

SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT WITH NJRC

- ★ Veterans will be referred to the NJRC by organizations such as the Education & Health Centers of America (ECHEA), New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC), New Jersey State Parole Board (NJSPB), Houses of Worship, and/or veterans themselves.
- ★ A licensed social worker will review the veteran's history of trauma, mental health or addiction treatment, and medical history. If the veteran appears to be suffering from mental illness resulting from their service or subsequent experiences, the veteran may be required to meet with a psychologist, psychiatrist, or clinical social worker for the purposes of further referral.
- ★ A Case Manager shall interview the veteran client, complete the intake questionnaire and prepare initial document requests, such as acquiring a veteran's DD-214 form or other relevant service files. Questions that will be asked by interviewers include when/where you served, what is your discharge status, have you been diagnosed with any mental health illness (such as PTSD or TBI) or do you believe you may suffer from one? Have you seen combat? Have you applied for any VA or state benefits? etc.



CASE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The veteran is assigned a case manager, who will connect the veteran with the appropriate services and non-profit veteran organizations that will help facilitate the services needed to address the veteran's individual needs. This includes counseling, homeless prevention benefits, and social service assistance. The case manager will orient the veteran with NJRC and continue to act as a guide/counselor throughout the process. The goal is to achieve immediate "maintenance" benefits for veteran clients with a less than honorable discharge by applying for and securing social services.

Healthcare

- ★ Medicaid registration and linkage to healthcare through federally qualified healthcare centers and hospitals or coverage through the Affordable Care Act.
- ★ NJRC will link veterans who require medical treatment with Federally Qualified Health Services (FQHS).
- ★ NJRC will link veterans dealing with addiction and/or mental health issues (such as PTSD or TBI) with Certified Community Behavior Health Clinics and other veteran-specific organizations Such as Keep Our Veterans Alive (KOVA) and the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA). NJRC also works with providers of innovative Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) programs to help veterans fight their addictions.

Legal Services

- ★ NJRC will help the veteran gain access to legal services through the New Jersey State Bar Association, Young Lawyer's division. Veterans will also be connected with pro-bono lawyers and veteran-specific legal services, such as the National Veterans Legal Services Program.
- ★ NJRC will assist the veteran with acquiring Motor Vehicle Commission identifications, such as a drivers license, which helps remove barriers to programs and employment.
- ★ NJRC will assist veterans manage unpaid fines and other outstanding legal issues, such as warrants.

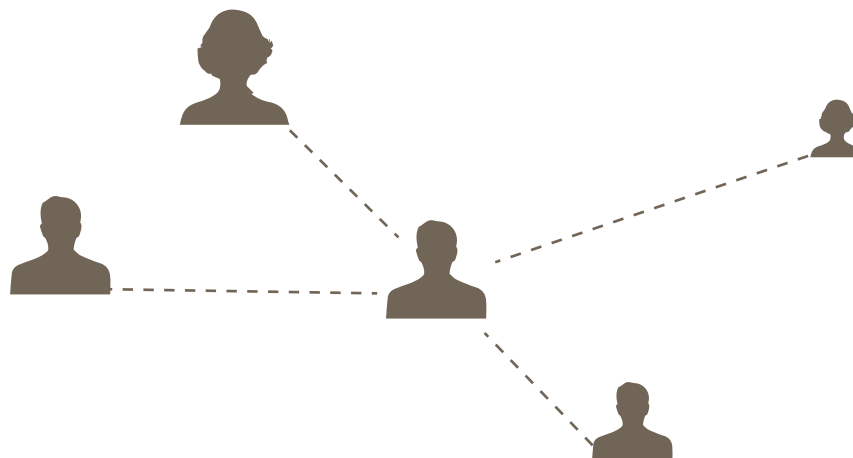
Employment

- ★ NJRC will provide veterans with professional emails, resumes, and training, as well certifications of eligibility from the federal bond program which will make the veteran a more attractive candidate for employment.
- ★ Veterans will have access to NJRC's One Stop services, where veterans can receive nationally recognized industrial certification in the growing job sectors. The One Stop Program works with veteran organizations to link veterans to veteran-friendly employers such as Sansone Auto, to secure veterans with well-paying and stable employment.
- ★ Enroll veterans with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, which can provide job coaching and up to \$10,000 for education and/or training programs.

State Benefits and Housing Referral

- ★ NJRC will help the veteran gain access to various programs from the state and the federal government, including HUD -VASH, Support Services for Veteran Families (SSVF), Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), General Assistance (GA), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF, and Supplemental Security Income (SSI).
- ★ Emergency assistance funds, rapid rehousing assistance, referrals to housing providers and assistance agencies.

REFERRALS



- ★ For formerly or currently incarcerated veterans, NJRC will work with the NJDOC, NJSPB, and the EHCA to link veterans with the assistance they need during and after incarceration.
- ★ Some cases will be referred to the National Veteran Veterans Legal Program (NVLSP) who, in conjunction with the NJRC, will assist with upgrading your discharge status or having it reclassified so that you may have access to VA benefits.
- ★ Additionally, veterans may be referred to our partners such as: VFW, The American Legion, VA, New Jersey Veterans Network, Jewish War Veterans, Catholic War Veterans, Marine Corps League, Disabled American Veterans, Hope For Veterans Program, Stand Down New Jersey, Operation Jersey Cares, Welcome Home Vets of New Jersey, Home For Veterans, and others.



Cases Referred to NVLSP

DISCHARGE REVIEW BOARD

Based on the intake interview at NJRC, the staff and attorneys at NVLSP will assist the veteran prepare their application to the appropriate agency.

Who applies?

- ★ Veterans who received an Other than Honorable Discharge or a Bad Conduct Discharge as a result of a special-court martial within the last 15 years.

What does it do?

- ★ Upgrade a discharge to Honorable or General and make the veteran eligible for most VA benefits.

Timeframe

- ★ A few months to several years.

Standard

- ★ The current discharge status is improper and unfair.
- ★ Greater consideration is given to claims based on mental health conditions, PTSD, traumatic brain injury, sexual assault, and sexual harassment.

Forms

- ★ DD293, DD214*, personal statement, medical records, and any other supporting evidence.

Process

- ★ Staff at NVLSP and NJRC help get together all necessary forms and craft a personal statement in support of the discharge upgrade.
- ★ The forms and statements are submitted to the proper DRB.
- ★ A group of 3 or 5 officers review the forms and the veteran can request an in-person hearing before the DRB.
- ★ While the DRB decides, NJRC staff supports the veteran by keeping informed about the proceedings and making the above benefits available.

BOARD OF CORRECTION OF MILITARY RECORDS

Who applies?

- ★ Veterans who received a Bad Conduct Discharge as a result of a general court-martial, a Dishonorable Discharge, an upgrade denial from the DRB, or 15 years elapsed without applying to the DRB.

What does it do?

- ★ Upgrade a discharge to Honorable or General and make the veteran eligible for most VA benefits.

Timeframe

- ★ A few months to several years

Standard

- ★ The current discharge status is an injustice that must be corrected.
- ★ Greater consideration is given to claims based on mental health conditions, PTSD, traumatic brain injury, sexual assault, and sexual harassment.

Forms

- ★ DD149, DD214*, personal statement, medical records, and any other supporting evidence.

Process

- ★ Staff at NVLSP and NJRC help get together all necessary forms and craft a personal statement in support of the discharge upgrade.
- ★ The forms and statements are submitted to the proper BCMR.
- ★ A group of 3 or 5 officers review the forms and the veteran can request an in-person hearing before the BCMR.
- ★ While the BCMR decides, NJRC staff supports the veteran by

keeping informed about the proceedings and making the above benefits available.

DD214 Form Information

The DD214 is the veteran's discharge papers that include the discharge status and reason for the discharge. This form is essential for a discharge upgrade and getting benefits.

- ★ Recently separated veterans can reach out to their service branch or go to "milConnect" to retrieve their DD214. Retrieving this form will greatly expedite the upgrade process.
- ★ A DD214 can be retrieve via the internet at <https://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records> or sending in the SF 180 to the NPRC through fax (314-801-9195) or mail (National Personnel Records Center, 1 Archives Drive, St. Louis, Missouri 63138)
- ★ Retrieving this form may take up to six months so it is critical to request the form as soon as possible to ensure the already long process of getting benefits can begin.
- ★ NJRC can submit a hardship notice and possibly get the DD214 a few months early.

Additional Legal Path to Benefits

- ★ Based on the intake interview at NJRC, some veterans may be able to get VA benefits without a discharge upgrade.

CHARACTER OF DISCHARGE

Who applies?

- ★ Any veteran applying for VA benefits.

What does it do?

- ★ Determines if a veteran is eligible for VA benefits.

Timeframe

- ★ Up to a few years.

Standard

- ★ Despite the less than honorable discharge, the veteran served honorably based on their whole service record.
- ★ Veterans with honorable or general discharge are automatically eligible for most benefits.

Forms

- ★ DD214, personal statement, medical records, and any other supporting evidence.

Process

- ★ This process can happen while the veteran applies to the DRB or BCMR.
- ★ Staff at NJRC help get together all necessary documents to craft a personal statement in support of the veteran's honorable service.
- ★ The forms are submitted to the regional VA office with an application for any of the VA benefits.
- ★ The regional office reviews the service record and any other evidence. The veteran can request an in-person hearing.

- ★ If they grant benefits, the discharge status does not change. If the DRB or BCMR upgrade the discharge status the VA must honor the upgrade even if they previously denied benefits.

NJRC supports the veteran through the process.

Honorable Discharge and General Under Honorable Conditions Discharge:

- ★ These veterans qualify for most VA benefits without requiring a discharge upgrade or character of discharge determination. Benefits include medical, home loan assistance, employment assistance, pension, education tuition, and much more.

Other than Honorable Discharge and Bad Conduct (as a result of a special court-martial) Discharge:

- ★ These veterans may qualify for the VA benefits listed above and others if the VA determines that they served honorably despite their discharge status. This is the Character of Discharge process explained in the previous chart. The veteran can also get a discharge upgrade from the Discharge Review Board or Board of Correction of Military Records explained in the previous chart. NJRC and NVLSP can assist veterans navigate those processes.
- ★ Limited mental health and addiction treatment is available through the VA even with an Other than Honorable or Bad Conduct (special court-martial) Discharge. There is more treatment available if the disorder or addiction is service related.

Bad Conduct (as a result of a special court-martial) and Dishonorable Discharge:

- ★ These veterans do not qualify for VA benefits unless they get a discharge upgrade from the Board of Correction of Military Records.
- ★ NJRC and NVLSP may be able to help these veterans get their claims processed.
- ★ NJRC will, no matter the discharge status, offer the veterans assistance programs mentioned in the first chart. These veterans served our country and now deserve assistance.