

# WASHINGTON STATE'S DEFINITION OF A VETERAN

## DEFINITION OF A VETERAN FOR THE PURPOSE OF STATE VETERANS BENEFITS

AS OF JUNE 6, 2024, THE STATE OF WASHINGTON HAS  
BROADENED ITS DEFINITION OF A "VETERAN" TO INCLUDE:

- **Inclusive Criteria:** Veterans who were separated with less than honorable characterizations of service (discharges) due solely to sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or actions or statements related to sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, regardless of characterization of service.
- **Eligibility for Federal Benefits:** Any veteran already eligible for federal Department of Veterans Affairs monetary benefits (non-service-connected pension and disability compensation).

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THE CHANGES:

- **Additional Benefits:** State veterans benefits encompass various programs, including county veterans assistance funds, civil service employment preference, state parks passes, hunting and fishing licenses, admission to state soldiers and veterans homes, homeownership down payment assistance, licensing extensions, property tax relief, and tuition waivers at public colleges.
- **Bipartisan Support:** This legislation, requested by the Attorney General's Office, passed unanimously with bipartisan backing.
- **Department of Licensing:** The Department of Licensing license plate related sections of the new law have a later effective date of April 1, 2025.

### LEARN MORE:



[www.dva.wa.gov/definition-veteran](http://www.dva.wa.gov/definition-veteran)  
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