville, PA 19460

Phone: 610/933/9305

Safe Harbor- Accepts women & men; NO substance abuse issues.
20 N. Matlack St.
West Chester, PA
Phone: 610/692/6550

Salvation Army Shelter- Accepts men; able to accept some substance abuse cases; Usually will refer out to a substance abuse facility.
101 East Market Street
West Chester, PA
Phone: 610/696/8746 or 610/696/7434

St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter- Accepts families
209 Emmett St.
Phoenixville, PA
Phone: 610/933/3097

Water Street Rescue Mission- Accepts men, women and children; will house clients with substance abuse issues for referrals only if a client is clean at the time. The Water Street Rescue Mission wants referring case manager to call and provide veteran with a referral sheet.
210 South Prince Street
Lancaster, PA 17603
Phone: 717/393/7709
Fax: 717/393/4966
Email: wsm@wsm.org (25 miles west of Coatesville)

Community Youth & Women Alliance- Emergency shelter and supportive services are provided for women with dependant children & single women. In addition, there is a Community Service Center, Youth Program and a Halfway House for recovering women and their children.
423 E/. Lincoln Highway
Coatesville, PA 19320
Phone: 610/384/9591

CHESTER CO. H.I.S. -Accept men, women & children
342 E. Birch St.
Kennett Square, PA 19348
Phone: 610/444/2559

MONTGOMERY COUNTY HOUSING ASSISTANCE AGENCIES/SHELTERS

Montgomery County Housing Authority- section 8 (Subsidy) program for low income families; other self sufficiency and transitional programs.

104 W. Main St.
Norristown, Pa. 19401
Phone: 610/275/5720

Salvation Army (Norristown)-Rental Assistance for families with children.
533 Swede St.
Norristown, Pa 19401
Phone: 610/275/4183

Montgomery County's Coordinated Homeless Outreach Ctr. (CHOC) -
Rental Assistance for Adult only households.
Norristown State
Stanbridge and Sterigere Sts.
Bldg. 53
Norristown, Pa 19401
Phone: 610/292/9244

Montgomery County MH/MR/D&A- Provides counseling on housing issues and some housing assistance to persons with mental health, mental retardation, drug and alcohol issues.
Human Services Ctr.
1430 DeKalb St.
Norristown, Pa. 194-04-0311
Phone: 610/278/3642
<http://mhmrda.montcopa.org/mhmrda/site/default.asp>

COADCOM- Some rental and mortgage assistance.
113 E. Main St.
Norristown, Pa. 19401
Phone: 610/277/6363

Community Housing Services- Self-Sufficiency Programs, First Homebuyers Program, Transitional Housing.
617 W. Main St.
Lansdale, Pa. 19446
Phone: 215/362/5250

Eldernet-For Lower Merion residents, may provide assistance for emergencies.
9 S. Bryn Mawr Ave.
Bryn Mawr, Pa. 19010
Phone: 610/525/0706

Hospitality Ctr: Day Shelter only
530 Church St.-1st flr.
Norristown, Pa. 19401
Phone: 610/277/1321

Interfaith Hospitality Network- Family shelter in churches
Main Line Area
Norristown, Pa/Lower Merion
Phone: 610/277/0977

Interfaith Hospitality Network Alliance
Ambler, Pa.
Phone: 215/628/2334

Interfaith Hospitality Network-Family shelter in churches
NorthPenn/Soulerton
Phone: 215/721/1299

Laurel House: Victims of Domestic Abuse -
Wouldn't give St. Address
PO Box 764
1/800/642/3150

Missionary Sisters of Charity-Women and children
Norristown, Pa. 19401
Phone: 610/277/5962

Salvation Army-Accepts families
533 Swede St.
Norristown, Pa 19401
Phone: 610/275/4183

Salvation Army- Accepts families
Pottstown, Pa.
610-326-1621
Bryn Mawr, PA 19010
Phone: 610/525/0706

Fair Housing Council of Montgomery County-Education & advocacy
regarding housing discrimination.
4 S. Easton Rd.
PO Box 578
Glenside, Pa 19038
Phone: 215/579/7711
<http://fairhousingmontco.org>

Genesis Housing Corp.-Works with families toward permanent housing options.
PO Box 1675
208 DeKalb St.
Norristown, Pa. 19401

Phone: 610/275/4357

Habitat for Humanity of Montgomery County-works with volunteers to rehab homes for families with low income

.848 Cherry St.

Norristown, Pa. 19401

Phone: 610/278/7710

Hedwig House-Housing support and counseling for individuals with psychiatric needs.

904 DeKalb St.

Norristown, Pa. 19401

Phone: 610/279/4400

Indian Valley Housing-provides housing assistance and supportive services for individuals& Families.

201 Main St.

Souderton, Pa. 18964

Phone: 215/723/8750 or 215/723/5430

Interfaith of Ambler-provides shelter and casework services to those in housing crisis.

31 S. Spring Garden St.

Ambler, Pa. 219002

Phone: 215/628/2334

Nehemiah's Way-Provides housing counseling and transitional housing for victims of domestic violence. --- (a satellite house)

217 E. Montgomery Ave.

North Wales, Pa. 19454

Phone: 215/699/8830

Laurel House

Hotline-connection for services

1/800/646/3150

Open Line-provides assistance to persons with low-income.

452 Penn St.

Pennsburg, Pa. 18073

Phone: 215/670/4112

Project Outreach-Some housing assistance available in Royersford area.

410 Washington St

Royersford, Pa. 19468.

Phone: 610/948/5111

Project SHARE/MH of S.E. Provides counseling for individuals with mental health issues
538 DeKalb St.
Norristown, Pa 19401
Phone: 610/272/7997 or 610/279/6100

Willow Grove Community Development Corp.-Affordable housing assistance, first-time homebuyer assistance and counseling.
PO Box 1097
Willow Grove, Pa. 19090
Phone: 215/657/3340

PHILADELPHIA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

Ridge Avenue Shelter: This is the intake shelter for men contracted by the city to house or sent to other contracted shelters homeless men in Philadelphia.
1360 Ridge Avenue
Philadelphia, PA
Phone: 215/236/0909

St. Barnabus Mission of Episcopal Community Services
6006 West Girard Avenue
Philadelphia, PA
Phone: 215/528/5419

St. Francis Inn
2441 Kensington Avenue
Philadelphia, PA
Phone: 215/423/5845

Sunday Breakfast Mission: Private shelter for men
302 N. 13th Street
Philadelphia, PA
Phone: 215/922/6400

Women, Families and Couples
1430 Cherry St
Philadelphia, PA
Phone: 215/686/7151

Brotherhood Mission : Accept men only; call after 5pm & ask for Mr. Dorsey
401 East Girard Ave
Philadelphia, PA
Phone: 215/739/4517

The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army operates a variety of specialized residential programs to meet the needs of families and individuals who are presently homeless. Currently in Philadelphia the Salvation Army operates three comprehensive shelter programs, two transitional housing programs, and a thirty day shelter program for troubled adolescents, with a total capacity for 385 people per night:

- Red Shield Family Residence
- Eliza Shirley House
- Bridge House
- MacLachlan House
- F.A.I.T.H. Program (Family And Individual Transitional Housing)

These services are available to single-parent families, single women, single men, married couples, children awaiting placement in a foster home, and dual-parent families. If someone you care about is struggling to survive homelessness, direct him or her to The Salvation Army will do their best to help, either by providing shelter or, if necessary, referring your friend to another program. Just call 215/787/2821 to get started.

Red Shield Family Residence

The Salvation Army
Red Shield Family Residence
715 North Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19123
Phone: 215/787/2887

The Salvation Army provides shelter and an array of supportive services for up to 120 homeless women, single parent families, and dual parent families each night at the Red Shield Family Residence. The Red Shield Family Residence's overall program is designed to help people break out of the sort of "conspiracy" of circumstances and choices that led to their end predicament of homelessness. The typical service package delivered to a client at the Red Shield Family Residence includes:

- Decent, safe, drug-free lodging
- 3 nutritious meals a day
- Health care (weekly on-site clinic, operated by Philadelphia Health Services)
- Individual case work/plan
- Drug/alcohol counseling
- Child care
- Life skills workshops (e.g. budgeting, nutrition, stress management, etc.)
- Job placement
- Parenting skills education
- Graduate Equivalency Diploma (GED) courses
- Literacy/computer literacy courses
- Information/referrals

- Sexual/child abuse prevention workshops
- Intensive "aftercare" support after graduation from the program
- Referral to a broad network of other Salvation Army services and programs

The Child Care and Parenting Program are a unique feature of this shelter program and an essential component of the overall recovery approach. The Salvation Army operates a day and evening child care center that provides critically needed care for the children, who are facing the uncertainties, setbacks, fears, and stresses involved in homelessness. Provision of child care also enables the parents to invest themselves in: searches for employment and permanent living arrangements; medical or social service appointments; parenting education and life skills sessions; literacy or drug/alcohol recovery programs; classes at Community College of Philadelphia and other institutions; and emotional / physical respites from the sometimes overwhelming responsibility of caring for their children. The parenting education curriculum supports parents in learning how to nurture and effectively discipline their children through nonviolent, age-appropriate management techniques. One notable goal of these sessions is to prevent child abuse, as many of our adult residents are in need of supportive educational intervention.

Eliza Shirley House

1320 Arch Street,
Philadelphia, PA 19107
Phone: 215/568/5111

Eliza Shirley House is an emergency shelter facility with two missions: to provide short term lodging, meals and immediate needs to displaced families, city wide on weekday nights and over holidays and weekends; and to provide longer term residential counseling, social work and referral services to homeless single and pregnant women 18 or older, 365 days a year. Women are admitted to Eliza Shirley after being referred from O.S.H.A. while others who arrive in the evening without referral are lodged (space permitting) only until O.S.H.A offices reopen. Eliza Shirley House provides safe, sanitary housing in a drug/alcohol-free environment. Nutritious meals are served and caring, experienced staff are on hand at all times. Qualified volunteers provide free legal services, medical care, and referral services.

Bridge House

4050 Conshohocken Avenue,
Philadelphia, PA 19131
Phone: 215/473/4088

Bridge House is a residential rehabilitation program for women recovering from drug and alcohol addiction. The program accepts single, homeless women with a history of drug and alcohol abuse. Each woman must prove abstinence from drugs and alcohol for a minimum of 90 days with corresponding attendance in A.A. (Alcoholics Anonymous)/N.A.(Narcotics Anonymous) and outpatient drug/alcohol treatment programs prior to admission to Bridge House. The

program has a capacity for 24 women. The average stay for each woman is one year. Resident on-site mentors help the women develop social skills, cultural values, and personal hygiene. The residents are required to actively participate in ongoing supportive treatment programs/services including A.A. or N.A., the G.E.D. program, vocational counseling, job placement, or other occupational training programs. Each woman must also invest 50% of her income into a savings plan which will ensure a financial resource for her to move into permanent housing at the end of her program period.

Family Services

701 N. Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19123

Phone: 215/787/2821 (administrative offices)

Through Family Services, The Salvation Army provides a wide spectrum of assistance for not only families, but individuals as well. The staff work with individuals and families who are experiencing financial difficulty due to illness, unemployment, fire, other natural disasters and those who are working to get off of welfare. Case workers help people in need obtain utility, food and rent assistance. They also offer counseling and support services to victims of domestic abuse as well as referrals to other agencies for additional support and assistance. Homeless prevention is very important to Family Services. To prevent homelessness caseworkers provide clients with money management counseling, schedule bill payments, make appointments and assist with other matters. *Sources on Salvation Army directly from-
<http://www.877redkettle.org/res-she.htm> (Salvation Army (Salvation Army @ <http://www.use.salvationarmy.org>;

DELAWARE COUNTY SHELTERS

City Team Ministries- Have information about shelters; accept substance abuse;

1 ½ year residential program; men only

634 Sproul St

Chester, PA

Phone: 610/872/6865

Community Action Agency-Accept men, women and children

229 Norris St.

Chester, PA

Phone: 610/872/4070

Connect- They pick up people at 69th and Market transportation terminal at 9:00 pm and take them to a participating church to sleep. They return to the terminal at 6:30am.

Upper Darby

Phone: 610/352/1590

Life Center of Eastern Delaware County-Accept men, women and persons struggling with substance use issues
6310 Market St
Upper Darby, PA
Phone: 610/734/5770

Wesley House- Accept families; Substance abuse referrals
701 Madison St.
Chester, PA
Phone: 610/872/2611

Federal American Coalition of Tenants

100 Sheridan Square, Suite 200
Pittsburgh, PA 15206
412-361-1761

Philadelphia Committee to End Homelessness

P.O. Box 15010
802 N. Broad St.
Philadelphia, PA 19130-2235
215/232-1867
215/232-1824
rdarbyjr@hotmail.com

Kensington Welfare Rights Union

P.O. Box 50678
Philadelphia, PA 19132
215/203-1945
215/203-1950
kwru@kwru.org
www.kwru.org

Harrisburg Center For Peace and Justice

315 Peiffer Street
Harrisburg, PA 17102
717/233-3072 , 717/233-3261

PA Low Income Housing Coalition

2 S. Easton Rd
Glenside, PA 19038
215/576/7044; 215/887-8638

Homeless Advocacy Project

1424 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102
215/523/9595
215/981/0866
HAP@libertynet.org
www.libertynet.net/~HAP

Community Human Services

374 Lawn St.
Pittsburgh, PA 15213-4297
412/621/4706
412/621/7137

- **Salvation Army** - provides services, including shelter and transitional housing, for homeless individuals and families. For local services and information contact:
Eastern Pennsylvania
701 North Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19123
Western Pennsylvania
424 Third Avenue
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15219
- **United Way** - provides a variety of services through local organizations. Check the phone book for a local post or locate local organizations online at www.unitedway.org.
- **Local churches and faith-based organizations**, such as Catholic Charities, Salvation Army, and Volunteers of America, may have a variety of programs to assist you. Find these organizations by calling your county or city Department of Social Services. Check the blue pages of the phone book for the number.
- **Philadelphia Housing Authority**
The largest permanent housing program in Philadelphia is the Philadelphia Housing Authority, funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). There are two types of housing available - conventional public housing and Section 8 housing. Conventional public housing is housing available in the public housing developments or in scattered sites. The Section 8 program involves a rent subsidy to households in privately owned rental housing. Applicants will be placed on a waiting list upon completion of the application. Applications for public housing and Section 8 are offered to

residents in homeless shelters. Homeless applicants are then placed on a priority waiting list.

- **PHA**
Carl Greene, Executive Director
12 S. 23rd Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103
215/684/4000
- **Central Admissions**
3010 Market Street, 2nd Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19104
215/684/4477
- **Section 8 Program**
3010 Market Street, 2nd Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19104
684-4300
- **Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh**
200 Ross St., 9th Floor
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
412/456/5000
Office Hours: Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
HACP Information Line: 412.201.HACP (4227)
General e-mail: info@hacp.org
- Dauphin County Housing Authority
P.O. Box 7595
501 Mohn Street
Steelton, PA 17113
Phone: 717/939/9301
- Lebanon County Housing & Redevelopment Authority
303 Chestnut Street
Lebanon, PA 17042
717/274/1401

Also, look in the phone book **yellow pages** under "Social Service Organizations" for local shelters or organizations that may be able to help. Additionally, look in the phone book **blue pages** under local, city, or county government Department of Social Services or "Human Services" or call the County Commissioner's Office for information about local low-income housing coalitions or homeless advocacy groups who may know what is available.

SECTION III

SUBSTANCE ABUSE & MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

If eligible for veterans' benefits:

- Contact the Homeless Veteran Services Coordinator at the local **VA Medical Center** or **Vet Center**. Call 1-877-222-8387 to or go to <http://www.starsandstripes.med.va.gov/visn4/>, to find the medical center nearest you.

Medical Centers:

Medical Centers:

Philadelphia	1-800-949-1001
Coatesville	1-800-290-6172
Lebanon	1-800-409-8771
Wilkes-Barre	1-877-928-2621
Altoona	1-8777-626-2500
Pittsburgh	1-866-482-7488
Butler	1-800-362-8262
Erie	

<http://www.starsandstripes.med.va.gov/visn4>

If not eligible for veterans' benefits, the following sources may be able to tell you where you can go to get help:

- The Department of Health and Human Services **Drug and Alcohol Treatment Referral Routing Service** can refer you to local programs. Call 1-800-662-4357.
- **National Alliance for the Mentally Ill** lists community mental health services providers at: www.nami.org, or call 1-800-950-6264.
- **National Mental Health Association** offers support groups, rehabilitation, socialization, and housing services through 340 community organizations located across the country. Call 1-800-969-NMHA, or find a local office online at www.nmha.org.

VETERAN CENTER PROGRAM

Vet Center: The Vet Center Program was established by Congress in 1979 out of the recognition that a significant number of Vietnam era vets were still experiencing readjustment problems. Vet Centers are community based and part of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. In April 1991, in response to the Persian Gulf War, Congress extended the eligibility to veterans who served during other periods of armed hostilities after the Vietnam era. Those other

periods are identified as Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, the Persian Gulf, Somalia, and Kosovo/Bosnia. In October 1996, Congress extended the eligibility to include WWII and Korean Combat Veterans. The goal of the Vet Center program is to provide a broad range of counseling, outreach, and referral services to eligible veterans in order to help them make a satisfying post-war readjustment to civilian life. On April 1, 2003 the Secretary of Veterans Affairs extended eligibility for Vet Center services to veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and on June 25, 2003 Vet Center eligibility was extended to veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and subsequent operations within the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). The family members of all veterans listed above are eligible for Vet Center services as well. On August 5, 2003 VA Secretary Anthony J. Principi authorized Vet Centers to furnish bereavement counseling services to surviving parents, spouses, children and siblings of service members who die of any cause while on active duty, to include federally activated Reserve and National Guard personnel.

*Above source: http://www.vetcenter.va.gov/Vet_Center_Services.asp

Readjustment Counseling

What is readjustment counseling?

Readjustment counseling is wide range of services provided to combat veterans in the effort to make a satisfying transition from military to civilian life. Services include individual counseling, group counseling, marital and family counseling, bereavement counseling, medical referrals, and assistance in applying for VA Benefits, employment counseling, guidance and referral, Alcohol/drug assessments. Information and referral to community resources, military sexual trauma counseling & referral, outreach and community education.

Does VA have readjustment counseling for family members?

Family members of combat veterans have been eligible for Vet Center readjustment counseling services for military related issues since 1979.

Am I eligible for Vet Center readjustment counseling?

If you, or a family member, served in any combat zone and received a military campaign ribbon (Vietnam, Southwest Asia, OEF, OIF, etc.)you are eligible for Vet Center services.

Where is counseling offered?

VA's readjustment counseling is provided at community-based Vet Centers located near veterans and their families. There is no cost for Vet Center readjustment counseling. Contact your nearest Vet Center. Vet Center staff are available toll free during normal business hours at 1-800-905-4675 (Eastern) and 1-866-496-8838 (Pacific).

*Above source: http://www.vetcenter.va.gov/Vet_Center_Services.asp

VETERAN CENTERS IN PENNSYLVANIA

DuBois Vet Center

100 Meadow Lane, Suite 8
DuBois, PA 15801
Phone: 814/372/2095

Erie Vet Center

Renaissance Centre 1001 State St., Suite 102
Erie, PA 16501
Phone: 814/453/7955

Harrisburg Vet Center

1500 N. Second Street Suite 2
Harrisburg, PA 17102
Phone: 717/782/3954

McKeesport Veterans Resource Center

Oak Park Mall
2001 Lincoln Way
McKeesport, PA 15131
Phone: 412/678/7704

Philadelphia Vet Center

801 Arch Street Suite 102
Philadelphia, PA 19107
Phone: 215/627/0238

Philadelphia Vet Center NE

101 E. Olney Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19120
Phone: 215/924/4670

Pittsburgh Vet Center

2500 Baldwick Rd
Pittsburgh, PA 15205
Phone: 412/920/1765

Scranton Vet Center

1002 Pittston Ave.
Scranton, PA 18505
Phone: 570/344/2676

Williamsport Vet Center

49 E. Fourth Street Suite 104
Williamsport, PA 17701

Phone: 570/327/5281

The Adjutant General's Office

Veterans Administration Center, Wissahickon Avenue & Manheim Streets
P. O. Box 42938, Philadelphia, PA 19101
Phone (215) 381-3040; fax (215) 381-3492

The Adjutant General's Office

Jewelcor Building, Second Floor
100 N. Wilkes-Barre Boulevard, Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701-2605
Phone (570) 826-6244; fax (570) 821-4047

The Adjutant General's Office

Veterans Administration Building
Room 432F, 1000 Liberty Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15222-4003
Phone (412) 395-6225; fax (412) 395-6224

HEALTH

If eligible for veteran's benefits:

- We encourage you to enroll in the VA Health Benefits System as soon as you are released. Every **VA Medical Center** has a **Health Care for Homeless Veterans Coordinator** who helps veterans and their families find resources inside and outside the VA Health Care system. Call 1-877-222-8387 or go to <http://www.starsandstripes.med.va.gov/visn4/>, to find the medical center nearest you.

Altoona

James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center
2907 Pleasant Valley Boulevard
Altoona, PA 16602-4377
(814) 943-8164
(877) 626-2500 (toll free)

Butler

VA Medical Center
325 New Castle Road
Butler, PA 16001
(724) 287-4781 or 1-800-362-8262

Coatesville

VA Medical Center
1400 Black Horse Hill Rd.
Coatesville, PA 19320-2096
(610) 384-7711
(800) 290-6172

Erie

VA Medical Center
135 East 38 Street, Erie, PA 16504
(814) 868-8661 or 1-800-274-8387

Lebanon

VA Medical Center
1700 S. Lincoln Avenue
Lebanon, PA 17042
(717) 272-6621 or 1-800-409-8771

Philadelphia

VA Medical Center
University and Woodland Aves.
Philadelphia, PA 19104
(215) 823-5800 or 1-800-949-1001

Pittsburgh

University Drive C
Pittsburgh, PA 15240
(866) 4VAPITT or (866) 482-7488

Wilkes-Barre

VA Medical Center
1111 East End Boulevard
Wilkes Barre, PA 18711

If ineligible for veteran's benefits, free or low-cost health care may be available from the following sources:

- **Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)** can tell you where to find health care facilities for the homeless. Check the phone book blue pages under local, city, or county government for the number.
- **National Health Care for the Homeless Council** has a list of health care providers working with homeless people across the nation. For a list of providers in your state, go to www.nhchc.org.
- **Free clinics** are run by many local organizations and communities. Look in the phone book blue pages under "Public Health" to contact local government office for clinics in your area.

Special Health Information for Veterans:

If you think you may be at risk for AIDS and HIV infection after your release, contact the nearest VA Medical Center to get tested, and seek counseling. Those at highest risk for AIDS and HIV infection are:

- people who share needles or syringes to inject drugs or steroids
- men who have sex with other men;
- those born to mothers who have HIV
- people who received blood transfusions before 1985;
- anyone who has sex with anyone who is at risk for HIV / AIDS.
- Veterans, homeless, and incarcerated people are at high risk for **Hepatitis C (HCV)**, a serious disease that can cause cirrhosis (scarring of the liver) and liver cancer. If you think you are at risk after your release, contact the nearest VA Medical Center to get tested and seek HCV counseling. You are at risk if:
 - you ever used a needle to inject drugs;
 - you had a blood transfusion or organ transplant before 1992;
 - you were a health care worker and had contact with blood;
 - you were on long-term kidney dialysis;
 - your mother had hepatitis C when she gave birth to you.
- The Veterans Health Administration also recommends testing if:
 - you are a Vietnam-era veteran;
 - you have had exposure to blood on your skin;
 - you have had multiple sex partners;
 - you have tattoos or body piercing;
 - you have ever snorted cocaine;
 - you have liver disease;
 - you have a history of drinking a lot of alcohol;
 - you have had an abnormal liver function test.

EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE

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 go to work when released. Don't wait until you get out to start thinking about what you will do, start planning now!

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

The Department of Labor's (DOL) One-Stop Career Centers offer the convenience of one-stop shopping for your employment and training needs. One-Stop Career Centers offer a variety of job finding resources in one place.

Services at One-Stop include:

- Internet access to thousands of job listings in NJ and nationwide.
- Computerized job matching and direct referral to job opportunities.
- Career counseling and job search workshops.
- Assistance writing and publicizing your resume.
- Assistance accessing training and retraining resources.

The One-Stop Career Center is a new approach to the delivery of employment and training services. State, county and local government agencies, community colleges, local non-profits, business and labor have joined forces to make it easier to find work, get training or change careers.

There are one-stop centers and affiliates located throughout Pennsylvania. A listing of PA centers is available on the web at www.servicelocator.org

- The **VA 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 your VA Regional Office (VARO) at 1-800-827-1000, or go to

<http://www1.va.gov/directory/guide/division.asp?dnum=3>.

- The **VA Veterans Industries and Compensated Work Therapy programs**, 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 New Jersey, the VA currently has Veterans Industries Programs located throughout Central New Jersey. For further information go to www.vetsinfo.com.

Re-Entry Specialist Contact Information Listed by State

State	Name of Specialist	Contact Information
Alabama	Harell Jamison	803-776-4000
Alaska	Diana Rogers	503-220-8262
Arizona	Danica Bogicevic	602-277-5551
Arkansas	Kyle Liotta	318-473-0010
California	Craig Lea	562-826-8000
Colorado	Michael Apgar	303-399-8020
Connecticut	Kevin Casey	781-687-3487
Delaware	Otis Nash	717-272-6621
Florida	Taylor Alyea	352-379-4955
Georgia	Varanese Cousan	404-321-6111
Hawaii	George Kennedy	650-493-5000
Idaho	Diana Rogers	503-220-8262
Illinois	Therese Lynch	312-569-8145
Indiana	Stacy Knipscheer	260-426-5431
Iowa	Brian Brooks	515-577-8068
Kansas	Rolando Vazquez	314-652-4100
Kentucky	Kathy Vasquez	859-233-4511
Louisiana	Kyle Liotta	318-473-0010
Maine	James Hart	781-687-3352
Maryland	James Haskell	410-605-7000
Massachusetts	Kevin Casey	781-687-3487
Michigan	Elvin Barren	734-845-5030
Minnesota	Brian Brooks	515-577-8068
Mississippi	Kyle Liotta	318-473-0010
Missouri	Rolando Vazquez	314-652-4100
Montana	Amy Earle	801-582-1565

Nebraska	Brian Brooks	515-577-8068
Nevada	Virginia Hines	702-636-3000
New Hampshire	James Hart	781-687-3352
New Jersey	Susan Moore-Magee	973-676-1000
New Mexico	Danica Bogicevic	602-277-5551
New York	Jonathan Pollack	518-626-5161
North Carolina	Eddie Watts	410-642-2411
North Dakota	Brian Brooks	515-577-8068
Ohio	David Shawlson	440-526-3030
Oklahoma	David Sands	713-791-1414
Oregon	Diana Rogers	503-220-8262
Pennsylvania	Otis Nash	717-272-6621
Rhode Island	Kevin Casey	781-687-3487
South Carolina	Harell Jamison	803-776-4000
South Dakota	Brian Brooks	515-577-8068
Tennessee	Suzanne Jenkins	615-327-4751
Texas	Warren Pearson	254-297-3699
Utah	Amy Earle	801-582-1565
Vermont	James Hart	781-687-3352
Virginia	James Temple	804-675-5333
Washington	Diana Rogers	503-220-8262
Washington D.C.	Rodney Carter	202-745-8000
West Virginia	Otis Nash	717-272-6621
Wisconsin	David Kagabitang	414-588-7019
Wyoming	Michael Apgar	303-399-8020