



New York State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli

## Tips for Veterans

**1) Claim your benefits.** Most VA benefits are not automatic: you must apply for them. By not filing a claim, you may be missing out on money you're entitled to. Please contact the Department of Veterans Affairs at (800) 827-1000 with eligibility questions and to apply for your benefits.

**2) Lower your property taxes.** New York's Alternative Veterans Exemption provides a property tax exemption of 15% of assessed value to wartime veterans and an additional 10% to those who served in a combat zone. An exemption is also available to disabled veterans equal to one-half of their disability rating. Ask your local assessor or clerk to determine if this exemption is in effect for your local government.

**3) Take advantage of educational opportunities.** Veterans Tuition Awards are available for full- and part-time study for eligible veterans matriculated at an undergraduate or graduate degree-granting institution or in an approved vocational training program. Contact the Higher Education Services Corp. at (888) 697-4372.

**4) Lower your mortgage rate.** New York's Homes for Veterans program offers fixed-rate mortgages with interest rates 0.5% below the current rates charged on State of New York Mortgage Agency mortgages with closing cost assistance. Contact 1-800-382-HOME or visit [www.nyhomes.org](http://www.nyhomes.org).

**5) Take out a low-interest small business loan.** The State Comptroller and the New York Business Development Corporation sponsor a Veterans Loan Program which offers New York business owners who serve in the Guard and Reserve, or honorably-discharged former active duty members who are seeking to start a small business, an opportunity to apply for lower interest small business loans of up to \$150,000. Please call (800) 9-BDC-504 for more information.

**6) Avoid benefit buyout scams.** If you're offered a lump-sum cash payment in exchange for your monthly benefit check, just say "no." Not only is it illegal for you to assign your benefits to a third party, but the size of the upfront payment, while designed to sound enticing, will deprive you of thousands of dollars owed to you.



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