



**A Guidebook
for
Incarcerated
Veterans
NEVADA**

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Forward

This handbook can be an important tool. Review all of the programs thoroughly to understand the opportunities available. When these programs are used properly, the benefits will be a minimization of the outside pressures you may be confronted with if released; social acceptance, economics, and re-establishment as a productive member of society.

This booklet is a tool for Veterans Incarcerated and their families who wish access to services to support a new and better way of life. Be aware, this guidebook is designed to assist veterans incarcerated, in the State of Nevada and their families, laws do vary from state to state. Therefore, check your state laws and regulations against this guide.

Thank you,

Veterans Incarcerated Workgroup VSIN 21 & VISN 22

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. To perpetuate the value of this document, we respectfully request that if you discover any incorrect, conflicting, or out-of-date information in this Guidebook please send the discrepancies, and updated information if you have it, to:

Marcia Evans, APRN, BC
Program Manager, CBOC
912 W. Owen
Las Vegas, NV 89106

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.

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SECTION I

USING THIS GUIDE AND SEEKING HELP

- 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. You may want to ask a friend or family member to help you find the information you need if you don't have phone or internet access. 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 you are in prison, find out which unit in your facility can help you plan for your release (often the education or transfer unit). Classes may be offered so you can work on skills development and prepare for life after release. **You don't want to risk homelessness once you are released, 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 care? 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 clothing to wear to work.
 - I need to find out what benefits I can get as a veteran.
 - I want to get addictions treatment.
 - I owe child support.
- Think about your list as you read through 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 writing a letter to request information, **be clear.** Keep your letter short, to the point, and write legibly. Include the following information:
 - Your name and contact information.
 - A brief statement about your current situation.
 - Your specific request.
 - What you have done so far (Example: I have written to _____ X _____ organization and they suggested I contact you).
 - Any restrictions for mailings (Example: Mail with staples or paper clips will not be accepted by my prison facility).
- 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 about 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. Computer access may also be provided at Job Connect offices, and Employment Security Department offices (referred to as Job Service Centers or Unemployment Offices). Job Connect Office location:

Owens Outreach Office
930 W. Owens
Las Vegas, NV 89106
Phone: 702-486-5290
Fax: 486-5288

- **Section II** of this guide provides Help for Veterans. **Section III** provides information about assistance for specific needs, such as medical, mental health, housing, etc. **Section IV** covers basic information about seeking VA / Federal benefits. The last pages contains a **Checklist** that summarizes each section of this guide and helpful websites.

SECTION II

HELP FOR VETERANS

Preparing for Release from Incarceration

Receiving services from the Veteran's Administration is completed in several steps. The basic information requested can be completed while you are incarcerated improving your chances of getting the help you need at the time of your release. The following information will guide you through the process of Enrolling with the Veteran's Administration. The availability of your military record will determine how long it takes to establish your VA eligibility.

DD-214

If you have your DD-214 (Report of Separation) include a copy with your Enrollment paperwork. The DD-214 is not required to Enroll but can expedite your application processing. It is recommended to acquire a copy of your DD-214 to enhance your access to the many benefits veterans may receive. The application for your DD-214 (Form 180) is included in this handbook or located in the library. As with all Veteran's Administration applications be careful to write legibly and complete every blank with complete information. Items left blank could slow the results of your application.

Enrollment (Form 10-10 EZR)

If you have not received VA services within the past year from a VA in your home jurisdiction complete and submit Form 10-10 EZR, included in this handbook or located in the library. Receipt of the application will initiate verification of your eligibility and determine if there will be a co-pay for services rendered. Occasionally military records require an information search and can delay benefits. Completing this application several months before release is highly recommended.

All blanks of the 10-10 EZR must be completed. Blanks requesting information that do not pertain to you should be designated with an N/A (Not Applicable). Blanks requesting information you do not know should indicate (unknown). Blanks requesting financial information must have a number. Zero (\$0) to indicate nothing. Blanks left empty could prevent processing of the application delaying your eligibility for VA services.

Information about your income pertains to the calendar year prior to this application. Most veterans incarcerated in the past year will fall below the threshold requiring a co-pay. If your income exceeds the financial threshold inquire to your VA about a Hardship request based on your recent incarceration.

The application requests contact information. It is very important that an accurate mailing address and phone number are included on the application of where you can be reached for several months. If you will be released before receiving a reply of eligibility contact the VA Business Office directly to request a status report.

The 10-10 EZR can be mailed to the VA located in your home jurisdiction or to the local VA near the institution in which you currently are confined. Each VA can electronically share medical and business information allowing you to receive VA services in whatever community you reside.

Results of Application to the VA

The results of the 10-10 EZR indicate your eligibility for Veteran's Administration medical services. If you are found ineligible for VA Medical you may still be eligible for other VA benefits, such as housing and vocational supports. Each VA has a Homeless unit capable of assisting you with application to these Per Diem programs.

Correction of Military Record and Upgrade of Discharge

- Many variables are involved in determining eligibility and you are encouraged to apply for benefits to allow the Veteran's Administration to sort through all of the contributing factors, such as period of service, length of active duty service, and participation in combat. The character of your discharge can reflect on the benefits you may receive. Honorable, General and Discharge under Honorable Conditions will all reflect favorably on your eligibility for all benefits and services. Other Discharges are also eligible for benefits and services and must be reviewed individually for a definitive determination.
- If your application for VA Medical Benefits is denied you will receive an explanation. Often complete information about your military history was unavailable and your DD-214 is required. If the denial was based on the character of Discharge you will want to review your DD-214 and circumstances that brought about the less than favorable military separation status.

- Each branch of the military has a Review Board designed to receive appeals to erroneous information on the DD-214 (Form DD-149) and reconsideration of Discharge status (Form DD-293). Depending on the circumstances unique to your case you may want to receive guidance from a Veteran's Service Officer or legal counsel in preparing your appeal. The forms are included with this handbook for your review and consideration.

Education Benefits

- Funds available for education are time limited and it is important to determine if your benefits are about to lapse. The Application for VA Education Benefits (Form 22-1990) is included in this handbook. The information included with the form defines which groups of veterans are eligible for this education benefit.

Planning Your Return to Home

Four Months before Release

1. Complete VA Form SF-180 (Request Pertaining to Military Records) if you don't have your DD-214. The SF-180 is available on the VA website (vaww.gov) or in the library. The address to send the completed form depends on your branch of the military and when you served. That information is found on page 3 of the SF-180. Your DD-214 can take up to six weeks to arrive.
2. Begin work on the Inventory of Needs form included in the Handbook. Identifying your specific set of needs upon return to community living will help you begin preparing now. This information will also help your discussions with the personnel at the prison in best preparing your release plans.

Two Months before Release

3. Complete the 10-10EZR. FILL IT OUT CAREFULLY. Information should be printed and answer each blank fully. If a question doesn't apply to you say, N/A or not applicable. If the question asks for an amount of money be sure to answer with a number. If the answer is zero say 0. Section V on Form 10-10EZR gives you a YES/NO option about reporting financial information. Be aware that unless you have previously received a VA Disability rating above 10% you will not be approved for VA Enrollment without saying YES and disclosing your financial information in Sections VI, VII, VIII and IX. Once completed submit the 10-10EZR, your DD-214 if available, and a copy of your Inventory of Needs to:
Marcia Evans, APRN, BC
Program Manager, CBOC
912 W. Owen
Las Vegas, NV 89106
4. You will receive communication from the VA indicating your status for eligibility. If you are found eligible for VA services additional information will be sent providing you with instructions about completing your Enrollment and information about resources and suggested transition arrangements. Authorization for the VA to communicate with other's involved with your transition will be requested. If you agree to this assistance sign the authorization form and return to the VA.

The first 24 Hours after Release

5. Register as a felon with the local police department within the first 48 hours of release in Nevada.
6. If released on parole, initiating contact with your Parole Agent is your first priority and is required immediately upon your arrival to your community.
7. Contacting your VA representative is your next step toward getting the assistance for a smooth and successful transition. If you are unable to reach your VA representative leave very specific information about how they can reach you.

Name:
Date of Release:

Inmate Number:
Inmate Address:

Inventory of Needs

You face many challenges when leaving prison. Success within the community is accomplished by resolving the barriers. The Veteran’s Administration can be one starting point for addressing some of the problems. You can use this checklist to identify your concerns. The resources identified in this Handbook and personnel at your VA can help direct you to resources. Many of these problems will take time but can be resolved with your commitment.

Immediate Concerns Describe

Housing	
Clothing	
Food and applying for food stamps	
Transportation to Parole (NDOC transports to parole office if the inmate is paroling; if expiring sentence NDOC will transport to nearest Greyhound bus station)	
Medication	
ID	
Paroled to unfamiliar location w/ few supports	

Financial Describe

Employment	
Child Support/Alimony	
Credit Debt	
Disability/Pension Money	
MVA Fines	
Debt/Credit Issues	

Health Describe

Medical Concern	
Medication	
Addictions Treatment	
Mental Health Needs	
Barriers to Working	

Legal Describe

Traffic	
Child Custody	
Restitution	

Marital Status	
Anger Management Classes	
Domestic Violence Classes	
Parole Registering Restrictions: All felons must register with the Metro Police Dept within ten days of their arrival to Nevada.	

Other:

SECTION III

RESOURCES FOR VETERANS

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.

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 www.visn21.med.va.gov ,
www.visn22.med.va.gov
 - ✓ 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 Support Number** - 1-888- 784-2433 (1-888-SUICIDE)
- **Clark County Social Service** – dial 2-1-1 to access health and human services assistance and referrals. Clark County Social Services, 1600 Pinto Lane/2432 Martin Luther King Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89106, (702) 455-3141 or dial 211.

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!**

For veterans only

- 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 1-877-222-8387 or go to www1.va.gov/homeless/page.cfm?pg=21.
- **Nevada Department of Veterans Affairs** 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 federally funded reintegration projects. Call **(775) 688-1653**, in the Las Vegas area call (702) 636-3070, or go to www.veterans.nv.gov

For veterans and non-veterans

- **National Coalition for the Homeless** has a directory of shelters and homeless assistance programs online. This does not list every program in the country, so be sure to check your phone book for local programs. www.nationalhomeless.org
- **Salvation Army** - provides services, including shelter and transitional housing, for homeless individuals and families. For local services and information contact: <http://www.salvationarmyusa.org> or Reno: 775-688-4570 Las Vegas: 702-639-0278
- **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.
- **FISH**, located in Carson City, provides food, shelter, and case management. Phone: 775-882-3474
- **HELP** of Southern Nevada in Las Vegas, provides food, shelter and case management. Phone: 702-369-4357.
- **Social Entrepreneurs, Inc.** (greater Reno area).
6121 Lakeside Drive, Suite 160 Reno, NV 89511
Phone: (775) 324-4567
- **Clark County Community Resources Management**
500 So. Grand Central Parkway. Las Vegas, NV 89155
Phone: (702) 455-5025
- Southern Nevada Disenfranchised Veterans, 702-735-2424, Contact: Eddie Hicks
- Key Foundation, 1001 N. "A" St., 702-384-0202
- National Association of Black Veterans, 702-891-9697, Contact: George Spicer
- Food Stamps: Nevada State Welfare, 1050 W. Owens, Las Vegas, NV 89106, (702) 387-2206
- Food resources:
 - Catholic Community Services, Main & Owens
 - Help of Southern Nevada, 953 E. Sahara Ave, (702) 369-4357
 - Lutheran Family Service, 800 N. Bruce St, (702) 639-4357
 - Salvation Army, 33 W. Owens, Las Vegas, NV 89106

MILITARY RECORDS

To request your military records, go to the website: vetrecs.archives.gov

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 emergency shelter, 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. If you are released and find yourself homeless, emergency assistance is available.

Emergency and Transitional Housing

- To find out if there are homeless veteran service providers in your area, call 1-800- VET-HELP, write to NCHV, 333 ½ Pennsylvania Ave., SE Washington, DC 20003-1148, or go to www.nchv.org.
- 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.
- Coalitions for the Homeless are listed in the phone book of many cities and urban counties. You may also find local housing information at www.nationalhomeless.org/local/local.html.
- Nevada Department of Business & Industry **HOUSING DIVISION**. Visit website for lists of emergency housing www.nvhousing.state.nv.us
- **Ridge House, Inc.:** A three-month residential substance abuse treatment program and an outpatient program that solely serves individuals with criminal histories and parolees recently released from prison. Contact: 275 Hill St., Suite 281 Reno, NV 89501 Phone: 775-322-8941 E-Mail: ridgehouse@aol.com
- **Transitional Living Communities** (TLC) runs the V2 program which serves as a 90-day substance abuse program and halfway house for individuals on parole or probation with and minimum supervision. Contact: 210 N. 10th St. Las Vegas, NV 89101 Phone: 702-387-3131
- 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 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.
- U.S. Veterans, Initiative, 525 E. Bonanza Ave., LV, NV, 89106, 702-336-0456; 90 days transitional housing program for individuals with substance abuse problems and/or those who are work ready.
- Bonanza View Apartments, 640 McKnight, LV, NV 89106, 702-387-1700 - Long term transitional housing program for veterans with stable source of income.
- Key Foundation – 1001 N. "A" St; LV, NV 89101; Housing for veterans who are work ready
- Samaritan House, 4th Street and Washington, 702-382-8437: Sober living environment.
- God in Me Ministry – 851 Hassell Ave., LV, NV 702-648-3223
- Shelter: City Mission, 1118 Fremont St., Las Vegas, NV 384-1930

Long-term or Permanent Housing

Public housing waiting lists can be long, but the length of time can vary from place to place. Even if you are not sure where you want to live yet, apply to get on the waiting list so that you have as many options as possible. To learn how to apply, contact the local housing authority listed in the phone book blue pages under "Local Government, Public Housing Authority".

FINDING & KEEPING A JOB

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

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

- **Department of Labor:** Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DOL-VETS) and Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) work to help veterans find and keep jobs. DVOP specialists develop job and training opportunities for veterans with service-connected disabilities, linking veterans with employers and making sure follow-up services are provided. LVER specialists are located in state employment offices (also called One-Stop Career Centers or Unemployment Offices). To find a DVOP or LVER near you, visit your state employment service office listed in the phone book blue pages under “State Government, Employment Agencies,” or go to www.dol.gov/vets/aboutvets/contacts/main.htm.
- The State of Nevada has a **Vocational Rehabilitation** program that helps people with disabilities find and keep jobs. Apply for these services immediately after your release. Look in the phone book blue pages under "Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)," then "Vocational Rehabilitation," or search the Internet for "Vocational Rehabilitation" in your state. Nevada States office: (775) 684-4070
- Department of Veterans Affairs' Compensated Work Therapy Program (**CWT**) is available to some veterans. CWT 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 Contact the local VA Medical Center to see if you qualify. Call 1-877-222-8387 to find the medical center nearest you or log into www.visn21.med.va.gov or www.visn22.med.va.gov
- **Department of Veterans Affairs website** can help job seekers prepare resumes, find on-the-job training and apprenticeship programs, and search for job openings by state. For more information about VA employment assistance services and programs, and for contact information in your area, go to www.va.gov, and click on “Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Services.”

- **Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Projects (HVRP).** HVRP assists veterans with job search preparation, vocational counseling, occupational skills training, on-the-job training, trade skills certification and licensing, and job placement assistance and referral to supportive services. To find out if you may be eligible and how to access, contact :George Spicer, 702-891-9697
- **EVOLVE** (Educational and Vocational Opportunities Leading to Valuable Experience) offers motivational counseling, case management, vocational education, and job placement to individuals with criminal histories. Services available include resume preparation, interview techniques and mentorship. Contact: 1971 Stella Lake Drive. Las Vegas, NV 89106, Phone: 702-638-6371, E-Mail: sgiff2thousand1@aol.com
- **Nevada JobConnect** is charged with overseeing and providing workforce development services to employers and job seekers in Nevada. For job seekers, Nevada JobConnect offers career development information, job search resources, training programs, and, as appropriate, unemployment benefits. For more info: <http://www.nevadajobconnect.com/index.htm>
- The **Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)** is a federal tax credit to reduce the federal tax liability of private for profit employers to be used as an incentive for employers to hire individuals from eight different targeted groups to include veterans and ex-felons. WOTC can save an employer as much as \$2,400 in taxes when they hire a worker who historically has had a hard time landing a job. And it's easy. All an employer has to do is hire a qualified worker, fill out the Pre-Screening Notice (8850) and Individual Characteristics Form (9061) and drop them in the mail within 21 calendar days from the start date of employment. An ex-felon who has a hiring date, which is not more than one year after the last date on which they were convicted or released from prison, and is a member of An economically disadvantaged family is qualified for WOTC. The Employment Security Department is the "Right Connection" to the Work Opportunity Tax Credit. If an employer wants more information and forms, they can call the WOTC Unit at 1-800-669-9271, or contact their local WorkSource Center .
- **Nevada State Bonding Program.** We do not have bonding insurance in this state. Nevada does require work cards in many areas of employment. Health, Tam and/or Security cards are required for many employers. The Security card will verify their current legal status (outstanding warrants, parole violations, etc.) and are required prior to

employment. Providing accurate information regarding past incarceration will minimize chances of job termination. Nevada identification is a requirement of employment.

HEALTH CARE

If eligible 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 to find the medical center nearest you.

VA Medical Centers

VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System

1000 Locust Street
Reno, NV 89502
Phone: (775) 786-7200
Fax: (775) 328-1464

VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System (VASNHS)

P.O. Box 360001
North Las Vegas , NV 8903
Phone: (702) 636-3000
Fax: (702) 636-3027

Outpatient Clinics

VA Carson Valley

925 Ironwood, Suite 2102
Minden, Nevada 89423
888-838-6256 ext 4000

VA Sierra Foothills Clinic

3123 Professional Drive, Suite
250
Auburn, CA 95603
530-889-0872

Ely outpatient Clinic

6 Steptoe Circle
Ely , NV 89301
Phone: 775-289-2788 ex 105

Henderson

2920 N. Greenvalley Pkwy 215
Henderson , NV 89014
Phone: (702) 456-3825

Las Vegas: MASH Village

940 West Owens Avenue
Las Vegas , NV 89106
Phone: (702) 386-3140

Pahrump Medical Center

2100 E. Calvada Blvd.
Pahrump , NV 89048
Phone: (775) 727-7535

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. County Social Service agencies can issue a medical card.

For medical care contact Nevada Rural Health Centers, 801 S. Rancho Dr., Suite B-2, Las Vegas, NV 89106, (702) 307-5414, fax: (702) 307-5421.

- **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 be 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 be 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.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

If eligible for veterans' benefits:

- Contact the Homeless Veteran Services Coordinator at the local **VA Medical Center** Call 1-877-222-8387 to find the medical center nearest you
- For readjustment counseling, contact your local **Vet Center**.

RENO VET CENTER

1155 W. 4th St., Suite 101,
Reno , NV 89503
Phone: 702-323-1294

LAS VEGAS VET CENTER

1919 S. Jones Blvd., Suite A
Las Vegas , NV 89146
Phone: 702-251-7873

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

- **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.

- **Southern Nevada Adult Mental Health and Northern Nevada Adult Mental Health** provides a continuum of services and programs for adults with mental health needs. 6161 W. Charleston Blvd., Bldg. 3A, Las Vegas, NV 89146. (702) 486-8020.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT

If eligible for veterans' benefits:

- Contact the Addictions Treatment Center at the local **VA Medical Center**. Call 1-877-222-8387 to find the medical center nearest you.

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.
- **Focus On Recovery Helpline** - A 24-hour national alcohol and drug abuse addiction and treatment hotline: 1-800-888-9383.

Alcohol and Drug Abuse Support groups:	<u>Reno area</u>	<u>Las Vegas Area</u>
Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)	775-355-1151	702-598-1888
Narcotics Anonymous (NA)	775-322-4811	702-369-3362
Rational Recovery	775-786-8801	Al-Anon and
Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACOA) 775-348-7103	702-615-9494	

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 call Nevada State Welfare/Medicaid Phone: 775-448-5000
- 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 www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/contact_info/hotlines.htm. You can also contact the local

Department of Human Services, many drop-in shelters, or legal aid services to ask for an application. Nevada State Welfare/Medicaid Phone: 775-448-5000

- **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.fns.usda.gov/fsp/contact_info/hotlines.htm
- **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 (call 1-800-562-2308 for the nearest Service Officer).
- To request your military records, go to the website: vetrecs.archives.gov

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. Carson City office: 800-323-8666, Las Vegas office: 800-522-1070 Web Site: www.nlslaw.net

- **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.

State Bar of Nevada, for referral services, 800-789-5747 (in-state)

E-Mail: ileanav@nvbar.org Web Site: www.nvbar.org/publicServices/index3.php3

- **Criminal Record Repository**

This is the agency individuals may contact to obtain a copy of their state rap sheet and learn about the process of sealing, expunging or cleaning it up. The criminal record repository can also tell the individual who else is legally entitled to have access to his or her record. You can obtain a copy by completing form NHP-006, a fingerprint card with the subject's fingerprint impressions, and a money order or certified check for \$15 made payable to the "Nevada Highway Patrol." **Contact:** Nevada Department of Public Safety Nevada Highway Patrol. Records and Identification Bureau. 808 West Nye Lane. Carson city, NV 89703. Phone: 775-687-1600 Web Site: <http://nvrepository.state.nv.us/>

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 to find the medical center nearest you.
- Many women in prison had similar histories, problems, and personal issues before their arrest and conviction. Mentors with **Women in Community Service (WICS)** help women preparing to leave prison and those who are just getting back into society. WICS' prison programs help women think about their behavior, gain job skills, and build self-esteem. Go to <http://www.wics.org> to find the nearest WICS program.

SECTION III

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.

U.S. Dept Of Veterans Affairs - Regional Office Reno

1201 Terminal Way
Reno , NV 89520
Phone: 1-800-827-1000

Outbased Office: The **Las Vegas** facility provides interview and counseling space. Regularly scheduled due process hearings held each month.

Location: 4800 Alpine Place, Suite 11, Las Vegas, NV 89107

- Call 1-800-827-1000 or find information about benefits at www.vba.va.gov/.
- For VA Medical clinics please see Section II, Health care section of this book, Page 18

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 re-enlisting. 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. Contact 1-877-222-8387 to find the medical center nearest you.

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 of \$807 per month. He commits a crime and is incarcerated, but doesn't tell the VA right away and keeps getting paid for 6 months. **Joe is overpaid a total of \$4,872.** After serving his sentence of 18 months, he is released and applies to the VA to have his pension restarted. The new pension rate is \$830 per month, but the VA will use that amount to start repaying the \$4,872 debt. **Joe's first real check will start 5 months after he is released and will be for \$30!** Joe has to go at least 5 months 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. This includes placement in a community treatment center or halfway house. **Remember, you must notify the VA when you are released to restart your payments.**

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, send a letter 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 DIC recipient, may still receive full benefits. If the veteran continues to receive benefits after the 60-day period, it will result in an "over-payment". 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 entire overpayment is recovered by the VA. 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 (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.

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.

- Check the blue pages of the phone book for the number of a County Veteran Service Officer in your area.
- 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. You can contact any VSO listed below to see if there is a service representative near you.

Organization:	Northern Nevada	Southern Nevada	website
AMVETS	775-784-5381	702-636-3000x4156	www.amvets.org
American Legion	702 382-2353	702 382-2353	(National) www.legion.org (Nevada) www.taldon.org
Disabled American Veterans (DAV)	775-784-5239	702-651-0023	www.dav.org
Military Order of the Purple Heart	775-688-1653	702-636-3070	www.purpleheart.org
Paralyzed Veterans of America	800-795-3583	800-795-3583	www.pva.org
Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)	775-784-5244	702-258- 5904 (Rick Borings)	www.vfwkc.org/post_location/Department.asp
Vietnam Veterans of America	1-800-vva-1316	1-800-vva-1316	www.vva.gov

NABVETS	See website	See website	www.nabvets.com
Blinded Veterans Assoc.	1-859-441-7300	1-859-441-7300	www.bva.org
Nevada Department of Veterans Affairs	775 -688-1653	702- 636-3070	www.Veterans.Nv.gov

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.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.

- **Standard Form-180 – Request Pertaining to Military Records** - is used to get copies of your Record of Discharge (DD-214), military personnel and medical records. You will need a copy of your DD-214 when applying for any benefits. Requests may also be completed online at <http://vetrecs.archives.gov>.
- **VA Form 21-526 - Application for Compensation or Pension**- must be filed to apply for compensation -or pension. This form, along with your DD-214 and the following forms should be mailed directly to the VARO nearest your release destination 30 to 45 days before our 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 day's 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.

CHECKLIST

▪ **Using This Guide**

- Ask about classes or resources to help you plan for your release.
- Make a list of your needs.
- Make a list of who may be able to help you.
- Write letters and/or contact organizations by phone or email.
- Write down the steps you take so that you do not repeat them.

▪ **Just for Veterans**

- Know where to call toll-free for help.
- Contact organizations about what services they have to offer.
- Think about your housing needs and gather information about what is available locally.
- Learn about job resources and create a plan to find a job.
- Learn about health issues, and what services are available.
- Learn about the resources available for substance abuse and mental health treatment in your area.
- Learn about your options to get financial help.
- Begin to take care of other legal issues.
- Learn about homeless veterans services.
- Learn about resources for women veterans
- If you are not currently receiving benefits, find out if you can or should be.
- If you are receiving benefits, notify the VA when you go to prison to avoid an overpayment.
- Contact a veteran service representative to represent you and help you file a claim.
- Apply for apportionment so that some of the money withheld may be given to eligible family members.

This publication is available in alternative format upon request. Please contact the Program Manager, CBOC, 912 W. Owen, Las Vegas, NV 89106

Web Sites

Internet connections are usually available at local libraries. The following are but a few sites that can help you.

General

www.firstgov.gov

- On FirstGov.gov, you can search millions of web pages from federal and state governments, the District of Columbia and U.S. territories. Most of these pages are not available on commercial websites. FirstGov has the most comprehensive search of government anywhere on the Internet.

Benefits

www.Govbenefits.gov

GovBenefits.gov is a partnership of Federal agencies with a shared vision - to provide improved, personalized access to government assistance programs.

www.Disabilityinfo.gov

This user-friendly Web site contains links to information of interest to people with disabilities, their families, employers, service providers and other community members.

Are there government benefit programs available to help you?

GovBenefits.gov will help you answer that question. Our online screening tool is free, easy-to-use, and completely confidential. We do not require your name, phone number, Social Security number, or any other information that could be used to identify you. You answer a series of questions about yourself, and then GovBenefits.gov returns a list of government benefit programs you may be eligible to receive along with information about how you can apply.

VA Web sites

www.va.gov

Main website for Department of Veterans Affairs.

www.visn22.med.va.gov

Web site for VA medical services in Southern Nevada

www.visn21.med.va.gov

Web site for VA medical services in Northern Nevada

Social Security Administration

www.ssa.gov

Employment

www.dol.gov/vets

US Department of Labor—special programs for homeless and incarcerated veterans