

# A Guide for RETURNING VETERANS

As a public service, The San Francisco Chronicle has compiled this guide to benefits, entitlements and services available to veterans in the Bay Area.

## COUNSELING

**VA Medical Centers** offer mental health and substance abuse treatment, including services for combat-related stress and readjustment issues.

**Martinez** —  
Mental Health Clinic (925) 372-2105

**Palo Alto and Menlo Park** —  
Specialized mental health consult team (866) 717-1978

**San Francisco** —  
Central Access Mental Health Service (415) 750-6674

### Local Vet Center

Vet centers offer broad readjustment services. They focus on counseling for military traumas, employment and family problems. They also provide referral services for VA benefits and medical assistance and liaisons with community agencies.

### Concord Vet Center

1899 Clayton Road, Suite 140  
Concord, CA 94520 (925) 680-4526

### Oakland Vet Center

1504 Franklin Street, Suite 200  
Oakland, CA 94612 (510) 763-3904

### Peninsula Vet Center

2946 Broadway Street  
Redwood City, CA 94062-1594  
(650) 299-0672

### Rohnert Park Vet Center

6225 State Farm Drive, Suite 101  
Rohnert Park, CA 94928 (707) 586-3295

### San Francisco Vet Center

505 Polk Street  
San Francisco, CA 94110 (415) 441-5051

## HOUSING

### Department of Housing and Urban Development Veteran Resource Center

(800) 998-9999  
[www.hud.gov/hudvet](http://www.hud.gov/hudvet)  
San Francisco Regional HUD Office  
450 Golden Gate Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94110-3448  
(415) 489-6400

### Resources for the Homeless

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides hands-on assistance directly to homeless veterans. The VA conducts outreach to connect homeless veterans to both mainstream and homeless-specific VA programs and benefits. Contact your local VA for assistance, or the homeless outreach coordinator at the locations below:

**Martinez** (925) 580-5950

**Oakland** (510) 587-3440

**Palo Alto and Menlo Park**

(650) 493-5000, ext. 22460

**San Francisco** (415) 551-7300

### National Coalition of Homeless Veterans

Provides help to homeless veterans.  
Call to find a local shelter.  
(800) VET-HELP (800-838-4357)

### Vietnam Veterans of California, Inc.

A member of the California Association of Veteran Service Agencies, this nonprofit corporation offers community-based services to veterans and their families. Contact the North Bay Resource Center for further details.  
(707) 578-8387

### Next Step

Provides employment and housing services to veterans. This organization is a division of Vietnam Veterans of California.  
795 Willow Road, # 116B6,  
Building 323-A,  
Menlo Park, CA 94025  
(650) 566-0240  
24-hour (650) 326-4526  
FAX (650) 566-8650

### The Homeless Veterans Emergency Housing Facility (HVEHF)

A branch of VA Palo Alto, located in Menlo Park, HVEHF combines emergency shelter, transitional housing and supportive services in one location — on the hospital grounds. For a phone screen or to request an outreach visit, call (650) 493-5000, ext. 22044.

### Homeless Veterans Rehabilitation Program (HVRP)

A component program at VA Palo Alto, HVRP treats homeless and substance dependent veterans through an intense and demanding six-month program. Veterans learn job skills, relapse prevention strategies and a host of other skills through group meetings and classes. Call to apply for this program.  
(800) 848-7254

### Home Loans

Veterans can apply for a VA loan with any mortgage lender that participates in the VA home loan program. VA guaranteed loans are made by private lenders like banks, savings and loans or mortgage companies to eligible veterans for the purchase of a home for their own personal occupancy.

### California Dept. of Veterans Affairs

1227 O Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
(800) 952-5626  
(press 1 for home loan information)  
[www.cdva.ca.gov/calvet](http://www.cdva.ca.gov/calvet)

### Dept. of VA Loan Guaranty Customer Service Office

(888) 244-6711  
[www.homeloans.va.gov](http://www.homeloans.va.gov)

## EDUCATION

**California Department of  
Veterans Affairs** (800) 952-5626  
(press 5 for information on education)

### College Tuition Fee Waivers for Veterans' Dependents

Children, spouses and unmarried surviving spouses of veterans may be eligible to have tuition and fees waived at any California community college, California State University or University of California. Contact your local County Veterans Service Office (under General Assistance) for more information.  
Information and an application form at [www.cdva.ca.gov/service/feewaiver.asp](http://www.cdva.ca.gov/service/feewaiver.asp)

### GI Bill/VA Education Services

Information on what education benefits are available under the GI Bill and the Dependents Educational Assistance program (DEA).  
(888) GIBILL-1 (442-4551)  
[www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov)

### Vocational Rehabilitation

For information on training and rehabilitation for veterans with service-connected disabilities (vocational rehabilitation), call the VA Education benefits hotline: (888) 442-4551  
or go to [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) and click on "vocational rehab."

## TUITION ASSISTANCE SCHOLARSHIP RESOURCES

### Air Force Aid Society

AFAS's mission is to relieve financial distress of Air Force members and their families and to assist in financing their higher-education goals. Contact the Family Support Center at Travis AFB for more information. (707) 424-2486  
[www.afas.org/body\\_grant.htm](http://www.afas.org/body_grant.htm)

### DoD Voluntary Educational Programs

Online links to scholarships and student loan information.  
[www.voled.doded.mil](http://www.voled.doded.mil)

### FinAid

Lists of scholarships, grants and financial aid available to veterans and their dependents. The site provides forms.  
[www.finaid.org/military](http://www.finaid.org/military)

### Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society

The Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society's education programs help eligible Navy and Marine Corps families by providing education financing. Awards are based on need. (703) 696-4904  
[www.nmcrs.org/education](http://www.nmcrs.org/education)

### Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges

This consortium of colleges and universities provides educational opportunities for servicemembers and their families. (800) 368-5622  
[www.soc.aascu.org](http://www.soc.aascu.org)

## EMPLOYMENT

### U.S. Department of Labor

Veterans' Employment and Training Service  
Regional Office, 71 Stevenson Street,  
Suite 705, San Francisco, CA 94105  
(415) 975-4700

### Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP)

Job and training opportunities, with emphasis on veterans with service-connected disabilities, make up DVOP. Specialists provide outreach and offer assistance by promoting community and employer support for employment and training opportunities, including apprenticeship and on-the-job-training.

### Local Veterans' Employment

**Representatives (LVERs)** are state employees in state employment service local offices who provide assistance to veterans by supervising the provision of all services, including counseling, testing and identifying training and employment opportunities.

### Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise

Certified veterans can participate in the state-mandated goal of awarding 3 percent of all state contracts to disabled veterans through the DVBE program.  
Office of Small Business and DVBE Certification  
707 3rd Street, 1st Floor, Room 400  
West Sacramento, CA 95605  
(916) 375-4940  
(800) 952-5626 (press 7 for DVBE)

### Employment and Unemployment Insurance

Assistance in obtaining training, employment and unemployment insurance.

**English** (800) 300-5616

**Spanish** (800) 326-8937

**Chinese** (800) 547-3506

**Vietnamese** (800) 547-2058

### Civil Service Jobs

Veterans are entitled to preference for civil service jobs filled by competitive exams.  
(202) 606-1800  
[www.usajobs.opm.gov](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov)

### Helmet to Hardhats

This program places men and women from the Armed Forces into building and construction careers.  
(866) 741-6210  
[www.helmetstohardhats.com](http://www.helmetstohardhats.com)

### Troops To Teachers

This U.S. Department of Education and Department of Defense program helps eligible military personnel begin new careers as teachers in public schools where their skills, knowledge and experience are most needed.

Central & Northern California Office  
(916) 924-3605  
[www.proudetoserveagain.com](http://www.proudetoserveagain.com)

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### VetJobs.com

VetJobs.com connects civilian sector jobs with highly trained veterans.  
(877) Vet-Jobs (877-838-5627)

### Employment Development Department (EDD) Veterans Services Program

All EDD Job Service offices have specially-trained staff to ensure veterans receive maximum employment and training opportunities. To make an appointment with a Veterans Employment Representative or a Disabled Veterans Outreach Specialist, contact your local EDD Job Service Office.  
**Campbell** (408) 369-3606  
**Daly City** (650) 301-8440  
**Fort Bragg** (707) 964-3295  
**Gilroy** (408) 842-2165  
**Hayward** (510) 259-3500  
**Lakeport** (707) 262-3105  
**Oakland** (510) 563-5200  
**Pleasant Hill** (925) 602-1521  
**Richmond** (510) 970-7379  
**San Carlos** (650) 802-5000  
**San Francisco** (415) 749-7503  
**San Rafael** (415) 473-3330  
**Santa Rosa** (707) 576-2850  
**Suisun** (707) 863-3570  
**Sunnyvale** (408) 774-2365  
**Ukiah** (707) 463-5710  
**Vallejo** (707) 648-4024

### BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

**Small Business Administration (SBA)**  
SBA provides services to veterans thinking of starting a small business.  
(800) 827-5722  
San Francisco (415) 744-6820

**Veterans Online Business Registry (VETBIZ)**  
(866) 584-2344 www.vip.vetbiz.gov

### GENERAL ASSISTANCE

These state agencies provide advocacy for veterans, benefits, counseling and other services.

**CA Department of Veterans Affairs**  
1227 O Street, Sacramento, CA 95814  
1 (800) 952-5626  
1 (800) 324-5966 (TDD)  
www.cdva.ca.gov

**County Veterans Service Offices** These county offices are entities of local government and are made up of trained accredited claims representatives. As advocates of veterans, their dependents and survivors, they assist the claimant with filing claims for entitlements from the Department of Veterans Affairs and provide case management even after the DVA renders its decision.

**Alameda County**, 6955 Foothill Blvd., Suite 300, Oakland 94605 (510) 577-3547  
**Contra Costa County**, 10 Douglas Drive, #100, Martinez 94553 (925) 313-1481  
**Lake County**, 255 North Forbes Street, Lakeport 95453 (707) 263-2384  
**Marin County**, 10 North San Pedro Rd., Suite 1010, San Rafael 94903 (415) 499-6193  
**Mendocino County**, 290 East Gobbi Street, Ukiah 95482 (707) 463-4226  
**Napa County**, 900 Coombs St., Room 257, Napa 94559 (707) 253-4558  
**San Francisco County**, 875 Stevenson Street, Suite 250, San Francisco 94103 (800) 807-5799

**San Mateo County**, 550 Quarry Road, San Carlos 94070 (650) 802-6598  
**Santa Clara County**, 68 North Winchester Blvd., Santa Clara 95050 (408) 553-6000  
**Solano County**, 711 Empire Street, Fairfield 94533 (707) 421-6590  
**Sonoma County**, 2250 N. Point Park Way, Santa Rosa 95407 (707) 565-5960

### VETERAN SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

The following nonprofit organizations help veterans navigate the VA system and advocate for veterans' rights. They are not affiliated with the government.

#### American Legion

American Legion provides all-around assistance for veterans and their families, including information on loans, employment and benefits.  
Veterans War Memorial Bldg.  
401 Van Ness Ave., Ste. 117  
San Francisco, CA 94102-4587  
(415) 431-2400 www.calegion.org

#### American Veterans (AMVETS)

Free counseling and claims assistance for honorably discharged veterans and dependents.  
(877) 7-AMVETS (877-726-8387)  
www.amvets.org

#### Disabled American Veterans (DAV)

Advice on filing claims, especially for service members in transition with a disability. Also offers transportation to facilities for treatment.  
Disabled American Veterans  
VARO Oakland Federal Building  
1301 Clay Street, Room 1110 North Oakland, CA 94612-5209  
(510) 834-2921; (510) 834-2959  
www.dav.org

#### Paralyzed Veterans of America

A congressionally chartered veteran service organization providing expertise on the special needs of veterans who have experienced spinal cord injury or dysfunction by providing quality health care for members, research and education, benefits, civil rights and opportunities that maximize the independence of members.  
Bay Area and Western Chapter  
3801 Miranda Avenue, Building 101  
Room A1-219, MC 3816  
Palo Alto, CA 94304  
(800) 273-6789  
www.pva.org

#### Swords to Plowshares

This community-based organization provides counseling and case management, employment and training, housing and legal assistance to veterans in the Bay Area.  
1060 Howard Street  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
(415) 252-4788  
www.swords-to-plowshares.org

#### Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)

The VFW assists veterans and their dependents in obtaining federal or state entitlements.  
(800) 839-1899  
www.vfw.org

#### United Service Organization (USO)

Provides information, welfare and recreation-type services to uniformed military personnel.  
San Francisco International Airport  
(650) 761-4611 (24-hour)

### MEDICAL

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**  
(800) 827-1000

#### VA HEALTH BENEFITS

VA provides recently discharged veterans who served in Iraq or Afghanistan two years of free medical and mental health care, beginning on the date of separation, for all illnesses and injuries related to military service. Other medical care is subject to co-pay, depending on the veteran's income. For eligibility and enrollment information: (877) 222-VETS (8387)  
VA telephone care: (800) 733-0502  
www.va.gov

#### VA MEDICAL CENTERS

**Menlo Park Division (VA Palo Alto Health Care System)**  
795 Willow Road, Menlo Park, CA 94025  
(650) 493-5000  
www.palo-alto.med.va.gov  
24-hour advice nurse (800) 455-0057

**VA Northern California Health Care System**  
150 Muir Road, Martinez, CA 94553  
(925) 372-2000  
24-hour advice nurse (800) 382-8387

**VA Palo Alto Health Care System**  
3801 Miranda Avenue  
Palo Alto, CA 94304-1290  
(650) 493-5000  
www.palo-alto.med.va.gov  
Joe Russo, Patient Advocate  
(650) 493-5000  
24-hour advice nurse (800) 455-0057

**San Francisco VA Medical Center**  
4150 Clement Street  
San Francisco, CA 94121-1598  
(415) 221-4810  
Member services office (877) 487-2838  
www.sf.med.va.gov  
Polly Rose, Combat Veteran Case Manager  
(415) 221-4810, ext. 4405  
24-hour advice nurse (800) 733-0502

#### HEALTH CARE FOR WOMEN VETERANS

In response to the growing number of women veterans, the VA established the Women Veterans Health Program. This program offers primary and specialty medical care, mental health and social service programs. The VA provides specialized counseling for the aftereffects of sexual trauma. Contact VA medical centers and ask for the women veterans' coordinator. Additional services can be found at:

**VA Northern CA Healthcare System**  
Women's health coordinator  
(925) 372-2494

**VA Palo Alto, Women's Mental Health Center and Trauma Recovery Program**  
(650) 493-5000  
Mammography help line (888) 492-7844

**SF VA, Women Veterans Health Services**  
(415) 750-2174

#### OUTPATIENT CLINICS

**Fairfield Outpatient Clinic**  
103 Bodin Circle, Travis Air Force Base  
(707) 437-1800  
**Mare Island Outpatient Clinic**  
201 Walnut Avenue, Vallejo  
(707) 562-8200

**Martinez Outpatient Clinic**  
150 Muir Road  
(925) 372-2000  
**Oakland Mental Health Clinic**  
2505 West 14th Street Oakland Army Base  
(510) 587-3400  
**Oakland Outpatient Clinic**  
2221 Martin Luther King Jr. Way  
(510) 267-7820  
**Santa Rosa Outpatient Clinic**  
3315 Chanate Road  
(707) 570-3855  
**VA 13th & Mission Outpatient Clinic**  
205 13th Street, San Francisco  
(415) 551-7300

#### VA Regional Office (VARO)

The Oakland VARO provides benefit services for veterans residing in Northern California.  
1301 Clay Street, Room 1300 N  
Oakland, CA 94612  
(800) 827-1000  
www.va.gov

#### HEALTH INSURANCE

Active duty and retired members of the uniformed services, their families and survivors in California, contact TRICARE Military Health Care Program, West Region at (888) TRIWEST (888-874-9378)  
www.triwest.com

### OTHER SERVICES

**CHAMPVA**  
Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Dept. of Veterans Affairs provides medical care for dependents and survivors of veterans.  
(800) 733-8387

**Insurance**  
VA Life Insurance (800) 669-8477  
Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) (800) 419-1473

**Naturalization**  
Applicants for naturalization who have served may apply for naturalization based on military service. No period of residence or specified period of physical presence within the United States is required. National Customer Service Center (800) 375-5283  
For more information or to contact your local district office online, visit www.uscis.gov

**State Parks Access Pass**  
Veterans with disabilities have free access to California State Parks. California Department of Parks and Recs/Field Services Division (916) 653-4000

**Tax Exemptions**  
Wartime veterans with disabilities and unmarried surviving spouses may be exempt from paying property taxes and are eligible for some deductions. California Department of Veterans Affairs (800) 952-5626

**Vehicle Registration**  
Veterans may be entitled to exemptions from registration and plate fees. California Department of Motor Vehicles (800) 777-0133 www.dmv.ca.gov  
California Dept. of Veterans Affairs (800) 952-5626  
(press 4 for license information)