



# VETERANS AFFAIRS



## Community Commitment

Dear Veterans, Families, and Members of Our Community,

Bring on spring and the renewed sense of energy and opportunity throughout our community. This time of year brings an increase in events and activities dedicated to supporting our local Veterans, and I encourage everyone to take part whenever possible. Whether attending, volunteering, or simply helping to spread awareness, your involvement makes a meaningful difference.

One of the most critical services we provide through our office is the D.A.V. Transportation Program. This program offers free transportation for Veterans to attend their VA medical appointments at locations including Pittsburgh, Altoona, Butler, and the Indiana County Community-Based Outpatient Clinic located outside of IRMC. For many Veterans, especially those without reliable transportation, this service is essential in ensuring they receive the medical care they need and have earned. This program would not be possible without the dedication of our volunteer drivers, who collectively log over 1,000 hours of transportation each year. Their commitment ensures that Veterans can access care safely and consistently, removing one of the most common barriers to healthcare.

At this time, we are actively seeking additional volunteer drivers to support this important mission. Volunteers must complete a physical and background check, and scheduling is flexible to accommodate individual availability. If you are interested in volunteering or have more questions, please call our office at 724-465-3815.

I would also like to remind everyone about the upcoming Veterans Parsonage Sleepout, which will be held on April 25th at the Indiana Mall, next to Rural King. This event raises both awareness and critical support for the Veterans Parsonage, which provides safe and stable housing for Veterans in need.

As more events continue to be scheduled throughout the spring, please be sure to stay connected and informed. We regularly share updates, event details, and ways to get involved on our Facebook page at the Indiana County Department of Veterans Affairs.

Thank you for your continued support in serving those who have served our country.

*Jessica*  
 Jessica Walker  
 Director

## Highlights

Veterans  
 Parsonage  
 Sleepout

Brain Health Fair


Kidney Disease

PTSD Treatment

Trades Career  
 Fair

HereNOW

Free Park Passes



## THE VETERANS PARSONAGE HOMELESS SLEEPOUT

**April 25, 2026**

From 7:00 am until 9:00 pm on **Saturday, April 25, 2026**, board members of the Veterans Parsonage and students from the IUP PTX Military Service Fraternity will be joining forces to hold a campout in front of the **Indiana Mall Entrance next to Rural King to raise awareness and funds for the Veterans Parsonage in Indiana, PA and to shed some light on the homeless Veterans problem that plagues our nation.**

The Veteran's Parsonage is a non-profit organization funded through private donations. It provides critical services to American Military Veterans in terms of social services, life-skill services, counseling services, and employment services, as well as a warm place to rest their heads out of the elements.

The Parsonage was formed in order to assist and encourage responsible participation by Veterans in returning to the workplace and successful re-integration back into society.

**Please stop to show your support!** Food & Drink items will be accepted for event participants, as we will not be eating or drinking anything that isn't donated (much like our Veterans who find themselves in this situation). **Monetary donations as well as cleaning supplies, non perishable food items, and personal hygiene products will be collected for the Veterans Parsonage during the event.**

The Veterans Parsonage Board is completely volunteer and 100% of all donations go to helping Veterans.

*\* THANK YOU \*  
for  
Protecting  
Us*




## Serving Those Who Served And Their Families

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We are proud to explore the launch of a 12-Week Veterans Wellness Program designed to support military veterans and their families through health, connection, and community.

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**Program Dates:**  
**Week of April 27 – July 20**

**Program Highlights**

- ✓ Individualized exercise training in a supportive group setting
- ✓ Nutrition guidance and wellness education
- ✓ Mindfulness and stress management practices
- ✓ Weekly in-person sessions at the YMCA
- ✓ Flexible virtual component for added support

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**Who Qualifies?**

- Honorably discharged veterans
- Active military
- Active or honorably discharged reservists/National Guard
- Spouses/partners of veterans

Interested? Let Us Know!

Complete the survey today 

Share your contact info to learn more





## SAVE THE DATE

AGING SERVICES, INC. IS HOSTING THE  
4th ANNUAL

### Brain Health Fair & Dementia Friendly Indiana County Kick-Off



Thursday, June 4, 2026  
10:00 A.M. — 1:00 P.M.

Businesses and organizations that offer programs, services, and activities to promote healthy living are invited to join this event!

If your business or organization is interested in attending, please contact Heidi Farmery at [hfarmery@agingservicesinc.com](mailto:hfarmery@agingservicesinc.com) or call 724-349-4500.



## Veteran Spotlight

Edward Antonacci, a Bolivar native born March 22, recently celebrated his 100th birthday at The Addison of Moorehead Place with family and fellow residents. A lifelong exemplar of service and dedication, he enlisted in the U.S. Air Force on his birthday, March 22, 1944, serving in radio communications during World War II. His typing skills led to a transfer to Headquarters Company, allowing him to travel the world, training across the U.S. and serving in Australia, India, Egypt, Israel, Morocco, France—where he saw the Mona Lisa—and Germany, before returning home and being discharged in 1946.

After the military, Antonacci built a long career as a cost estimator, working until age 95. He married Bebe in 1971, raised three sons, and enjoys family, sports, and cheese ravioli, sharing advice to avoid tobacco and cook in olive oil.

# VA News and Information



## Kidney Disease

More than 1.4 million Veterans in VA health care have chronic kidney disease (CKD). Because CKD often shows no symptoms until advanced stages, early screening with simple blood and urine tests is essential. Veterans face higher CKD risk due to diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, and certain military-related exposures.

Since 2019, VA has focused on CKD prevention, early detection, and management, updating guidelines to address military exposures and support shared decision-making. VA offers genetic testing, home dialysis, integrated kidney care teams, and virtual Telenephrology visits. Veterans are encouraged to screen, track health metrics, review medications, and discuss kidney risk with their care team. [Read More](#)



## Warning Signs

Veterans often notice when a buddy isn't acting like themselves—pulling away, acting differently, or seeming run-down. You don't need to be an expert to help; being present, paying attention, and knowing what to do can save a life. VA **S.A.V.E. Training** teaches practical steps any Veteran can use in a suicide crisis. **Spot the signs:** changes in behavior, mood, or routine may indicate risk. **Ask the question:** directly ask if they're thinking about suicide—honest, simple questions show you care. **Validate:** listen, take them seriously, and offer supportive comments without minimizing. **Encourage and support:** connect them to VA resources, a trusted person, or the Veterans Crisis Line (988, Press 1; chat or text 838255). The training is free, practical, and designed for real-life situations with Veterans. [Read More](#)



## Protecting Veterans

As National Consumer Protection Week and Slam the Scam Day concluded in March 2026, VA reaffirmed its commitment to protecting Veterans from fraud and scams. Veterans had been targeted by schemes including government impostors, direct deposit fraud, phishing, identity theft, and fake VA calls or emails. They were advised to safeguard personal information, verify contacts, avoid unusual payment methods, shred sensitive documents, and stay informed about scams. VA representatives never request personal information or payments via unsolicited calls or emails.

Suspicious activity can be reported at [VSAFE.gov](https://www.vsa.gov), and missing or incorrect VA benefit payments can be reported to VA at 800-827-1000. [Read More](#)



## New COE Enhancements

For Veterans, the path to homeownership begins with the Certificate of Eligibility (COE), a key document that confirms eligibility for VA home loan benefits and helps make purchasing a home more affordable. A update to the VA: Health and Benefits mobile app now allows eligible users to view their active COE Home Loan Letter in real time, making access faster and more convenient.

Veterans who do not yet have an active COE, or who need to make updates, should work with a mortgage lender or visit [VA.gov](https://www.va.gov) for assistance. The new feature was introduced through a phased rollout from March 2 through March 5, gradually expanding access to ensure a smooth implementation and minimize disruptions.

This enhancement reflects VA's continued efforts to streamline processes, reduce delays, and provide Veterans with better tools to manage their benefits. The mobile app also offers secure access to healthcare information, appointments, and benefit updates, improving the overall Veteran experience. [Read More](#)




## PTSD Treatment Options

The PTSD Treatment Decision Aid (PTSDTDA) is an interactive tool designed to help Veterans choose the PTSD treatment that best fits their needs. Because PTSD affects individuals differently, finding the right treatment requires understanding available options and working closely with a clinician. The PTSDTDA supports this process by providing clear, accessible information about therapies and medications.

Users can explore educational materials, watch videos featuring clinicians and fellow Veterans, and learn about approaches such as trauma-focused talk therapies and medications. The tool also allows users to compare treatments side by side, helping them evaluate effectiveness and personal fit based on their goals and preferences. By answering a few questions, Veterans can generate a personalized summary outlining their treatment preferences, goals, and questions to discuss with their clinician. This encourages informed, collaborative decision-making and empowers Veterans to take an active role in selecting the most appropriate treatment plan. [Learn More](#)

# Resources



## Union Trades Career Fair


SAVE THE DATE  
 Wednesday, April 8, 2026  
 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
 3 p.m. - 6 p.m.

PA CareerLink® Indiana County  
 300 Indian Springs Rd  
 Indiana, PA 15701

Are you seeking a fulfilling career in the Union Trades?

- Plumber ~ Mechanical Insulator
- Carpenter ~ Heavy Highway Carpenter
- Electrician ~ Operating Engineer
- Painter ~ Millwright ~ Laborer
- Sprinkler Fitter ~ Steamfitter ~ Ironworker

LEVEL UP YOUR CAREER




A proud partner of the AmericanJobCenter network

PA CareerLink® is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs are federally funded dollars. For federal funding information, visit <https://pccountyweb.org/about-4cwb7-4d-212>.

## HereNOW HELP FOR VETERANS

Free Anonymous Mental Health & Wellness App for Pennsylvania Veterans.

24/7 / 365 Access to Self-Care, Peer Care, and Clinical Care.



State Access Code: 578217

Download on the App Store

GET IT ON Google Play

Verify with ID.me

Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs



**Mission.** Team Rubicon is a Veteran-led humanitarian organization that serves global communities before, during, and after disasters and crises. Our vision is to support humanity and build resiliency for vulnerable communities across the world.

In 2010, U.S. Marine Corps Veteran Jake Wood responded to a devastating 7.0 earthquake in Haiti by leading a small team of seven into action. Together, they cared for thousands of survivors and demonstrated that rapid, decisive action could make a meaningful impact. That first mission inspired the name Team Rubicon—symbolizing a point of no return and a full commitment to serve those in need.

Today, the organization has grown to more than 180,000 volunteers, with the mission remaining the same: helping people affected by disasters. As disasters increase in frequency, so does the need for support from donors, partners, advocates, and Greyshirts who step up to serve communities. [Learn More.](#)



**GOLD STAR & VETERAN**

**AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL**  
 The National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass

**<MILITARY>**  
 LIFETIME

Free Park Passes

U.S. military members, Veterans, and Gold Star Families are eligible for free annual or lifetime passes to more than 2,000 federal recreation sites, including national parks, wildlife refuges, and forests. These passes cover entrance and standard day-use fees as a token of appreciation for service and sacrifice. Veterans and Gold Star Families qualify for a lifetime pass, while current service members and their dependents may receive an annual Military Pass. Passes cover vehicle occupants or up to three additional adults at per-person sites. Veterans must show valid ID, and Gold Star Families may self-certify. To learn more or apply, visit: [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov).

*Thank you for reading!*

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| Indiana County<br>Department of Veterans Affairs  | (724) 465-3815  |
| <a href="https://www.indianacountypa.gov/departments/veteran-affairs/">https://www.indianacountypa.gov/departments/veteran-affairs/</a> | 825 Philadelphia Street<br>Second Floor, Court House<br>Indiana, PA 15701 |

