



Veteran Services
2100 Campus Drive SE,
Suite 200
Rochester, MN 55904
(507) 328-6355

March 24, 2015

VA Works to Expand Choice Program Eligibility

Eligibility criteria for 40 miles calculation would change to driving distance - Washington -- In order to expand eligibility for the Veterans Choice Program, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced that it will change the calculation used to determine the distance between a Veteran's residence and the nearest VA medical facility from a straight line distance to driving distance. The policy change will be made through regulatory action in the coming weeks. The Veterans Choice Program was authorized by the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (VACAA).

"VA has worked very quickly to implement the Veterans Choice Program and we appreciate the constructive feedback shared by Veterans and our partners to help us improve service to Veterans," said Secretary Robert McDonald. "We've determined that changing the distance calculation will help ensure more Veterans have access to care when and where they want it. VA looks forward to the ongoing support of our partners as we continue to make improvements to this new program." The method of determining driving distance will be through distance as calculated by using a commercial product. The change is expected to roughly double the number of eligible Veterans. The Veterans Choice Program is a new, temporary benefit that allows eligible Veterans to receive health care in their communities rather than waiting for a VA appointment or traveling to a VA facility. Veterans seeking to use the Veterans Choice Program should call 1-866-606-8198 to confirm their eligibility and to schedule an appointment. Since the Choice Program went into effect on November 5, 2014, more than 45,000 medical appointments have been scheduled. Using expanded authorities from VACAA, VA continues to expand access to care through increased staffing and enhanced collaboration with both the Indian Health Service and Native Hawaiian Health Care Systems. VA is enhancing its health care system and improving service delivery to better serve Veterans and set the course for long-term excellence and reform. VA has made significant progress in various areas of the legislation, such as extending the Assisted Living/Traumatic Brain Injury Pilot program and Project Arch, to expand timely access to high-quality health care for Veterans.

For more details about the department's progress and related information, see www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/factsheets_and_details.asp

And www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/documents/FactSheets/Progress-Report-March-2015-Fact-Sheet.pdf.

A fact sheet on the 40-mile-rule change can be found at www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/documents/FactSheets/March-2015-40-mile-rule-change-factsheet.pdf.



Veterans Employment

To qualify for veterans employment services you must:

- Have served more than 180 consecutive days on active duty (not for Reserve or National Guard training) and been discharged or released with other than a dishonorable discharge, OR
- Have served on active duty and been released because of a service-connected disability, illness or injury, OR
- Have been a member of a reserve component under an order to active duty, served on active duty during war or in a campaign or expedition, and been discharged or released from duty with other than dishonorable discharge, OR
- Be the spouse of any veteran living or deceased who qualifies for benefits.

Specially trained Veterans Employment Representatives can assist you if you have been discharged or left active duty in the last three years; have significant challenges finding or keeping a job; or have a service-connected disability. Veterans employment representatives work one-on-one with veterans to provide services custom-tailored to meet individual needs.

Services typically include such things as:

- Help with developing or polishing resumes and cover letters
- General job search guidance
- Information on licensure, certification and apprenticeships
- Explaining employment benefits, rights and preferences for veterans
- Direct referrals to job openings
- Referrals to other state and federal agencies for additional services

Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPS) provide intensive case managed services designed to assist Veterans with the development and execution of a job search strategy, and provide (one-to-one) guidance on various aspects of job search. These may include, but are not limited to resume development, interviewing skills, networking and use of social media, and direct referral to employers with available jobs.

Veterans employment representative for this area is Scott Metcalf, Rochester Workforce Center, 2070 College View Road E, Rochester, MN 55904. Phone: (507) 923-2828

Job and Career Fair
Wednesday, April 29, 9am-12pm
RCTC Sports Center
851 30th Ave SE
Rochester, MN 55904



PTSD Support Group for Veterans, Friends, and Family Members

SEMCIL's Veteran Services Program is offering a support group for Veterans that have been diagnosed with PTSD, or those who have signs and symptoms of PTSD, and their family members. Maybe you need to talk or just be in the company of your extended Veteran family. The support group will be a place for Veterans to share, heal and talk about their experiences in dealing with PTSD. We will be there for each other.

We are our brothers and sisters keepers because the oath we took to never leave a fallen comrade has no expiration date. For many of us, combat veterans, there are daily reminders of deaths of brothers and sisters.

The group will be facilitated by Jennifer Shumaker, Veteran

Upcoming meetings:

Thursday, April 30, 2015

Thursday, May 28, 2015

6:30pm-8:30 p.m.

**American Legion
315 1st Ave NW,
Rochester, MN, 55901**

Jennifer at 507-328-6324 or shumaker.jennifer@co.olmsted.mn.us





Salute to Women Veterans

16 May 2015 · 8:00am-4:00pm · Cragun's Resort · 11000 Craguns Dr., Brainerd MN 56401



free!



Keynote Speaker:

Peggy Moon, 1st woman American Legion Department of Minnesota Commander and first ever female chair of the Commander's Task Force

ALL Ages,
Eras, Branches,
Transitioning
Military Women
WELCOME!

Please contact Jennell Stai
at 612.970.5787
to register

- Discounted room rates
Stay the weekend with your family!
- Workshops
 - Art Therapy
 - Meditation, Mindfulness, Ecopsychology
 - Entrepreneurship
 - VA Healthcare for Women
- Connection & networking
- State & federal benefits
- Vendors & resources
- Holistic Health Practitioners on site!



Olmsted County Veteran's Services

**Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) Elimination of Net Worth Determinations
Fact Sheet**

Summary:

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) currently collects income and net worth (asset) information from Veterans who apply for enrollment in VA health care to determine eligibility and/or copay responsibility. Effective January 1, 2015, VA will no longer collect Veterans' net worth information for purposes of financial assessment for health benefits. VA will consider only a Veteran's previous year's gross household income (earned and unearned income), and deductible expenses to determine eligibility and/or copay responsibility. VA will continue to consider a Veteran's net worth in determining eligibility for extended care services. (such as nursing home or assisted living care)

VHA will send letters to Veterans who have been placed in Priority Groups 7 and 8 because their net worth placed them over the VA income limits for consideration of another Priority Group. The letter will inform Veterans they may now be eligible for enrollment in a higher priority group based solely on their previous year's gross household income, and suggest they complete and submit an enclosed VA Form 10-10EZR, Health Benefits Renewal, for consideration.

Key Facts:

- VA is committed to providing the best quality, safe and effective health care our Veterans have earned and deserve.
- VA continues to look for ways to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its exceptional health care service.
- As part of VA's commitment to providing Veterans world class health care and services, VA is discontinuing consideration of a Veteran's net worth information beginning January 1, 2015.
- This change will align VA's health care program with other federal health care program's financial assessment requirements.
- This change will lessen out-of-pocket expenses for lower income Veterans.



Upcoming local events

Rochester American Legion Post 92

3rd Tuesday of each month

315 First Ave NW

Rochester, MN 55901

7pm

Legion Riders

2nd Thursday of each month

7pm

Forty et eight at the American Legion

2nd Tuesday of each month

7pm

Military Order of the Purple Heart

3rd Thursday of each month,

6pm, March, May, July, September, and

November

Rochester VFW Post Meeting

2nd Tuesday of each Month VFW Post 1215

16 6th Street SW, Rochester, MN 55902

7pm

Byron American Legion Post 119

1st Monday of the month

March 2, 8pm

505 Frontage Road NW, Byron, MN

Vietnam Veterans of America

Meets 4th Monday each month

at 7:00pm, at the Rochester American Legion

315 First Ave NW

Rochester, MN 55901

DAV Meeting

2nd Monday, of each Month Rochester's Elks Lodge

1652 Hwy 52 N, Rochester, MN 55901

5:30pm dinner, meeting at 6:00pm

Korean War Veterans

Every Monday at Grandmas Kitchen

1514 N Broadway, Rochester, MN 55906

(Silver lake plaza)

8 AM

Marine Corp League Meeting

4th Tuesday of the month, 7pm, American Legion

315 First Ave NW, Rochester, MN 55901

POW/MIA Riders Association, Member Meeting

2nd Saturday of the month 11am-1pm, VFW Post

1215 16 6th Street SW, Rochester, MN 55902

Kasson American Legion Post 333

Third Thursday of the month

March 19 , 7pm

212 West Main Street , Kasson, MN 55944

Chatfield VFW Post 6913

2nd Tuesday of the month

March 10

9– 2nd St SW, Chatfield, MN





“Application Form “Trolling for the Troops 2015”

We believe that all Veterans and any Soldier of any branch and service, who have served our country through the years deserve a day on the lake. If this describes you, here’s your opportunity to get a chance to fish with some of the best anglers in the Midwest! Well known professional fishermen and others will guide a Veteran and a Soldier for a day on Mille Lacs Lake or the Mississippi River! This will be a fun, exciting, day of fishing in boats that make heads turn. Prizes will be awarded to the most successful anglers!

Details: Trolling for the Troops

Date: Thursday/Friday, June 4-5, 2015

Headquarters: Camp Ripley, MN

Fishing Locations: Mille Lacs Lake and Mississippi River

To apply: http://www.mnlegion.org/html/trolling_for_the_troops.html **print the application form and send to:**

Department Adjutant Randy Tesdahl, The American Legion, 20 West 12th Street, Rm 300A, St. Paul, MN 55155, or you can email in **PDF Format Only** to rtesdahl@mnlegion.org. **Applications are due by May 15, 2015!** There is no application fee for the fifth annual Trolling for the Troops. It is important that your application reflect your current mailing address. A sponsor will select the participants. Those most recently deployed will have preference. Once selected, information regarding billeting & meals will be mailed to you.

Fishing Application: (Minnesota Veterans & Soldiers)

Name _____ Rank: _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Home # () _____ Cell # () _____

Email _____ D.O.B. _____

Emergency Contact _____ Phone # () _____

Relationship to Emergency Contact: _____

Briefly describe (IF) physical disabilities: _____

Do you require the use of a WHEELCHAIR for independence: Yes _____ No _____

Please circle items used: WALKER CANE CRUTCHES other _____

Allergies (be specific) _____

Veteran: Yes _____ No _____ Which War: _____

Do you want your Spouse/Care giver to fish with you? Yes _____ No _____, Name _____

Shirt Size, Small _____ Medium _____ Large _____ XLarge _____ XXLarge _____

Spouse/Care Giver Shirt Size, Small _____ Medium _____ Large _____ XLarge _____ XXLarge _____

For specific questions regarding the event, please contact: Randy Tesdahl, The American Legion: 651-291-1800 or email rtesdahl@mnlegion.org. Information regarding lodging and logistics will be mailed to the selected applicants.

Housing & meals will be provided by event sponsors.

By signing this application you hereby agree /allow for voice and photo release to promote the 2015 T4T event. Signature: _____

Spouse/Care Giver Signature: _____

June 4

1500 - 1645 Registration -Team Meet and Greet @ Camp Ripley

1700 - 2100 Group photo, evening dinner, door prizes

June 5

0630-1530 Fishing

“To promote the interests and welfare of veterans, their dependents and survivors and to enhance their quality of life through counseling, claims assistance, education, advocacy and special projects.”



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