



A Guidebook For Incarcerated Veterans In North Carolina

Revised May 2013

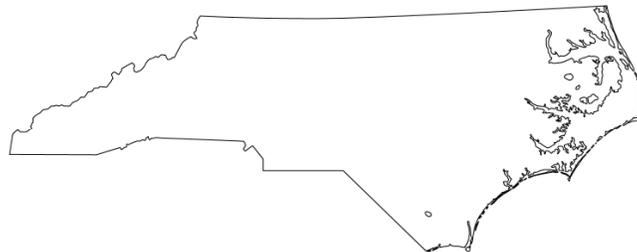


TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1: USING THE GUIDE & SEEKING HELP	4
SECTION 2: VA BENEFITS, SERVICES & ELIGIBILITY	5
Eligibility	5
Benefits and Services Available	6
VA Benefits During Incarceration	8
Family Benefits – Apportionment	9
Veteran Justice Outreach and Healthcare for Reentry Veterans Specialists	8
Applying for Benefits	11
SECTION 3: GETTING STARTED	13
Toll Free Numbers	13
Healthcare for Those Ineligible for VA Benefits	14
Employment Resources	15
Financial and Legal Assistance	16
Women Veterans	17
SECTION 4: Resources	17
VA Medical Centers, Community Based Outpatient Clinics, Vet Centers	18
Housing	19
Emergency Housing	20
Transitional Housing	22
Checklist	24

Foreword

Respect and appreciation to all Veterans for your service to our country. This handbook can be an important tool in planning for release and successful reintegration. 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 that you may be confronted with when released and an increase in 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 North Carolina, and their families, laws and programs do vary from state to state. Therefore, check your state laws and regulations against this guide.

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 To perpetuate the value of this document, we respectfully request that if you discover any incorrect, conflicting, or out-of-date information in this Guidebook please send the discrepancies, and updated information if you have it, to:

*Lucas Vrbsky
Health Care for Reentry Veterans Specialist
1601 Brenner Ave (122)
Salisbury, NC 28144
lucas.vrbsky@va.gov*

We would like to acknowledge:

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.

*Thank you,
VISN 6 Homeless Workgroup
Salisbury, NC
Last date revised: November, 2012*

SECTION 1: 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 that may be available after your release. You might want to ask a friend or family member to help you find the information you need. 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 receive.
- I owe child support.
- I want to get addictions treatment.
- I need medical care.

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. 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 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. Ask to use a computer in your facility, or visit the public library after release.

SECTION 2: VETERANS AFFAIRS BENEFITS, SERVICES & ELIGIBILITY

The Department of Veterans Affairs publishes a booklet entitled “**Federal Benefits for Veterans and Their Dependents**” that describes the types of benefits available and lists the contact information for VA facilities nationwide. Write the VA Regional Office to request a copy:

Winston Salem Regional Office
Department Of Veterans Affairs
251 N. Main St.
Winston-Salem, NC 27155

Who is Eligible for Veteran Affairs Services?

Health Care Eligibility Eligibility for VA health care is dependent upon a number of variables, which may influence the final determination of the services for which you qualify. These factors include the nature of a Veteran's discharge from military service (e.g., honorable, other than honorable, dishonorable), length of service, VA adjudicated disabilities (commonly referred to as service-connected disabilities), income level, and available VA resources, among others. Generally, you must be enrolled in VA health care system to receive benefits offered in the Medical Benefits Package. To apply for VA health care benefits, including enrollment, you must fill out an application. The application is used to determine:

- Whether you have qualifying service as a Veteran.
- What your Veteran status is so that you can be placed into one of the priority groups.

Determining Your Eligibility Eligibility for health care through VA is a two-step process:

1. VA must determine your eligibility status as a Veteran by reviewing your:
 - character of Discharge from active military service, and your
 - length of active military service
2. VA must determine whether you qualify for one of the eight enrollment priority groups.

Step 1: Determine your qualifying military service

The character of discharge you received from the military can be a factor. It is not an issue if you received: an honorable discharge; a general discharge; a discharge under honorable conditions. The length of your service may also matter. It depends on when you served. There's no length of service requirement for:

- Former enlisted persons who started active duty before September 8, 1980; or
- Former officers who first entered active duty before October 17, 1981

All other Veterans must have 24 months of continuous active duty military service or meet one of the exceptions described below. If you have a different character of discharge, you may still be eligible for care. Contact your Enrollment Coordinator at your local VA health care facility to see if you qualify.

Minimum Service Requirement

You do not have to meet the 24 continuous months of active duty service requirement if you:

- Were a Reservist or National Guard member who was called to Active Duty and who completed the term for which you were called, and who was granted an other than dishonorable discharge; or

- Only request a benefit for or in connection with: a service-connected condition or disability; or treatment, and/or counseling of sexual trauma that occurred while on active military service; or treatment of conditions related to ionizing radiation; or head or neck cancer related to nose or throat radium treatment while in the military.
- Were discharged or released from active duty for a hardship, or
- Were discharged with an “early out”; or
- Were discharged or released from active duty for a disability that began in the service or got worse because of the service; or
- Have been determined by VA to have compensable service-connected conditions; or
- Were discharged for a reason other than disability, but you had a medical condition at the time that was disabling, and in the opinion of a doctor, would have justified a discharge for disability (in this last case, the disability must be documented in service records)

One important requirement for eligibility is that the Veteran has to have been issued either an honorable or general discharge, or would have received one if not for reenlisting. If a veteran had two periods of service, one honorable and the other less than honorable, she or he may still be eligible for VA benefits based on the honorable period of service. If you are not currently eligible for benefits based on the character of your discharge (other than honorable, undesirable), you should contact a Veteran Service Officer upon your release and inquire about requesting a review of your discharge.

Step 2: Enrollment in VA Health Care System

You may enroll by submitting Form 1010EZ, application for health benefits, along with a copy of your DD214, to your local VA medical center.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) offers a wide range of benefits for the nation's veterans, service members, and their families.

Benefits and Services Available

Compensation The VA will pay you monthly compensation if you are rated at least 10% disabled as a result of your military service.

Pension You can receive a monthly pension if you are a wartime veteran with limited income, and you are permanently and totally disabled or at least age 65. There is no time limit to apply for compensation and pension benefits.

Healthcare The VA provides a number of healthcare services.

- Hospital, outpatient medical, dental, pharmacy, and prosthetic services
- Domiciliary, nursing home, and community based residential care
- Sexual trauma counseling
- Specialized healthcare for Women Veterans
- Health and rehabilitation programs for Veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness
- Readjustment counseling
- Alcohol and drug dependency treatment

- Medical evaluation for disorders associated with military service during OIF/OEF, the Gulf War, Vietnam, Korea, or WWII, as well as post traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, exposure to Agent Orange, radiation, and other environmental hazards.

Combat Veterans The VA provides free healthcare for Veterans who served in a theater of combat after November 11, 1998 for any illness possibly related to their service in that theater. You have five years from the date of your discharge from active duty on or after January 28, 2003 to apply. Remember, the Vet Center provides readjustment counseling to Combat Veterans of all eras.

Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment The VA provides assistance to Veterans with service-connected disabilities to prepare for, obtain, and maintain suitable employment. For Veterans with serious service-connected disabilities, the VA also offers services to improve their ability to live as independently as possible. There are five service delivery options available: Re-employment, Rapid access to employment, Self employment, Employment through long-term services, Independent living.

Education and Training VA pays benefits to eligible veterans, reservists, and active duty service members while they are in an approved education or training program. Benefits are based on the type of military service.

- **The Post-9/11 GI Bill** provides financial support for education and housing to individuals with at least 90 days of aggregate service on or after September 11, 2001, or individuals discharged with a service-connected disability after 30 days. You must have received an honorable discharge to be eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Additional information is available at <http://www.gibill.va.gov> or you can call 1-888-GIBILL1.
- **Benefits:** The school will report a Veteran's status as incarcerated on the certification and note whether the federal, state, or local government is paying all or part of the cost for tuition, fees, books, equipment, or supplies and the amounts paid.
- **Time Limits:** Benefits are available for up to 15 years from the last period of active duty of at least 90 consecutive days. This also applies if released for a service-connected disability after at least 30 days of continuous service.

Home Loans The VA offers a number of home loan services to eligible Veterans, some military personnel, and certain surviving spouses.

Dependents and Survivors Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)

DIC is payable to certain survivors of:

- Service members who died on active duty
- Veterans who died from service-related disabilities
- Certain veterans who were being paid 100% VA disability compensation at time of death.
- **Death Pension** is payable to some surviving spouses and children of deceased wartime veterans. The benefit is based on financial need.
- **Parents' DIC** is payable to some surviving parents. The benefit is based on financial need.

Burial and Memorial benefits are available for eligible service members, Veterans, Reservists, National Guard members, and eligible family members. Services include interment, headstones and markers, and Presidential memorial certificates.

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 restricts 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, she or 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 or misdemeanor. However, the family may receive an apportionment of such benefits under the procedure described above. (See 38 C.F.R. Sec.3.666)

VA Medical Care cannot be 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. Incarcerated Veterans do not forfeit their eligibility for medical care; however, current regulations restrict VA from providing hospital and outpatient care to an incarcerated Veteran who is an inmate in an institution of another government agency when that agency has a duty to give the care or services. VA may provide care once the Veteran has been unconditionally released from the penal institution. Veterans interested in applying for enrollment into the VA healthcare system should contact the nearest VA healthcare facility upon their 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.

VA Benefits During Incarceration

There is a 60-day grace period following conviction where the Veteran receiving Service Connected Disability Compensation or Pension Benefits, or recipient of Dependents and Survivors Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC), may still receive full benefits. If the

Veteran continues to receive benefits after the 60-day period, it will result in an overpayment. According to the VA, it is the recipient's responsibility 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 is also a standard procedure that the family will not be entitled to receive an apportionment until the debt is completely recovered. VA Form 21-4193 needs to be filled out at the time of incarceration to notify the Veterans Benefits Administration.

REMEMBER, you must notify the VA when you are released to restart your payments. It is advisable to ask a Veteran Service Officer or Veteran Service Organization to assist you with reinstating your benefits. Form 21-4138 (Statement in Support of Claim) should be completed and you should have a copy of your release papers. The North Carolina VA Regional Office is located at 251 N. Main St. Winston-Salem, NC 27155. You may contact the VA Regional Office by calling 1-800-827-1000.

Family Benefits—Apportionment Financial Payments to Your Family

Although a Veteran can only receive a portion of the full amount payable for his or her disability rating, the remaining balance may be divided among (apportioned) the individual's dependent family. To apply for apportionment, the **dependent** must send a letter to the VA Regional Office that has jurisdiction over the Veteran's case. The dependent is the family member who qualifies to receive the benefits, for example your spouse.

VA regulations clearly specify this apportionment amount will only go to family members if they can show financial need. This applies to the spouse, children, or dependent parents who are involved in the application. The VA will decide whether partial payment of benefits is appropriate, the amount of benefits, and who will receive the payments. The VA will consider the following factors:

- 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.

Accessing Post 9/11 GI Bill Educational Benefits while Incarcerated

Veterans who served after September 11, 2001 and have an honorable discharge may be eligible to access educational benefits while incarcerated. The Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits expire 15 years after discharge from military service. VA Form 22-1990 Application for Education Benefits should be submitted to determine eligibility. While incarcerated this benefit would cover the cost of classes and books. Additional information is available at <http://www.gibill.va.gov> or you can call 1-888-GIBILL1.

Help for Veterans

If you are in a state or federal prison, the Healthcare for Re-entry Veterans (HCRV) program is an excellent place to start planning for your release and re-entry to community life. If you are in

a local jail, the starting place is the Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) program. Use the information on this page to contact specialists for these programs.

The HCRV specialist will visit each correctional facility in North Carolina to provide overview information to interested veterans and meet individually with Veterans prior to their release dates. VJO specialists may not be able to meet with you individually but may be able to provide assistance either by phone or in writing. The specialists will provide you with individualized and respectful assistance to enhance your adjustment to the community and to ensure your treatment needs are met. Ask for help from your case worker, counselor, treatment program, jail services officer, or other correctional staff to contact the **HCRV specialist if you are in a state prison** or the **VJO specialist if you are in a local jail**.

The VA has programs, treatment, and services that may assist you. However, you may need to practice patience and persistence and stay focused on the goals of you and your loved ones.

Veteran Justice Outreach Specialists

Katie Stewart, MSW, LCSW
Charles George VA Medical Center
1100 Tunnel Road
Asheville, NC 28805
800.932.6408 x 1195

Curtis Murrow, MSW
Fayetteville VA Medical Center
230 Ramsey Street
Fayetteville, NC 28301

Tim Virgilio, LCSW
Durham VA Medical Center
508 Fulton St
Durham, NC 27705
888.878.6890 x 5186

Carolyn Cardwell, LCSW
W.G. Bill Hefner VA Medical Center
1601 Brenner Ave
Salisbury, NC 28144
800.469.8262 x 4129

Health Care for Reentry Veterans Specialist

Lucas Vrbsky, MSW
W.G. Bill Hefner VA Medical Center
1601 Brenner Ave (122)
Salisbury, NC 28144
800.469.8262 x 5521

Seeking Help After Release

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. Many Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) have trained staff who can help you with your VA claim, and can legally represent your claim before the VA. Examples of Veterans Service Organizations include Disabled American Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, National Association for Black Veterans, and the American Legion, just to name a few. Each county in NC has a Veteran Service Officer who can help with claims. Visit www.doa.state.nc.us/vets/locations/ to find a Veteran Service Officer near you.

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.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms1.htm 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. If you need assistance with obtaining these forms ask Correctional Staff or contact the VJO/HCRV in your geographical area.

- VA Form 21-526 - Application for Compensation or Pension- must be filed to apply for compensation or pension. Mail your DD-214 and the following forms to the VARO nearest your release destination 30 to 45 days before your 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 days 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.

Applying for VA Health Care and Benefits

To apply for benefits, you will need your DD214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty). The programs staff or case managers at your facility may be able to assist you. You may download a copy of the Form SF-180 from <http://www.archives.gov/veterans> or you may request a copy by calling 1-866-272-6272.

The information required for the enrollment process and determination of eligibility for a disability rating may seem overwhelming. However, an HCRV or VJO program specialist will help you complete the enrollment documents and submit them on your behalf. The HCRV/VJO specialist will make sure all details are included. The specialist will also be able to monitor your status and inform you accordingly.

The enrollment document (1010EZ) will determine your eligibility for VA healthcare benefits. Eligibility is determined by the character of your discharge from the military, the length of time you were on active duty, and the presence of a service-connected disability. The HCRV/VJO specialist will discuss eligibility with you when you meet and help you complete form 1010EZ. The outcome of your request for enrollment will provide you with facts concerning your eligibility for VA benefits. There are contacts at each VA medical center and you will receive that information when you meet with the HCRV/VJO. The HCRV/VJO specialist will provide you with contact information for the VA medical center nearest you. This person will be available to assist you in navigating the VA healthcare system. In many cases the contact person will be the homeless coordinator or someone in that program. Refer to the list of VA medical centers in North Carolina in Section 3: Resources.

You will receive a confirmation letter from the VA advising you of the status of your eligibility for benefits. This correspondence will be mailed to the address identified when you meet with the HCRV/VJO specialist. You will be determined as eligible, ineligible, or unable to determine as eligible. If you disagree with the determination, you may appeal the decision and submit documents in support of your claim.

Be sure to obtain a copy of your DD214 since this is an important document to submit if your eligibility is denied or more information is needed to confirm your eligibility for VA healthcare. Keep the original for your records and submit only a copy of your DD214.

If your eligibility is confirmed or if you want to contest the preliminary eligibility determination, visit the VA medical center of your choice to register for care. Make an appointment to meet with the contact person at the VA medical center so he or she can assist you with the registration process. You will need a picture identification in order to register for healthcare (the picture identification provided by the prison is adequate for registration purposes). You will be asked to update your information. At the time of registration you may schedule an appointment for primary care. You should also ask to be photographed for a VA identification card.

Make sure you receive an appointment with a primary care physician in a timely manner if you are prescribed medications. Typically the prison or jail will provide you with at least a 30 day supply of medication. In most cases you may be able to see a VA physician within 30 days. In case of an emergency, you may be seen in the emergency department at the VA medical center. Your primary care physician is an essential contact. You may request specialized services such as mental health treatment, substance use treatment, and other assistance from this physician.

SECTION 3: GETTING STARTED

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 Medical Centers: 877.222.8387
- VA Benefits: 800.827.1000
- Education Benefits: 888.442.4551
- CHAMPVA: 800.733.8387
- Persian Gulf War Helpline: 800.749.8387
- National Coalition for Homeless Veterans www.nchv.org, 800.838.4357
- National Homeless Veterans Call Center 877.424.3838
- Veterans Crisis Line 800.273.8255 (TALK)
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration Treatment Referral Helpline
800.662.4357 (HELP) <http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/>
- Health Benefits: 800.222.8387
- Debt Management: 800.827.0648
- Health Eligibility Center: 800.929.8387
- National AIDS Hotline: 800.822.7422

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!**

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.

The coordinator for the homeless program at each medical center is a valuable resource for information and referrals to housing programs. Resources vary from location to location and the homeless programs have specific information regarding resources in their respective areas. Make sure you contact the homeless coordinator at the VA medical center where you receive care if you need housing assistance.

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 by calling 1.877.4AID.VET (1.877.424.3838) or at <http://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/NationalCenter.asp>.

NCDPS County Resource Guide The N.C. Department of Public Safety County Resource Guide was developed by the NCDPS Office of Research and Planning/Office of Transition Services to provide a searchable database of community resources in each of North Carolina's 100 counties. The database contains contact information for many core local, state, and federal agencies, as well as various faith-based and community-based service organizations that provide assistance to released offenders and/or offenders under correctional supervision to support a successful transition into their community. You may want to ask your case manager about a county specific guide.

Ineligible for Veteran's benefits? Free or low-cost healthcare may be available.

Department of Social Services can tell you where to find healthcare facilities for the homeless. Check the phone book blue pages under local, city, or county government for the local number. **National Healthcare for the Homeless Council** has a list of healthcare providers working with homeless people across the nation. For a list of providers, 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 the local government office for clinics in your area. You may also contact the NC Association of Free Clinics at www.ncfreeclinics.org or at PO Box 25893 Winston-Salem, NC 27114.

Mental Health Services, Substance Use Disorder Treatment, Support Groups

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill lists community mental health service providers at www.nami.org or call 800.950.6264.

Mental Health America offers support groups, rehabilitation, socialization, and housing services through 340 community organizations located across the country. Call 800.969.6642 or find a local office online at www.nmha.org.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration operates a national treatment referral helpline at 800.662.4357 (HELP) or online at <http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/>

Alcoholics Anonymous Check the phonebook for a local number or visit <http://www.aa.org>

Narcotics Anonymous Check the phonebook for a local number or visit <http://www.na.org>.

Employment

Employment is one of the biggest barriers between you and successful re-entry. 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. Don't wait until you get out to start thinking about employment. **Start planning now!** Ask for job counseling and training while incarcerated so you are prepared to work when released. Obtain and keep copies of any education, training, or trade certifications you may have from your work or training while you are incarcerated. These could make a difference in getting hired. You also may be able to obtain references relevant to your employment.

NC Division of Employment Security (Employment Security Commission)

The Employment Security Commission provides three major services: employment service, unemployment insurance, and labor market information. Services are provided through a variety of access points including local and branch offices, call centers, internet, and the central office. ESC is recognized as a public service agency staffed with professionals who can provide selection and referral services for employers and assist applicants in applying for jobs in the local area or across the state. The bulk of ESC service delivery comes through the agency's network of 90 local offices, including 60 full service offices and 30 branch offices. ESC also maintains an on-site presence at over 70 other locations including local community college campuses, state universities, military bases and a number of local community service agencies. In addition most ESC services and agency information can be accessed remotely by anyone with access to the Internet. **Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists** assigned by the NC Division of Employment Security to help Veterans find and keep jobs. LVERs are located with the local offices. DVOP Specialists work under the supervision of the LVER to develop job and training opportunities for veterans with service-connected disabilities, linking veterans with employers and making sure follow-up services are provided.

The State of North Carolina 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.

Department of Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment

This program helps Veterans with service-connected disabilities by providing job training and counseling to those who have an employment handicap. Services include help finding a job, on-the-job training, job development, and vocational training. If you are not eligible for these services, a VA counselor may help you find other options, goals, or programs. Contact your VA Regional Office (VARO) at 1-800-827-1000.

Veterans Industries and Compensated Work Therapy Programs

The VA offers structured work opportunities and supervised therapeutic housing for at-risk and homeless veterans with physical, mental health, and addiction problems. The 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. You will need to get a referral from your primary care provider at your local VA medical center after your release.

Homeless Veterans Supportive Employment Program (HVSEP)

provides vocational assistance, job development and placement, and ongoing supports to improve employment outcomes among homeless Veterans and Veterans at-risk of homelessness.

Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP)

VRAP offers up to 12 months of training assistance to unemployed Veterans. The program is limited to 54,000 participants from October 1, 2012, through March 31, 2014. Participants must attend full-time in order to receive up to 12 months of assistance equal to the monthly full-time payment rate under the Montgomery GI Bill–Active Duty program (\$1,564 effective October 1, 2012). DOL will offer employment assistance to every Veteran who participates upon completion of the program. Participants must be enrolled in a VA approved program of education offered by a community college or technical school. The program must lead to an Associate Degree, Non-College Degree, or a Certificate, and train the Veteran for a high demand occupation. VRAP offers 12 months of training assistance to Veterans who:

- Are at least 35 but no more than 60 years old
- Are unemployed on the date of application
- Received an other than dishonorable discharge
- Are not eligible for any other VA education benefit program (e.g.: the Post-9/11 GI Bill, Montgomery GI Bill, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Assistance)
- Are not in receipt of VA compensation due to unemployability
- Are not enrolled in a federal or state job training program

Financial Help

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. You should contact your local Department of Social Services office to ask for an application. For more information look online at www.ncdhhs.gov/dss/foodstamp/index.htm

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.ssa.gov/>

Other programs may be available in your area. Check the community services section of your phonebook. Look for listings such as the American Red Cross, Catholic Charities or Catholic Social Services, the Salvation Army, United Way, 2-1-1, and other non-profit providers. 2-1-1 provides free and confidential information and referral. Call 2-1-1 for help with food, housing, employment, health care, counseling and more. <http://www.211.org/>

Legal Assistance

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 the 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. 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 about pro-bono programs in your community. Or go to <http://www.abanet.org/barserv/stlobar.html>.

Legal Aid of North Carolina is a statewide, nonprofit law firm that provides free legal services in civil matters to low-income people to ensure to ensure that equal access to justice and to remove legal barriers to economic opportunity. Legal services are available in all 100 counties of North Carolina. The administrative office of Legal Aid is located at 224 South Dawson Street, Raleigh, NC 27601, 919-856-2564. The web site address is www.legalaidnc.org.

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. Most VA Medical Centers have a Women's Health Clinic to help meet the needs of female Veterans. Look online at <http://www.womenshealth.va.gov/> for more information.

SECTION 4: RESOURCES

Emergency Assistance

If you are in a medical crisis, call 911 for immediate medical and mental health assistance.

If you have thoughts of harming yourself, call the **Veterans Crisis Hotline** at **1.800.273.8255**.

To find homeless Veteran service providers in your area, call the **National Call Center for Homeless Veterans** hotline at 1.877.424.3838.

Healthcare

VA Medical Centers and VA Community Based Outreach Clinics in North Carolina

You can use Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC's) for routine care after you have registered for care at the associated medical center. These CBOC's are designed to provide access to healthcare and routine care in areas distant from the medical center. Certain areas of the state may be geographically closer to VAs in different states (Virginia, Tennessee, Georgia, South Carolina). A list of VA facilities is available in the last section of the Federal Benefits for Veterans book and can be accessed online.

Charles George VA Medical Center

1100 Tunnel Road
Asheville, NC 28805
800.932.6408
CBOCs in Franklin and Rutherfordton.

Durham VA Medical Center

508 Fulton St
Durham, NC 27705
888.878.6890
CBOCs in Durham, Raleigh, Greenville, and Morehead City.

Fayetteville VA Medical Center

230 Ramsey Street
Fayetteville, NC 28301
800.771.5106
CBOCs in Supply, Hamlet, Jacksonville, Pembroke, Wilmington and Goldsboro.

W.G. Bill Hefner VA Medical Center

1601 Brenner Ave
Salisbury, NC 28144
800.469.8262
CBOCs in Charlotte, Hickory and Winston-Salem.

Vet Centers

If you have served in any combat zone, or experienced military sexual trauma, Vet Centers are in your community to help you and your family with readjustment counseling and outreach services. The Vet Centers in North Carolina are listed below:

Charlotte Vet Center

223 S. Brevard Street Suite 103
Charlotte, NC 28202
704.333.6107

Greensboro Vet Center

3515 W Market St., Suite 120
Greensboro, NC 27406
336.333.5366 Or 877.927.8387

Fayetteville Vet Center

4140 Ramsey Street Suite 110
Fayetteville, NC 28311
910.488.6252

Greenville Vet Center

150 Arlington Blvd
Greenville, NC 27856
252.355.7920

Raleigh Vet Center

1649 Old Louisburg Rd.
Raleigh, NC 27604
919.856.4616

Jacksonville Vet Center

110A Branchwood Dr
Jacksonville, NC 28546
910.577.1100

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. A stable housing plan should provide the best available support and opportunity to make a successful reentry. This section includes ways to locate emergency shelters, 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. Some options may serve as a stepping stone until additional options become available.

Salvation Army - provides services, including shelter and transitional housing, for homeless individuals and families. For available local services and information, check the phone book for the local office of the Salvation Army or contact the organization online at www.salvationarmyusa.org

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.

EMERGENCY HOUSING

To find out if there are homeless Veteran service providers in your area, contact the Health Care for Homeless Veterans Team at your local medical center. 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.

To find a list of emergency shelters for men, women and families in every state, check with **Housing Urban Development** online at www.hud.gov/homeless/hmlsagen.cfm

There are several web sites that list emergency homeless shelters across the country.

<http://www.shelterlistings.org>

<http://www.homelessshelterdirectory.org>

Your local HCHV program should know about resources in your area. Below are several of the community shelters located in North Carolina. This is not a comprehensive list.

Name & Location of Shelter	Phone Number	Comments
Stanly County Community Inn 510 South First St Albemarle, NC 28001	704.984.6454	www.stanlycohomesofhope.org
ABCCM Vet's Quarters 1329 Tunnel Rd Asheville, NC 28805	828.298.7952	Men Only. Check-in: 4 pm; Check-out: 8 am www.abccm.org
WNC Rescue Mission 225 Patton Avenue Asheville, NC 28801	828.254.0471	Men-3 days in, 7 days out. Check-in: 4-6 pm; Check-out 7am http://westerncarolinarescue.org Cannot be on registry.
Salvation Army 204 Haywood Street Asheville, NC 28805	828.253.4723	90 day stay if employed, otherwise 14 day stay. \$60 per week after first 14 days. Cannot be on registry. Check-in: 3 pm; Check-out: 7am
Allied Churches of Alamance County 206 N. Fisher Street Burlington, NC 27216	336.229.0881	www.alliedchurches.org
Chapel Hill Interfaith Shelter 100 W. Rosemary Street Chapel Hill, NC 27516	919.967.0643	90 day limit. Check-in: 5pm www.ifcweb.org
Uptown Men's Shelter 1210 Tryon St Charlotte NC 28206	704.334.3187	Need Mecklenburg County ID & clean drug screen. www.mensshelterofcharlotte.org
Salvation Army ARC 1023 Central Ave Charlotte NC 28204	704.332.3187	
Urban Ministry Center 945 N. College St Charlotte NC 28206	704.347.0278	www.urbanministrycenter.org
Cooperative Christian Ministries 246 Country Club Dr NE Concord, NC 28025	704.786.4709	www.cooperativeministry.com
Salvation Army ARC 216 Patterson SE Concord, NC 28025	704.782.7822	
Durham Urban Ministries Shelter 410 Liberty Street Durham, NC 27701	919.682.0538 x 221	Check-in: 3pm www.umdurham.org Cannot be on registry.
Durham Rescue Mission 1201 E. Main Street Durham, NC 27701	919.688.9641 x 5034	www.durhamrescuemission.org
Salvation Army 107 S Broad St Gastonia, NC 28052	704.685.0187	

Name & Location of Shelter	Phone Number	Comments
Urban Ministries Weaver House 305 W. Lee St Greensboro, NC 27406	336.271.5959 x347	http://greensborourbanministry.org
Salvation Army 1311 S Eugene St Greensboro, NC 27406	336.272.1366	
Salvation Army Shelter 750 Third Ave Pl, SE Hickory, NC 28602	828.322.8061	
Open Door Ministries 400 N Centennial St High Point, NC 27262	336.885.0191 336.886.4922	www.odm-hp.org
Salvation Army 301 W Green Dr High Point, NC 27260	336.881.5420	
Lexington Crisis Ministry 107 East 1 st Ave Lexington, NC 27292	336.248.6684	http://crisisministryofdavidsoncounty.com
Union County Community Shelter 311 E Jefferson Monroe, NC 28112	704.289.5300	http://unionshelter.org
Raleigh Rescue Mission 314 E. Hargett Street Raleigh, NC 27601	919.828.9014	www.raleighrescue.org
South Wilmington Street Center 1420 South Wilmington Street Raleigh, NC 27603	919.857.9428	
Rowan Helping Ministries 226 N Long St Salisbury, NC 28144	704.637.9355 x3	Must be Rowan County resident. http://rowanhelppministries.org
Fifth Street Ministries PO Box 5217 Statesville, NC 28687	704.872.4045	http://fifthstreetministries.com
Bethesda Center 930 N Patterson Ave Winston-Salem, NC 27101	336.722.9951	http://bethesdacenter.org
Samaritan Ministries 1243 N Trade St Winston-Salem, NC 27101	336.748.1962	http://samaritanforsyth.org
Salvation Army 1255 N Trade St Winston-Salem, NC 27101	336.722.8721	
Winston-Salem Rescue Mission 717 Oak St Winston-Salem, NC 27101	336.723.1848 x103	http://wsrescue.org

Transitional Housing

VA Grant and Per Diem Program (GPD) is offered annually (as funding permits) by the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Programs to fund community agencies providing services to homeless Veterans. The purpose is to promote the development and provision of supportive housing and/or supportive services with the goal of helping homeless Veterans achieve residential stability, increase their skill levels and/or income, and obtain greater self-determination. GPD programs offer supportive housing (up to 24 months) or service centers. Most GPD programs charge 30% of your income. Following is a list of GPD programs in North Carolina. There are also several contract residential programs that provide transitional housing for up to three months. If you are interested please write the address below and discuss with your HCRV/VJO.

Oxford House is a self-run, self-supported recovery house program for individuals recovering from alcoholism and drug addiction. Oxford Houses assure an alcohol and drug-free living environment. There are 150 houses in North Carolina, with locations in 28 cities. Individuals living in a house are expected to participate in a recovery program in the community during their residence. For more information view www.oxfordhouse.nc.org or contact the Oxford House Criminal Justice Outreach at 919.247.7831 or 919.395.8192

There are other transitional housing options run by community and faith based agencies.

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."

Name & Location of GPD Program	Phone Number	Comments
Veteran's Restoration Quarters and Transitional Housing (ABCCM) 1329 Tunnel Rd Asheville, NC 28805	828.299.8701	24 month program. Converted motel. www.abccm.org/ministries/veterans Men's Program.
Steadfast House (ABCCM) 30 Cumberland Ave Asheville, NC 28801	828.259.5365	Women's Program. Women with young children welcome. http://www.abccm.org/ministries/women
First at Blue Ridge (Vets First) PO Box 40 Ridgecrest, NC 28770	828.669.0011	For those in recovery from substance use disorders. www.firstinc.org Men's program and Women's Program. Near Asheville
Family Forum (Independence Place) 3501 E Independence Blvd Charlotte, NC 28805	(704) 817-8049	
Faith Farm (Lutheran Family Services) 842 Dallas-Stanley Highway Dallas, NC 28034	800.435.7464	Women's Program. www.lfscarolinas.org Near Charlotte.
Healing with CAARE 214 Broadway St Durham, NC 27701	919.687.0793	24 month program. Shared living space, single rooms in several houses. http://caare-inc.org
Maple Court (Volunteers of America) 207 Commons Blvd Durham, NC 27704	919.477.0571	Apartments. 24 month program.
Triangle Residential Options for Substance Abusers (TROSA) 1820 James St Durham, NC 27707	919.419.1059	For those in recovery from substance use disorders (alcohol and other drugs). Must be able to work. 24 month program. www.trosainc.org
Servant Center 1312 Lexington Ave Greensboro, NC 27403	336.275.8585	For those with medical issues and receiving or applying for benefits. Men's Program. http://www.theservantcenter.org
Caring Services Vet Safety Net 102 Chestnut Drive High Point, NC 27262	336.886.5594	For those in recovery from substance use disorders (alcohol and other drugs). Men's Program. www.caring-services.org
Arthur Cassell Transitional House 1022 True Lane High Point, NC 27260	336.885.2166	For those in recovery from substance use disorders (alcohol and other drugs). 24 month men's program. www.odm-hp.org/ch.htm
Healing Place of Wake County 1251 Goode St Raleigh, NC	919.838.9800	For those in recovery from substance use disorders (alcohol and other drugs). 24 month program. www.hpowc.org
Veterans Helping Veterans Heal 3614 N Glenn Ave Winston-Salem, NC 27105	336.744.1313	For those in recovery from substance use disorders (alcohol and other drugs). Men's program.
Good Shepherd Ministries 811 Martin St Wilmington, NC 28401	910.763.4424	For those in recovery from substance use disorders. 18 month program. http://www.goodshepherdwilmington.org

Checklist

Using This Guide

- Ask about classes and 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.
- 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 use 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 Officer 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.

Thank you for your service to our country.