



A Guidebook For Veterans Incarcerated In Arizona



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Foreword

This handbook can be an important tool. Review all of the programs thoroughly to understand the opportunities available. When these programs are used properly, you may benefit from minimizing outside pressures you may be confronted with when released. These resources may assist you in establishing social acceptance, economic security, and your new place as a productive member of society.

This booklet is a tool for incarcerated Veterans and their families who wish to access services to support a new and successful way of life. This guidebook is designed to assist Veterans incarcerated in the State of Arizona. Laws vary from state to state; therefore, check your own state laws and regulations for the most accurate information.

Agency staff names, addresses, phone numbers, and website addresses may change. If you attempt to contact one of the resources in this guidebook and find that it is not current, do your best to obtain the current information through telephone information or an internet search. You can also call one of the following VA toll-free numbers for additional assistance:

To locate a VA Medical Facility: 1-877-222-8387

To find out about VA benefits: 1-800-827-1000

We respectfully request that if you discover any incorrect, conflicting, or outdated information in this Guidebook please send corrections to:

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VISN 18 HealthCare for Re-Entry Veterans Specialist
6950 E. Williams Field Rd.
Mesa, AZ 85212
Susann.Adams@va.gov
(602) 212-2139

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- ❖ The Veterans Incarcerated Workgroup of Walla Walla, Washington, for the concept of state-specific information in its "Guidebook for Incarcerated Veterans"
- ❖ Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc., for developing the first incarcerated Veterans guidebook, which has inspired and informed subsequent efforts
- ❖ The Incarcerated Veterans Workgroup, Southern Arizona VA HealthCare System, which created the first version of this guidebook
- ❖ 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
- ❖ Any public domain and agency resources included in the guidebook.

SECTION I

USING THIS GUIDE AND SEEKING HELP

This guide is for you to use to plan for your release and to have as a reference afterward. It includes addresses, phone numbers, and web sites that you can use to find out about programs and other help available after your release. You may want to ask a friend, family member, or correctional staff to help you find the information you need if you do not have phone or internet access. 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, contact your assigned Correctional Officer III or IV for assistance in planning for your release. Your assigned Correctional Officer III or IV will refer you to the appropriate correctional programs that will prepare you for release and reintegration into the community. **You want to be prepared for life outside of prison 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 care, mental health care, or substance abuse treatment? Do I need to learn job skills? Do I have any other legal issues, such as overdue 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 identification, important documents.
- I need clothing, food.
- I want to get addiction(s) treatment.
- I owe child support.

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 the internet or 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 other information that identifies you: your inmate number, mailing address, and if writing to the VA, your date of birth, Social Security number, and military branch & dates of service.

- A brief statement about your current situation
- Your specific request
- What you have done so far (Example: I have written to the following 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 you are contacting an agency for help either by mail, email, or phone, **be assertive (persistent and polite)** in order to get results. Ask questions if information is not clear to you. 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 about 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. If computer access is not available at your facility, you can get internet access and obtain other resources through your local public library after release. Computer access may also be provided at Work Source and Work Source Affiliate sites, Workforce Development Council member locations, and Employment Security Department offices (referred to as Job Service Centers or Unemployment Offices).

Section II of this guide provides information about assistance for specific needs.

Section III covers basic information about seeking VA benefits.

Section IV is a **Checklist** that summarizes each section of this guide and includes space for your own plan.

Section V is a list of VA and community resources

SECTION II

HELP FOR VETERANS

This section includes resources that can help you get back on your feet. Remember to check the internet and 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. In many areas, the VA does not have programs that an inmate can parole to; although many VA programs do accept veterans who have been released and are on parole or probation.

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. Many states now also have a free social service resource directory, which can be accessed by dialing "2-1-1" from any telephone within the state.

- **US Department of Veterans Affairs** — www.va.gov

Benefits: 1-800-827-1000

Medical Centers: 1-877-222-8387

National Call Center for Homeless Veterans:

1-877-4AID-VET (1-877-424-3838)

Veterans National Crisis Line:

1-800-273-8255, press "1" for Veterans

- **Social Security Administration** - www.ssa.gov

1-800-772-1213 (24 hours per day)

- **Arizona Driver's License** – www.azdot.gov

If the license was issued prior to July 1995, you must visit an MVD office to obtain the duplicate. The fee is \$12.00 payable by VISA/MC/AmEx/Discover if paid online, payable only by VISA/MC over the telephone (1-800-251-251-5866) and by check if mailed.

ID Card – 2 pieces of Identification (1 photo) is required. If you do not have a photo id than 3 pieces of identification is required. Examples are birth certificate, DD214, social security card, Department of Correction card. The fee is \$12.00 if under age 64 and there is no fee if 65 or older.

MAIL DROP 510
MOTOR VEHICLE DIVISION
PO BOX 2100
PHOENIX AZ 85001-2100

- **24 Hour Addiction Helpline** - A 24-hour national alcohol and drug abuse addiction and treatment hotline: 1-877-217-3903

- **National AIDS Hotline** - Talk to someone who knows about HIV, AIDS and can tell you about services in your city or state: 1-800-448-0440

- **National Coalition for Homeless Veterans** – Talk to someone who can give you resources for the area where you will be paroled to: 1-800-838-4357 or website: www.nchv.org,

WHERE TO START

It is essential for success to make a plan for your release. Check the internet or 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, food, 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 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 resources to end homelessness among Veterans. The HCHV program provides outreach, clinical assessments and referrals for healthcare, mental health care, and substance abuse treatment, transitional housing, case management and employment assistance with linkage to permanent housing. They also have a list of local community resources to assist you with your needs. To locate your nearest HCHV Coordinator and/or your nearest VA Medical Center call 1-877-222-8387 or go to www.va.gov/homeless .
- **The Veterans Benefits Administration** (also referred to as the VBA or Regional Office) provides information and assistance with VA Disability Compensation and Pension, Education and Training Programs, VA Home Loans, Life Insurance, and other federal benefits for eligible veterans. The VA Regional Office in Arizona may be reached at:

**VA Regional Office
3333 N. Central Avenue
Phoenix, AZ 85012
1-827-1000 toll-free**

- **Arizona Department of Veterans Services (ADVS)** provides assistance with Veteran benefits & entitlements information, VA claims process, as well as representation and advocacy. ADVS also assists Veterans with appeals when claims have been denied. They may also provide outreach and home visits to communities outside urban areas. Call 1-800-406-3373 or go to www.azdvs.gov. You can also write to the ADVS office and they can provide you with information about your local ADVS location:

**Arizona Department of Veterans Services
3333 N. Central Avenue, Suite 1052
Phoenix, AZ 85012-2402**

- **National Coalition for the Homeless** - www.nationalhomeless.org has a directory of shelters and homeless assistance programs online. This does not list every program in the country, so be sure to check your phone book for local programs. The following are those listed for the State of Arizona:

Directory of Local Homeless Service Organizations

- **Central AZ Shelter Services: Phoenix**
1209 W. Madison St., Phoenix, AZ 85007; 602-256-6945
- **Community Information & Referral Services, Inc.: Central & Northern Arizona** 2200 N. Central Ave., Ste. 601, Phoenix, AZ 85004 24-hour helpline: 602-263-8856 or 1-800-352-3792
- **Community Information & Referral Services, Inc.: Statewide**
Call 2-1-1 to request information on shelters, food, etc.

Directory of Homeless & Housing Advocacy Coalitions

The following is a list of Homeless and Housing Advocacy Coalitions for the State of Arizona. Not all of these coalitions provide direct services, but they may be able to tell you about local programs or services.

Arizona Coalition to End Homelessness
3829 N. 3rd Street, Suite 104
Phoenix, AZ 85004
602-340-9393
www.azceh.org

Tucson Pima Collaboration to end Homeless
3130 N. Dodge Blvd.
Tucson, AZ 85716
520-917-2384
www.tpch.org

Primavera Foundation – Homeless Services
702 S. 6th Avenue
Tucson, AZ 85701
520-623-5111
www.primavera.org

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. This section includes ways to locate emergency shelter, transitional programs, and permanent housing assistance. Transitional or temporary housing can serve as a step toward independent living upon your release. However, there are often waiting lists for housing assistance programs, so you should ask about applying as early as possible.

If you are released and find yourself homeless, emergency assistance is usually available. **Call either the National Homeless Call Center (NHCC) at 1-877-424-3838 or the Arizona's Community Information & Referral Line by dialing 2-1-1 from any phone. Both are available 24 hours per day** for information about local shelters, transitional housing and services for the homeless. Arizona 2-1-1 has information about services for food, shelter, rent assistance, utility bill assistance, counseling, child care, after-school programs, senior services, disaster relief, and many other community resources. You can also find this information **on the Internet** under Homeless Services in Arizona. **ALSO**, 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 who may know what is available.

Local Emergency Shelters

- To find out resources in your area contact the HCHV Coordinator at the nearest VA Hospital or contact the NHCC at 1-877-424-3838.
- To find out if there are homeless Veteran service providers in your area, contact the **National Coalition for Homeless Veterans:** NCHV, 333½ *Pennsylvania Ave.*, SE Washington, DC 20003-1148 1-800-VET-HELP; www.nchv.org
- To find a listing of homeless services nationwide, go to the website of the **Department of Housing and Urban Development** at www.hud.gov/homeless
- Phoenix Area Emergency Shelter Resources:

Church on the Street: 4001 W. Van Buren St., Phoenix
602-447-0259 (Men Only)

AZ Coalition to End Homelessness: 1735 Grand Ave.,
Phoenix 602-340-9393 (Open to All)

Lampighter: 1945 W. Van Buren St., Phoenix
602-254-5282 (Open to All)

CASS: 1209 W. Madison St., Phoenix
602-256-6945 (Open to All)

▪ Tucson Area Emergency Shelter Resources:

Salvation Army Hospitality House: Arrive at 3p.m.
1021 N. 11th Ave., Tucson 520-622-5411

Primavera Shelter: 200 E. Benson Highway, Tucson
Must call for bed reservation at 9:00 a.m. each morning -
520-623-4300 (ID & TB results required, no level 3 Sex
Offenders) Men Only

Gospel Rescue Mission: First come; first serve 3 - 5 p.m.
Men's Shelter, 312 W. 28th St. Tucson, AZ 85713.
Women's Shelter, 1130 W. Miracle Mile, Tucson, AZ 85705.
Telephone number to both shelters: 520-740-1501

Church on the Street: 2551 W. Orange Grove Rd.
(Open to All) 520-441-0008

▪ Prescott Area Emergency Shelter Resources:

Project Aware: first 12 men at 6:00p.m. daily
(must be sober, ID required)
217 Leroux St., Prescott 928-778-7744

PAWS: 336 N. Rush St., Prescott 928-778-2531
(Women/children only – boys 12+ stay at a different shelter)

Arizona State Veterans Homes

Located in Tucson and Phoenix adjacent to the medical centers where long-term skilled care for chronically ill seniors is provided. Resident Veterans enjoy comfort, dignity and warm social connections. A variety of activities are planned and promoted, increasing the sense of community for each resident. Caregivers are respectful, well-trained and attentive.

VA Transitional Housing – Grant & Per Diem Programs

Transitional housing programs funded by VA grants given to non-profit agencies in the community. Currently there are programs in Phoenix, Tucson, and Prescott. Each housing program is unique with the ability to stay up to 24 months while working on permanent housing goals. Contact your local HCHV Coordinator at each of the Medical Centers for more information.

VA Domiciliary Care Program

Domiciliary care is short-term housing (up to 120 days) for stabilization of medical, mental health, or substance abuse disorders. The Dom is located at the VA Medical Center in Prescott.

Long-term or Permanent Housing

HUD-VASH is a collaborative program at each VA medical center which is currently open to chronically homeless Veterans and their families. Case management is a requirement and assists the Veteran and their families in obtaining and maintaining permanent housing by mastering goals in all areas of life.

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. Be sure to indicate you are a Veteran as there is often a waiting list priority specifically for Veterans. To learn how to apply, contact the local housing authority listed in the phone book blue pages under "Local Government, Public Housing Authority "or through their website www.hud.gov.

Senior Housing is an option for those Veterans who are looking for permanent housing. You must be 62 or older to qualify for all senior housing complexes but a number of units are also available and you will qualify at age 55 or at age 52 if disabled. Many of these apartment complexes have privately funded low income supplements to assist with your monthly rent. There is a list of available housing complexes on the US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development website – www.hud.gov.

EMPLOYMENT

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. Participate in job counseling and training while incarcerated so you are prepared to work when released. It is important to have all necessary documents prior to seeking employment. For employment, you will need a resume, photo ID, and a social security card. You may also need copies of your birth certificate, DD 214, or other documents. **DO NOT wait** until you get out, **start planning NOW!**

- Arizona has **One-Stop Service Centers** where customers can access a broad range of employment-related and training services. **Comprehensive Centers** have programs such as Veterans Employment & Training, Postsecondary Vocational Education, and others. To find a One-Stop Service Center near you, visit your nearby Department of Economic Security office (listed in the phone book blue pages under "State Government, Department of Economic Security,") or go to www.azdes.gov.
- **Arizona Workforce Connections** partners with workforce development agencies to provide businesses and job seekers with comprehensive and streamlined services. Partners include the Arizona Department of Commerce, Arizona Department of Economic Security, Arizona Department of Education, and multiple other workforce programs. They also offer information to assist ex-offenders with post-release employment. To find an Arizona Workforce Connections location, near you, look in the yellow pages, dial 2-1-1 for information, or go to www.arizonaworkforceconnection.com.
- **Arizona Women's Education & Employment (AWEE)** provides career planning, job training, educational workshops, financial supports and social services for women AND men in Maricopa and Yavapai counties. They have several Re-entry Programs: Women Living Free (WLF) for nonviolent female prisoners transitioning from the Arizona Department of Corrections, Paths to Living Free (PLF) for male and female non-violent ex-felons, and Choices for Changed Lives (CCL) for ex-felons ages 18-29 years old. For more information, you can write to AWEE at 640 N. 1st Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85003. You can also contact them and find more information at www.awee.org or (602) 223-4333.
- **Arizona Opportunities Industrialization Center (Arizona OIC)** is a non-profit organization that is a part of a nationwide network of comprehensive employment training programs. The services that they offer include: pre-employment training courses, Administrative Skills Training, Job Placement and Counseling Services, Pathways Out of Poverty (POP) for Veterans and ex-offenders. To apply for services or obtain more information, they may be reached at: Arizona OIC, 39 East Jackson Street, Phoenix, AZ 85004; www.azoic.org or (602) 254-5081

- **The State Department of Economic Security** has Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists that help Veterans find and keep jobs. LVERs are located with the local Work Source sites (such as Arizona Workforce Connections or One-Stop Centers) or affiliate Job Service Centers (JSC). 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. To find one near you, visit your state employment service office in the phone book blue pages - "State Government, Department of Economic Security," or www.azdes.gov .
- **Pima County Workforce Development** works in conjunction with other agencies, such as Jackson Employment Center, **Tucson**, to administer the Homeless Veteran's Reintegration Project (HVRP). This assists eligible homeless Veterans who want to become self-sufficient by providing employment and training services to get back into the workforce. This program specifically assists Veterans with job search preparation, vocational counseling, occupational skills training, on-the-job training, trade skills certification/licensing, job placement assistance, and referral to supportive services. Contact Jackson Employment Center at 520-838-3300. You must call to schedule an intake appointment as no walk-ins are allowed. Location: 300 E. 26th St., Tucson, AZ 85713, Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm. Santran Bus Route #23.
- The VA's **Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment** services help 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, or go to www.vba.va.gov/locations.
- The VA's **Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) Program** promote employment opportunities for Veterans with physical, mental health, and addiction problems. Through these programs, Veterans may learn job skills, relearn successful work habits, and regain a sense of self-esteem. CWT programs are typically located within VA medical centers in most large metropolitan areas and many smaller communities. In Arizona, CWT programs are available at all three medical centers in the state. For further information go to www.cwt.va.gov.
- The State of Arizona 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 Economic Security" then "Vocational Rehabilitation," or search the internet for "Vocational Rehabilitation" in your state.

The Federal Bonding Program is an incentive for employers to hire you. A free fidelity bond is available at the time of hire for 6 months. Why is this important? The employer gains the worker's skills, abilities and knowledge without taking risk of potential employee dishonesty. There are no forms or other papers for the employer to sign, and no processing to delay matters – the insurance can be put into effect instantly. The bond insurance can apply to any job except self-employment and covers any employee dishonesty that occurs on or away from the employer's work facility.

Why bonding is needed - Job seekers who have in the past committed a fraudulent or dishonest act, or who have demonstrated other past behavior that casts doubt upon their credibility or honesty, often experience a special barrier to gaining employment. Such persons are routinely classified as "at-risk" job applicants. This is further heightened by the fact that bond insurance commercially purchased by employers to protect against employee dishonesty usually will not cover those at risk—and classified as "NOT BONDABLE" As a result, at risk job applicants are routinely denied employment. Ex-offenders and anyone who has ever been on parole or probation are at-risk applicants. Others, similarly at risk and NOT BONDABLE are ex-addicts, persons with poor credit history or bankruptcy, economically disadvantaged persons who lack a work history, and individuals who were dishonorably discharged from the military.

What is a Fidelity Bond? - Fidelity bonding is a form of business insurance usually purchased to indemnify employers for loss of money or property sustained through the dishonest acts of their employees (i.e. theft, forgery, larceny, and embezzlement). This "employee dishonesty insurance" is generally considered a good business management practice, and is purchased by many employers. However, while other types of insurance set premiums that vary according to the degree of risk, Fidelity Bond premiums are always set based upon taking no risk. As a result, insurance companies usually will not cover at-risk persons under Fidelity Bonds, a practice that has created a special barrier to employment for the growing large number of persons (i.e. ex-addicts, credit risks, etc.) whose personal credibility is questionable due to other dishonest or deviant past acts.

Federal Bonding in Arizona is provided through the Employment Administration of the **Arizona Department of Economic Security.**

Bonding Services Coordinator
Employment Administration
Arizona Department of Economic Security
P.O. Box 6123
Site Code 734T
Phoenix, AZ 85005
Phone: 602-542-6320
Fax: 602-542-5014

VA HEALTH CARE

Veterans who served active duty military and were discharged under honorable conditions (includes general discharge) may qualify for VA health care benefits. Reservists and National Guard Members may also qualify for VA health care benefits if certain criteria are met. For most Veterans, entry into the VA Health Care System begins by applying for enrollment. To apply, complete VA Form 10-10EZ, Application for Health Benefits, which may be obtained online or from any VA health care facility or Veterans Benefits Administration/Regional Office. If you are unsure of your discharge condition, refer to your DD214. If you need a copy of your DD214, You can request it. You can request to upgrade your other than honorable discharge but it takes time so start this process early.

If eligible for Veteran's benefits, we encourage you to apply for enrollment in the VA Health Care System within 6 months of your release or as soon as you are released. Although some services may vary by location, VA Medical Centers may provide the following types of programs to eligible Veterans: comprehensive medical care, mental health care, substance abuse treatment, pharmacy services, employment services, homeless services, nursing homes, and many other programs/services. Community Based Outpatient Clinics also offer many of the same basic medical and mental health services as the Medical Centers, although hours of operation are usually more limited and services offered may not be as comprehensive.

Every **VA Medical Center** has a **Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Program** which helps Veterans and their families find resources inside and outside the VA Health Care system. Call 1-877-222-8387 or go to www.va.gov, to find the medical center nearest you. The following list includes all of the VA Medical Centers and Community Based Outpatient Clinics within Arizona.

Northern Arizona

Northern Arizona VA Health Care System

500 N. Hwy 89
Prescott, AZ 86313
928-445-4860
800-949-1005 toll-free

Anthem Clinic

3518 W. Anthem Way Bld. D Suite 120
Anthem, AZ 85086
623-551-6092 or 1-800-949-1005 x7200

Cottonwood Clinic

501 South Willard
Cottonwood, AZ 86326
928-649-1523 or 1-800-949-1005 x1532

Flagstaff Clinic

1300 W. University Ave. Suite 200
Flagstaff, AZ 86001
928-226-1056 or 1-800-949-1005 x7820

Kingman Clinic

1726 Beverly Avenue
Kingman, AZ 86409
928-692-0080 or 1-800-949-1005 x6830

Lake Havasu City Clinic

2035 Mesquite, Suite D
Lake Havasu City, AZ 86403
928-680-0090 or 1-800-949-1005 ext. 7300

Northwest Clinic

13985 W. Grand Ave., Suite 101
Surprise, AZ 85374
623-251-2884

Payson Clinic

1106 N. Beeline Highway
Payson, AZ 85541-3714
928-472-3148

Show Low Clinic

5171 Cub Lake Road, Suite C380
Show Low, AZ 85901
928-532-1069

Central Arizona

Phoenix VA Health Care System

650 E. Indian School Rd.
Phoenix, AZ 85012-1892
602-277-5551
800-554-7174 toll-free

Buckeye Clinic

306 E. Monroe Ave.
Buckeye, AZ 85326
623-386-6093

Globe-Miami Clinic

5860 S. Hospital Drive, Suite 111
Globe, AZ 85501-9449
928-425-0027

Southeast Clinic (Mesa)

6950 E. Williams Field Road, Bldg. 23
Mesa, AZ 85212-6033
602-222-6568

Thunderbird Clinic

9424 N. 25th Ave.
Phoenix, AZ 85021
602-633-6900

Northwest Clinic (Sun City)

10147 Grand Ave., Suite C1
Sun City, AZ 85351
602-222-2630

Southern Arizona

Southern Arizona VA Health Care System

3601 S. 6th Ave.
Tucson, AZ 85723
520-792-1450
800-470-8262 toll-free

Casa Grande Clinic

1876 E. Sabin Drive Bld. A, Suite 15
Casa Grande, AZ 85222
520-836-2536 or 1-800-470-8262, options 2-2-2-3

Green Valley Clinic

380 W. Vista Hermosa Drive, Suite 140
Green Valley, AZ 85614
520-629-4900

Safford Clinic
711 South 14th Avenue
Safford, AZ 85546
520-629-4900

Sierra Vista Clinic
101 Coronado Drive, Suite A
Sierra Vista, AZ 85635
520-792-1450

Northwest Tucson Clinic
2945 W. Ina Road
Tucson, AZ 85741
520-792-1450 or 1-800-470-8262

Southeast Tucson Clinic
7395 S. Houghton Road, Suite 129
Tucson, AZ 85747
520-792-1450 or 1-800-470-8262

Yuma Clinic
2555 E. Gila Ridge Road
Yuma, AZ 85365
520-792-1450 or 1-800-470-8262

If ineligible for Veteran's benefits, free or low-cost health care may be available from the following sources:

Department of Economic Security (DES) can tell you where to find health care facilities for the homeless. Check the phone book blue pages under local, city, or county government for the number.

National Health Care for the Homeless Council has a list of health care providers working with homeless people across the nation. For a list of providers in your state, 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 local government office for clinics in your area or call 2-1-1. You can also find out more about free clinic through your nearest homeless shelter.

Special Health Information for Veterans:

If you think you may be at risk for **AIDS and HIV** infection after your release, contact the nearest VA Medical Center to get tested, and seek counseling. National AIDS Hotline at 1-800-822-7422 is available for questions concerning HIV/AIDS and can tell you about services in your specific state. Those at highest risk for AIDS and HIV infection are:

- People who share needles or syringes to inject drugs or steroids
- Men who have sex with other men
- Those born to mothers who have HIV
- People who received blood transfusions before 1985
- Anyone who has sex with anyone who is at risk for HIV / AIDS

Veterans, homeless persons, and incarcerated people are at high risk for **Hepatitis C** (HCV), a serious disease that can cause cirrhosis (scarring of the liver) and liver cancer. If you think you are at risk after your release, contact the nearest VA Medical Center to get tested and seek HCV counseling. You are at risk if:

- You ever used a needle to inject drugs
- You had a blood transfusion or organ transplant before 1992
- You were a health care worker and had contact with blood
- You were on long-term kidney dialysis
- Your mother had hepatitis C when she gave birth to you

The Veterans Health Administration also recommends testing if:

- You are a Vietnam-era Veteran
- You have had exposure to blood on your skin
- You have had multiple sex partners
- You have tattoos or body piercing
- You have ever snorted cocaine
- You have liver disease
- You have a history of drinking a lot of alcohol
- You have had an abnormal liver function test

SUBSTANCE ABUSE & MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

If eligible for Veterans' benefits:

- Contact the Homeless Veteran Services (HCHV) Coordinator at the local **VA Medical Center**. Call 1-877-222-8387 or go to www.visn18.med.va.gov, to find the medical center nearest you or reference inside this guide.

- Eligible combat theater Veterans may obtain mental health and substance abuse services at Vet Centers as listed below:

Chinle Vet Center Outstation
P.O. Box 1934, Navajo Route 7, Old CBI Bld.
Chinle, AZ 86503
(928) 674-3682 or 1-877-927-8387

Hopi Vet Center Outstation 2
P.O. Box 929, 1 Main Street
Hotevilla, AZ 86030
(928) 734-5166 or 1-877-927-8387

Mesa Vet Center
1303 South Longmore, Suite 5
Mesa, AZ 85202
(480) 610-6727 or 1-877-927-8387

Phoenix Vet Center
77 E. Welden Avenue, Suite 100
Phoenix, AZ 85012
(602) 640-2981 or 1-877-927-8387

Prescott Vet Center
3180 Stillwater Drive, Suite A
Prescott, AZ 86305
(928) 778-3469 or 1-877-927-8387

Tucson Vet Center
3055 N. First Avenue
Tucson, AZ 85719
(520) 882-0333 or 1-877-927-8387

West Valley Vet Center
14050 N. 83rd Avenue, Suite 170
Peoria, AZ 85381
(623) 398-8854 or 1-877-927-8387

Yuma Vet Center
1450 E. 16th Street, Suite 122
Yuma, AZ 85365
(928) 271-8700

If you are not eligible for Veterans' benefits, the following sources may be able to tell you where you can go to get help:

- The Arizona Department of Health Services **Substance Abuse Treatment Referral Service** can refer *you* to local programs. Call 1-800-662-4357.

- **National Alliance for the Mentally Ill** lists community mental health services providers at: www.nami.org, or call 602-252-1349 or 1-800-950-6264.

- **National Mental Health Association** offers support groups, rehabilitation, socialization, and housing services through 340 community organizations located across the country. Call 1-800-969-6642 or find a local office online at www.nmha.org.

FINANCIAL HELP

- If you are unemployed with little or no income, you may be able to get **food stamps** which are now known as **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**. Contact the local Department of Economic Security (DES) at 602-542-9935 or 1-800-352-8401 for information and eligibility. You can apply for SNAP online at www.healthearizona.org or by telephone 1-800-352-8401. Applications are also available at local homeless shelters or legal aid services throughout the state.
- **Social Security Retirement, Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and Medicare** 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 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/notices/supplemental-security-income/>.
- The American Legion provides **Temporary Financial Assistance**, (TFA) from its national headquarters to minor children of Veterans who are eligible for membership. The purpose is to help maintain a stable environment for **minor children of Veterans**. To obtain an application, look in the phone book to contact a local post, or contact the National Headquarters (<http://www.legion.org/>) to find the post nearest you.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

Veteran status issues:

- You should talk to a **Veterans Advocate Service Officer** for help with discharge upgrades, seeking benefits, and filing a VA claim (call 1-800-562-2308 for the nearest Service Officer, or review the list in this guidebook).

Other legal issues:

- 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, insure that 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. Go to: www.abanet.org.

- **Legal Services or Legal Aid offices** have staff lawyers to provide free legal help to low-income clients. The lawyers are usually experts in the types of problems that low-income clients often have. Look in the yellow pages for a local Legal Aid office or check online for the program, nearest you.

- **Pine Tree Legal Assistance** has an online list of organizations across the nation that provides free legal help to clients who qualify. Go to: <http://statesidelegal.org>

- **Legal Services on a Pro Bono Basis** are currently available for various needs at the following Arizona locations:

Community Legal Services, Inc.

Offices are located in Phoenix, Mesa, Kingman, Lake Havasu, Prescott, and Yuma

Maricopa County Office: (602) 258-3434.

Mohave County Office: (928) 681-1177

Yavapai County Office: (928) 445-9240

Yuma County Office: (928) 782-7511

www.clsaz.org

DNA - People's Legal Services, Inc.

PO Box 306

State Route 264 and Indian Route 12

Window Rock, AZ 86515

Tel 928-871-4151

www.dnalegalservices.org

www.nativelegalnet.org

Maricopa County Volunteer Lawyers Program

PO Box 21538

Phoenix, AZ 85003

602-258-3434

<http://www.vlpmaricopa.org>

Southern Arizona Legal Aid, Inc.

Offices in Lakeside, Whiteriver, Tucson, Casa Grande, Sacaton

Call for locations and hours: 520-623-9465

<http://sazlegalaid.org>

Volunteer Lawyers Program of Southern Arizona

64 E Broadway Blvd

Tucson, AZ 85701-1720

520-623-9465

<http://www.vlparizona.org>

WOMEN VETERANS

- Most VA **Medical Centers, Vet Centers**, and readjustment offices have a designated Women Veterans Coordinator and/or a Women Veterans Program designed to assist women Veterans in accessing VA benefit programs and healthcare services. Call 1-877-222-8387 to or go to www.visn18.med.va.gov, to find the medical center nearest you (see pages 12 -15 for listings in Arizona).

- Many women in prison have had similar histories, problems, and personal issues before their arrest and conviction. Mentors with **Women in Community Service (WICS)** help women preparing to leave prison and those who are just getting back into society. WICS' prison programs help women think about their behavior, gain job skills, and build self-esteem. For Arizona, contact **the U.S. DOL, Job Corps** at 1-800-289-9427 or go to www.wics.org to find the nearest WICS program.

SECTION III

SEEKING FEDERAL BENEFITS

The Department of Veterans Affairs publishes a booklet called "**Federal Benefits for Veterans and Their Dependents**" that describes the types of benefits available and lists the addresses and phone numbers for VA facilities nationwide. A copy of this booklet is in your prison library. You may also write to the VA Regional Office (VARO) to request your own copy.

U.S. Dept. Of Veterans Affairs - Phoenix Regional Office

3333 N. Central Ave.

Phoenix, AZ 85012

Call 1-800-827-1000 or find information about benefits at www.vba.va.gov.

ELIGIBILITY FOR VA BENEFITS DURING INCARCERATION

Veterans incarcerated and incarcerated DIC recipients 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 has greatly restricted 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, he will receive only the amount payable to a 10 percent disabled Veteran.) Incarcerated DIC recipients will receive one-half the amount paid to 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. However, his family may receive an apportionment of such benefits under the procedure described above. (See 38 C.F.R. Sec.3.666)

One important requirement for eligibility for VA benefits is that the Veteran has to have been issued either an honorable or general discharge, or would have received one if not for re-enlisting. If a Veteran had two periods of service, one honorable and the other less than honorable, he may still be eligible for VA benefits based on the honorable period of service.

VA Medical Care is not provided to Veterans in prison, but VA health facilities may provide care to you after your release. To find the medical center or outpatient clinic nearest you either reference this guide, call 1-877-222-8387, look on the VA website - www.visn18.med.va.gov.

BENEFITS PAYMENTS WHILE INCARCERATED

There is a 60-day "**grace period**" following a conviction when you may still receive full benefits. **To avoid an overpayment**, it is important that you notify the VARO immediately when you go to prison if you are receiving payments. If you do not notify the VA and receive overpayment, you and your family will lose all financial payments until the debt is paid.

*For example, Joe is a Veteran who receives a VA pension of \$807 per month. He commits a crime and is incarcerated, but doesn't tell the VA right away and keeps getting paid for 6 months. **Joe is overpaid a total of \$4,872.** After serving his sentence of 18 months, he is released and applies to the VA to have his pension restarted. The new pension rate is \$830 per month, but the VA will use that amount to start repaying the \$4,872 debt. **Joe's first real check will start 5 months after he is released and will be for \$30!** Joe has to go at least 5 months without that income.*

Your award for compensation or pension benefits should resume from the date you are released, as long as the VA receives notice of release within one year. This includes placement in a community treatment center or halfway house. **Remember, to restart your benefit payments you must notify the VA prior to your release if you have paperwork verifying your release date or when you are released.**

APPORTIONMENT

Although legally, the Veteran can only receive a portion of the full amount payable for his or her disability rating, the remaining balance may be "apportioned to the individual's dependent family". To apply for apportionment, send a letter to the VA Regional Office (VARO) that has jurisdiction over the Veteran's case. VA regulations clearly specify this apportionment amount will only go to family members if they can show financial need for such amount. This applies to the spouse, children, or dependent parents who are involved in the application.

In deciding whether any apportionment is appropriate, the amount of the apportionment, and to whom it will go, the following factors are considered:

- 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.

For example: a Veteran incarcerated rated as 80 percent disability can only receive the amount he or she would get if he or she were 10 percent disabled. However, his or her family may be apportioned up to 70 percent, the difference of the 80 percent rating. (DIC may also be apportioned with similar restrictions.)

There is a 60-day “**grace period**” following conviction where the Veteran, or DIC recipient, may still receive full benefits. If the Veteran continues to receive benefits after the 60-day period, it will result in an “over-payment”. The VA considers it to be the recipient’s responsibility and fault if this occurs because the recipient failed 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 has also been a standard procedure that the family will not be entitled to receive an apportionment until the debt is completely recovered

For more information concerning VA debt collection rules that may affect the Veteran incarcerated, telephone: 1-800-827-1000 and request a Veterans Service Organization representative or, write to a Veterans Service Organization whose addresses you will find in this guide, online, or in the telephone book.

It is important that each disabled Veteran receiving compensation or DIC payments promptly notify the VARO. Regular full benefit payments should begin upon release, providing the VA is notified of the Veteran’s release, including placement within a community treatment center or halfway house in the community, within one year of 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.

HELP SEEKING BENEFITS

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. Some also help homeless and at-risk veterans find the support services they need. You can contact any VSO listed below to see if there is a service representative near you.

Veterans Service Officers can be contacted as noted below. If you reach a national level organization, they can direct you to your local representatives. Those VSOs marked with an asterisk (*) **have representatives located at the Phoenix VA Regional Office**. They can be contacted by mail at 3333 North Central Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85012-2436.

AAPTSD (National Website) www.aaptsdassn.com or 253-589-0766

American Ex-POWs * www.axpow.org 520-749-3863 (Tucson)
602-255-4713 (Phoenix)

AMVETS * amvets@amvets.org 1-877-726-8387 or 520-578-5712 (Tucson)

American Legion* www.legion.org 520-792-6509 (Tucson)

Disabled American Veterans * www.dav.org 520-792-6405 (Tucson)

***Military Order of the Purple Heart** www.mophaz.org 602-627-3307 (Phoenix)

NABVETS www.nabvets.org 1-877-622-8387

Paralyzed Veterans of America * www.pva.org 1-800-424-8200

Veterans of Foreign Wars www.vva.org 602-627-3299 (Phoenix)

Vietnam Veterans of America * www.vfw.org 520-458-2803 (Tucson)

Arizona Department of Veterans Services * www.azdvs.gov 1-800-406-3373

Although we encourage you to seek the aid of a service representative, you may choose to apply for VA benefits on your own. Write the VARO or find the forms online at: www.va.gov/vaforms. 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 and keep photocopies of all forms for your records before sending your packet to the VARO nearest you

- **Standard Form 180: Request Pertaining to Military Records** – request a copy of your Record of Discharge (DD-214), military personnel, and medical records. You will need a copy of your DD-214 when applying for any benefits. Requests may also complete online at <http://vetrecs.archives.gov>.
- **VA Form 10-10EZ: Enrollment for Medical Benefits** – application to determine if you are eligible to receive medical benefits. Complete the form and mail or bring to the local VA medical facility. You can also apply online at www.1010ez.med.va.gov
- **VA Form 21-526 - Application for Compensation or Pension-** must be filed to apply for compensation and/or pension. This form, along with your DD-214 and the following forms should be mailed directly to the VARO nearest your release destination 30 to 45 days before our release. Online application is available at VONAPP – www.ebenefits.va.gov
- **VA Form 21-4138: Statement in Support of Claim** - lets you or others 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 28-1900: Vocational Rehabilitation for Disabled Veterans** – application for the vocational rehabilitation program to help veterans who were disabled during their service reach maximum independence in daily living, to learn employment skills, 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.

SECTION V

CHECKLIST

- ❑ Ask about classes or 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.
- ❑ Obtain identification and important documents.
- ❑ 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 on local housing.
- ❑ Learn about job resources and create a plan to find employment.
- ❑ Learn about health issues, and what services are available.
- ❑ Learn what local substance abuse and mental health treatment is available.
- ❑ 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 receive benefits, notify the VBA of incarceration to avoid an overpayment.
- ❑ Contact a Veteran Service Officer to represent you and help you file a claim.
- ❑ If you receive benefits, apply for apportionment so that some of the money withheld may be given to eligible family members.

MY PLAN FOR RELEASE

Housing

Employment

Healthcare

Substance Abuse / Mental Health Treatment

Financial Assistance

Legal Assistance

SECTION V

RESOURCE WEBSITES

Dept. of Veterans Affairs (DVA) www.va.gov

Veterans Health Administration – VISN 18 www.visn18.med.va.gov

Southern Arizona VA Health Care System www.med.va.gov

Dept. of Veterans Affairs - Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) www.vba.va.gov

The American Legion - Dept. of AZ www.azlegion.org

Veterans of Foreign Wars www.vfwkc.org/post_location/Department.asp

Vietnam Veterans of America www.vva.org

Social Security Administration www.ssa.gov

National Coalition for Homeless Veterans www.nchv.org

Arizona Dept. of Transportation www.azdot.gov