



# Veterans Legal Issues

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# Overview

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- Veterans have unique legal needs different from that of the general population.

- When providing legal services, always ask:

*Is the client a veteran or a family member of a veteran?*

- Holistic Approach
- Awareness/Access to Information

# Disability Benefits and Appeals

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- Governed by Title 38, U.S. Code and Title 38, Code of Federal Regulations
- Service Connection – monthly payment for disability caused by active service.
- Pension – monthly payment to “war time” veteran based on financial need.
- Death Benefits – service connected and pension benefits can be paid to surviving spouse.
- Appeals – often when lawyers enter the benefits process; U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.

# Education and Employment Benefits

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- Usage of GI Bill benefits
- Employment Assistance Programs – awareness and reciprocity of training requirements and certification processes
- USERRA – Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act
- Unemployment Benefits (UCX)
- ADA/Reasonable Accommodations

# Healthcare

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- Lack of Coverage
- Medicaid Expansion under the Affordable Care Act
- Malpractice and Negligence Cases
- Class Actions?

# Housing

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- Home ownership
- Homelessness
- HUD-VASH – collaboration between Department of Housing and Urban Development and VA

# Family Matters

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- Unpaid Child Support
- Divorce/Alimony Settlements
- Uniformed Services Former Spouses Protection Act

# Veterans Treatment Courts

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- Help veterans with criminal history rehabilitate rather than serve time in prison
- VJO – Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist
- Emphasis on Holistic Approach



# Other Legal Issues

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- Resolving Criminal Matters – outstanding warrants and fines not covered by Veterans Treatment Courts
- Discharge Upgrades
- Estate Planning

# Additional Resources

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- The National Veterans Legal Services Program  
<http://www.nvlsp.org>
- The Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program  
<http://www.vetsprobono.net/>
- Stateside Legal  
<http://www.statesidelegal.org>
- Justice for Vets  
<http://www.justiceforvets.org>