

Program Name: Veterans' Services

Agency: Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services & local city/town departments

Description: State and locally funded cash and medical assistance benefits for veterans and their dependents (child/spouse/parent).

Website: www.mass.gov/veterans/

Eligibility:

A veteran is a person who has actively served in the U.S. Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Air Force or full time National Guard duty. To be eligible, individual must no longer be on active duty and must have received honorable discharge.

Availability/Limitations:

Veteran must have served a minimum of 90 days during war time or 180 days in peacetime. No minimum service requirements for a person with a Purple Heart or who suffered a service-related disability. Reservists must have been called to and served in active duty to qualify. Amount and benefits vary by municipality, individual need and other factors.

Immigrants: Eligible to serve in the U.S. Armed Forces and therefore eligible for Veterans' Benefits.

Amount:

Cash benefit depends on person's current income, financial needs & living situation (extra if person is retired or disabled). The maximum benefit amount changes each year depending on annual budget allotments of both the state and individual municipalities. If the vet has income greater than the budgeted amount, the individual can only qualify for help with medical costs. If individual income greatly exceeds the budget, the individual might be asked to pay a percentage of the medical costs.

Other Veterans' benefits available: Mortgage, rental or unpaid utility arrearages; moving expenses; tuition waivers at state schools; counseling; transportation to medical appointments; some catastrophe/disaster help; burial benefits, etc.

How to Apply:

Call 1-617-635-3037 or meet a Veterans' Services Officer (VSO) at 43 Hawkins St. Boston, MA 02114

For other towns/cities, contact the Town/City Hall, or go to www.mass.gov/veterans/ and look under "Key Resources" and "Find Local VSO"

Linked Services? VSO's may help veterans access other services for which they are income-eligible, such as MassHealth or Fuel Assistance.

Right to appeal? If benefits are denied, lowered or stopped, send appeal within 45 days to state Secretary of Veterans' Services. Existing benefits will continue while appeal is being considered.

Retroactive? State and local Veterans' Benefits are only retroactive back to date of application but Federal benefits are retroactive as far back as 7 years.

Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS): www.gbls.org/

Greater Boston Legal Services provides free civil (non-criminal) legal assistance to low-income people in Boston and thirty-one additional cities and towns. The help ranges from legal advice to full case representation, depending on client need. GBLS serves families whose yearly income does not exceed 125% of Federal Poverty Income Guidelines (\$30,375 for a family of four in 2017). There are no income limits for elderly and Medicare beneficiaries.

GBLS Main Office: 197 Friend St., Boston, MA 02114 Voice: 1-617-371-1234 Toll-Free: 1-800-323-3205 TDD: 1-617-371-1228

Cambridge/Somerville Office: 60 Gore Street, Suite 203, Cambridge, MA 02141 Voice: 1-617-603-2700 TDD: 1-617-494-1757

Mass Legal Services: www.masslegalservices.org/

Superb legal services website with detailed written resources on many public benefits and also a “find legal aid” geographic locator tool.

Use this page to find legal resources: www.masslegalservices.org/findlegalaid

Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center: www.massbudget.org

Contains an infographic explaining benefits and eligibility of various programs.
massbudget.org/reports/pdf/food_map.pdf

The Ride: www.mbta.com/riding_the_t/accessible_services/?id=7108#Ride For individuals who are unable to use fixed-route transit (such as the bus or subway) due to a physical, cognitive or mental disability, the MBTA provides a door-to-door transportation service. The Ride operates 365 days a year generally from 5 AM - 1 AM in 58 cities and towns. New or recertifying applicants to The Ride must apply for or renew their eligibility by appearing in-person for an interview with a Mobility Coordinator. Call The Ride Eligibility Center at 1-617-337-2727 for an appointment. Office hours are Monday - Friday, 8AM to 5PM, or evenings by request.

Youth Pass: www.mbta.com/fares_and_passes/reduced_fare_programs/?id=6442454105 The MBTA offers a monthly, \$30 Youth Pass to help low-income school-age youth and select 19-26 year olds who are not in middle or high school access affordable transportation. (Those in school should apply for a CharlieCard through their school – contact the school for more information.) The youth must also live in a participating city or town (Boston, Cambridge, Chelsea, Lynn, Malden, Quincy, Revere or Somerville as of December 2017). See MBTA website above for application or apply through participating cities. For more, Boston-specific info, call 1-617-635-1389 or email youthline@boston.gov. November 1st is the key date. If the youth turns 19 after November 1st, they are only eligible if enrolled in a HiSET (formally GED) or job training program. All program eligibility ends once a youth is 26 and November 1st has passed. Note: All youth passes expire every November 1st. Youths must re-enroll each year.