



VETERANS AFFAIRS



Strengthening Support for Veterans

Dear Veterans, Families, and Members of Our Community,

A new month brings opportunities to connect, learn, and strengthen the support we provide to our Veterans and their families. I want to thank our community partners, organizations, and Veterans for your continued involvement and dedication—your support truly makes a difference.

I am excited to announce the launch of a new monthly workshop series beginning in March called Veterans Lunch and Learn. These workshops will be held on the third Thursday of each month from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and will focus on timely, informative topics designed to support Veterans and their families. The first three months will feature: Dogs in the Lives of Veterans (companion animals, therapy dogs, and service dogs); Mental Health, PTSD, and Veteran Suicide; and Starting Your Own Business, presented by the Veterans Business Outreach Center. Be on the lookout for the flyer—sign-ups will be available soon!

We are excited to host our monthly Battle Brew on Friday, February 6, at Weaver’s Market Café in Cherry Tree. Battle Brew is now proudly sponsored by InFirst Bank, and we sincerely thank them for their support. The mission of Battle Brew is to create a welcoming space where Veterans can share experiences, build friendships, and provide mutual support over coffee. These gatherings help prevent isolation by getting Veterans into a safe, supportive environment and social events like Battle Brew play a vital role in promoting well-being and improve mental health.

I also encourage everyone to stop by and support the Veterans Parsonage Homeless Sleep Out on Saturday, February 7th, from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., between Rural King and the mall entrance. This event brings awareness to Veteran homelessness, with Parsonage guests, board members, and community volunteers collecting donations that directly support the Veterans Parsonage.

As always, if you are interested in learning more about the benefits you may be eligible for, please contact our office to schedule your first appointment. We are here to serve you.

As we continue through winter, please remember to stay safe and warm. We look forward to longer days and more sunshine as we move closer to March.

Jessica
Jessica Walker
Director

Highlights

Homeless Sleepout

Military Hiring Event

VLP Tax Clinic

Flu Season

Heart Health

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Operation HOST

Community News



THE VETERANS PARSONAGE HOMELESS SLEEPOUT

February 7, 2026

From 7:00 am until 9:00 pm on **Saturday, February 7, 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.**

* THANK YOU *
for
Protecting Us

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



MILITARY COMMUNITY HIRING EVENT

THURSDAY, MAR 05, 2026 | 11AM - 3PM ET

PITTSBURGH

Acrisure Stadium | 100 Art Rooney Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA, 15212



SCAN ME

rmvets.com/PIT0326

FROM LOCAL TO REMOTE — OPPORTUNITIES AT EVERY LEVEL

✓ PROJECT MANAGEMENT	✓ GOVERNMENT
✓ TRANSPORTATION / LOGISTICS	✓ HUMAN RESOURCES
✓ MANAGEMENT / SUPERVISION	✓ HEALTHCARE
✓ INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	✓ AND MORE...

No Federal or DoW endorsement implied

Veteran Spotlight



This month we recognize Jacob Spencer, who served in the U.S. Army from November 2013 to March 2022 as a Special Forces Engineer Sergeant with 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne). He provided critical expertise in mobility, demolitions, and unconventional operations, supporting combat and JCET missions across deployments to Colombia, Afghanistan, the Dominican Republic, and Chile. Jacob is known for his adaptability, professionalism, and success in complex operational environments.

Outside of military service, Jacob enjoys spending time outdoors hiking, camping, and exploring new landscapes. He is passionate about sports, traveling, and experiencing new cultures. Most importantly, he values quality time with his wife, Natalie Johnson, and their two dogs, Koda and Argos. Jacob also comes from a close-knit family that includes his parents, Lisa and Gene Spencer, and his siblings, Brittany Gentine and Justine Spencer.




Veterans Leadership Program's Tax Clinic

When: Starting January 29th through April 15th
Every Thursday - 9AM-2PM
Every Saturday - 9AM-1PM

Where: 2934 Smallman Street Pittsburgh, PA 15201

IRS-certified volunteers are ready to help households earning up to \$70,000 per year.

**MAKE AN APPOINTMENT TODAY BY
CALLING 211**

**To reach the
INDIANA COUNTY VA CLINIC
Call: 1-877-626-2500, Extension 15567**



Glaucoma Awareness

January's Glaucoma Awareness Month highlighted the importance of early detection to prevent vision loss from glaucoma, a condition that damages the optic nerve and can lead to irreversible blindness. Often symptomless at first, glaucoma may show subtle signs like peripheral vision loss, blurry vision, frequent prescription changes, or difficulty seeing in dim light. Risk factors include age, family history, diabetes, hypertension, eye injuries, and certain racial or ethnic backgrounds. Veterans can protect their eye health through regular exams, managing chronic conditions, staying physically active, avoiding smoking, and using VA resources like TeleEye and advanced medical or surgical treatments. Early screening and proactive care are key to preserving vision and maintaining long-term quality of life. [Read More](#)



Flu Season

Flu season is at its peak, making annual vaccination essential for Veterans. VA has offered flu vaccines since September, ensuring the most current protection against new strains. Vaccination helps prevent serious illness, complications, and hospitalizations. Veterans can conveniently receive flu shots during routine VA appointments, walk-in clinics, or at in-network pharmacies. Quick and easy processes at VA facilities encourage proactive care. Along with vaccination, maintaining hand hygiene, healthy diet, hydration, and adequate sleep supports overall health. Flu shots are covered for enrolled Veterans at VA centers, clinics, and participating pharmacies. Get vaccinated today to protect yourself and your community. [Read more](#)



Own Your Health

It's common to leave a doctor's appointment wishing you had remembered a question, concern, or new symptom. The "white coat effect" and time pressures can make it difficult to recall everything. A simple solution is to create a written list before your visit. Start early, keep it handy, and record specific details about symptoms, medications, and health concerns. Prioritize your top two or three issues to ensure they are addressed, even if time is short. A prepared list transforms appointments into focused, collaborative discussions, empowering you to actively participate in your care. Veterans can also apply for VA health care to access ongoing support, screenings, and treatments for their health needs. [Read More](#)



Take Charge of Your Heart Health

February is American Heart Month, a reminder to prioritize cardiovascular health. Heart disease remains the leading cause of death in the U.S., but many cases are preventable with lifestyle changes and proper medical care. Veterans can reduce risk by knowing their health numbers, attending regular check-ups, and managing conditions such as hypertension, high cholesterol, and diabetes. Healthy eating, regular physical activity, and participation in programs like MOVE! support heart health, while quitting tobacco and managing stress further lower risk. Medication adherence is critical, and VA resources are available to assist Veterans in staying on track. Women Veterans face unique risks, including pregnancy-related conditions, making awareness and prevention particularly important. Up to 80% of heart disease and stroke cases can be prevented through proactive management. Small, consistent changes—combined with VA support—can significantly improve heart health, helping Veterans lead longer, healthier lives. Visit [here](#) to learn more about heart health. [Read More](#)



Protection Against Suicide Risk

Suicide prevention doesn't require drastic changes—small, consistent steps can make a big difference. Building healthy habits like good sleep, regular movement, structured routines, and positive relationships strengthens both mind and body, creating a "protective buffer" against stress and crisis. Staying socially connected, even with one trusted person, significantly reduces risk; simple actions like texting a friend, joining community activities, or participating in Veteran peer groups help maintain these bonds. Finding a sense of purpose—through work, caregiving, hobbies, or small weekly goals—supports mental well-being. Making your environment safer, such as securing firearms and medications, adds an important layer of protection. Knowing available resources ensures timely support when challenges arise. VA offers self-help courses, crisis support, and guidance to help Veterans build resilience. Small, manageable actions—combined with professional support—can lower suicide risk and strengthen the ability to cope with life's challenges. [Read More](#)

Resources



Warrior Expeditions is a Veteran nonprofit outdoor therapy program that supports honorably discharged combat Veterans in transitioning from wartime experiences through long-distance outdoor journeys. Founded by Army Veteran Sean Gobin, the organization offers multi-month expeditions—such as the Warrior Hike on the Appalachian Trail, the Warrior Bike across the Great American Rail Trail, and the Warrior Paddle on the Mississippi River—at no cost to participants. Veterans receive all necessary gear, clothing, supplies, and community support along the route, helping build confidence, resilience, and camaraderie in nature. These outdoor experiences promote physical, mental, and social well-being while fostering connection with fellow Veterans and community volunteers. Warrior Expeditions emphasizes healing, adventure, and peer support to aid Veterans in their post-service journey. [Learn More](#)



OPERATION HOST

SUPPORTING OUR HEROES

OUR MISSION AND IMPACT

Our mission at Operation HOST is to gather and advocate and care for our nation's heroes who have suffered from a sexually traumatic experience, especially those that happened while serving. These brave survivors will be guided through their personal healing journey. Each Veteran will have a custom care plan developed to fit their individual mental and physical health needs.

OPERATION HOST

NO VETERAN WALKS ALONE

HOW WE SUPPORT

- Virtual Peer-To-Peer Support
- Advocacy Through VA Claims
- Resource Navigation & Guidance
- Education & Outreach
- Support for Underserved Vets
- Healing Tools & Secondary Therapies
- Hope

Join us in making a difference!
Call us at: 717-538-3153
Or email us at: Info@operationhost.org

OPERATION
HOST
INITIATIVE

DONATE HERE:

NATIONAL RESOURCE DIRECTORY

The National Resource Directory (NRD) is a federal website that connects Service Members, Veterans, wounded warriors, families, and caregivers to thousands of national, state, and local resources that support recovery, rehabilitation, and reintegration. Operated jointly by the Departments of Defense, Labor, and Veterans Affairs, the NRD centralizes reliable information from government agencies and community organizations to improve care coordination and access to services.

- The NRD offers information on:
- Benefits & Compensation
 - Education & Training
 - Employment
 - Family & Caregiver Support
 - Health
 - Homeless Assistance
 - Housing
 - Transportation & Travel
 - Other Services & Resources

[/NationalResourceDirectory](https://www.facebook.com/NationalResourceDirectory)

infornd.osd@mail.mil

Thank you for reading!

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https://www.indianacountypa.gov/departments/veteran-affairs/	825 Philadelphia Street Second Floor, Court House Indiana, PA 15701

