

Cost of Living Adjustment for Veterans Signed into Law

3.6% increase goes into effect on Dec. 1

On Nov. 9, 2011, President Barack Obama signed S. 849, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2011, into law. This 3.6% cost of living adjustment, or COLA, affects veterans receiving compensation for service-connected disabilities, as well as the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation of veterans who died as a result of service.

Although Congress has passed a COLA for veterans every year since 1976, there has not been an increase since 2009. The COLA is tied to the Consumer Price Index, which also adjusts benefits for Social Security recipients.

The 3.6% COLA increase will go into effect on Dec. 1, 2011. For more information, [click here](#).

DOL Gold Card Services for Veterans Now Available

Intensive and follow-up employment services for veterans

In August, President Obama announced a comprehensive plan to lower veterans' unemployment and to ensure that service members leave the military career-ready. The announcement included several initiatives including the creation of a suite of Gold Card services for veterans. The Gold Card provides unemployed post-9/11-era veterans with the intensive and follow-up services they need to succeed in today's job market. The Gold Card initiative is a joint effort of the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) and became available on Nov. 7, 2011.

An eligible veteran can present the Gold Card at his/her local One-Stop Career Center to receive enhanced intensive services including up to six months of follow-up. The enhanced in-person services available for Gold Card holders at local One-Stop Career Centers may include:

- Job readiness assessment, including interviews and testing.
- Development of an Individual Development Plan (IDP).
- Career guidance through group or individual counseling that helps veterans in making training and career decisions.
- Provision of labor market, occupational, and skills transferability information that inform educational, training and occupational decisions.
- Referral to job banks, job portals and job openings.
- Referral to employers and registered apprenticeship sponsors.
- Referral to training by WIA-funded or third-party service providers.
- Monthly follow-up by an assigned case manager for up to six months.

To read more about the Gold Card program and how to access these services, [click here](#).

New Search Tool to Help Veterans Match Military Experience to Civilian Career

My Next Move for Veterans part of DOL's new employment services for veterans

On [My Next Move for Veterans](#), veterans will find a simple and quick search engine where they enter their prior military experience (branch of service and military occupation code or title) and link to the information on civilian careers and related training, including information they can use to write resumes that highlight related civilian skills.

In addition, My Next Move for Veterans contains a link to an online assessment: the O*NET Interest Profiler, which provides results comparable to the Strong Interest Inventory being used in the new Transition Assistance Program (TAP). Veterans who have not received an interest assessment as part of TAP can access and take this interest assessment by [clicking here](#).

Military Families: Access to Care for Active Duty, National Guard, Reserve, Veterans, Their Families and Those Close to Them

Webcast available from SAMHSA

This webcast was held by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) as a part of Recovery Month, and is now available for viewing online. It explores the nature and scope of substance use and mental disorders among military service members and veterans. The webcast examines the strength of the system to address these problems and efforts underway to improve our ability to support military service members, veterans, and their families.

To view the webcast, [click here](#).

Funding Opportunities

The Beim Foundation expresses its values by making grants in the community in the areas of arts, environment, human services and education. The Foundation makes grants to organizations in Maine, Minnesota, Montana and Washington. The deadline for human services grant applications is in January. For more information, [click here](#).

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation is accepting proposals for grants through the Community Partners Program to improve the quality of life in the 26 communities nationwide where the founders owned newspapers. Although the priorities differ for each community, the focus is primarily on issues relating to children and families, civic participation, cultural life, educational and economic opportunities for all residents, and housing and community development. The foundation encourages interested organizations to submit a letter of inquiry before submitting a proposal. Geographic eligibility and other guidelines are available on the Foundation's website, which can be viewed by [clicking here](#).

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National Coalition for Homeless Veterans

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Mission: The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans will end homelessness among veterans by shaping public policy, promoting collaboration, and building the capacity of service providers.

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