



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Eligibility Qualifying Review Board
287 West Street
Rocky Hill, CT 06067



Nikiforos Mathews
Chairperson

EQRB Background, Administrative Structure and Procedures

- Public Act 21-79 directed the CT State Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) to establish the Qualifying Review Board, hereinafter administratively referred to as the Eligibility Qualifying Review Board (EQRB), for the purpose of restoring eligibility for State Veterans Benefits to Veterans who have an Other-Than-Honorable (OTH) characterization of discharge due to sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. The EQRB will also review restoration of State Veterans Benefits eligibility applications for Veterans who have an OTH which was as likely as not caused by post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or a traumatic brain injury (TBI) resulting from military service or as a result of military sexual trauma (MST). PTSD, TBI and MST applicants may choose to utilize the Qualifying Condition Verification process established by Public Act 18-47 in lieu of filing with the EQRB.
- The EQRB is a five-member body with three members appointed directly by the DVA Commissioner, one member from the DVA Board of Trustees and the DVA Manager of Advocacy and Assistance.
- Restoration of eligibility for State Veterans Benefits to an applicant who is a military Veteran domiciled in Connecticut by the DVA as a result of the EQRB or Qualifying Condition Verification review process does not alter an applicant's official federally issued character of discharge and does not provide eligibility for federal Veterans benefits.
- EQRB applicants stating their OTH was based on PTSD or TBI must provide documentation of a diagnoses of PTSD resulting from military service, a TBI resulting from military service, or that they experienced MST, as described in 38 U.S.C. § 1720D. All other EQRB applicants are required to submit as complete an Official Military Personnel File (OMPF) as possible in connection with their application, which they may request online at: <https://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/evetrecs-help.html> All such military records requested must be sent *directly* to the EQRB address in the instruction page, and not to the applicant or any other person. Applicants may contact the DVA if they need assistance in obtaining their OMPF, and if there is an unreasonable delay in the applicant being able to obtain a complete OMPF the applicant may request that the EQRB consider the application without a complete OMPF.
- Only complete applications will be considered by the EQRB. The EQRB will conduct a review within thirty (30) days of receipt of a completed application and will render a written recommendation to the DVA Commissioner of whether to restore eligibility for State Veterans Benefits to the applicant within ten (10) days of such review. Oral argument or testimony and/or additional documents may be required at the discretion of the EQRB. In such circumstances, the applicant will be contacted; however, the EQRB will strive to make determinations without the need for oral argument.
- The EQRB will consider all documentation and evidence provided by an applicant as part of an application. If an applicant is able to demonstrate that the PTSD stressor, TBI or MST occurred during military service or that such discharge was based on sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, then the EQRB will recommend that the DVA Commissioner restore eligibility for State Veterans Benefits to the applicant.
- The DVA Commissioner will consider the recommendation of the EQRB and render a written decision on the restoration of eligibility for State Veterans Benefits to an applicant within ten (10) days of receipt of an EQRB recommendation. Said decision will be sent to the applicant via email and U.S. Mail.
- An applicant denied restoration of eligibility for State Veterans Benefits may file a request for reconsideration (which may include supplemental supporting documentation) within fifteen days of receipt of the decision. The DVA Commissioner will consider each request for reconsideration and render a final decision within ten days of receiving a request. The DVA Commissioner's final decision upon reconsideration may be appealed to the state Superior Court within forty-five days pursuant to the Uniform Administrative Procedure Act (C.G.S §4-183).