



# VETERANS AFFAIRS



## Service, Support, Connection

Dear Veterans, Families, and Members of Our Community,

As we move through the final stretch of summer, August offers several meaningful opportunities to honor service, connect with one another, and renew our shared commitment to supporting Veterans.

On August 7, we observe Purple Heart Day, a time to reflect on the sacrifices of the brave men and women who were wounded or lost their lives in combat. The Purple Heart remains one of our nation’s most distinguished military honors. Here in Indiana County, we don’t honor these heroes on just one day—we honor them year-round by preserving their legacy and advocating for their continued care and recognition. Their courage reminds us daily of the true cost of freedom.

August also marks the second anniversary of the PACT Act, signed into law on August 10, 2022. This landmark legislation expanded VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to toxic substances, including those who served in Vietnam, the Gulf War, and post-9/11 operations. For many Veterans in Indiana County, this law has opened doors to new benefits and critical care. Our office has already assisted numerous Veterans with PACT Act-related claims, and we urge others to reach out—whether you’re uncertain about your eligibility or were previously denied benefits. We’re here to guide you, answer your questions, and advocate on your behalf.

Looking ahead, we’re thrilled to return to the Indiana County Fair, running from August 21 to August 30. Our Veterans Resource Table will be available throughout the week, providing a welcoming space for Veterans and their families to learn about benefits, ask questions, and connect with our team. Whether you’re a longtime resident or newly separated from service, we welcome you to stop by and explore the resources available to support you and your loved ones.

And don’t forget—on Monday, August 25, all Veterans receive free admission to the fair.

Thank you for your continued trust, support, and partnership. As always, our office is here to serve you. We hope to see many of you at the fair this month—and please remember, no question is too small when it comes to your care and benefits.

*Jessica*

Jessica Walker  
Director

### Highlights

Farmer’s Market Vouchers

Adapted Housing Program

Travel Health Support

Indiana CBOC

The Conversation Project

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## Veteran Spotlight



Steve Reinoehl enlisted in the U.S. Navy in May 1966 and proudly served aboard the USS Epperson (DD-719), a Gearing-class destroyer of the Seventh Fleet, homeported in Pearl Harbor. Affectionately known as “The Peppy Eppe,” the Epperson supported numerous key operations during its WestPac deployment, including Naval Gunfire Support missions in Vietnam, Operation Sea Dragon, Yankee Station, and operations in the Mekong Delta. During this tour, the ship earned two combat citations. Steve’s service took him across the Pacific, with port calls in the Philippines, Taiwan, Japan, Hong Kong (for R&R), Australia, Midway Island, and South Korea. He completed his service in May 1969 and returned home to Jersey City, New Jersey. Shortly after returning home, Steve married his wife, Jacklyn, and the couple settled in Cookport, Pennsylvania. He spent many years self-employed as a coal broker before founding Total Auction Services Inc., an auction company specializing in estate auctions. Now retired, Steve remains active in the veteran community through volunteer work with various organizations. When not volunteering, he enjoys peaceful moments on his deck, taking in the view. Steve and Jacklyn recently celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary, surrounded by their three children and nine grandchildren.

adagio health  
**VETERAN VOUCHERS**

**Have you or anyone in your household served in the Military?**

You can receive up to \$20 in Veteran Vouchers to purchase locally-sourced produce. These vouchers can ONLY be used at the Indiana County Farmers' Market for fresh fruits and vegetables on certain days until allocated funds are depleted.

**VETERAN READY CERTIFIED**

**Community Health Days**  
9:00 AM-12:00PM - S. 8th & Church St. Indiana, PA 15701

~~June 21st~~ ~~July 26th~~  
August 16th

**GOLDEN ONSITE DENTAL**

The Arc is partnering with Golden Onsite Dental to provide individuals with disabilities a sensory-safe location to receive dental health check-ups. All insurances are welcome!

**We bring the dental office to you!**  
Our Public Health Team will Provide:

- Exam
- Cleaning
- Fluoride Varnish

• Treatment options if needed, including with a local dental provider

• Parent education and hands-on learning for families

**Upcoming dates:**

<del>March 10, 2025 10 AM – 2 PM</del>	<del>April 10, 2025 10 AM – 2 PM</del>
<del>May 16, 2025 10 AM – 2 PM</del>	<del>June 10, 2025 10 AM – 2 PM</del>
<del>July 17, 2025 10 AM – 2 PM</del>	August 21, 2025 10 AM – 2 PM
September 18, 2025 10 AM – 2 PM	October 23, 2025 10 AM – 2 PM
November 13, 2025 10 AM – 2 PM	December 18, 2025 10 AM – 2 PM

**ACCEPTS ANY INSURANCE!**

**FOR AN APPOINTMENT – Please Text: Arc to 412-361-9265** and someone will be with you to schedule an appointment time.

The clinic will be held at The Arc of Indiana County  
(120 N. 5<sup>th</sup> Street Indiana, PA 15701)

The Arc Indiana County

**Veterans Leadership Program's Military Share Food Distribution**

**August 28th**

Line up begins at **11AM**

**727 Goucher St**  
**Johnstown, PA 15905**

VETERANS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

INDIANA COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA

Department of Veterans Affairs hosts

**Battle BREW**

A Veteran only coffee group with meetings the first Friday of each month.

<b>July 11th</b> 9:00 – 10:00 am Canella Cafe 660 Philadelphia Street Indiana, PA 15701	<b>August 1st</b> 9:00 – 10:00 am The Home Made Restaurant 5820 US-119 Marion Center, PA 15759	<b>September 5th</b> 9:00 – 10:00 am Cafe Bella 512 Salt Street Saltburg, PA 15681
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We are dedicated to fostering a supportive community for Veterans through the power of connection and conversation. Our mission is to create a welcoming space where Veterans can come together to share experiences, build friendships, and provide mutual support over a cup of coffee. We honor the sacrifices made by our service members while promoting well-being and camaraderie within our community. Together, we brew strength and resilience.

For more information please contact (724) 465-3815



## **Specially Adapted Housing Program**

VA's Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) program, established in 1948, assists Veterans with severe service-connected disabilities—such as spinal cord injuries, limb loss, blindness, and degenerative conditions like Parkinson's and ALS—by providing grants to buy, build, or modify homes for independent living. In 2024, SAH issued 2,352 grants totaling over \$147 million. The program supports Veterans domestically and internationally, helping them overcome challenges like currency exchange and language barriers. For example, a Veteran in the Philippines recently received a grant that improved his home accessibility, greatly enhancing his quality of life. Since its inception, SAH has awarded more than 53,500 grants totaling \$2.2 billion, enabling Veterans to increase mobility, access community resources, and connect with loved ones. For more information, visit [VA.gov/Housing-Assistance/Disability-Housing-grants](https://VA.gov/Housing-Assistance/Disability-Housing-grants). [Read More](#)



## **Board of Appeals Surpasses 92k**

The Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) is celebrating its 92nd anniversary on July 28, 2025. This milestone comes as the Board surpasses 92,000 disability appeals decisions for Veterans and dependents—faster than ever before. Established in 1933 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the Board was created to provide fair and final reviews of VA benefit denials and to assist claimants through a streamlined appeals process. Its mission is to uphold justice and resolve all reasonable doubt in favor of the Veteran. Over the past 92 years, the Board has held more than 746,500 hearings and issued over 3.7 million decisions. It continues to operate under the principles set forth in the original Executive Order, including VA's "duty to assist" and "benefit of the doubt" rules. Under President Trump, decision productivity reached historic levels, with an average of 2,550 decisions issued weekly. The Board remains committed to ensuring timely, accurate outcomes for Veterans and their families. [Read More](#)



## **VA Home Loans**

Each year on April 5, the nation honors Gold Star Spouses—the surviving husbands and wives of service members who died in the line of duty. These spouses face many challenges rebuilding their lives. VA supports them with benefits like the VA-guaranteed home loan, which removes financial barriers to homeownership. Eligible spouses can use this benefit to buy, build, or refinance a home without a down payment or private mortgage insurance. They may qualify for low interest rates and are exempt from the VA funding fee. To apply, they must get a Certificate of Eligibility through a lender or VA Form 26-1817. Choosing a VA-approved lender and knowledgeable real estate agent is essential. [Read More](#)



## **Direct Deposit**

The VA's Veterans Benefits Banking Program (VBBP), launched in 2019, helps unbanked Veterans and beneficiaries open accounts and enroll in direct deposit for secure, timely benefit payments. Since its inception, VBBP has assisted over 530,000 Veterans. Partnering with the Association of Military Banks of America (AMBA), the program includes 130 banks and credit unions committed to offering free or low-cost banking tailored to military financial needs. Direct deposit protects against fraud and ensures benefits are received on time. VBBP also provides free financial counseling, VetCents financial education, and Veteran Saves initiatives to help Veterans manage finances and build resilience. This program addresses challenges Veterans face and promotes access to safe, reliable financial services. Visit VBBP for more information and resources. [Read More](#)



## **Travel Health Support**

If you're a Veteran receiving care through VA or the Foreign Medical Program (FMP), or a family member covered by CHAMPVA, you can access healthcare during travel emergencies. In the U.S., VA Health Connect offers 24/7 nurse advice, appointment help, and virtual urgent care—just call your VA medical center and select option 3. Notify VA within 72 hours after emergency care. Veterans traveling abroad should enroll in FMP for coverage of service-connected conditions. CHAMPVA beneficiaries should carry their ID, understand coverage limits, and keep receipts for reimbursements. Before traveling, pack medications, documents, and emergency contacts. Planning ensures health and safety wherever you go. [Read More](#)

# Resources



The new Indiana Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) is now operating in the new location at 101 IRMC Drive in Indiana, conveniently located near the Indiana Regional Medical Center. If you have any questions regarding an upcoming appointment or need to schedule, call us at **1-877-626-2500 Ext 15567**.

## Tobacco-Free Success

### 5 Facts That Make a Difference

**Best results come from combining medication and counseling.** Using both greatly increases your chances of quitting successfully. Medication helps manage withdrawal, while counseling builds skills to handle triggers.

**Positive changes begin quickly.** Benefits start within minutes to days of quitting, including a slower heart rate, improved taste and smell, better breathing, and healing of mouth sores.

**Health benefits increase over time.** Long-term quitting reduces serious health risks like cancer, stroke, and heart disease. After 10 years, lung cancer risk is cut in half.

**VA Offers Comprehensive Support.** Veterans can access a full range of treatment through the VA, including counseling, nicotine replacement therapies, and personalized care plans.

**Persistence Pays Off.** It often takes multiple tries to quit, and each attempt teaches valuable lessons. Nearly 80% of Veterans who smoked have successfully quit.

**Getting Started.** Veterans can build a quit plan online, contact their provider via My HealtheVet, call 1-855-QUIT-VET, or sign up for SmokefreeVET text support.

## the conversation project

Navigating healthcare decisions can be challenging, especially during difficult times. The Conversation Project is a free, nationwide initiative designed to help Veterans and their families start important conversations about their healthcare wishes and end-of-life preferences.

Using easy-to-understand guides and tools, The Conversation Project encourages open dialogue so your voice is heard when it matters most. Whether you want to discuss your values, treatment choices, or appoint a healthcare proxy, their resources make it simple and stress-free.

Take advantage of this free support to ensure your wishes are known and respected. Visit [theconversationproject.org](http://theconversationproject.org) to learn more and access helpful materials today.

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



VA.gov is the gateway to access and manage your VA benefits and health care. <https://www.va.gov>



The VA Welcome Kit provides an overview of benefits and services. <https://www.va.gov/welcome-kit/>



With the official **VA: Health & Benefits** app, you can manage your VA health care, benefits, and payments from your mobile phone or tablet. <https://mobile.va.gov/app/va-health-and-benefits>



**My HealtheVet** is a free online tool to manage your health care. Refill and track prescriptions, access your medical records, and communicate with your health care team. <https://www.myhealth.va.gov>

*Thank you for reading!*

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

