

# APPENDIX

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## **Legal Services and other Forms of Representation for Veterans, Servicemembers, and Their Families**

Most veterans claims and appeals at the VA are handled by employees of veterans service organizations, state veterans agencies, or counties. They are called veterans service officers (VSOs) or veterans service representatives. Some are volunteers. Some of VSOs also represent servicemembers before disability separation proceedings, and veterans before Discharge Review Boards and the Boards for Correction of Military Records.

In some cases, servicemembers or retirees may receive legal assistance from members of the Judge Advocate Generals' corps. In some cases, the servicemember, vet or family member may prefer to seek assistance from a civilian attorney experienced in military or veterans law. The first question you are likely to ask is “how can I afford a civilian lawyer?” Fortunately, the answer is not so bleak. There are some lawyers who handle needy cases for free (“*pro bono*”). Also, if a money claim is involved, some will handle the case for a percentage of the recovery (this is a “contingent fee” and comes out of the amount received from the other side) or no fee at all if you lose your case. In some instances, federal law provides for government counsel to represent the vet. One example is in reemployment rights cases. And in other cases, lawyers

may take cases because the law permits the court to award relatively generous attorneys fees paid by the losing party (usually the government) if you win your case. (Do not worry; fees are not levied against the plaintiff—you—if you lose except in rare circumstances. In cases before the U. S. Court of Appeals for Veterans claims, there is an organization of volunteer lawyers which will provide free counsel in most cases.

We have attempted to compile a complete listing of national and state organizations that provide free legal assistance to or referrals for servicemembers, vets or their families. If none are in your immediate area or otherwise are not available to help you, try your local legal aid or legal services program, if one exists. To find most of these offices go to the listing below for the Legal Services Corporation. If that does not list a nearby office, ask your local bar association or look in the yellow pages under “lawyers.”

## ***I. National Organizations***

### ***GI Rights Network***

[www.girightshotline.org](http://www.girightshotline.org)

The GI Rights Network is a network of more than 20 organizations providing servicemembers, veterans, potential recruits and their families with information about their rights. It offers counseling on discharges, military regulations, discrimination, sexual assault and harassment complaint procedures, filing grievances, political activity and similar issues. Counseling is non-directive—it's designed to empower and support servicemembers in making their own decisions about rights and options when they face problems with the military. The services are confidential and free; Spanish language counselors are available. Sometimes referrals to experienced lawyers in military and veterans law can be provided.

For information on GI Rights and Discharges call:

(877) 447-4487

From Overseas: 202-483-2220

From Germany: 06223-47506

By e-mail: [www.girights@girightshotline.org](mailto:www.girights@girightshotline.org)

*The Legal Services Corporation (LSC)*

3333 K Street NW, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Washington, DC 20007

Tel: (202) 295-1500

Fax: (202) 337-6797

<http://www.lsc.gov/>

The federal Legal Services Corporation (LSC) funds a nationwide network of legal aid organizations providing free civil legal services to low-income Americans. LSC-funded programs handle the full range of non-criminal legal matters, including family law, consumer law, housing law and landlord/tenant matters, issues with government benefits, and more. Clients must meet certain eligibility requirements to qualify for assistance. Visit the “[Find Legal Assistance](#)” section of LSC's Web site to find a free legal aid organization in your area. [Click here](#) for a state-by-state list of free legal assistance Web sites containing valuable information and resources for civil legal issues.

*Military Legal Assistance Offices*

To find the nearest military legal assistance office, use the legal assistance locator at

<http://legalassistance.law.af.mil/content/locator.php>.

To find information on legal assistance for individual branches of the military contact the following offices:

**Air Force**

Air Force Legal Services Agency

150 Chennault Circle

Maxwell Air Force Base,

AL 36112

Phone: (334) 953-4179

<http://hqja.jag.af.mil/>

**Army**

U.S. Army Legal Assistance Policy Division, Client Services Branch

1777 North Kent St., Suite 9001

Rosslyn, VA 22209

Phone: (703) 696-1477

[www.jagcnet.army.mil/Legal](http://www.jagcnet.army.mil/Legal)

**Coast Guard**

Legal and Defense Services  
4200 Wilson Blvd., Suite 750  
Ballston, VA 22203  
Phone: (202) 493-1745  
[www.uscg.mil/legal/la/](http://www.uscg.mil/legal/la/)

**Marine Corps**

Commandant of the Marine Corps (JAL)  
HQMC  
2 Navy Annex  
Washington, DC 20380  
Phone: (703) 614-1266, (703) 614-3880 or (703) 614-3886  
<http://sja.hqmc.usmc.mil/>

**Navy**

Legal Assistance Division  
1322 Patterson Ave.,  
Suite 3000  
Washington Navy Yard,  
Washington, DC 20374  
Phone: (202) 685-4642  
[www.jag.navy.mil/html/OJAGLegal%20AssistHome.htm](http://www.jag.navy.mil/html/OJAGLegal%20AssistHome.htm)

***National Association of County Veteran Service Officers, INC.***

NACVSO works to promote the rights of veterans and dependents of the United States through a progressive legislative platform. It works collaboratively with the Department of Veterans Affairs as well as with other nationally chartered veterans organizations to ensure that veterans and their dependents receive the entitlements they deserve for the sacrifices they endured.

To find a local service officer please visit the Web site below.

<http://nacvso.org/cvso.asp>

***National Institute Of Military Justice***

4801 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20016  
Tel: (202) 274-4226

Fax: (202) 274-4226

[www.nimj.org/home.aspx](http://www.nimj.org/home.aspx)

National Institute of Military Justice (NIMJ) does not provide legal services or represent individuals. It does, however, comment on regulations and legislation, and regularly appears as an *amicus curiae* (friend of the court) in cases raising important issues of military justice law and policy. NIMJ's staff, officers, directors and advisors are available to the media to explain the operation of the military justice system.

### ***The National Lawyers Guild Military Law Task Force***

318 Ortega Street, San Francisco, CA 94122

Tel: (415) 566-3732 or (619) 233-1701

Contact: Teresa Panepinto [teresapanepinto@earthlink.net](mailto:teresapanepinto@earthlink.net)

Tel: (510) 2119-0413

[www.nlgmltf.org](http://www.nlgmltf.org)

The National Lawyers Guild Military Law Task Force assists those working on military law issues as well as military law counselors working directly with GIs. It trains and mentors counselors and beginning military law attorneys in all aspects of military law through training materials and direct communication. It updates changes in military law and policy. The National Lawyers Guild Military Law Task Force work includes challenges to continued deployments and extended tours of duty. They provide assistance with discharges and GI Rights, discharge upgrades, conscientious objector claims, counter recruitment, registration, draft and enlistment counseling, AWOL/UA, "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," veterans' rights, HIV discrimination, courts-martial, Nuremberg defenses, freedom of speech and communication, contract disagreements, and medical issues.

### ***National Organization of Veterans' Advocates***

1425 K Street NW, Suite 350, Washington, DC 2005

Tel: (877) 483-8238

Director: Rich Cohen [rich@wvajustice.com](mailto:rich@wvajustice.com)

National Organization of Veterans' Advocates (NOVA) provides representation to American veterans and their dependents seeking benefits through the federal veterans benefits system.

<http://www.vetadvocates.com/home.html>

### *National Veterans Legal Service Program: Lawyers Serving Warriors*

PO Box 65762, Washington, DC 20035

<http://www.nvlsp.org/>

A project of the National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP) providing free legal representation in disability, discharge and veterans benefits cases to servicemembers and veterans who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) or Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF).

Lawyers Serving Warriors may be able to assist where the servicemember or veteran has: been referred to the physical disability evaluation system, is inappropriately facing an involuntary administrative separation, received an inappropriate discharge or discharge characterization, filed a claim with the Department of Veterans Affairs

(VA) for disability compensation, or has had a claim under the Traumatic Injury Insurance Under the Servicemembers Group Life Insurance (TSGLI) denied.

To contact Lawyers Serving Warriors e-mail [LawyersServing@nvlsp.org](mailto:LawyersServing@nvlsp.org) or call (202) 265-8305 ext. 152.

### *Operation Enduring LAMP*

Operation Enduring Lamp is a project of the American Bar Associations Standing Committee on Legal Assistance for Military Personnel.

“It is a consortium of state and local bar associations that have made a commitment to recruit volunteer attorneys, and in many cases offer training and facilities to volunteers, in order to assist military legal assistance providers with civil law matters affecting service members.”

<http://www.abanet.org/legalservices/helpreservists/>

### *Servicemembers Legal Defense Network*

PO Box 65301, Washington, DC 20035

Tel: (202) 328-3244 or (202) 328 FAIR

Fax: (202) 797-1635

<http://www.sldn.org/>

To schedule a phone consultation call (202) 328-3244, ext. 501 or e-mail [legal@sldn.org](mailto:legal@sldn.org)

“SLDN provides free legal counseling to servicemembers with legal issues stemming, from or related to the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy banning military service by lesbian

gay, and bisexual persons, the regulations governing military service by HIV+ people, and the regulations addressing military service by transgender persons.”

### *Swords to Plowshares*

1060 Howard Street, San Francisco, CA 94103

Tel: (415) 252 – 4788

Contact: Shannon Kissinger

[www.stp-sf.org](http://www.stp-sf.org)

For VA benefits claims and military discharge upgrading, attorneys provide brief advice and representation to qualifying veterans and their family members. Veterans must be residents of San Francisco OR have served on active duty since September 11, 2001 (OIF/OEF). All services are free of charge.

Phone paralegal Vanessa Quiban to learn how we can help. Swords to Plowshares does not provide legal advice via e-mail. OIF/OEF veterans seeking non-legal-related assistance may contact Swords to Plowshares’ Iraq Veteran Project at [IVPinfo@stp-sf.org](mailto:IVPinfo@stp-sf.org) or by phone.

### *United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims*

625 Indiana Ave NW, Suite 900, Washington, DC 20004

Tel: (202) 501-5970

Fax: (202) 501-5848

“The Court provides veterans an impartial judicial forum for review of administrative decisions by the Board of Veterans' Appeals that are adverse to the veteran-appellant's claim of entitlement to benefits for service-connected disabilities, survivor benefits and other benefits such as education payments and waiver of indebtedness.”

<http://www.vetapp.uscourts.gov/>

To view list of public practitioners see link below:

<http://www.vetapp.uscourts.gov/practitioners/>

### *The Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program*

701 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Suite 131, Washington, DC 20004

Tel: (202) 628-8164 or toll free (888) 838-7727

Fax: (202) 628-8169

<http://www.vetsprobono.org/>

The Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program is an ongoing cooperative effort by four national veterans service organizations – The American Legion, the Disabled American Veterans, the National Veterans Legal Services Program and the Paralyzed Veterans of America. The Program provides free attorneys to veterans and their qualifying family members who have an appeal pending at the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. The appeals are handled by volunteer attorneys who are recruited and trained by the Program to help appellants free of charge.

A veteran or family member who has filed an appeal with the Court can request assistance from the Program by calling (toll-free) (888) 838-7727 or e-mailing [mail@vetsprobono.org](mailto:mail@vetsprobono.org).

*Veterans Service Organizations chartered by Congress and or the VA*

<http://www1.va.gov/vso/index.cfm?template=view>

## ***II. State and County Advocacy Services, Including Legal Clinics***

Each state and most territories have a locally-funded office that represents the interests of local veterans and their families with veterans claims, discharge upgrading and military records correction. The agency is usually called the State Department (or commission, bureau, division, or a similar name) of Veterans Affairs. Some are very large, some are not well funded, and some supervise employees in many, if not all, counties. In some states, the county veterans service officer (CVSO) is employed by the county or may have close ties to a local post or chapter of a national veterans service organization.

The list below provides state-by-state information on the veterans agencies. Some provide information on the location of the CVSOs in that state. If no CVSO is listed, try the Web site of the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers at [www.nacvso.org](http://www.nacvso.org). In some states there are locally-focused legal resources that may be of assistance, such as bar association projects or law school clinics. We list those of which we are aware state-by-state.

### ***Arkansas***

Fayetteville

University of Arkansas School of Law

Law School Legal Clinic

Waterman Hall, Maple Street, Fayetteville, AR 72701

Tel: (479) 575-3056

Fax: (479) 272-2815

Director: Michael W. Mullane [mullane@uark.edu](mailto:mullane@uark.edu)

Represents veterans? NA

Represents servicemembers? Y

Area Served? Y, did not specify

Income requirements? Y, did not specify

## California

San Diego  
Thomas Jefferson School of Law  
Thomas Jefferson Veterans Legal Assistance  
2121 San Diego Ave, San Diego, CA 92110  
[http://www.tjssl.edu/academic\\_veterans](http://www.tjssl.edu/academic_veterans)  
Contact: Steve Berenson [sberenson@tjssl.edu](mailto:sberenson@tjssl.edu)  
Tel: (619) 374-6925

Our clinic works only with veterans, who are participants in, or affiliates or alumni of, the Veterans Village of San Diego recovery program. All screening and eligibility determinations are done through VVSD.

Veterans Village of San Diego  
4141 Pacific Hwy., San Diego, CA 92110  
<http://www.vvsd.net/>  
Tel: (619) 497-0142  
Fax: (619) 497-0263

“Veterans Village of San Diego (VVSD), also known as Vietnam Veterans of San Diego, is dedicated to extending assistance to needy and homeless veterans of all wars and eras and their families by providing housing, food, clothing, substance abuse recovery and mental health counseling, job training and job search assistance.”

Swords to Plowshares  
1060 Howard Street, San Francisco, CA 94103  
Tel: (415) 252 – 4788  
Contact: Shannon Kissinger  
[www.stp-sf.org](http://www.stp-sf.org)

For VA benefits claims and military discharge upgrading, attorneys provide brief advice and representation to qualifying veterans and their family members. Veterans must be residents of San Francisco OR have served on active duty since September 11, 2001 (OIF/OEF). All services are free of charge.

Phone paralegal Vanessa Quiban to learn how we can help. We do not provide legal advice via e-mail. OIF/OEF veterans seeking non-legal-related assistance may contact Swords to Plowshares’ Iraq Veteran Project at [IVPinfo@stp-sf.org](mailto:IVPinfo@stp-sf.org) or by phone.

## *Delaware*

Wilmington

Widener University School of Law

Veterans Law Clinic

Main Office—Widener University School of Law

4601 Concord Pike , P.O. Box 7474, Wilmington, DE 19803-0474

<http://law.widener.edu/Academics/ClinicalProgramsandProfessionalTraining/Clinics/VeteransLawClinic.aspx>

Chester Branch Office: 1450 Edgmont Ave Room 150, Chester, PA 19103

Harrisburg Branch Office: 3800 Vartan Way, Harrisburg, PA 17106

Contact:

Delaware veterans: Prof. Thomas J. Reed (302) 477-2070

Southeastern Pennsylvania: Susan Saidel, Esq. (610) 874-1352

Central & Western Pennsylvania: Jeremiah Underhill (717) 5641-3900

Director: Prof. Thomas J. Reed [tjreed@mail.widener.edu](mailto:tjreed@mail.widener.edu)

Represents veterans? Y

Represents servicemembers? Y

Area Served? Delaware and Pennsylvania veterans and dependents receive a preference. New Jersey and Maryland veterans and dependents may be taken on a case-by-case basis

Income requirements? Total monthly family income from all sources must be at 150% of poverty level or less. Income from spouses and companions is included in this figure.

## *Florida*

Miami

University of Miami School of Law

Elder Law Project

1311 Miller Drive, Coral Gables, FL 33146

Contact: Yolanda Veloz

Tel: (305) 284-3951

Fax: (305) 284-6407

Director: Melissa Lader Barnhardt (Adjunct Faculty)

JoNel Newman (Assistant Professor)

Represents veterans? N

Represents servicemembers? N

Area Served? South Florida/ greater Miami

Income requirements? 200% of the poverty level

### *Illinois*

Chicago

John Marshall Law School

Veterans Legal Support Center and Clinic

315 South Plymouth Court, Chicago, IL 60604

<http://www.jmls.edu/veterans/index.shtml>

Tel: (312) 427-2737 ext. 346

Fax: (312)427-0438

E-mail: [VLSC@jmls.edu](mailto:VLSC@jmls.edu)

Handles VA cases and appeals.

American Bar Association

The ABA Military Pro Bono Project

321 N. Clark St, Chicago, IL 60654

[www.militaryprobono.org](http://www.militaryprobono.org)

Director: Jason Vail [vailj@staff.abanet.org](mailto:vailj@staff.abanet.org)

The ABA Military Pro Bono Project is a referral service for active-duty servicemembers. We refer veterans to programs that handle veterans cases.

Represents veterans? Refer to pro bono attorneys

Represents servicemembers? Refer to pro bono attorneys

Area Served? NA

Income requirements? E-6 pay grade or below

### *Massachusetts*

Boston

Boston University Law School, Northeastern Law School, Suffolk Law School, New England School of Law, Boston College Law School, Harvard Law School

<http://www.shelterlegalservices.org/>

Shelter Legal Services Legal Clinic at Shelter for Homeless Veterans

NESHV 17 Court St, Boston, MA 02108

Shelter Legal Services Legal Clinic at Chelsea Soldier's Home

91 Crest Ave, Chelsea, MA 02150

Contact: Lisa M. LaFera, Esq.

Tel: (617) 305-1699

Fax: (617) 305-6268

Director: Lisa M. LaFera, Esq. [lafera@shelterlegalservices.org](mailto:lafera@shelterlegalservices.org)

Represents veterans? Y  
Represents servicemembers? NA  
Area Served? In around the Boston area  
Income requirements? 125% of Federal poverty guidelines

### *Michigan*

Detroit  
University of Detroit Mercy School of Law  
Veterans Law Clinic  
651 Jefferson Ave, Detroit, MI 48226  
Contact: Michelle Van Horn  
Tel: (313) 596-0262  
Fax: (313) 596-0280  
Director: Joon Sung [sungjh@udmercy.edu](mailto:sungjh@udmercy.edu)  
Peggy Costello  
Represents veterans? Y  
Represents servicemembers? N  
Area Served? N  
Income requirements? 200% of federal poverty guidelines

### *New York*

Albany  
Albany Law School  
Albany Law Clinic & Justice Center  
80 New Scotland Ave., Albany, NY 12208  
[http://www.albanylaw.edu/sub.php?navigation\\_id=39](http://www.albanylaw.edu/sub.php?navigation_id=39)  
Tel: (518) 445-2328

The Albany Law Clinic & Justice Center is willing to represent and/or advise active-duty, low-income servicemembers within the Albany, New York area in the legal areas listed below:

Health law services for clients with cancer or HIV/AIDS  
Workers' compensation claims  
Securities arbitration  
Clients with developmental disabilities  
Taxpayer disputes with the IRS  
Domestic violence legal assistance  
New York

New York City Bar Association  
 The City Bar Justice Center  
 42 West 44th St, New York, NY 10036  
<http://www.nycbar.org/CityBarFund/index.htm>  
 Contact: Sara Chang  
 Tel: (212) 382-6648  
 1-877-564-3833  
 Represents veterans? Y, in access to disability benefits only  
 Represents servicemembers? N  
 Area Served? Y, New York City  
 Income requirements? Y, did not specify

Urban Justice Center  
 Veterans and Servicemembers Project  
 123 William St.-16th floor, New York, NY 10038  
<http://www.urbanjustice.org/ujc/projects/veterans.html>  
 Contact: Rachel Natelson [rnatelson@urbanjustice.org](mailto:rnatelson@urbanjustice.org)  
 Tel: (646) 602-5620  
 Fax: (212) 533-4598  
 Represents veterans? Y  
 Represents servicemembers? Y  
 Area Served? N, priority given to NY area clients  
 Income requirements? N, priority given to low income clients

### *North Carolina*

Durham  
 North Carolina Central University law School  
 Veterans Law Clinic  
 1512S Alston Ave, Durham, NC 27707  
 Contact: Craig Kabatchnick  
 Tel: (336) 456-3751 or (919) 530-6005  
 Represents veterans? Y  
 Represents servicemembers? Y  
 Area Served? N  
 Income requirements? N  
 Raleigh  
 Veterans Foundaion Inc.

Veterans Law Project

PO Box 25337, Raleigh, NC 27611

<http://www.veteranslawproject.org>

Contact: Tara Sue Clark [veteransfoundation@gmail.com](mailto:veteransfoundation@gmail.com)

Tel: (336) 987-8398 or (919) 828-5058

Fax: (919) 261-6771

Represents veterans? Y

Represents servicemembers? Y

Area Served? N

Income requirements? N

The Veterans Law Project is working to establish pro bono law clinics to assist military families throughout the globe in a variety of legal interests. These include but are not limited to claims, appeals, classes, programs, training and co-ops with veterans service organizations. The Veterans Law Project pilot project can be found at the North Carolina Central University Law School.

## *Virginia*

Arlington

George Mason University School of Law

Clinic For Legal Assistance to Servicemembers

3301 Washington Blvd, MS 6C5, Arlington, VA 22201

Contact: Student Office [class@gmu.edu](mailto:class@gmu.edu)

Tel: (703) 993-8214

Fax: (703) 993-9540

Director: Joseph Zengerle [jzengerl@gmu.edu](mailto:jzengerl@gmu.edu)

Represents veterans? N

Represents servicemembers? Y

Area Served? Virginia, Maryland, District of Columbia are preferred

Income requirements? Undue hardship to retain counsel

*Vermont*

South Royalton  
 Vermont Law School  
 South Royalton Legal Clinic  
 PO Box 117, South Royalton, VT 05068  
 Contact: Maryann Zavez [MZAVEZ@vermontlaw.edu](mailto:MZAVEZ@vermontlaw.edu)  
 Tel: (802) 831-1500  
 Handles VA cases

*Washington D.C.*

Catholic University Law School  
 Columbus Community Legal Services  
 3602 John McCormack Rd., NE, Washington DC, 20064  
 Contact: Michael McGonnigal [mcgonnigal@law.edu](mailto:mcgonnigal@law.edu)  
 Tel: (202) 319-6788  
 Fax: (202) 319-6780  
 Director: Catherine Klain  
 Represents veterans? Y  
 Represents servicemembers? N

Area Served? For cases before the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, we accept clients from throughout the United States. For all other matters, we represent only residents of the District of Columbia.

Income requirements? : In general, we represent clients whose income does not exceed 200 percent of the poverty level.

*Wisconsin*

Madison  
 University of Wisconsin  
 Neighborhood Law Project & Family Court Assistance Project  
 975 Bascom Mall, Madison, WI 53706  
 Villager Mall, 2300 South Park St. #3, Madison, WI 53713  
 Neighborhood Law Project: (608) 260-8221  
<http://law.wisc.edu/fjr/eji/neighborhood/>  
 Family Court Assistance Project: (608) 262-2301  
<http://law.wisc.edu/fjr/eji/familycourt/>  
 Fax: (608) 265-3732  
 Represents veterans? Y, but not in disputes with the military

Represents servicemembers? Y, but not in disputes with the military  
Area Served? Dane County, Wisconsin  
Income requirements? N

**\*Appendices compiled by Kaya Sanchez-Harvey, research assistant at Veterans For America, assisted by David Addlestone and Craig Kubey.**