Definition of Veteran:
A Guide for Municipalities

NEW HAMPSHIRE MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION

An advisory of the New Hampshire Municipal Association
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Summary of Changes Pursuant to 2026 Chapter Law 252 (SB 448)

Amendments to RSA 21:50, 72:36-A, 119:6, 283:4, 97:1 and 110-D:3 applying the expanded definition of the term "veteran" found in RSA 21:50 to broaden eligibility for state benefits and programs that depend on veteran status.

2026 Chapter Law 252 (SB 448) amends several statutes to ensure that individuals discharged under honorable conditions, including those with a general discharge under honorable conditions, are included in the definition of the term "veteran". Key changes include the replacement of the term "honorably discharged veterans" with a more inclusive definition as outlined in RSA 21:50 across various statutes, including employment preferences and property tax exemptions for disabled veterans. Specifically, this legislation replaces the term "honorable discharge" or "an honorable discharge" with the term "discharge of a character outlined in RSA 21:50." This will include more individuals under the definition of veteran, regardless of the type of discharge they received.

Notably, this amendment applies the broader definition of the term "veteran" to employment benefits and preference under RSA 119:6, 283:4, 97:1 and 110-D:3 and for taxation purposes under RSA 72:36-A, 72:35, 72:28, and 72:28-b. It is also important to note that this definition also changes spousal eligibility for the standard and optional surviving spouse tax credit under RSA 72:29-a. In addition, it should be noted that this change DOES NOT require re-adoption or amendment of any municipal rules in effect at the time. The new definition will apply without further action needed.

Effective Date: August 31, 2026
Statutes Amended: RSA 21:50, 72:36-A, 119:6, 283:4, 97:1 and 110-D:3.