



MVAA: WE STAND FOR THOSE WHO SERVED

Updated on 12/9/2025 — Display until 1/31/2027

The **Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency** (MVAA) is the central coordinating agency for Michigan veterans and their families, providing advocacy and connecting veterans to earned benefits. As a state agency, MVAA is not part of the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA), but we work closely with them and other entities to serve the Michigan veteran community.



NO WRONG DOOR FOR MICHIGAN VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

The Michigan Veteran Resource Service Center and **Mi.gov/MVAA** support veterans, members of the National Guard and Reserve and their families as they transition through each chapter of their lives.

Callers to the Resource Service Center at **1-800-MICH-VET** (1-800-642-4838) can request their DD-214 discharge documents and get connected to VA benefits, emergency aid, housing assistance, education and employment resources and other federal and state benefits.

RESPONDING TO EMERGENCY NEEDS

The Michigan Veterans Trust Fund (MVTF) provides emergency financial aid to eligible veterans experiencing unforeseen financial hardship. Learn more about eligibility at **Mi.gov/MVTF**.

TARGETED OUTREACH

MVAA's Buddy to Buddy program pairs veterans with a veteran mentor to provide comradeship and support in all facets of life. Visit **Mi.gov/MVAAB2B**.

Through MVAA's Veteran Connector program, organizations and businesses help MVAA identify veterans and get them linked to benefits. Learn more at **Mi.gov/VeteranConnector**.

Michigan Vietnam War-era veterans can receive a recognition certificate for their service. Learn more at **Mi.gov/VietnamCertificate**.

VETERAN SERVICE OFFICERS (VSOs)

MVAA employs its own VSOs and accredits VSOs throughout the state to ensure veterans have free, expert assistance in getting their earned benefits. VSOs help with claims for disability compensation, pensions, education benefits, health care and other services and resources. Find a VSO near you at **Mi.gov/VSO**.

CONNECTION TO HEALTH CARE AND MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

MVAA connects veterans to VA health care and mental health resources as part of its mission to prevent veteran suicide. **Veterans in crisis should call 988 and press 1** to speak confidentially with a crisis counselor.

EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

MVAA's Veteran-Friendly Schools (VFS) program supports higher education institutions committed to meeting the needs of student veterans. The VFS dashboard provides detailed information about all certified universities, colleges and trade schools. Learn more at **Mi.gov/MVAA/Education**.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

MVAA's Veteran-Friendly Employer (VFE) program supports Michigan employers in their efforts to recruit, train and retain veterans and their spouses. Learn more about the program at **Mi.gov/VeteranFriendlyEmployers**.

Get personalized voter information on early voting and other topics at **Michigan.gov/VOTE**

1-800-MICH-VET (1-800-642-4838)
Michigan.gov/MVAA

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VETERANS, COME THRIVE IN MICHIGAN

If you're transitioning out of the military, the **Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency (MVAA)** is here to **serve you**. The Great Lakes State offers opportunities to live affordably, raise a family, work and retire. Contact us at **1-800-MICH-VET** (1-800-642-4838) or visit **Michigan.gov/MVAA** to learn more.



[Scan Me]



BEAUTIFUL & AFFORDABLE

- Great Lakes, 11,000 inland lakes, state parks, hiking trails, ski hills, historic lighthouses.
- Breweries, pro sports teams, low cost of living, urban and rural settings.

JOBS & SCHOOL

- Around 600 Veteran-Friendly Employers dedicated to hiring and retaining veterans.
- State-provided employment assistance at **Michigan.gov/VES**.
- 2 years of service as an E6 waives the college degree requirement for some State of Michigan careers.
- 60+ colleges in our Veteran-Friendly Schools program and 1,000s of GI Bill® approved apprenticeships.

VETERAN BENEFITS & SUPPORT

- Emergency aid through the Michigan Veterans Trust Fund and other sources.
- MVAA-provided Veteran Service Officers (VSOs) and connection to hundreds of VSOs in state.
- Buddy to Buddy initiative pairs veterans with veteran volunteer mentors.
- Veterans with a VA disability rating of 100% may be eligible for a waiver of the property taxes on their primary residence.

HEALTH CARE

- 5 VA Medical Centers and dozens of VA outpatient clinics and Vet Centers.
- 3 state-run, long-term care facilities (Michigan Veteran Homes).

Updated on 4/3/2024



**Michigan Veterans
Affairs Agency**



LINK2LIFE PROGRAM

Updated on 1/13/2026 — Display until 1/31/2027

INSPIRED BY THE MEMORY OF SSG PARKER GORDON FOX

Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox joined the Army in 2014 and served as a sniper instructor at the U.S. Army Infantry School at Fort Benning, GA. Known for his kindness and generosity, he died by suicide on July 21, 2020 at the age of 25. This program honors his legacy by supporting veterans and their families.

OUR MISSION

To reduce and prevent suicide among veterans and their families by providing social support and connecting them to U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and community resources. Our goal is to improve the mental health and overall well-being of veterans.



WHAT WE OFFER

- Personalized service planning crafted to enhance safety and work towards meaningful goals
- Dedicated one-on-one case management and collaborative coaching
- Comprehensive mental health screening and seamless connection to mental health support
- Facilitated entry into VA mental health care, free for 90 days
- Expert guidance with VA benefits and programs
- Coordinated and supported referrals to trusted resources

ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS

- Service members, veterans discharged under conditions other than dishonorable and family members (18+, if the veteran is enrolled and engaged in the program)
- Screening Required



HOW TO GET STARTED

Visit Michigan.gov/Link2Life, call **1-800-MICH-VET** (1-800-642-4838) or scan the QR code with your camera app to learn more. If you or a loved one are in crisis, please call 988 (veterans press 1).



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MICHIGAN VETERANS TRUST FUND

Updated on 2/18/2025 — Display until 1/31/2027

HELPING VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES REGAIN THEIR FINANCIAL FOOTING SINCE 1946

Through its Emergency Grant Program, the Michigan Veterans Trust Fund (MVTF) has approved more than 650,000 applications for emergency assistance and distributed more than \$130 million to eligible veterans and their dependents who were in financial crisis related to mortgage or rent, emergency home and auto repairs, property taxes and utility bills.

In addition to providing emergency financial assistance, the MVTF has collaborated with community partners including GreenPath Financial Wellness to provide financial education and debt management programs for veterans. These and other programs help to establish Michigan as the place where veterans choose to live, raise a family, work and retire.



Visit Michigan.gov/MVTF to learn more about the Michigan Veterans Trust Fund.

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Through its **Emergency Grant Program**, the MVTF assists wartime-era veterans (and peacetime veterans that have earned the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal) that are experiencing unforeseen financial hardship. Peacetime-era veterans that are 65 and older should inquire about the **65+ Peacetime Program** that offers similar emergency assistance.

These emergency assistance programs are discretionary, but policy defines emergent need as “an unforeseen circumstance causing a temporary financial emergency or hardship that a grant will resolve. The key factor in determining whether or not a grant is approved is the ability of the applicant to manage the obligation for which aid is requested after a grant is made.”

LOCAL VETERAN COMMITTEES

Applications are typically taken through the individual county veterans affairs offices, though veterans in certain counties may apply by contacting **1-800-MICH-VET** (1-800-642-4838). Completed applications will be submitted to local county or district committees of eligible veterans appointed by the MVTF Board of Trustees. **Please see reverse for application instructions.**

1-800-MICH-VET (1-800-642-4838)
Michigan.gov/MVAA

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APPLYING FOR THE MICHIGAN VETERANS TRUST FUND'S EMERGENCY GRANT PROGRAM

If you are eligible, the Michigan Veterans Trust Fund may be able to help you when an unforeseen situation has caused a temporary financial emergency or hardship that a grant would resolve. You must be able to show that you can meet future expenses after a grant has been provided.

Eligibility

- Honorable discharge or a general discharge under honorable conditions
- 180 days of active duty service during a period of war or 180 days of active duty with award of Armed Forces/Navy/Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal
- A minimum of one day of wartime service with separation due to mental/physical disability incurred in the line of duty
- Dependents can apply if veteran is eligible under certain circumstances

How to Apply

- Veterans may contact the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency at **1-800-MICH-VET** (1-800-642-4838) to learn where they can apply in their county
- Call and make an appointment and ensure you bring all required documents and information to complete the application

What to Bring to Complete your Application

- Discharge papers, separation report or DD-214 (Member Copy 4 showing the dates of active duty and the character of discharge)
Note: To request a copy of your DD-214, contact the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency at **1-800-MICH-VET** (1-800-642-4838).
- Proof of residence (driver's license, voter registration, state ID)
- Bills or account statements regarding the items for which you are seeking a MVTF grant, plus copies of all monthly bills
- Proof of employment or other income
- Documentation of any VA disability rating
- Marriage certificate and/or birth certificates of minor children, if applicable
- Death certificate of a deceased spouse or parent, if applicable



SCAN WITH YOUR
CAMERA APP TO
LEARN MORE.

MICHIGAN VETERANS AFFAIRS AGENCY

The **Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency** (MVAA) is the central coordinating agency for Michigan veterans and their families, providing support, care, advocacy and service. Veterans can call the MVAA at **1-800-MICH-VET** (1-800-642-4838) or visit **Michigan.gov/MVAA** to get information, resources and support as they transition through each chapter of their lives. As a state agency, all MVAA services are complimentary.





MICHIGAN VETERANS TRUST FUND: **65+ PEACETIME PROGRAM**

Updated on 2/19/2025 — Display until 1/31/2027

EMERGENCY GRANTS EXPANDED TO PEACETIME VETERANS 65 AND OLDER

Peacetime-era veterans 65 years and older and their surviving spouses are now eligible for emergency assistance as part of the **Michigan Veterans Trust Fund's (MVTF) 65+ Peacetime Program**.

Similar to its Emergency Grant Program for wartime-era veterans, the MVTF's 65+ Peacetime Program allows veterans who served in a peacetime era, have at least 180 days of service and received an honorable discharge or a general discharge under honorable conditions to apply for emergency assistance. A veteran or the surviving spouse is eligible to apply any time during the year in which the veteran turns (or would have turned) 65 years old.

The assistance helps veterans overcome unforeseen situations causing a temporary or short-term financial emergency or hardship that a grant will resolve and for which the applicant can demonstrate the ability to meet future expenses. Covered expenses under the 65+ Peacetime Program include utility bills, emergency home repairs and rent and mortgage assistance.

APPLYING FOR THE 65+ PEACETIME PROGRAM

Veterans interested in applying for the 65+ Peacetime Program should contact the MVTF county committee serving the county they reside in. Veterans can call the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency (MVAA) at **1-800-MICH-VET** (1-800-642-4838) to be connected to their county veteran representative. Learn more about the MVTF and how to apply at **Michigan.gov/MVTF**.



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100-PERCENT DISABLED VETERAN BENEFITS

Updated on 10/31/2025 — Display until 1/31/2027

If you have received a rating of 100 percent permanent and total (P&T) or Individual Unemployability (IU) from the VA, you may be eligible for additional benefits.

FEDERAL BENEFITS (VA.GOV)

- **Adaptive Housing Grants** — Grants to help purchase or construct an adapted home, or modify an existing home to accommodate a disability. Learn more at go.mi.gov/SAHGrant.
- **Burial Benefits** — You may be eligible for burial benefits to help cover plot or interment allowance, burial and funeral costs, and transportation costs. Learn more at cem.va.gov/burial-memorial-benefits.
- **CHAMPVA** — Health benefits program for dependents.
- **Clothing Allowance** — For veterans who have a service-connected disability that requires a prosthetic or orthopedic appliances or medications that damage clothing.
- **Commissary & Exchange Privileges** — You may be eligible for Armed Forces Commissary and Exchange privileges. You can shop in store or online at ShopMyExchange.com. Find a RAPIDS ID Card Office at bit.ly/RAPIDScard.
- **Dental Care** — Dental treatment provided at VA Medical Center.
- **Dependents Education Assistance** — Education benefits for spouse and children.
- **Health Care** — Enrollment in VA Healthcare Priority Group 1, with no co-payments required.
- **VA Guaranteed Home Loan** — You may be eligible for a VA guaranteed mortgage. The funding fee is waived for 100 percent service-connected veterans.
- **Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E)** — Provides services to help veterans with

disabilities prepare for, find and maintain suitable employment. Visit bit.ly/VA-VRE.

- **Waiver of Life Insurance Premiums** — You may be eligible for a waiver of the premiums on your government life insurance benefits.

MICHIGAN BENEFITS

- **Children of Veterans Tuition Grant** — This grant provides undergraduate tuition assistance to the child of a veteran who dies while on active duty or who has been awarded a total and permanent disability rating from the VA. Visit Michigan.gov/MiStudentAid or call **888-447-2687**.
- **Free Entrance to State Parks** — Free entry into Michigan facilities that require a Recreation Passport. Must have a corresponding veteran license plate. Visit Michigan.gov/SOS.
- **Free Hunting and Fishing Licenses** — Must obtain licenses through a DNR office, not from an agent or online. Visit Michigan.gov/DNR to locate an office near you.
- **Property Tax Waiver** — You may be eligible for a waiver of the property taxes on your primary residence. You must apply to your city or township taxing authority. Visit Michigan.gov/Taxes.
- **Vehicle Registration** — You are entitled to one disabled veteran license plate for use on a private passenger vehicle, with no annual administrative fee. Visit Michigan.gov/SOS.

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VETERAN DEPENDENTS AND SURVIVORS

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ACCRUED BENEFITS

Accrued benefits are benefits that are due, but not paid prior to a beneficiary's death. Examples include:

- A claim or appeal for a recurring benefit was pending at the time of death, but all evidence needed for a favorable decision was in VA's possession.
- A claim for a recurring benefit had been allowed, but the beneficiary died before award.

DEPENDENCY INDEMNITY COMPENSATION (DIC)

DIC is a tax-free monthly benefit paid to eligible survivors of military service members who died in the line of duty or eligible survivors of veterans whose death resulted from a service-related injury or illness. A surviving spouse may be eligible if they meet the following requirements:

One of these must be true:

- You lived with the veteran or service member without a break until their death, **OR**
- If you're separated, you weren't at fault for the separation

And one of these must be true:

- You married the veteran or service member within 15 years of their discharge from the period of military service during which the qualifying illness or injury started or got worse, **OR**
- You were married to the veteran or service member for at least 1 year, **OR**
- You had a child with the veteran or service member

Note: If you remarried or are a surviving child, please contact a Veteran Service Officer to determine eligibility.

SUBSTITUTION

Substitution allows a person eligible for accrued benefits to substitute a deceased beneficiary on a pending claim or appeal. The substitute claimant may submit evidence in support of the pending claim or appeal for potential accrued benefits.

SURVIVORS PENSION

The Survivors Pension benefit, often referred to as Death Pension, is a tax-free benefit payable to un-remarried surviving spouse and/or unmarried child(ren) of a deceased veteran with wartime service. The deceased veteran must have met the following service requirements:

- Entered active duty on or before September 7, 1980, and served at least 90 days on active military service, with at least 1 day during a covered wartime period, **OR**
- Entered active duty after September 7, 1980, and served at least 24 months or the full period for which they were called or ordered to active duty (with some exceptions), with at least 1 day during a covered wartime period **OR**
- Was an officer and started on active duty after October 16, 1981, and hadn't previously served on active duty for at least 24 months **AND**
- Was discharged from service under other than dishonorable conditions.

The Survivors Pension is a needs-based benefit. Qualifying factors include annual income, assets and eligible medical expenses. While an un-remarried spouse is eligible at any age, a child of a deceased wartime veteran must be:

- Under 18, **OR** 18-23 and attending a VA-approved school, **OR**
- Permanently incapable of self-support due to a disability before age 18

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SUPPORT FOR VETERAN CAREGIVERS

Updated on 1/23/2025 — Display until 1/31/2027

VA PROGRAMS FOR CAREGIVERS

Often, people do not identify themselves as a “caregiver.” Caregivers are daughters, wives, husbands, sons, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, partners and friends. Caregivers manage a wide range of responsibilities and play an important role in caring for veterans at home and in the community. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has two programs for caregivers:

- **Program of General Caregiver Support Services:** For caregivers of veterans enrolled in VA healthcare.
- **Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers:** For caregivers of eligible veterans who have a service-connected disability/disabilities and a combined rating of 70% or more is assigned by VA.



Visit caregiver.va.gov to learn more about the caregiver programs offered by the VA.

AM I A CAREGIVER? Do you assist a veteran who needs help to:

- Make medical appointments or drive to the doctor?
- Drive to the pharmacy to pick up prescriptions?
- Get dressed, take a shower or take medication?
- Get in and out of bed?
- Complete physical therapy or give injections?
- Feed self, with feeding tubes or complete similar procedures at home?
- Talk with doctors, nurses, social workers and others to understand about their medical care or benefits?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, you are a caregiver and may be eligible for caregiver services at the VA.

INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE?

Each VA Medical Center has a Caregiver Support Coordinator available to assist you with enrolling in these programs. Find your local coordinator at go.mi.gov/VACaregiverSupport, or call the VA Caregiver Support Line at **1-855-260-3274**.

Do you or a veteran you know need help accessing a DD214 or other military records? Call the Michigan Veteran Resource Service Center at **1-800-MICH-VET** (1-800-642-4838) or visit Michigan.gov/MVAA.

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PRESUMPTIVE CONDITIONS

Updated on 11/18/2024 — Display until 1/31/2027

Certain disabilities diagnosed in some groups of veterans are presumed to have been caused by their military service. If a veteran is diagnosed with one of these specific conditions, they may be awarded disability compensation through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Veterans diagnosed with a chronic disease such as diabetes, arthritis, or hypertension within one year of release from active duty are encouraged to apply. Veterans diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS)/Lou Gehrig's disease any time after discharge or release from qualifying active service is sufficient to establish service connection, if the veteran had active, continuous service of 90 days or more.

Veterans in the following groups may qualify for presumptive disability benefits:

VIETNAM VETERANS

If you were exposed to Agent Orange or served in the following locations, you may have a presumptive condition.

- Republic of Vietnam or on a vessel operating not more than 12 nautical miles seaward from the demarcation line of the waters of Vietnam and Cambodia between Jan. 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975
- Any U.S. or Royal Thai military base in Thailand from Jan. 9, 1962 through June 30, 1976
- Laos from Dec. 1, 1965 through September 30, 1969
- Cambodia at Mimot or Krek, Kampong Cham Province from April 16, 1969 through April 30, 1969
- Guam or American Samoa or in the territorial waters off Guam or American Samoa from Jan. 9, 1962 through July 31, 1980
- Johnston Atoll or on a ship that called at Johnston Atoll from Jan. 1, 1972 through Sept. 30, 1977

Specific presumed conditions include:

- AL amyloidosis
- B-cell leukemia
- Chronic lymphocytic leukemia
- Multiple myeloma
- Type 2 diabetes
- Hodgkin's disease
- Ischemic heart disease (including but not limited to, coronary artery disease and atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease)
- Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- Parkinson's disease
- Parkinsonism
- Prostate cancer
- Respiratory cancers
- Soft-tissue sarcoma (not including osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma or mesothelioma)
- Bladder cancer
- Hypothyroidism
- Hypertension
- Monoclonal gammopathy of underdetermined significance (MGUS)

PRISONERS OF WAR

Imprisoned for any length of time, and disability at least 10 percent disabling.

- Psychosis
- Dysthymic Disorder
- Post-traumatic Osteoarthritis
- Any of the Anxiety States
- Organic Residuals of Frostbite
- Stroke and Complications
- Heart Disease or Hypertensive Vascular Disease and their complications

Imprisoned for at least 30 days, and disability at least 10 percent disabling.

- Avitaminosis
- Beriberi
- Chronic Dysentery
- Cirrhosis of the Liver
- Helminthiasis
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome
- Malnutrition (including Optic Atrophy)
- Peptic Ulcer Disease
- Pellagra and any other nutritional deficiency
- Peripheral Neuropathy

VETERANS EXPOSED TO IONIZING RADIATION

- Leukemia (all form except chronic lymphocytic)
- Bronchiolo-alveolar Carcinoma
- Multiple Myeloma
- Lymphomas (other than Hodgkin's disease)
- Primary Liver Cancer (except if cirrhosis or hepatitis B is indicated)
- Cancer of the thyroid, breast, pharynx, esophagus, stomach, small intestine, pancreas, bile ducts, gall bladder, salivary gland, urinary tract (kidneys, renal pelvis, ureters, urinary bladder and urethra), brain, bone, lung, colon, or ovary

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GULF WAR AND POST 9/11 VETERANS

Presumptive conditions for Gulf War and Post-9/11 Veterans depends on where and when you served.

If you served in the Southwest Asia theater of operations, Afghanistan, Israel, Egypt, Turkey, Syria, or Jordan, during the Persian Gulf War and have:

- A medically unexplained chronic multi-symptom illnesses that exist for six months or more, such as:
 - Chronic fatigue syndrome
 - Fibromyalgia
 - Irritable bowel syndrome
- Any diagnosed or undiagnosed illness that warrants a presumption of service connection, as determined by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs
- Signs or symptoms of an undiagnosed illness, including:
 - Cardiovascular symptoms
 - Fatigue
 - Gastrointestinal symptoms
 - Headaches
 - Joint pain
 - Menstrual disorders
 - Muscle pain
 - Neurological or neuropsychological symptoms
 - Skin symptoms
 - Sleep disturbance
 - Symptoms involving the upper or lower respiratory system
 - Weight loss

If you served in the Southwest Asia theater of operations or in Afghanistan on or after September 19, 2001 and:

- Manifest one of the following infectious diseases to a degree of 10 percent or more within 1 year of separation, specific conditions include:
 - Brucellosis
 - Campylobacter jejuni
 - Coxiella burnetii (Q fever)
 - Nontyphoid Salmonella
 - Shigella
 - West Nile virus
 - Malaria (or when accepted treatises indicate the incubation period began during a qualifying period of service)
- Manifest to a degree of 10% or more at any time after separation, specific conditions include:
 - Mycobacterium tuberculosis
 - Visceral leishmaniasis

If you served any amount of time in Afghanistan, Djibouti, Syria, or Uzbekistan during the Persian Gulf War, from Sept. 19, 2001 to the present or the Southwest Asia theater of operations from Aug. 2, 1990 to the present, specific conditions include:

- Squamous cell carcinoma of the larynx
- Squamous cell carcinoma of the trachea
- Adenocarcinoma of the trachea
- Salivary gland-type tumors of the trachea
- Adenosquamous carcinoma of the lung
- Large cell carcinoma of the lung
- Salivary gland-type tumors of the lung
- Sarcomatoid carcinoma of the lung
- Typical and atypical carcinoid of the lung

If you served on or after Sept. 11, 2001 in Afghanistan, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Uzbekistan, Yemen, or if you served in the Southwest Asia theater of operations*, or Somalia, on or after Aug. 2, 1990, specific conditions include:

- Asthma that was diagnosed after service
- Brain cancer
- Chronic bronchitis
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Chronic rhinitis
- Chronic sinusitis
- Constrictive bronchiolitis or obliterative bronchiolitis
- Emphysema
- Gastrointestinal cancer of any type
- Glioblastoma
- Granulomatous disease
- Head cancer of any type
- Interstitial lung disease (ILD)
- Kidney cancer
- Lymphatic cancer of any type
- Lymphoma of any type
- Melanoma
- Neck cancer of any type
- Pancreatic cancer
- Pleuritis
- Pulmonary fibrosis
- Reproductive cancer of any type
- Respiratory cancer of any type
- Sarcoidosis

*The Southwest Asia theater of operations refers to Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the neutral zone between Iraq and Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, the Gulf of Aden, the Gulf of Oman, the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Sea, the Red Sea, and the airspace above these locations.

HAVE YOU HAD A BENEFITS CHECKUP?

The Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency (MVAA) is the state's central coordinating agency for veterans and their families, providing support, care, advocacy and service. Our Veteran Resource Service Center technicians are available at **1-800-MICH-VET** (1-800-642-4838) to connect you with education, health care and other benefits you earned for your service, and to connect you with local Veteran Service Officers to help you file VA benefit claims.





Buddy to Buddy

Veteran Mentorship Program

You've served and are looking to continue your service with a proud community of veterans that are passionate about supporting their fellow veterans and those still serving. The **Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency** (MVAA) has an opportunity for you.

Our **Buddy to Buddy Veteran Mentorship Program** is offering **free training** to prepare veteran mentors to be partnered up with other veterans and service members to offer mentorship and support. Here is an opportunity to assist those who proudly served while they navigate the process of how to connect to resources and benefits they have earned.

For more information on Buddy to Buddy and how you can volunteer, email **MVAA-B2B@michigan.gov**, call **1-800-MICH-VET** (1-800-642-4838) or visit **Michigan.gov/MVAAB2B**.

Checklist for Becoming a Veteran Mentor

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Submit your Volunteer Application | ☐ Complete a Self-Paced Video Training Series with a Check On Learning Assessment |
| ☐ Complete a Background Check with Liability Waivers | ☐ Sign a Volunteer Mentor Code of Conduct and MOU |
| ☐ Verify Honorable Discharge | |

Updated on 2/22/2024



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Buddy to Buddy

Veterans, You Are Not Alone

The Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency (MVAA) **Buddy to Buddy Veteran Mentorship Program** offers personal, one-on-one veteran mentorship to veterans of all eras and discharge types as well as individuals currently serving in the Michigan National Guard or Reserves who may not know where to find the resources they need or may be reluctant to ask for help.

Volunteer veteran mentors, called “Buddies,” are located throughout Michigan to help support your needs and to link you to benefits and resources ranging from financial to employment, and from education to health care.

Buddies can also connect their fellow veterans to advocates, such as Veteran Navigators, who can help with mental health and substance abuse issues.

To connect to a Buddy, call 1-800-MICH-VET (1-800-642-4838).

Updated on 2/13/2024



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Michigan Veterans,
**Find Your
Next Step**

*Your path to a healthy
financial future starts here.*



GreenPath™
financial wellness

You're not alone.
GreenPath is here to
help you succeed.

Are you concerned about your finances? Stop worrying. Since 1961, GreenPath has been empowering people to regain control of their finances – and their lives.

GreenPath has partnered with the Michigan Veterans Trust Fund to help you to get out of debt, pay bills on time, and enjoy life without financial stress.

A caring GreenPath financial expert will:

- Take time to understand your financial situation and concerns.
- Explore strategies for paying off your debts and achieving your financial goals.
- Discuss the benefits and drawbacks of each option.
- See if you should consider a debt management plan, which may help you pay off credit card balances faster and save thousands of dollars in interest.
- Review your credit report with you.
- Develop a personalized action plan for getting back on track.

Take the first step.

866-256-8352
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GUN SHOP & RANGE: SUICIDE PREVENTION MEASURES



**Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among
Service Members, Veterans and their Families**

Learn more at Michigan.gov/SuicidePrevention

GUN SHOP & RANGE: SUICIDE PREVENTION MEASURES

Disclaimer: This document was created for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal or general medical advice. This information is being provided to assist with sharing information on suicide prevention strategies and is not intended for either legal or medical advice. The views, opinions, and content expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the views, opinions, or policies of the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency (MVAA), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), or the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Gun Shops and Suicide:

1. Won't a suicidal person just use something else if they can't get a gun?

Sometimes, yes. But almost every other method is less lethal than a firearm so there's a greater chance the person won't die in their attempt. Also, other methods allow time for rescue or give the ambivalent attempter some time to change their mind mid-attempt.

2. If a suicidal person substitutes another method and doesn't die, won't they eventually figure out a way to kill themselves later?

Suicidal feelings often pass over time. Studies that follow people over many years have found that roughly 90% of those who survive a suicide attempt do not go on to die by suicide, including those who made a very serious attempt, like jumping in front of a train.

3. Suicide is a sensitive subject — I'm concerned about offending my customers or making them feel uncomfortable.

It's true this is a difficult subject, but it's also true that thoughtful conversations about hard topics can produce good outcomes, in this case even save lives. A customer might see a brochure in your store, for example, and talk to his newly-divorced brother about letting him hold onto his guns until his deep depression lifts. Your store may have just helped save a life without you even knowing it. That said, it is very important to us to ensure our materials share information in a respectful manner. Please let us know what you hear!

4. Suicide is a personal choice — it's your right to end your life. Who am I to intervene if someone doesn't want to live anymore?

Suicide is certainly a personal choice. Some people attempt suicide after a lot of deliberation and are virtually certain life is no longer worth living. But many attempt during a crisis and most have mixed feelings or regret. Over half of attempters report less than an hour passed between deciding on suicide and making the attempt, according to a number of studies. Often people who have survived serious attempts say something like: "The moment I jumped, I said to myself, What did I just do? I don't want to die..." Also, thousands of people in their teens and twenties kill themselves each year in the U.S. — too young an age to give up on life.

5. Does relocating the guns for a while always work?

Reducing access to firearms and other lethal means is only part of a broader suicide prevention plan. Those considered actively suicidal are best protected by not being left alone until they are feeling better. Getting professional help and the support of other family and friends is strongly advised. The phone number for the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** is **988** and is available 24/7.



Gun shop and range photos courtesy of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Michigan.gov/DNR

6. The Tip Sheet says one in ten firearm suicides were with recently purchased guns. That sounds like a lot. I've been in business for many years and never thought a customer was suicidal.

It sounded like a lot to us, too. But that number comes straight from various state medical examiner (ME) offices. When an ME office investigates a death, sometimes they'll find a receipt for the gun in the victim's pocket or next to the gun, so they know it's a recent purchase. Hopefully you and your staff will never come across a suicidal customer but being prepared could save a life.

7. I have had a customer purchase a gun for suicide, and he didn't exhibit ANY warning signs at all.

You can't always spot people who are serious about killing themselves. There's no way all suicides can be prevented. There have been occasions when a dealer asked a person who seemed shaky whether they should really be buying this gun and they admitted they were considering suicide. The more ambivalent someone is about suicide, the greater the opportunity for intervention.

8. What do I say to a customer who keeps a gun at home for self-defense but is worried about someone at home who's going through a rough time?

It depends on how that gun is stored. If a customer's loved one at home (or with keys to their home) is going through a rough time, they may want to re-evaluate the accessibility of that firearm to that person. Additionally, veterans can contact their local VA hospital and request free gun locks for any firearms in their home. Suicide may be the bigger threat that your customer has to guard against in the short term until the situation improves.

OTHER QUESTIONS?

Contact the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline / Veterans Crisis Line** at: **988** (Veterans press 1) for questions on how to best support, intervene, connect and prevent suicides in our communities.

The **Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency** (MVAA) is also available at **1-800-MICH-VET** (1-800-642-4838) or **Michigan.gov/MVAA** for any veteran related questions.



UNDERSTANDING SUICIDE AND PREVENTION MEASURES FOR FIREARM RETAILERS AND RANGE OWNERS

Your vigilance could save a life!

The National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) and American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) have created a special presentation to help firearm owners, retailers, ranges and employees better understand the complexities of suicide and suicide prevention.

By working with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, NSSF is distributing suicide prevention education materials to thousands of firearm retailers, shooting ranges and gun owners nationwide. This education focuses on risk factors, warning signs and actions that can be taken to help prevent suicide: making sure firearms are securely stored when not in use, temporary removal of firearms from the home during periods of risk and denying the sale or rental of a firearm when appropriate.

Additional measures that firearm retailers and range owners should consider to assist in suicide prevention efforts are:

1. Reach out. Contact your local AFSP Chapter at 810-701-7790 or aperry@afsp.org. More information and resources on suicide prevention, including a toolkit containing educational materials for use in-store and for distribution to customers can be found at nssf.org/safety/suicide-prevention/suicide-prevention-toolkit.

2. Obtain and distribute free gun locks. Free gun locks can be obtained through your local VA Medical Care facility. A best practice recommendation would be to hand out a free gun lock to every customer who purchases a firearm from your location. To obtain these free locks, contact mvastrategy@michigan.gov or call **1-800-MICH-VET** (1-800-642-4838) and request a "Gun Lock Supply."

3. Become a veteran connector. The more connected service members, veterans and their families are to their earned benefits, such as VA health care or disability compensation, the lower the risk for suicide and/or other self-harming behaviors. A best practice recommendation would be to ask all of your customers or display in your business a sign that states: "**Have you or a member of your household served in the military?**"

For those who identify as being military connected, the **Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency** can help identify and connect them to benefits, resources and other assistance programs that their service may qualify them for. All services are free and confidential. It all starts by calling **1-800-MICH-VET** (1-800-642-4838).

IMPORTANT RESOURCES

In Crisis, Dial 988 (Veterans Press 1) **or Text 838255**



The **Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency** can help connect you to veteran-related resources and information.

Call 1-800-MICH-VET (1-800-642-4838) or visit **[Michigan.gov/MVAA](https://michigan.gov/MVAA)**

Email MVAA at **MVAAResourceCenter@michigan.gov**