



Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services

2024 Recap

The Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services is dedicated to honoring those who have served by connecting them and their families to the benefits, services, and resources that enhance their quality of life. Below you'll find our quantifiable statistics for the year 2024.



Claims Filed

2,592



Total Value of Claims Completed

\$50.3 MIL.



Maine Veterans' Cemetery System Burials Completed:

998



GI Bill Programs Approved:

2,935



Veterans and/or dependents used education benefits:

3,047



Education and training funding supporting GI Bill

\$13.1 MIL.



State Park / Museum Passes Issued:

543



Recreational Licenses (Hunting/Fishing)

232



Veterans Provided with Recognition

533

MBVS operates eight field offices across the state with locations in Caribou, Bangor, Machias, Augusta, Togus, Lewiston, Portland, and Springvale as well as the four State of Maine Veterans' Memorial Cemeteries located in Caribou, Springvale, and two in Augusta.

For more information about the Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services or available benefits and resources, please visit our website at maine.gov/veterans or contact our office directly at 207-287-7020.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, VETERANS, & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT



Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services



INTRODUCTION TO THE BUREAU

maine.gov/veterans

January 2025



Mission

To provide comprehensive support and resources to Maine's veterans, their families, and survivors.

The Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services (MBVS) is dedicated to honoring those who have served by connecting them to benefits, services, and resources that enhance their quality of life.

This includes assistance with healthcare, education, employment, housing, financial aid, and other critical needs, ensuring that veterans receive the support and recognition they deserve.





DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, VETERANS, & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services

MEET THE TEAM



David Richmond

Director

✉ david.a.richmond@maine.gov



Steven Lanning

Deputy Director

✉ steven.d.lanning@maine.gov



Jaime Robichaud

Business Systems Coordinator

✉ jaime.robichaud@maine.gov



Barrett Fisher

Supervisor of Veterans' Services

✉ barrett.k.fisher@maine.gov



Sarah Sherman

Director of Strategic Partnerships

✉ sarah.sherman@maine.gov



Matthew Kennedy

Deputy Supervisor of Veterans' Services

✉ matthew.r.kennedy@maine.gov



Ryan Lorrain

Director of Communications

✉ ryan.e.lorrain@maine.gov



Vacant

Cemetery Superintendent



Eileen Miazga

State Approving Agency

✉ eileen.miazga@maine.gov

WHAT WE DO

Veterans' Services



MBVS provides highly skilled veterans' services which includes claims services at our eight field offices across the state. These offices are located in Caribou, Bangor, Machias, Augusta, Togus, Lewiston, Portland, and Springvale. To provide more direct service to our veterans in the community, the Bureau also operates 15 itinerant offices throughout the state.



Our VA-accredited Veterans Services Officers assist and advocate for Maine's Veterans with:

- Enrolling in the VA system to access healthcare services and VA benefits.
- Filing a claim with the VA.
- Obtaining a copy of your DD 214.
- Applying for free park passes and hunting and fishing licenses.

WHAT WE DO

Maine Veterans' Memorial Cemetery System (MVCS)



MBVS operates and maintains our Maine Veterans' Memorial Cemetery System consisting of four cemeteries across the state.

These cemeteries are located in - Augusta (Civic Center Drive and Mount Vernon Road), Caribou, and Springvale.



Federally recognized veterans and dependents are eligible for burial with a plot allowance provided by the VA.

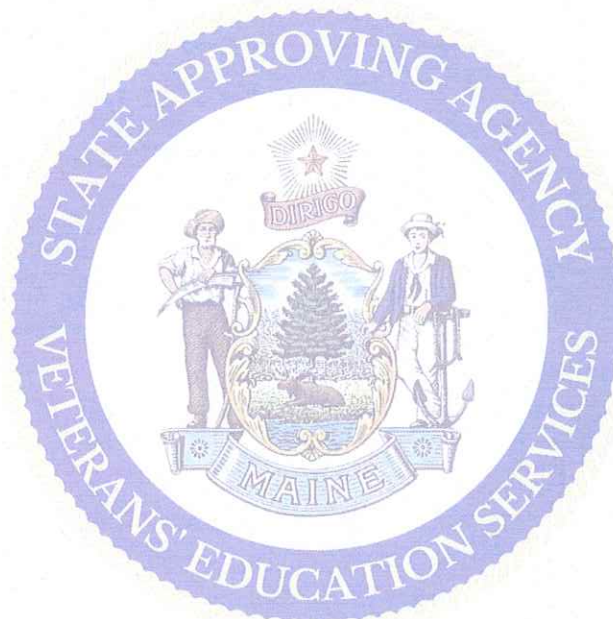
Recent burial eligibility was extended to certain National Guard and Reservists, dependents, and limited ROTC members.

WHAT WE DO

State Approving Agency (SAA)

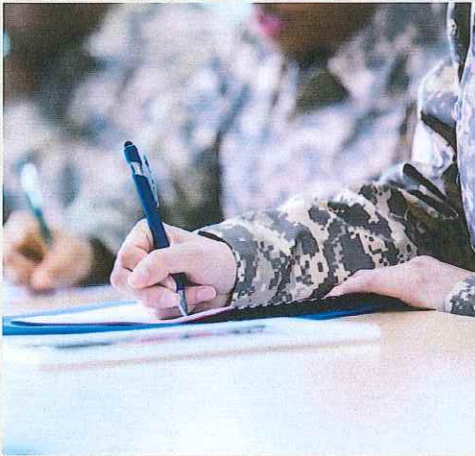


The primary responsibility of State Approving Agency (SAA) is to ensure the quality and integrity of education and training programs for using GI Bill® benefits. The scope of responsibility includes high schools, adult education centers, employers providing on-the-job and apprenticeship training, license and certification testing, vocational training, and all certificate and degree levels of post-secondary education. The SAA does this through reviewing, evaluating, and approving quality education programs (secondary and postsecondary, public and private) and training utilizing pre-established state and federal criteria to ensure each program is eligible for use of the GI Bill®.

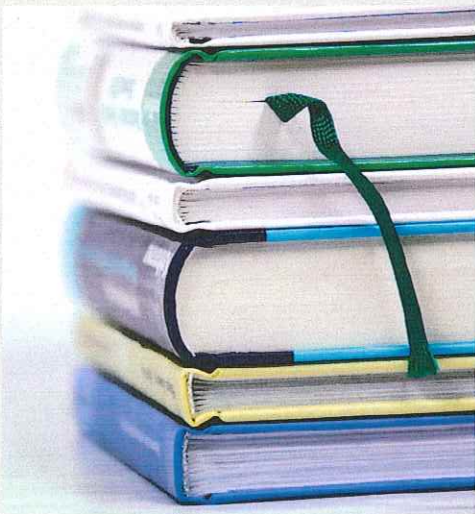


AID TO VETERANS & THEIR DEPENDENTS

Veterans' Dependent Educational Benefit (VDEB)



Provides a tuition waiver for up to 120 credit hours for a spouse for a certificate program or an associate's, bachelor's, or master's degree program and a tuition waiver for up to 120 credit hours for a child (including adopted or step) for a certificate program, associate's, or bachelor's at state-supported post-secondary vocational schools or institutions of collegiate grade.



Spouses, children, step-children, and adopted children qualify for VDEB if the veteran meets one of the following requirements:

- 100% permanent and total disability rating.
- Killed in action.
- Died from a service connected disability.
- As a member of the Armed Forces on active duty was listed MIA for 90 days, captured, or forcibly detained in the line of duty.

AID TO VETERANS & THEIR DEPENDENTS

Veterans' Emergency Financial Assistance Program (VEFAP)



The Veterans' Emergency Financial Assistance Program (VEFAP) through the Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services provides short-term financial support to veterans and their families in times of critical need. This program is designed to address immediate financial emergencies that may jeopardize a veteran's basic living situation or stability.

Availability

Up to \$2,000 in grants are available for veterans who have "a financial need and suffer an emergency."

Funding

This is a \$ 250,000-a-year, lapsing state-funded program.

Accessibility

VEFAP is done through a vendor selected from the State's Request for Proposal process.

The current vendor administering this program is FEDCAP, Inc.

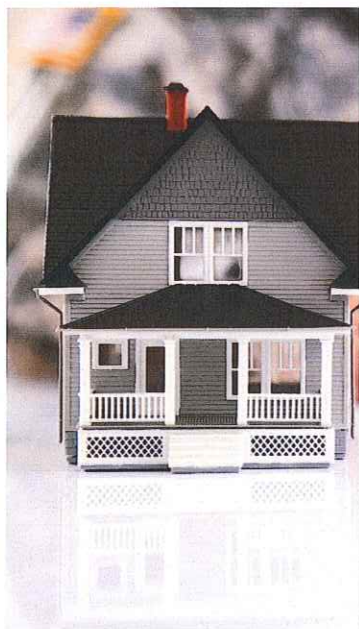


ASSISTING HOMELESS VETERANS

Veterans' Homelessness Prevention Coordination



The Veterans' Homelessness Prevention Coordination initiative by the Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services is aimed at addressing and preventing homelessness among veterans in Maine. This program connects veterans at risk of homelessness, or those experiencing homelessness, with resources and services that support stable housing and self-sufficiency.



Implementation

To provide up to \$50 a day for up to 30 days (waiverable to 45 days by the Director) of transitional housing to prevent or end veterans' homelessness through the Bureau's Veterans Homeless Prevention Team or external partner agencies.

Funding


This is a \$100,000 a year, non-lapsing state-funded program.



DENTAL CARE ASSISTANCE

Maine Veterans' Dental Network (MVDN)

The Maine Veterans' Dental Network (MVDN) is a program established by the Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services (MBVS) to provide Maine veterans with access to essential dental care. This initiative addresses a significant gap in healthcare services for veterans, particularly those who do not qualify for VA dental benefits.



Availability

The MVDN is funded through a grant from Northeast Delta Dental and provides a connection to a dentist and up to \$600 to veterans who cannot afford to pay for oral healthcare out of pocket, do not have dental insurance and are not 100% service-connected to the VA.

Application & Screening Process

The Bureau provides veterans with application screening and referrals to the MVDN dental clinics.

Grant Funded

Northeast Delta Dental awarded \$300,000 in December 2024 to Maine's veterans for the second year in a row. Over the past four years, they have given \$635,000 in support to the MVDN. The Maine Masonic Charitable Foundation donated \$37,500 to the program in 2023 and 2024.

Administration

These grant funds are distributed directly to the (23) dental clinics in the network by Northeast Delta Dental based on the Bureau's recommendations after reviewing the dental clinic's end of year reports in January.

RECOGNITION

Maine Veterans Recognition Program



The Maine Veterans Recognition Program through the Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services is designed to honor Maine veterans and their families for their military service and sacrifices. The program provides various certificates, medals, and awards to recognize the dedication and contributions of veterans across different eras of service.



Honoring Service

The recognition program provides veterans with a certificate and coin depending on the era they served (World War II, Korea, Vietnam, General, and Women's). Depending on the dates of service, a veteran may qualify for multiple service periods.

Annual Recognition Ceremonies

MBVS hosts annual events in recognition of Veterans Day, Vietnam Veterans Day, Women Veteran Appreciation Day, and more.





ACCESS TO DOCUMENTATION

Free Access to DD Form 214

The Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services provides free access to DD 214 forms to veterans, making it easier for them to retrieve this vital document. The DD 214 is a certificate of release or discharge from active duty and is essential for accessing various veteran benefits, including healthcare, education, housing assistance, and more.

A partial view of a DD Form 214, "Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty". The form is tilted and shows the following sections:

- 1. DATE OF BIRTH (YYMMDD)
- 2. COMPONENT AND BRANCH
- 3. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER
- 4. RESERVE OBLIG. TERM. 1 (Year, Month, Day)
- 5. WHERE SEPARATED
- 6. SGLI COVERAGE (Amount \$, None)
- 7. SERVICE PERIODS (This Period, This Period, This Period, This Period)
- 8. DATE OF RECORD AT TIME OF ENTRY (City and state, or country if known)
- 9. DATE OF SEPARATION (All periods of service)

The Bureau can provide copies of most DD Form 214 for veterans who entered from the State of Maine or veterans who entered services after the mid-2000s, generally on the same day.

For veterans who entered service before the mid-2000s or from out-of-state, the Bureau can assist in requesting service records from the National Archives for free. However, request time is very dependent on processing times by the National Archives. Some requests can take 180 days or longer.

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Disabled Veterans Hunting and Fishing License



Through the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Maine offers Disabled Veterans Hunting and Fishing Licenses to honor and support veterans with service-connected disabilities. These licenses provide free access to hunting, trapping, and fishing opportunities across the state.



Qualifications

Requires a Department of Veterans Affairs service-connected disability rating of 50% or greater.

Requirements

The veterans must provide a copy of the appropriate hunter's safety course and the safety course for any endorsement they wish to add, such as archery or trapping.

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Disabled Veterans' Controlled Moose Hunt Lottery

The Maine Disabled Veterans' Moose Hunt is a partnership between Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Maine Bureau of Veterans Services' and Smoldering Lake Outfitters

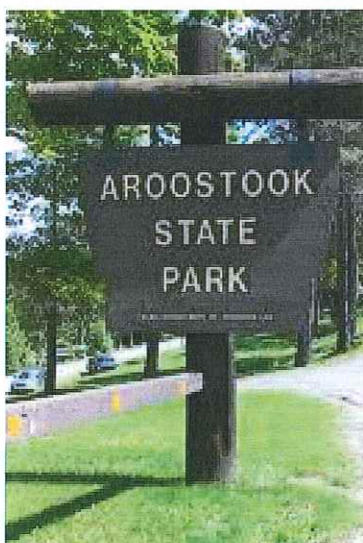
The hunt lottery is limited to veterans who have a VA disability rating of at least 50% or higher and have either completed hunter safety or a hold Maine hunting license.

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Free lifetime State Parks and Museum Pass



A benefit provided by the State of Maine to honor veterans for their service. This pass allows eligible Maine veterans to enjoy free access to state parks and historic sites, as well as Maine State Museum facilities.



Combination Pass

Through a Memorandum of Agreements with the Commissioner of Conservation, the Maine State Museum Commission, and DVEM, the Bureau provides park and museum passes to all honorably discharged veterans.

This combined pass allows free entry into most state parks and the Maine State Museum.

SUICIDE PREVENTION

Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Grant



The Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services is in year three of receiving the Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Grant, actively involved in leveraging the grant to support Maine veterans by addressing mental health challenges and reducing suicide rates. This grant is provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and is named in honor of Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox, a U.S. Army veteran whose life tragically ended due to suicide.



In partnership with the Maine Medical Association, Health Affiliates of Maine, and the Maine Crisis Line, we've developed a toolkit to assist healthcare providers identify and screen veterans for suicide ideation and offer connections to community and crisis resources as an opportunity to prevent suicides.

SUICIDE PREVENTION

Suicide Mortality Review Committee

The Bureau was one of ten states awarded a \$300,000 Cooperative Agreement from the VA and SAMHSA to form an exploratory Suicide Mortality Review Committee with specific areas of concern being Veterans and Native Americans. The committees' efforts will help create new targeted approaches to suicide prevention.



OUTREACH Efforts

Monthly Newsletter & Podcast

Through our monthly eNewsletter and Podcast, "The Maine Veterans Connection Podcast" we provide highlights about initiatives, programs, upcoming events, success stories and testimonials, and information on available resources and assistance offered at the Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services.

Social Media

The Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services utilizes social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn) to connect with veterans, their families, and the public, providing timely updates and fostering community engagement. These platforms are an essential tool for sharing information, highlighting resources, and promoting events.

Veterans' Resource and Benefits Guide

A comprehensive handbook designed to help Maine veterans and their families navigate the various programs, services, and benefits available to them. It serves as a centralized resource to ensure that veterans are fully informed about the opportunities and assistance they can access.



In-Person Events

The Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services places significant emphasis on in-person events as a means to connect directly with veterans and their families, ensuring they receive vital resources and support. These events provide a welcoming environment for veterans to engage with MBVS staff, service providers, and other veterans, particularly those who may be underserved or unaware of available benefits. Examples include our Homeless Veteran Stand Downs held annually in October as well as our quarterly Veterans and Community Connections Expos, rotated geographically across Maine.