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Texas Veterans Commission
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Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
www.thecb.state.tx.us

Texas Veterans Land Board
www.texasveterans.com

Texas Workforce Commission
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www.texvet.com



Please send suggestions or comments pertaining to this newsletter to:

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Texas Veterans Commission
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Hazlewood Act Facts

By Melanie A. Moynahan, Texas Veterans Commission

In the recent Texas legislative session, some important changes were made to the Hazlewood Act. Although the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board regulates the granting of this exemption, the Texas Veterans Commission receives a large volume of calls and emails from veterans who have questions about this benefit and whether it applies to them. The following is a compilation of information from both agencies which will hopefully dispel some of the myths about Hazelwood and answer some questions about recent changes.



Explanation of the Hazlewood Act

Veterans who were Texas residents at the time they entered military service, entered the service in Texas, or designated Texas as their home of record may be entitled to a waiver of tuition, fees, and other required charges at state-supported/public (taxpayer supported) colleges and universities in Texas. In addition, they must have served at least 181 days of active military service (excluding training) and have honorable discharges/separations or general discharge under honorable conditions.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is it possible to receive the Hazlewood Act benefits and federal VA educational benefits concurrently?

If the student is receiving federal VA education benefits other than the Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33 or any other benefits designated only for payment of tuition and fees), he/she can receive both benefits concurrently. If the student is receiving federal VA education benefits for payment of tuition and fees, he/she may receive both benefits concurrently only if the federal VA tuition and fees benefit amount does not equal or exceed the Hazlewood exemption value. If the federal VA benefits do not equal or exceed the Hazlewood exemption value, the student may receive a Hazlewood exemption that equals the difference between the total tuition and fees (including student property deposit, student services, and all other fees) and the federal VA benefits. Students must provide copies of the official written notice (award letter) from the VA indicating the student's benefit type and amount, the inclusive dates of payment, and the remaining entitlement at the end of the award period.

Which institutions are eligible for this exemption?

Only those schools which are state-funded. Private or independent institutions do not qualify for Hazlewood.

Do dependents qualify for Hazlewood Act benefits?

Children of service members of the U.S. Armed Forces, Texas National Guard, or Air National Guard who are killed in the line of duty, are missing in action or who die as a result of injury or illness directly related to military service are eligible for Hazlewood Act benefits providing the child was a dependent of the Texas service member at the time he/she died. Children of Texas service members who receive 100% VA disability benefits as a result of a disability or being individually unemployable are also eligible for this benefit. Effective with tuition and fee payments for the fall 2009 term, Hazlewood eligibility has been expanded to spouses meeting these same criteria.

Can I transfer this benefit to my spouse or child?

The recently passed "Legacy Act" allows for an eligible veteran to waive his or her right to any unused hours for which he or she is eligible (up to the maximum 150 semester credit hours) and transfer the benefits to a child. The child designee must be the stepchild, biological, or adopted child of the parent veteran; or claimed as a dependent on a federal income tax return filed for the preceding or current tax year. The child must be a resident of Texas, be 25 years or younger on the first day of the semester or term for which the exemption is claimed, and must be making satisfactory academic progress in a degree, certificate, or continuing education program as determined by the institution. Transfer of this benefit to a spouse is not permitted.

For more information about the Hazlewood Act benefit contact your school's financial aid advisor or certifying official. Additional information and application forms are available on the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's website at www.collegeforalltexas.com.★

IMPORTANT NOTICE FROM VA LIAISON

I have received many reports that veterans are being contacted by "Patient Care Group" representing that they are helping administer VA prescriptions and stating that the pharmacy billing procedures have changed and they are therefore requesting veteran credit card numbers for prescription payments in advance of filling their prescriptions. This is false. VA does not call veterans asking to disclose personal financial information over the phone. VA has not changed its processes for dispensing prescription medicines.

Kevin Secor, Veterans Service Organizations Liaison
Office of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, (202) 273-4836



In the Spotlight

Texas Veterans Commission Provides Representation at Army Discharge Review Board

By Lonnie Ragland, Veterans Counselor
Texas Veterans Commission

The objective of the Army Discharge Review Board (ADRB) is to examine applications for change in characterization of service and reentry codes based on standards of equity or propriety. The Board will review discharges not issued by sentence of general court-martial or medical discharges, provided appeals are filed within 15 years. The Army Discharge Review Board conducts hearings once a year, for three days at the Federal Building in Dallas, TX, for the Texas area. The Board is composed of five Army Colonels trained in the examination and investigation of records. Also, Texas Veterans Commission Counselors are available for representation.

The Board will evaluate cases based on documentation in the military records with additional evidence provided by the applicant, i.e. letters of recommendation, (personal or professional), community service or church. Applicants may appear personally before the Board with or without counsel, or counsel may appear on the applicant's behalf. Discharges more than 15 years old must be petitioned to the appropriate branch of service for Correction of Military Records, using DD Form 149, Application for Correction of Military Records. A review is conducted of the veteran's records and any additional



U.S. Army Photo

documentation provided, "Under the Provisions of Title 10, U.S. Code, and Section 1552." However, this is not a traveling board.

The following is an example of a 2008 Case Report from an ADRB hearing. In this case, a preponderance of evidence supported three charges against the veteran with over eight years of service. The veteran was discharged under other than honorable conditions in lieu of court martial. With the Texas Veterans Commission representation, the following was found by the ADRB Hearing and Review:

"After a careful review of all the applicant's available military records during the period of enlistment under review and the issue and documents he submitted, the analyst recommends that the applicant's

characterization of service be upgraded to general, under honorable conditions. This recommendation was made after full consideration of his faithful and honorable service as well as his record of misconduct. The evidence in the case supports a conclusion that the applicant's characterization of service was too harsh, and as a result, it is inequitable. While the applicant's misconduct is not condoned, the analyst noted that the overall length and quality of the applicant's service, to include combat service, and the circumstances surrounding the applicant's discharge, mitigated the discrediting entries in his service record. Accordingly, the analyst recommends to the Board that the applicant's characterization of service be upgraded to general, under honorable conditions. This action entails a restoration of grade to SSG/E-6. However, the reason for discharge remains both proper and equitable."

While this is only one case, it serves as an example of how the process can work, if discharges do not meet standards of equity or propriety. Questions regarding the review of a discharge may be addressed by TVC Counselors and your Veterans County Service Officers. Contact information is available on the TVC website at www.tvc.state.tx.us. ☆

"Taps" for Tuition Program

Attention  Students!!

Do you play the bugle, trumpet or coronet?

Do you want to earn \$25 vouchers for your education?

Call the Texas Veterans Commission for details today!

Call (512) 463-5538 or email info@tvc.state.tx.us.

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 U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
www.samhsa.gov

Veterans Press 1


**TEXAS VETERANS
COMMISSION**
"Helping Veterans
Starts Here"
• VA Claims Assistance
• Women's Program
• Veterans Education
• Employment Services

www.tvc.state.tx.us

Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs)

Local Area Agencies on Aging work within their communities to assist older adults, their family members and caregivers in receiving the information and assistance they need in locating and accessing community services.

Covered services

- Information, referral and assistance – Assessing older Texans' needs, finding organizations capable of meeting the needs, evaluating all appropriate resources, providing enough information about each resource to help older Texans make informed choices, helping them find alternative resources, actively linking people to needed services and performing follow-up to ensure the services were provided.
- Benefits counseling/legal assistance – Assisting with obtaining information regarding public benefits, private benefits and community support programs. Benefits counseling services include assisting older Texans and Medicare beneficiaries with understanding their rights, applying for benefits and receiving appropriate referrals, exercising choice, benefiting from services and opportunities authorized by law, and maintaining their rights, especially those people with reduced capacities. Consumer-protection issues are a major theme in benefits counselors' work, along with basic questions about rights, benefits and entitlements.
- Care coordination – Assessing, planning, arranging, coordinating and following up on services that most appropriately meet identified needs as mutually defined by AAA staff, the older Texan and, where appropriate, a family member or other caregiver.
- Caregiver Support Services – Providing critical support needed by families to help them maintain their caregiver roles.
- In-home support services – Assisting with support services designed to enable older Texans to remain in their homes and communities. The Older Americans Act requires that allocated funds be used to bring together community resources – public, private, formal and informal – to assure a range of efficient, well-coordinated and accessible services are available to older Texans.
- Legal awareness – Providing accurate, timely and relevant information to older Texans about eligibility criteria, requirements and procedures related to public entitlements, health and long-term care, individual rights, planning and protection options, housing, and consumer issues.
- Nutrition services – Providing congregate and home-delivered meals, as well as nutrition education, counseling and consultation.
- Ombudsman Program – This program, which is administered by the Office of the State Long-term Care Ombudsman, works closely with the 28 local programs to advocate for the rights of residents and their families so they receive the highest quality of care in long-term care facilities. Specially trained staff and certified volunteers serve as advocates in 1,124 licensed facilities across the state.



and social need, with particular attention to low-income, minority older people, older people living in rural areas, and people at risk of institutionalization.

In addition, family members and other caregivers may receive information and services on behalf of the people for whom they are providing care.

Availability

Services are available statewide; however, because service priorities and available resources vary across the state, individuals should contact their local AAA for information regarding services in their area.

Aging Texas Well

The Aging Texas Well (ATW) initiative referenced in Executive Order RP 42 began in 1997 and was formalized in 2005. The purpose of ATW is to identify and discuss aging policy issues, guide state government readiness, and promote increased community preparedness for an aging Texas.

Eligibility requirements

Services are provided to people 60 and older and are targeted at those with greatest economic



ATW is both an initiative and a guiding philosophy that partners the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) with communities and individuals to meet the needs of Texas' citizens. As a guiding philosophy, ATW helps define strategies to prepare Texas for its aging future. As an initiative, the state approaches aging well from a "holistic" perspective, encompassing all aspects of individual and social life, not just retirement but also physical health, long-term services, and other aging-related concerns for young and old alike. Approaching aging well from this perspective solidifies the important relationship that exists between individual actions and community support.

ATW aims for improvements in sixteen life areas, some of which focus on individual preparedness and others on social infrastructure. From the individual perspective, ATW addresses the areas of physical health, mental health, social engagement, spirituality, and financial and legal preparedness. Social domains are quite varied, including: employment, protections, transportation, housing, volunteerism, community supports, and long-term services and supports, among others. Taken together, these life areas empower aging Texans to take control of their lives, promote a positive aging experience, meet the challenge of obstacles with resources, and foster innovative solutions for generations of Texans to come.

DADS, through its Aging Texas Well initiative, provides an array of information, tools and resources to help individuals and their communities age well. To access information, resources and services in your community, contact your local Area Agency on Aging at (800) 252-9240, or visit www.AgingTexasWell.org.★

September is Healthy Aging Month

Did you know that in 2008 more than half of Texas adults were overweight or obese? The health implications for people diagnosed as being obese or overweight includes the likelihood of developing a chronic disease such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, arthritis, and certain forms of cancer. These chronic diseases bring with them serious health consequences that range from conditions that lower a person's quality of life to an increased risk of premature death.

The care and maintenance for chronic health conditions not only affects the individual, they are also costly to employers. Employers saw their health insurance premiums increase by 6.1 percent in 2007 - two times the rate of inflation.

But it's not all bad news, one of the easiest and most cost efficient ways for individuals and employers to combat obesity and overweight is for people to engage in activities that promote healthy lifestyles, such as stopping smoking, regular physical fitness, and a good diet.

The Texercise program offers a new exercise DVD and a 12-week fitness program created for the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) to encourage positive lifestyle changes for Texans. Other motivational Texercise program resources designed to help integrate healthy lifestyle changes are also available. For more information on how to get involved, contact Texercise at 1-800-889-8595.

Free Veterans Benefit Fairs & More!

CAREER FAIRS

Open to all Military & Former Military

Thursday, Oct. 8, 2009

10:00 am to 2:00 pm

Club Hood

Bldg. 5764, 24th & Wainwright
Fort Hood, TX 76544

- Aviation
- Healthcare
- Law Enforcement
- Logistical
- Maintenance
- Management
- Driving
- Engineering
- Sales
- and much more....

Contact Job Fair Information: (678) 819-4172

Thursday, Oct. 8, 2009

11:00 am to 3:00 pm

Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum
1800 N. Congress Ave.
Austin, TX 78701

Job Seekers who would like to pre-register for the event, visit: www.recruitmilitary.com/.

For further details, contact,
RecruitMilitary Career Fairs at 1-800-226-0841.

VETERANS' BENEFIT FAIRS

Open to All Veterans,
Dependents & Survivors

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2009

10:00 am to 1:00 pm

El Paso Community College
Admin Center
9050 Viscount
El Paso, TX 79925

Contact Fred Munoz, TX Veterans Land Board at (915) 204-6741 for further info.

Saturday, Aug. 29, 2009

10:00 am to 1:00 pm

Texas State Technical College
1902 North Loop
Harlingen, TX 78550

Contact Carlos Martinez, TX Veterans Land Board at (956) 493-9523 for further info.

Valuable personal assistance with your questions and claims from experts with the

TX Veterans Commission Claims, Employment & Education, TX Veterans Land Board, Veterans County Service Officers, Department of Veterans Affairs & other federal, state and local representatives.

Bring pertinent case information to discuss pending cases.

2009 Texas Stand Down Schedule

Stand Downs provide services to homeless Veterans such as food, shelter, clothing, health screenings, VA and Social Security benefits counseling, and referrals to a variety of other necessary services, such as housing, employment and substance abuse treatment. Stand Downs are collaborative events, coordinated between local VAs, other government agencies, and community agencies who serve the homeless.

BONHAM

September 17

Contact Tammy Wood
(214) 467-1863

HOUSTON

October 7 - 8

Contact Derrick Morrison
(713) 791-1414, Ext. 6399

EL PASO

September 18

Contact Joel Arrigucci
(915) 564-6159, Ext. 7544

SAN ANTONIO

November 8

Contact Steve Shomior
(210) 949-9005

BIG SPRING

September 25

Contact Bill Groth
(432) 263-7661, Ext. 7059

DALLAS

December 19

Contact Tammy Wood
(214) 467-1863

For additional information on Stand Down dates and locations, please contact the Homeless Veterans Programs Office at (202) 461-7401.

2nd Annual Vietnam Vet Reunion

Oct 9-11, 2009



Thompson-Patton-Zahn VFW Post 8905
21902 Hempsted Highway
Cypress, TX 77429
(281) 469-6632

- Camping
- Speakers
- Wrestling
- Martial Arts
- Dragon Dance
- Memorial Service
- Parade

<http://webpages.charter.net/vietnamvetreunion/>

BROTHERS



FOREVER