



**Minnesota**  
STATE COLLEGES  
& UNIVERSITIES

## **VETERANS SERVICES FACT SHEET**

**August 2006**

### **OVERVIEW**

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities has a long history of providing education and training to veterans and those on active duty who are seeking to gain new skills, enhance existing skills and translate skills learned in the military for use in the civilian world. As times have changed, the focus of Minnesota's state colleges and universities has shifted to meet current needs of returning veterans.

### **MINNESOTA GUARD DEPLOYMENT**

Since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, about 8,000 members of the Minnesota National Guard have been called to active duty overseas. In March 2007, an estimated 3,000 Minnesota National Guard members now serving overseas are due to return to the state. This will be the largest group of veterans to return at the same time in the state's history. Thousands of other Minnesotans serve in the regular armed forces and federal reserve units.

### **PREPARING FOR MINNESOTA'S RETURNING VETERANS**

Meeting the needs of returning veterans is a complex undertaking. In September 2005, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system office began additional training for counselors, student affairs staff and administrators with the assistance of the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs. Several colleges and universities also initiated additional workshops for staff and faculty.

### **CHALLENGES FACING VETERANS WHO RETURN TO COLLEGE**

Many veterans face personal, relationship, education and employment issues on being discharged or completing military duty. Veterans' families also may need help while their loved ones serve overseas and when they return home.

### **VETERANS ASSISTANCE OFFICES PROVIDE ONE-STOP SHOP ON CAMPUSES**

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs has contracted with Central Lakes College, a member of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, to set up six regional Veterans Assistance offices to coordinate and provide services to veterans attending a Minnesota state college or university, the University of Minnesota or other colleges. These offices, staffed by employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, will help veterans find the state and federal resources available to them as they begin or continue their higher education. The appropriation provides \$600,000 a year for five years to run the offices. Five of the six regional offices will be based at Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. They are: **Minnesota State University Moorhead**, **Lake Superior College** in Duluth, **St. Cloud State University**, **Southwest Minnesota State University** in Marshall and **Minnesota State University, Mankato**. The other

center will be at the Twin Cities campus of the **University of Minnesota**, which is a separate system.

#### **EDUCATION-RELATED BENEFITS AND SERVICES AVAILABLE FOR VETERANS**

- **On-campus Veterans Centers** – Some colleges have veterans centers and specialized services. They include: Central Lakes College, Brainerd and Staples; Southwest Minnesota State University, Marshall; Inver Hills Community College, Inver Grove Heights; and Winona State University.
- **Education credit transfer for military training and education** – Veterans can receive education credits at a Minnesota state college or university for military training and experience that meets American Council on Education standards.
- **In-state tuition rates are available for non-resident soldiers and veterans.**
- **Veterans in college awaiting federal benefits can delay tuition payments without penalty.** A state college or university will not charge late fees or other late charges for veterans who are eligible or have applied to receive federal educational assistance.
- **Veterans Upward Bound** – Minneapolis Community and Technical College has the only Veterans Upward Bound program in the state. Operating continuously since 1972, the program offers special academic and support services to eligible veterans.
- **Minnesota Online opportunities** – Service men and women can take an array of online courses offered by Minnesota State Colleges and Universities while in the military. Go to [www.minnesotaonline.org](http://www.minnesotaonline.org) for more information.

#### **WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT TODAY'S MINNESOTA VETERANS?**

- In 2005, more than 5,000 veterans from the Minnesota National Guard who received benefits that paid for their education attended one of the 32 Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. About 600 veterans attended the University of Minnesota Twin Cities.
- Thousands of other military veterans who served in reserve units or in the regular branches of the armed forces are going to college.
- About 70 percent are married.

#### **RESOURCES**

- Don Pfeffer, director, higher education veterans programs, 218-855-8148.
- Clark Dyrud, Minnesota commissioner of veterans affairs, 651-296-2345.
- Steve Frantz, system director, student affairs, 651-296-9443.
- John Morris, deputy state chaplain, Minnesota Army National Guard, 651-282-4085.

#### **ABOUT MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system comprises 32 state universities and community and technical colleges serving the higher education needs of Minnesota. The system serves about 240,000 students per year in credit-based courses and an additional 130,000 students in non-credit courses.

*For more information or to arrange media interviews, please contact Melinda Voss, public relations director, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, at 651.296.9443 or [melinda.voss@so.mnscu.edu](mailto:melinda.voss@so.mnscu.edu).*