

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

COVID-19 Veterans Resource Guide 2020



COVID-19 in California

- COVID-19, which is caused by the coronavirus, is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways
- A shelter-in-place directive was issued March 19th in response to slowing down the virus
- Californians can go out for essential errands or to do critical jobs, but are otherwise advised to stay away from others
- Visit <u>https://covid19.ca.gov/</u> for continual updates and useful information





Stay-at-Home Order

Do: √Stay home

✓Wash hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer

✓Cover your cough or sneeze

✓Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces Don't: √ Shake hands

✓ Touch your face

✓ Go to the doctor if you aren't sick

✓ Stockpile masks or gloves



What's Open During the Stay-at-Home order?

Essential services such as:

- Gas stations, pharmacies, and banks
- Grocery stores, farmers markets, food banks, convenience stores, take-out and delivery restaurants
- Laundromats/laundry services
- Essential state and local government functions



Nutritional Resources





CalFresh

- Formerly known as Food Stamps
- Helps to improve the health and well-being of qualified households and individuals by providing them a means to meet their nutritional needs
- Apply for CalFresh <u>online</u> or dial **916-654-1896**
- Get your questions answered through the CalFresh Benefits Helpline at **1-877-847-3663**



Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

- Federal food stamp program
- Provides nutrition benefits to supplement the food budget of needy families
- For more information, call 1-877-847-FOOD (1-877-847-3663) or apply <u>online</u>





Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP)



- Created to meet the needs of the hungry and homeless throughout the US
- Allocates federal funds for the provision of food and shelter, as well as services that provide financial assistance
- <u>United Way</u> serves as the fiscal agent



Food Banks

- A location where donated food and other products are solicited and warehoused
- Food is distributed to a variety of individuals and community agencies which serve people in need
- To locate a nearby food bank, go to <u>www.cafoodbanks.org</u> or call 1-866-321-4435



Healthcare



VA Healthcare

- USDVA is still accepting applications for health care during the COVID-19 Pandemic
- Estimated time for approval is approximately 7-10 days business days
- Apply <u>online</u> or by telephone at **1-877-222-8387**



My HealtheVet

• To mitigate community spread visit <u>www.myhealth.va.gov</u>



- Access or manage: Appointments, Prescriptions, Health Records, or Messages to or from your Doctor
- Contact My HealtheVet by phone at
 - 1-877-327-0022



Veterans Crisis Line

- A free, confidential resource that connects veterans with caring, qualified responders
- Available 24/7 to anyone, even if you're not registered with VA or enrolled in VA health care
- If you are in crisis and need to speak with a crisis responder, please call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1 or text 838255
- Also offers online chat to provide another way for Veterans to connect with confidential, round-the-clock support



www.veteranscrisisline.net



VA Facilities Directory

- A storehouse of facility and key staff information within 1,934 VA facilities
- Categorizes information for browsing by state, administration, and address
- Locate VA Medical Centers or Clinics in your local area at <u>www.va.gov</u>



Other Websites and Phone Numbers

- Check out <u>publichealth.va.gov</u> for the latest Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Coronavirus information
- The VA's **Inquiry Routing & Information System** (IRIS) webpage is a one-stop location that routs you to information on many of the different programs offered through the VA
- **1-844-MyVA311 (1-844-698-2311)** is a national toll-free number which assists Veterans in getting their questions answered more efficiently



More Websites and Phone Numbers

- For Benefits Questions, such as GI Bill, Claim Status or Disability Benefits, contact the VA Benefits Hotline at 1-800-827-1000 (Monday Friday, 8AM 9PM ET)
- Call **1-877-222-VETS (1-877-222-8387)** if If you have a problem with your care provider, VA medical facility, or any other aspect of your care



Community Services and Resources



County Services and Resources

- Each city, county, and local government in California is uniquely working to mitigating the spread of COVID-19
- Find out how your county is responding by getting local information at <u>www.covid19.ca.gov</u>





Education Services and Resources

- Check your <u>local school district</u> for more information on how and where to receive services
- Childcare for essential workers may be available in your area
- Contact your city, county, or local government as available services can vary



Renters and Homeowners Protection

- The California Governor authorized local governments and banks to halt evictions for renters and homeowners, slow foreclosures, and protect against utility shutoffs for Californians affected by COVID-19
- The order does not relieve a tenant from the obligation to pay rent or restrict the landlord's ability to recover rent that is due
- The protections are in effect through May 31, 2020, unless extended



90-Day Mortgage Payment Relief

- If you are struggling with the COVID-19 crisis contact your financial institution to see if you are eligible to participate in the 90-Day Grace Period for Mortgage Payments program
- This relief package offers mortgage payment forbearances of up to 90 days to borrowers economically impacted by COVID-19



In Addition...

Those institutions will:

- Provide borrowers a streamlined process to request a forbearance for COVID-19-related reasons
- Confirm approval of and terms of forbearance program
- Provide borrowers the opportunity to request additional relief, as practicable, upon continued showing of hardship due to COVID-19



Included with the Package

- Late or missed payments will not be shared with credit reporting agencies
- Moratorium on initiating foreclosure sales or evictions for 60 days
- Financial institutions will waive or refund mortgage-related late fees and other fees for 90 days



Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDLs)

- A low-interest federal disaster loan that is offered through the U.S. Department of Small Business Administration
- Provides up to \$2 million in assistance and can provide vital economic support to small businesses to help overcome the temporary loss of revenue
- Can be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills that can't be paid because of the disaster's impact
- Businesses can apply here <u>online</u>



COVID-19 Emergency Financial Relief Program

- Prioritizes and provides financial assistance to individuals who are experiencing financial stress due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Available to all all Veterans, Active Duty, Reserves and National Guard
- Supports 1 month of payment (up to \$1500) in areas such as rent, mortgage, auto loan/lease, or utilities (electric, water, heat)
- One emergency financial request per household





Important Dates and Deadlines

- State and federal tax deadlines have been extended to July 15, 2020
- The deadline for compliance with REAL ID requirements has been delayed until October 1, 2021





VA Education Benefits



Senate Bill 3503

- Emergency Act to Preserve GI Bill Payments Becomes Law: Effective 3/1/2020 - 12/21/2020
- VA education payments for classes that are "converted to distance learning by reason of an emergency or health-related situation" will continue to be paid as if they were conducted in the classroom



www.Military.com

Affects all VA education payments





GIBill.va.gov

- Check the <u>Announcements</u> section for up-to-date information on COVID-19 and any changes that are made in regards to education benefits in general
- Follow USDVA on Facebook @gibilleducation to participate in open discussions related to your GI Bill benefits at this time
- If you have questions about your specific circumstance, please contact the Education Call Center @ 1-888-442-4551



Maintain Academic Standards

- Remain aware of your Professors expectations as news regarding COVID-19 changes daily
- Continue to communicate any issues or concerns you may have during this unique time
- Apply for <u>Tutorial Assistance</u> if needed, and if you meet eligibility requirements



CVSO Claims & Resources



County Veterans Service Office

- Provide Veterans and dependents free benefit information and assistance for state and federal programs
- Representatives assist with processing intent to files, claims, and appeals
- Available by phone or through e-mail (certain locations may have video chat capabilities)
- Locate your local County Veterans Service Office <u>online</u>



Assistance Offered Regarding...

• College Fee Waiver

• Legal Aid Resources

- DMV Veteran Designation
- Records Request

- Housing Resources
- PTSD & Mental Health Resources

Please note there maybe limitations to the programs



Housing



Suspension of Foreclosures

- The U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) <u>suspends all foreclosures for</u> <u>the next 60 days</u>
- Applies to homeowners with FHA-insured Title II Single Family forward and Home Equity Conversion (reverse) mortgages
- Meant to address the impacts to the financial well-being of America's individuals, families, and businesses caused by Coronavirus (COVID-19)
- Includes short and long-term forbearance options, mortgage modifications, and other mortgage payment relief options available based on the borrower's individual circumstances



Public and Indian Housing

- HUD developed an <u>Information and Resource</u> webpage that makes it easier for state and local health departments to collaborate with housing providers
- See FAQ regarding COVID-19 and Public Housing, Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) programs, and Native American programs





Homeless Service Providers

- People experiencing homelessness often have a higher risk for exposure to communicable diseases and have little access to health care systems and treatment in their communities
- Find information and resources for community partners at <u>HUD Exchange</u>
- Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) can fund for a range of eligible activities that prevent and respond to the spread of infectious diseases such as COVID-19
- See HUD's <u>Quick Guide</u> to review eligible activities to support infectious disease response



Employment





Search for Jobs

- Employee Development Department (EDD) provide priority services to all veterans, and their eligible spouse to find jobs and maximize employment and training opportunities
- Search for federal jobs at <u>USAJobs.gov</u> (Apply for Veterans Preference <u>here</u>)
- Search for California State jobs at <u>CalCareers.ca.gov</u> (Apply for Veterans Preference <u>here</u>)
- Get assistance with the job search process through <u>Work for</u> <u>Warriors</u>

Search for Essential positions



Social Media

- Utilizing different Social Media Outlets can let you post and submit your resume and search for jobs
- <u>LinkedIn</u> can connect you to the world's professionals to become more productive and successful
- Check out CalVet's <u>Facebook</u> page for job postings specifically advertised to Veterans, and tips on securing a job



Unemployment Benefits

- File a Claim online
- If the Veteran has been separated for more than 18 months, they must use the **REGULAR UI Application**
- If the Veteran has separated for less than 18 months, they must fill out the SERVED IN THE MILITARY Application (Can only be filed via phone or mailed faxed, and must include a copy of the veteran's DD-214)
- Contact your County Veteran Service Office (<u>CVSO</u>) for all questions and/or help





New Mission: Self Care



Adapt, Overcome, and Improvise

- As of now, life must adapt to a new way of living, which will incorporate a large amount of social distancing and self-isolation
- For many veterans, this can lead to a whole host of negative symptoms which could possibly affect your transition into civilian life
- It is important that you find ways to improve your mental health when sheltering in place



Create a Routine

- Perform the same morning rituals you did before
- Have meals at a consistent time throughout the day
- Try your best to get to bed at the same time each night



• Keep a rough schedule for things during the day; try to eat breakfast, read, or do chores and maybe after lunch, do an online activity or finish some work



Continued Social Interactions

- Stay in touch with friends through texting, phone calls, and video chat
- Go for walks and use that time as an opportunity to get fresh air and a sense of human connection with those who may be doing the same
- Facebook groups are more relevant now, as people become more accustomed to, and more reliant on, online communities for an increasing range of their social needs



• Find virtual meeting spaces, ie: Streaming church services or music events



Ask for Help

• You don't have to be alone. If you or anyone you know needs help, contact the <u>Veterans Crisis Line</u>





Contact Us

California Department of Veterans Affairs 1227 O Street, Sacramento CA 95814 1-800-952-5626 www.calvet.ca.gov