

U.S. Congresswoman
TAMMY DUCKWORTH
Proudly Serving Illinois' 8th District

Resource Guide for Veterans



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Constituent Services Offerings for Veterans and Their Families

If you can't get an answer from a federal agency in a timely fashion, or if you feel you have been treated unfairly, my office may be able to help resolve a problem or get you the information you need. While we cannot guarantee you a favorable outcome, we will do our best to help you receive a fair and timely response to your problem.

My office helps with a wide variety of claims for Veterans, including obtaining records and medals, assistance with healthcare and housing, and help with military pensions and aid and attendance.

Residents of the 8th Congressional District of Illinois can contact me for assistance in dealing with Federal agencies. In order to better serve you, please fill out and sign the Privacy Act Release Form, which is located in Appendix 1.

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Dear Returning Service members, Veterans & Families:

Welcome home. Thank you for your service to our nation. My office has compiled this resource packet for you in hopes that your transition home can be a smooth one.

As a member of the Armed Services Committee and a retired member of the National Guard with 23 years of service, I understand the sacrifices Veterans made for our country and I am committed to serving those who defended our freedoms.

In Congress, I am working to ensure our policies enable our warriors to thrive and succeed when they return from serving our nation. Our Veterans deserve to return to a country full of the same opportunities they defended for others.

I will continue to work with legislators to make sure our Veterans and their families continue to have the support and care they deserve.

Within this packet you will find information on various resources and benefits available to you at both a local and federal level. I hope you find it beneficial.

If you have questions or concerns, please reach out to my office. For Veterans casework you can call my Illinois office at (847)413-1959 and ask for Susan Giannone. For Veterans policy concerns, you can call my Washington D.C. office at (202)225-3711 and ask to speak to my Legislative team.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tammy Duckworth". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tammy" and last name "Duckworth" clearly legible.

Tammy Duckworth
Member of Congress

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My Work in Congress for Veterans

My job in Congress is to be a voice for my neighbors, advocating for the practical solutions and cooperation that is needed to move our country forward. I serve on the Armed Services Committee. I have introduced various pieces of legislation, including the SAV Act which works to prevent Veteran suicide and became law this year, as well as other bills that assist Veterans in their transition to the private sector, and to eliminate abuses in the Veterans benefit system. Below is a snapshot of work I continue to do on behalf of Veterans.

If you have questions or concerns, please reach out to my office. For Veterans casework you can call my Illinois office at (847)413-1959 and ask for Susan Giannone. For Veterans policy concerns, you can call my Washington D.C. office at (202)225-3711 and ask to speak to my Legislative team.

Employment and Entrepreneurship

In my first term, I introduced the bipartisan [Troop Talent Act](#). This bill would improve the translation of military skill sets to civilian credentials or licenses and allow Military Tuition Assistance to be used on courses and programs that guarantee a credential or industry certification after successful completion. Many provisions of the Troop Talent Act were passed as part of the National Defense Authorization Act in the House of Representatives in 2014.

Education

Together with Senator Durbin, I introduced the [Service member Student Loan Affordability Act](#) which would enable pre-service private or federal student loan debt to be consolidated or refinanced. This allows Service members with Federal Family Education Loans or Perkins student loans to enroll in the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program while they are serving and still take advantage of the 6% rate cap under SCRA.

Housing

No one who has served our country should ever deploy without a safe, stable place when they return home. That is why I voted for the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2013 which funds a 3.5% increase for Veterans programs. The bipartisan legislation provides \$6.2 billion for homeless Veterans treatment, services, housing, and job training. If you or a Veteran you know are in need of housing, please call the **VA's Homeless hotline at 1-877-424-3838**.

Health

Through the Veterans' Access to Care through Choice, Accountability, and Transparency Act that passed in 2014 Veterans are guaranteed quality and timely health care. The bipartisan legislation I supported provides \$10 billion to allow Veterans to seek private medical care if they have unreasonable wait times. It also provides additional doctors, nurses, medical staff and leases for 27 medical facilities across the country. I also introduced the MEMORY Act, which is aimed at helping active duty service members better track potential exposures during deployment that could be later connected to mental health injuries and mild TBIs.

Veteran Suicide

It has been reported that in the United States today, up to 22 Veterans commit suicide each day. But even one is too many. This is why I helped push the implementation of the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans (SAV) Act into law. This bill will prevent Veteran suicide and help our nation's heroes who may be struggling get the care and support they need. The bill will establish a peer support and community outreach pilot program to assist transitioning service members with accessing VA mental health care services. To ease access to services, the law will require the VA to create a one-stop, interactive website to serve as a centralized source of information for all mental health services for Veterans. If you or someone you know is having suicidal thoughts, please contact the Vets Crisis line at **1-888-273-TALK**. You can also chat with someone online at <http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/ChatTermsOfService.aspx>.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Resources

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is the central location for your interactions with the government and for obtaining benefits post-separation from the military. The quickest way to receive service is by filing a fully developed claim. During this process, you provide pertinent information to VA so that you can get the care that you need.

- VA Health Benefits include all the necessary inpatient hospital care and outpatient services to promote, preserve, or restore your health. Veterans Health Administration (VHA) medical facilities provide a wide range of services including traditional hospital-based services such as surgery, critical care, mental health, orthopedics, pharmacy, radiology and physical therapy. To learn about your health benefits options, [visit http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/access/medical_benefits_package.asp](http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/access/medical_benefits_package.asp) or to apply, visit <http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/apply/>.
- The VA currently has over 800 Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC). The VHA operates these clinics to make access to health care easier. These clinics provide the most common outpatient services, including health and wellness visits, without the hassle of visiting a larger medical center. VHA continues to expand their network of CBOCs to include more rural locations, making access to care closer to home. To find a CBOC nearest to you please visit:
http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/Allstate_flash.asp?dnum=1.
- Unlike a VA Hospital or CBOC, Vet Centers can serve Vets regardless of discharge status. Vet Centers across the country provide a broad range of counseling, outreach, and referral services to combat Veterans and their families. Vet Centers guide Veterans and their families through many of the major adjustments in lifestyle that often occur after a Veteran returns from combat. Services for a Veteran may include individual and group counseling in areas such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), alcohol and drug assessment, and suicide prevention referrals. All services are free of cost and are strictly confidential. To find a Vet Center near you, visit <http://www.va.gov/directory/guide/vetcenter.asp?isFlash=0>.
- Veterans, Active Duty service members, and retired Reservists and National Guard service members are eligible for an inscribed headstone or marker for their unmarked grave at any cemetery — national, state veterans, tribal, or private. VA will deliver a headstone or marker at no cost, anywhere in the world. To learn about all burial benefits, visit http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book/benefits_chap08.asp.
- National Guard members performing active service where pay is received from the Federal government may qualify for many VA benefits. This could be active duty under Title 10 or full-time National Guard duty under Title 32, to include performing full-time

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duties as an Active Guard Reserve member. Learn more about your Active National Guard VA benefits, such as Education, Home Loans, Disability Compensation, and Pension here: <http://www.benefits.va.gov/GUARDRESERVE/active-reserve.asp>.

- If you need immediate assistance or are having suicidal thoughts, please contact the Vets Crisis line at **1-888-273-TALK**. You can also chat with someone online at <http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/ChatTermsOfService.aspx>.

This information was compiled using information from www.va.gov.

Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA) Resources

To assist Veterans in navigating the complex web of services and benefits available, the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA) runs 49 full-time and 35 part-time offices across the State of Illinois. These offices are staffed by more than 60 individual Veteran Service Officers (VSOs), fellow Veterans who are experts on federal, state and local Veteran resources.

Military Records

Veterans and their families may obtain one full set of the Veteran's military awards and decorations free of charge. Your local state of Illinois Veteran Service Officer can help. Apply here: <https://www.illinois.gov/veterans/programs/Pages/MilitaryRecords.aspx>.

The Lincoln Champion Award

The Abraham Lincoln Veteran Champion Award (previously the Veteran of the Month award) highlights and honors the work of Illinois Veterans whose contributions in service to the Veteran community and their local communities are truly above and beyond. Nominees are evaluated on the basis of their leadership, dedication, innovation, and impact in serving these communities. Award recipients are those whose efforts add to the powerful narrative that Veterans are dedicated, lifelong public servants from whose efforts all of Illinois' communities stand to benefit. To learn more about this award visit:

<http://www.illinois.gov/veterans/programs/Pages/Awards.aspx>

Vets Cash

During my time working for the IDVA, I helped create the Illinois Lottery Veterans Cash Grant Program. It has provided nearly \$12 million for programs to help Veterans throughout Illinois. All proceeds from ticket sales are deposited into the Illinois Veterans Assistance Fund, making it the first Illinois Lottery instant scratch-off ticket for which 100 percent of the net proceeds are dedicated to support Illinois Veterans. To learn more or apply for a grant visit:

<https://www.illinois.gov/veterans/programs/Pages/veterans-cash.aspx>.

Veterans Homes

There are four Veterans' Homes in Illinois that provide quality long-term skilled care and services to resident members. Each home is licensed by the Illinois Department of Public Health and certified by the US Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center of jurisdiction. The Homes work closely with the local healthcare community to ensure that each resident's specific health care needs are available and met. You can find full addresses for each home in Appendix 2. More information here: <http://www.illinois.gov/veterans/homes/Pages/default.aspx>.

Veteran Tax Credit for Employers

While IDVA, I also worked on tax credits for employers who hire Veterans. Illinois employers can now earn a State income tax credit of up to \$5,000 annually for hiring Veterans of Operation Desert Storm, Operation Enduring Freedom, or Operation Iraqi Freedom. The credit is 10 percent of the total wages paid to every qualified Veteran hired after January 1, 2010. Veterans

must work at least 185 days during the tax year for the employer to qualify for the Veteran's Tax Credit. To learn more, visit: http://www.ides.illinois.gov/Pages/Tax_Credit_Programs.aspx.

Veteran Service Officers (VSOs)

The IDVA VSOs are trained and accredited by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to provide free assistance to Veterans and their dependents and survivors. This includes not only applying for federal and state benefits but also providing resources related to the following:

- Compensation and Pension
- Health Care
- Education & Training
- Employment
- Burial & Survivor
- Housing
- Permits
- Transportation
- Military Records

To find a VSO nearest you, visit <http://www2.illinois.gov/veterans/Pages/ServiceOffices.aspx> or see Appendix 2 at the end of this document.

This information was compiled using information from veterans.illinois.gov.

Veterans' Benefit Expiration Dates

Many of your benefits have an [expiration date](#). Below are a few important ones to remember so you don't lose out.

Post 9/11 GI Bill: The Post-9/11 GI Bill provides up to 36 months of education benefits, generally payable for 15 years following your release from active duty. The GI Bill Calculator can be found here: <http://newgibill.org/calculator/>. You also have the option to transfer the unused portion of your GI bill to your spouse or children if DoD determines they are eligible. The criteria can be found here: http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/post911_transfer.asp.

Montgomery GI Bill for Active-Duty (MGIB): 10 years from date of last discharge or release from active duty.

Veterans Education Assistance Program (VEAP): 10 years from date of last discharge or release from active duty.

Montgomery GI Bill for Selected Reserve (MGIB-SR): 14 years from the date of eligibility for the program, or until released from the Selected Reserve or National Guard. Some extensions available if activated.

Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VocRehab): Generally, 12 years of separation from service or within 12 years of being awarded service-connected VA disability compensation.

Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI): Coverage ends 120 days after separation or can be extended up to 1 year for totally disabled Veterans.

Veterans Group Life Insurance (VGLI): This program allows the conversion of SGLI coverage to those discharged from service. You must roll over your SGLI to VGLI within 120 days of discharge to be eligible. Coverage rates will increase compared to SGLI.

Social Security Military Credit: If you served in the military before 1957 you did not pay Social Security taxes, but Social Security may give you special credit for some of your service. Under certain circumstances, special earnings can be credited to your military pay record for Social Security purposes. These extra earnings are for periods of active duty or active duty for training, and may help you qualify for Social Security or increase the amount of your Social Security benefit. NOTE: Social Security will add these extra earnings to your earnings record when you file for retirement or disability benefits. You may be asked to provide proof of military service when you apply.

Aid and Attendance (A&A): The Aid and Attendance (A&A) Special Pension is a benefit paid in addition to a Veteran's monthly pension that is available to help offset some of the costs of nursing homes, assisted living communities, personal care homes or homecare expenses. Married Veterans are eligible for up to \$2,085/month, single Veterans up to \$1,758/month and widows of Veterans up to \$1,130/month. It is available to the Veteran, spouse or widow/er who served at least ninety days of active service, one of which was during wartime (including those who served stateside). Applicable Veterans must have been honorably discharged.

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Family Caregiver Program (FCP): Through the FCP Eligible post-9/11 Veterans will have the option to receive their care in a home setting from a primary Family Caregiver. Veterans can download a copy of the Family Caregiver program application (VA CG 10-10) at www.caregiver.va.gov. The application enables the Veteran to designate a primary Family Caregiver and secondary Family Caregivers if needed. Caregiver Support Coordinators are stationed at every VA medical center and via phone at 1-(877)222 VETS (8387) to assist Veterans and their Family Caregivers with the application process.

This information was compiled using resources from Military.com.

Additional Resources for Veterans

Housing:

- The Department of Housing and Urban Development – VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Program is a joint effort between HUD and VA to move Veterans and their families out of homelessness and into permanent housing. HUD provides housing assistance through its Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) that allows homeless Veterans to rent privately owned housing. Visit <http://www.va.gov/homeless/hud-vash.asp> to learn more.
- VA provides Service members, Veterans, and eligible surviving spouses with home loan guaranty benefit and other housing-related programs to help buy, build, repair, retain, or adapt a home. VA Home Loans are provided by private lenders, such as banks and mortgage companies. VA guarantees a portion of the loan, enabling the lender to provide you with more favorable terms.
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides loans and guaranties to buy, improve or operate farms. These are generally available to those returning to or looking to move to towns with a population of 20,000 or less. For more information, see Appendix 3.
- Housing and Urban Development (HUD) sponsors the Veteran Resource Center (HUDVET), which works with national Veterans service organizations to serve as a general information center on all HUD-sponsored housing and community development programs and services. To contact HUDVET, call 1-(800)998-9999, TDD 1-(800)483-2209, or visit www.hud.gov/hudvet.
- Veterans are eligible to live in the Armed Forces Retirement Homes located in Gulfport, Miss., or Washington, D.C., if their active duty military service is at least 50 percent enlisted, warrant officer or limited duty officer if they qualify under one of the following categories: Are 60 years of age or older; and were discharged or released under honorable conditions after 20 or more years of active service. More information on this topic can be found in Appendix 3.
- The Midwest Shelter for Homeless Veterans has limited openings for Veterans experiencing homelessness in the Chicagoland area. They are located at 433 S. Carlton Ave., Wheaton, IL and can be reached by phone at (630)871-VETS.
- The Veterans' Homes mentioned above also can provide housing for Veterans. Each home is licensed by the Illinois Department of Public Health and certified by the US Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center of jurisdiction. You can find full addresses for each home in Appendix 2. More information here: <http://www.illinois.gov/veterans/homes/Pages/default.aspx>

Other Housing-Related Resources

- Jesse Brown VA and Hines VA host a Veterans pantry that is a collaboration between the Greater Chicago Food Depository, the hospitals & AmeriCorps. The pantry distributes fresh produce and shelf-stable items every Tuesday from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. You can learn more about the pantry www.chicagosfoodbank.org
- County Veterans Assistance Commissions (VACs) have limited rent and sustenance emergency funds. Check the status of your county at one of the following links: Cook: <http://bit.ly/1OjXzk4> DuPage: <http://bit.ly/1axfQeN> Kane: www.goo.gl/OQsZp6

Financial Assistance

- Disabled Military Retirees may be eligible to claim a federal tax refund through the IRS based on an increase in their disability rating percentage from VA, or, if combat disabled, applying for and being granted Combat- Related Special Compensation after an award for Concurrent Retirement and Disability. Additional information on this process can be found in Appendix 3.
- Monthly retirement, disability, and survivor benefits under Social Security are payable to Veterans and dependents if the Veteran has earned enough work credits under the program.
- The VA Home Loan Program offers service members, both deployed and non-deployed, a loan guaranty program that is generally capped at \$417,000 per loan. The program allows purchasers to obtain an original loan or refinance a pre-existing loan, and the purchasing party may choose the amount of the down payment, to include no money down. More information can be found at <http://www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/>.
- County Veterans Assistance Commissions (VACs) have the capability to provide financial assistance. Contact your county's VAC at one of the following links: Cook: <http://bit.ly/1OjXzk4> DuPage: <http://bit.ly/1axfQeN> Kane: www.goo.gl/OQsZp6

Legal Aid:

- Veterans Legal Support Clinic/John Marshall Law School offers free legal aid to all Veterans. They can be reached at (312)427-2737 x346 or at 315 S. Plymouth Ct., Chicago, IL 60604.
- National Veterans Law Service Program offers free legal aid to Veterans. They can be reached at (202)265-8305 or at P.O. Box 65762, Washington, DC 20035.

Transportation and Disability Services:

- Disabled American Veterans (DAV) operates a nationwide volunteer transportation network to transport veterans with disabilities to VA medical facilities. Contact the Disabled American Veterans at www.dav.org for additional information.
- Veterans Assistance Commissions in each county are dedicated to the assistance and support of Illinois Veterans. They are designed to provide needed services, including financial aid, veteran services, transportation and advocacy services to military veterans and their families that reside in each county. You can contact them at www.iacvac.org.

Hunger:

- Jesse Brown VA and Hines VA host a Veterans pantry that is a collaboration between the Greater Chicago Food Depository, the hospital & AmeriCorps. The pantry distributes fresh produce and shelf-stable items every Tuesday from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. You can learn more about the pantry www.chicagosfoodbank.org

Education:

- Educational Opportunities for Children (10-18 Yrs): Financial aid is provided annually to each child between the ages of 10 and 18 years of a Veteran who died or became totally disabled as a result of service in the Armed Forces during World War I, or II, the Korean and Vietnam Conflicts or beginning February 1, 1955, until such individuals are no longer eligible for induction under the Universal Military Training and Service Act. Attendance means a state educational institution of elementary grade, a high school or business college, vocational training school or other educational institution.
- The Illinois Veteran Grant (IVG) Program pays tuition and certain fees at all Illinois state-supported colleges, universities and community colleges for Illinois residents. If you have served at least one year of federal Active Duty service; or served on federal active duty service in a foreign country during a time of hostilities in that country and were honorably discharged or are honorably serving currently, you may be eligible. Click www.isac.org to apply.
- The University of Illinois offers a select amount of tuition waivers and fee waivers for children of Veterans. To apply for this scholarship, visit:
<https://secure.admin.illinois.edu/osfa/scholarship-database/detail.aspx?id=1522>.

Resources for Women Veterans

VA Health Care for Women Veterans

- At each VA medical center nationwide, a Women Veterans Program Manager (WVPM) is designated to advise and advocate for women Veterans. The WVPM can help coordinate all the services you may need, from primary care to specialized care for chronic conditions or reproductive health. Woman Veterans who are interested in receiving care at VA should contact the nearest VA Medical Center and ask for the WVPM.

VA Benefits for Victims of Military Sexual Trauma

- VA has special services available to help men and women who experienced Military Sexual Trauma (MST), including free, confidential counseling and treatment for mental and physical health conditions related to MST. You do not need to have a service-connected disability or injury, and may be able to receive this benefit even if you are not eligible for other VA care. You do not need to have reported the incidents when they happened or have other documentation that they occurred in order to receive MST services.
- Every VA facility has a designated MST Coordinator who serves as a contact person for MST-related issues. This person is your advocate and can help you find and access VA services and programs, state and federal benefits, and community resources. You can learn more about these resources at www.mentalhealth.va.gov/msthome.asp. At Hines VA, the military sexual trauma coordinator is Kristin Lopez. She can be reached at (708)202-4718. At Jesse Brown VA, the military sexual trauma coordinator is Jenny Garretson. She can be reached at (312)287-0154.

Employment Resources for Veterans

We must help our service men and women more easily transition into the private sector. Our nation's heroes deserve to return to an America full of opportunities so they can thrive and succeed after serving our great nation.

Federal Employment and Education Resources

[eBenefits Veterans Employment Center](#)
[Department of Labor Veteran's Employment and Training Service \(VETS\)](#)
[VETS Staff Directory – Chicago Region](#)
[Department of Labor Resources for Employers](#)
[GI Bill Benefit Information](#)
[USAJOBS](#)

Illinois Employment and Education Resources

[Illinois Joining Forces \(IJF\) - Illinois Military and Veteran Job Resources](#)
[Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs Education Benefit Resources](#)
[Illinois Department of Employment Security – Veteran Services](#)

Private Sector Employment Resources

[Hiring Our Heroes - Chamber of Commerce Employment Initiative for Veterans, Spouses, and Employers](#)
[Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America - Job and Career Links](#)
[Get Skills to Work - An effort to connect veterans and businesses for the good of both](#)
[Military.com / MONSTER.com 'Job Skills Translator'](#)
[Helmets to Hardhats](#)
[Troops to Teachers](#)
[Teamsters Military Assistance Program](#)
[Plumbers and Pipe Fitters Union Vets Academy and Apprenticeship Program](#)
[Electrician Apprenticeship Programs for Veterans](#)

Employers in the 8th District Looking to Hire Veterans

[Sears Holdings](#)
[Northrop Grumman](#)
[Amtrak](#)
[Standfast Manufacturing](#)
[Wiegel Tool Works, Inc.](#)

If my office can be of service during your search for employment, or if you would like to send us your resume, please contact us at (847)413-1959 or doinfo.tammy@mail.house.gov.

Resources for Employers Looking to Hire Veterans

Our nation's heroes deserve to return to an America full of opportunities so they can thrive and succeed after serving our great nation. If your company is hiring and you are looking to add a Veteran to your team, please visit the resources below.

Federal Resources

[Feds Hire Vets](#)
[eBenefits VA Employer Portal](#)
[USA Jobs](#)
[Military One Source](#)
[Department of Labor Resources for Employers](#)
[Department of Labor Tool Kit for Hiring Veterans](#)
[Warrior Gateway](#)
[Department of Veterans Affairs Employment Center](#)

Illinois Resources

[Illinois Hires Our Heroes Consortium](#)
[Illinois Joining Forces](#)
[Illinois Department of Employment Security Guide to Hiring Veterans](#)

Colleges and Universities in and around the 8th District

[Harper College Job Placement Resource Center](#)
[University of Illinois at Chicago Student Veterans Association](#)
[Elgin Community College](#)
[College of DuPage](#)

Resources in the Private Sector

[The Veterans of Foreign Wars Vet Jobs](#)
[Chamber of Commerce Hiring Our Heroes](#)

If your organization would like to be added to our Employers Looking to Hire Veterans list, please email more information to doinfo.tammy@mail.house.gov.

Community Partners

There are many organizations in our communities committed to helping Veterans succeed. Below is a sampling of organizations that could be helpful to you as you explore options available for your specific needs. Be wary of organizations that are not fully developed or vetted by the already-established Veteran Service Organizations, as there are many deceptive organizations claiming to help Veterans in our country. For a comprehensive list of Congressionally-chartered Veteran Service Organizations, visit <http://veterans.house.gov/citizens/resources>.

Veterans of Foreign Wars

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. are the official nonprofit service organization for USA military Veterans benefits, VFW programs and community service. To find a VFW near you, visit <https://www.vfw.org/oms/findpost.aspx>.

American Legion

The American Legion was chartered and incorporated by Congress in 1919 as a patriotic Veterans organization devoted to mutual helpfulness. It is the nation's largest wartime Veterans service organization, with programs for mentoring youth and sponsorship of programs in our communities, promoting strong national security, and supporting our fellow service members and Veterans. To find a post near you, visit http://www.members.legion.org/CGI-BIN/lansaweb?webapp=MYLEPOST+webtrn=wr_dsplcr+ml=LANSA:XHTML+part=TAL+lang=ENG.

Disabled Veterans of America (DAV)

The DAV provides free, professional assistance to Veterans and their families in obtaining benefits and services earned through military service and provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and other agencies of government.

AMVETS

AMVETS (or American Veterans) assists Veterans and sponsors programs that serve our country and its citizens. Membership in AMVETS is open to anyone who is currently serving, or who has honorably served, in the U.S. Armed Forces from World War II to the present, to include the National Guard and Reserves. Learn more about their programs here:

Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA)

Paralyzed Veterans of America is an organization dedicated to Veterans service, medical research and civil rights for people with disabilities. PVA has national officers and 34 chapters in all 50 states assisting Veterans with disabilities.

Blind Veterans of America

The Blinded Veterans Association (BVA) is an organization of blinded Veterans helping blinded Veterans. There is no charge for any BVA service and membership is not a prerequisite to obtain help. All legally blinded Veterans are eligible for BVA's assistance whether they become blind during or after active duty military service.

The Military Order of the Purple Heart

Chartered by Congress in 1958, The Military Order of the Purple Heart is composed of military men and women who received the Purple Heart Medal for wounds suffered in combat. Although membership is restricted to the combat wounded, they support all Veterans and their families with a myriad of nation-wide programs by Chapters and National Service Officers.

Wounded Warrior Project

The WWP mission is to honor and empower Wounded Warriors who incurred a physical or mental injury, illnesses, or wound, co-incident to military service on or after September 11, 2001. You may also be eligible for the program if you are the family member or caregiver of a Wounded Warrior.

Korean War Veterans Association (KWVA)

The KWVA provides assistance to Korean War Veterans and Korean War Memorial sites across the country. If you honorably served in Korea as a member of the U.S. Armed Forces September 3, 1945 to present, or served outside of Korea June 25, 1950 to Jan. 31, 1955, you qualify to be a Regular Member of the Korean War Veterans Association.

Veterans Assistance Commissions (VACs)

Cook, Kane and DuPage County all have Veterans Assistance Commissions which serve the purpose of providing emergency financial assistance to indigent Veterans and their families. The VAC also provides non-financial services and seeks to identify and provide for other needs that Veterans and their families may have. To learn more about these commissions, visit their webpages at the following links. Cook: <http://www.cookcountyil.gov/veterans-assistance-commission/>, Kane: <http://www.countyofkane.org/pages/veterans.aspx>, and DuPage: <http://www.dupageco.org/vac/>.

Donating to Veterans Organizations and Volunteering with Veterans

If you are interested in donating goods, services or time to a Veterans organization, please reach out to my District Office directly, and ask for our Veterans Outreach Coordinator at (847)413-1959. We will work to partner your talents and generosity with fully-vetted Veterans organizations within the 8th Congressional District. While we cannot accept any donations or make any donations through this office, we would be happy to connect you with the appropriate organization.

Grant Resources Available for Veteran Services

The office of Congresswoman Duckworth has a full time grants coordinator on staff to assist you with your grant application process, letters of support and other materials pertaining to grants. If you are interested in a letter of support or guidance on the grants process, please contact Trisha Chokshi, Grants Coordinator at 847-413-1959. She will be happy to assist you.

Grants.gov

A federal grant website offering numerous opportunities to organizations, cities, states, and individuals, Visit www.grants.gov and type in keyword "Veterans."

U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs' Homeless Providers Grant & Per Diem Program

A [federal program](#), that assists public and non-profit private entities in establishing programs and service centers to provide supportive services and housing for homeless Veterans.

The Foundation Center

A comprehensive [database](#), with information on grant makers, and their grants with grants specifically for Veterans.

Veterans Cash

Veterans Cash is a lottery ticket program which has funded programs for Veterans throughout Illinois in the form of grants. Learn more here:
<http://www2.illinois.gov/veterans/programs/pages/veterans-cash.aspx>

The Home Depot Foundation

A [program](#), awarding grants to organizations, which aid Veterans through community projects as well as use Veterans as volunteers for said projects, grants are awarded in the form of Home Depot gift cards.

The McCormick Foundation

The Veterans Program invests in capacity building for non-profit organizations focusing on Veterans in the Chicagoland area. Learn more here: <http://www.mccormickfoundation.org/>

Disabled Veterans National Foundation

DVNF provides grants on a case-by-case basis to organizations that provide support to Veterans and disabled Veterans alike. Learn more here: <http://www.dvnf.org/veteran-organizations/organizational-grants/>

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TAMMY DUCKWORTH
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Appendix 1: Privacy Act Release Form

The Privacy Act of 1974 prohibits the disclosure of personal information without that individual's consent. In order to open a case on your behalf please complete this form and return it to my Congressional District Office. Please include copies of any relevant documents.

Title: _____ First Name: _____ Last Name: _____
Address: _____ Apt. # _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Home Phone: _____
Other Phone: _____
E-mail: _____
Social Security Number: _____ Date of Birth: _____
Alien Registration Number: _____
Veteran's Claim Number: _____
Military I.D. Number: _____
Branch of Service: _____ Dates of Service: _____
Other case or claim number(s): _____

Briefly explain your problem or the information you are requesting:

I agree to allow Congresswoman Tammy Duckworth to access any records relating to the problem described above.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please return this signed form by mail, fax or email to:

Office of Congresswoman Tammy Duckworth
1701 E. Woodfield Rd., Ste. 900
Schaumburg, IL 60173
Fax: (847)413-1965
Email: DOInfo.Tammy@mail.house.gov
For questions, please call the district office at (847)413-1959. Thank you.

Appendix 2: Veteran Service Officers in the 8th District and IL Veteran Homes

Cook County - James R. Thompson Center
James R. Thompson Center 100 W Randolph Suite 5-570 Chicago, IL 60601 VSO: Cynthia Green Ph: (312) 814-3326 Hours: 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM (Daily) Female Service Officer Available

Cook County
Schaumburg Township 1 Illinois Blvd Hoffman Estates, IL 60169 VSO: James Lopez Ph: (847) 884-0030 Ext. 2019 Hours: 9:00am-4:00pm (Thursday ONLY)

Cook County
Cook County Dept. of Corrections 2799 S. California Ave Chicago, IL 60608 VSO Mike Cameron Ph: (773)674-7100 9:00am to 4:00pm Friday No Public Access

Cook County-Evanston Vet Center
Evanston Vet Center 1901 Howard Street Evanston, IL 60202 VSO: Angel Montes Ph: (847) 332-1019 Hours: 9:00-4:00 (Every Monday & Wednesday)

Cook County #2
General Jones Armory 5200 S Cottage Grove Ave Room 101 - 103 North Chicago, IL 60615 VSO: Sharon Buchanan Ph: (773) 363-1492 VSO: Michelle Richards Ph: (773) 363-9851 Hours: 8:00 AM to 4:00 ...

Cook County #3
IL Dept. of Veterans Affairs National Guard Armory 1551 N Kedzie Ave Chicago, IL 60651 VSO: Angel Montes Ph: (773) 292-7894 Hours: 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM (Daily except Monday & Wednesday)

Cook County #4
IL Dept of Veterans Affairs 1010 Dixie Hwy - Suite 101 Chicago Heights, IL 60411 VSO: Michael Cameron Ph: (708) 754-6403 Hours: 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM (Daily except Friday)

Cook County #5
Chicago Regional VA Office 2122 Taylor St - Suite 127 Chicago, IL 60612 Hours: 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM (Daily) Ph: (312) 980-4512 Receptionist: Charles Simmons Ph: (312) 980-4512

Cook County #6
IL Dept. of Veterans Affairs Dept. of Employment Security 16845 S. Halsted Street Harvey, IL 60426 VSO: Charles Lawrence Ph: (708) 225-8030 Hours: 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM Daily

Cook County #7
IL Dept. of Veterans Affairs 1515 S. Harlem Avenue Unit 1B Forest Park, IL 60130 VSO: Robert Iverson Ph: (708)366-5020 Fax: (708)366-5059 Hours: 8:00am-4:30pm Daily

Cook County #9
Palatine Township 721 S Quentin Rd - Suite 102 Palatine, IL 60067 VSO: James Lopez Ph: (847)485-2772 Hours: 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM (Daily, Except Thursdays)

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Cook County #10

Village of Orland Park 14700 S Ravinia Ave Orland Park, IL 60462 VSO: Charletta Lutchter-Hayes Ph: (708) 403-2011 Hours: 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM (Daily) Female Service Officer Available

Cook County #11

Illinois Department of Veteran's Affairs Frisbie Senior Center 52 E. Northwest Highway Des Plaines, IL 60016 VSO: Cynthia McKee Ph: (847) 294-4664 Hours: 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM Female Service Officer Available.

DuPage County #1

IL Dept of Veterans Affairs 421 N County Farm Rd Room 2-600A Wheaton, IL 60187 VSO: Marcus Woodward Ph: (630) 690-9449. Hours: 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM (Daily)

DuPage County #2

Leyden Township 2501 N Mannheim Rd Franklin Park, IL 60131 VSO: Cynthia McKee Ph: (847) 451-5111 Hr: 8:00am - 4:00pm Female Service Officer Available.

Kane County #1

IL Dept of Veteran Affairs Elgin National Guard Armory 254 Raymond St Elgin, IL 60120 VSO: John Fanning Ph: (847) 608-0138 Hours: 8:00 AM to 3:30 PM (Daily).

Kane County #2

Dupage County Vet Center 750 Shoreline Dr., Suite 150 Aurora, IL 60504 VSO: Wesley Yi Ph: (630) 585-5372 Fax: (630) 585-5382 Hours: 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM (Daily).

VAC of Cook County

1100 S. Hamilton Avenue, Room C011, Chicago, IL 60612
Superintendent: Abundio "Al" Zaragoza, Abundio.zaragoza@cookcountyil.gov, (312)433-6010

VAC of DuPage County

421 N. County Farm Road, Wheaton, IL 60187, Superintendent: Steven Fixler,
dupagevac@dupageco.org, (630)407-5655

VAC of Kane County

Government Center, 719 S. Batavia Ave. Rm 104, Geneva, IL 60134
Superintendent: John Carr, carrjohn@co.kane.il.us, (630)232-3550

Veterans Homes:

The Adjutant Illinois Veterans Home - Anna
792 N. Main Street
Anna, Illinois 62906
Phone: (618) 833-6302

The Adjutant Illinois Veterans Home - LaSalle
1015 O'Connor Avenue
LaSalle, Illinois 61301
Phone: (815) 223-0303, ext. 210

The Adjutant Illinois Veterans Home - Manteno
1 Veterans Drive
Manteno, Illinois 60950
Phone: (815) 468–6581

The Adjutant Illinois Veterans Home - Quincy
1707 N. 12th Street
Quincy, Illinois 62301
Phone: (217) 222-8641

Appendix 3: Benefits Provided by Other Federal Agencies

Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents and Survivors

Internal Revenue Service

To file for additional assistance or tax relief, the disabled Military Retiree needs to file the amended return, Form 1040X, Amended U.S. Individual Income Tax Return, to correct a previously filed Form 1040, 1040A or 1040EZ. An amended return cannot be e-filed. It must be filed as a paper return. The filer should include all documents received from VA and any information received from Defense Finance and Accounting Service explaining proper tax treatment for the current year.

If needed, Military Retirees should seek assistance from a competent tax professional before filing amended returns based on a disability determination. Refund claims based on an incorrect interpretation of the tax law could subject the taxpayer to interest and/or penalty charges.

Complete information and requirements can be found here:

<http://www.irs.gov/Individuals/Military/Special-Tax-Considerations-for-Veterans>

USDA Provides Loans for Farms and Homes

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides loans and guaranties to buy, improve or operate farms. Loans and guaranties are generally available for housing in towns with a population up to 20,000. Applications from Veterans have preference. For further information, contact Farm Service Agency or Rural Development, USDA, 1400 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, DC 20250, or apply at local Department of Agriculture offices, usually located in county seats.

Veterans Receive Naturalization Preference

Honorable active duty service in the U.S. armed forces during a designated period of hostility allows an individual to naturalize without being required to establish any periods of residence or physical presence in the United States. A Service member who was in the United States, certain territories, or aboard an American public vessel at the time of enlistment, re-enlistment, extension of enlistment or induction, may naturalize even if he or she is not a lawful permanent resident. Additional information about filing and requirement fees and designated periods of hostility are available on the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Website at www.uscis.gov.

For additional information, USCIS has developed a web page, www.uscis.gov/military that contains information and links to services specifically for the military and their families. Members of the U.S. military and their families stationed around the world can also call USCIS for help with immigration services and benefits using a dedicated, toll-free help line at 1-877-CIS-4MIL (1-877-247-4645).

Small Business Administration (SBA)

Historically, Veterans do very well as small business entrepreneurs. Veterans interested in entrepreneurship and small business ownership should look to the U.S. Small Business Administration's Office of Veterans Business Development (OVBD) for assistance. OVBD conducts comprehensive outreach to Veterans, service-disabled Veterans, and Reservists of the U.S. military. OVBD also provides assistance to Veteran- and Reservist-owned small businesses. SBA is the primary federal agency responsible for assisting Veterans who own or are considering starting their own small businesses.

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Among the services provided by SBA are business-planning assistance, counseling, and training through community based Veterans Business Outreach Centers. For more information, go to www.sba.gov/aboutsba/sbaprograms/ovbd/OVBD_VBOP.html. There are more than 1,000 university-based Small Business Development Centers; nearly 400 SCORE chapters (www.score.org/Veteran.html) with 11,000 volunteer counselors, many of whom are Veterans; and 100 Women's Business Centers.

SBA also manages a range of special small business lending programs at thousands of locations, ranging from Micro Loans to the Military-community-targeted Patriot Express Pilot Loan, to venture capital and Surety Bond Guarantees (www.sba.gov/services/financialassistance/index.html). Veterans also participate in all SBA federal procurement programs, including a special 3 percent federal procurement goal specifically for service-connected disabled Veterans, and SBA supports Veterans and others participating in international trade.

A special Military Reservist Economic Injury Disaster Loan (www.sba.gov/reservists) is available for self-employed Reservists whose small businesses may be damaged through the absence of the owner or an essential employee as a result of Title 10 activation to Active Duty.

A Veterans Business Development Officer is stationed at every SBA District Office to act as a guide to Veterans, and SBA offers a full range of self-paced small business planning assistance at www.sba.gov/survey/checklist/index.cgi for Veterans, Reservists, discharging Service members, and their families. Information about the full range of services can be found at www.sba.gov/about-offices-content/1/2985, or by calling (202)205-6773 or 1-800-U-ASK-SBA (1-800-827-5722).

Social Security Administration

Upon the Veteran's death, a one-time payment of \$255 may be made to the Veteran's spouse or child. In addition, a Veteran may qualify at age 65 for Medicare's hospital insurance and medical insurance. Medicare protection is available to people who have received Social Security disability benefits for 24 months, and to insured people and their dependents who need dialysis or kidney transplants, or who have amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (more commonly known as Lou Gehrig's disease).

Since 1957, military service earnings for active duty (including active duty for training) have counted toward Social Security, and those earnings are already on Social Security records. Since 1988, inactive duty service in the Reserve Component (such as weekend drills) has also been covered by Social Security. Service members and Veterans are credited with \$300 in additional earnings for each calendar quarter in which they received active duty basic pay after 1956 and before 1978.

Veterans who served in the military from 1978 through 2001 are credited with an additional \$100 in earnings for each \$300 in active duty basic pay, up to a maximum of \$1,200 a year. No additional Social Security taxes are withheld from pay for these extra credits. Veterans who enlisted after Sept. 7, 1980, and did not complete at least 24 months of active duty or their full tour of duty, may not be able to receive the additional earnings. Check with Social Security for details. Additional earnings will no longer be credited for military service periods after 2001. Also, non-contributory Social Security earnings of \$160 a month may be credited to Veterans who served after Sept. 15, 1940, and before 1957, including attendance at service academies.

For information, call 1-800-772-1213 or visit www.socialsecurity.gov/. (Note: Social Security cannot add these extra earnings to the record until an application is filed for Social Security benefits).

Armed Forces Retirement Homes

Veterans are eligible to live in the Armed Forces Retirement Homes located in Gulfport, Miss., or Washington, D.C., if their active duty military service is at least 50 percent enlisted, warrant officer or limited duty officer if they qualify under one of the following categories:

Are 60 years of age or older; and were discharged or released under honorable conditions after 20 or more years of active service.

Served in a war theater during a time of war declared by Congress or were eligible for hostile-fire special pay and were discharged or released under honorable conditions; and are determined to be incapable of earning a livelihood because of injuries, disease or disability. Served in a women's component of the armed forces before June 12, 1948; and are determined to be eligible for admission due to compelling personal circumstances.

Eligibility determinations are based on rules prescribed by the Home's Chief Operating Officer. Veterans are not eligible if they have been convicted of a felony or are not free from alcohol, drug or psychiatric problems. Married couples are welcome, but both must be eligible in their own right. At the time of admission, applicants must be capable of living independently. The Armed Forces Retirement Home is an independent federal agency. For information, call 1-800-332-3527 or 1-800-422-9988, or visit www.afrh.gov/.

Commissary and Exchange Privileges

Unlimited commissary and exchange store privileges in the United States are available to honorably discharged Veterans with a service-connected disability rated at 100 percent or totally disabling, and to the un-remarried surviving spouses and dependents of Service members who die on active duty, military retirees, recipients of the Medal of Honor, and Veterans whose service-connected disability was rated 100 percent or totally disabling at the time of death. Certification of total disability is done by VA. National Guard Reservists and their dependents may also be eligible. Privileges overseas are governed by international law and are available only if agreed upon by the foreign government concerned.

Though these benefits are provided by DOD, VA does provide assistance in completing DD Form 1172, "Application for Uniformed Services Identification and Privilege Card." For detailed information, contact the nearest military installation.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services provides funding to states to help low-income households with their heating and home energy costs under the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). LIHEAP can also assist with insulating homes to make them more energy efficient and reduce energy costs. The LIHEAP program in your community determines if your household's income qualifies for the program, to find out where to apply call 1-866-674-6327 or e-mail energy@ncat.org 7 a.m. - 5 p.m. (Mountain Time). More information can be found here: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/liheap/#index.html>