



VETERANS AFFAIRS



County VA Office Welcomes New Director

Hello Indiana County Veterans, family and community friends,

As we turn the page to a new chapter, I want to share some important updates with you. After many years of dedicated service, VA Director, Al Lockard, has retired to beautiful Colorado. Al's leadership has truly made a difference in the lives of countless Veterans in our community. His tireless efforts and commitment have set a high bar for all of us. We are grateful for his remarkable service and wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

I'm excited to introduce myself as your new Director. My name is Jessica Walker, and I'm honored to step into this role. As a proud Veteran and spouse of a Veteran, I have a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities we face. I'm dedicated to continuing the excellent work Al has done and am committed to enhancing our services and outreach to ensure that every Veteran in Indiana County receives the support and recognition they deserve.

I am excited to announce the launch of this newsletter platform designed to increase communication and resource-sharing for Veterans, their families, and the organizations that support them. Each issue will feature Veterans Affairs news, community updates and events, local Veteran spotlights, highlights of organizations making a difference, and more. We invite you to join us on this journey, share your insights, and help us build a stronger, more connected network for Indiana County Veterans.

Thank you for your continued support and trust in our department. I look forward to working with all of you and making a positive impact in our community.

Best,

Jessica
Jessica Walker

Highlights

Veteran Spotlight

Veteran's
Marathon

Battle Brew

Beware of claims
predators

VA Secure
Sign-In

PA Educational
Gratuity

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Battle BREW

Battle Brew is a new coffee group for Veterans to come together in a relaxed, supportive environment. It's a time where those who have served can meet, connect, and share valuable resources and experiences. Whether you're looking to forge new friendships, gain insights, or just enjoy a good cup of coffee with fellow Veterans, Battle Brew offers a *welcoming place for all!*

First Friday of every month at various locations.

beginning
September 6th at 7:00am
Sit N' Stay Cafe
285 Philadelphia Street



Pennsylvania CareerLink®

The PA CareerLink is a "One-Stop" center providing an array of career and workforce developmental services to employers and jobseekers.

Located at 300 Indian Springs Road, PA CareerLink also has dedicated staff to assist Veterans and their spouses with a full range of employment services, including referral services, job development, and transition services.



September 11, 2024
10:00-2:00 pm
Indiana PA Career Link Day!

Giveaways, music, food truck, employment opportunities, resources, workshops, and more!



InFirst Bank Veterans Marathon

Please join us for the *13th Annual* InFirst Bank Veterans Marathon.

When: November 3rd, 2024

Where: Saylor Park, 1284 Old Indiana Rd, Black Lick, PA 15716

Marathon, Half Marathon, Relay Marathon, and Boston Marathon Qualifier

Money raised will go to the Western PA Veterans Relief Fund.

Registration Now Open!



Veteran Spotlight

This month's Veteran is Amelia Nelson.

Amelia is the new secretary for our Veterans Affairs Department. She is originally from the Chicago area where she enlisted in the Army in August 2001 as a 63G, fuel and electrical mechanic which eventually merged to a 91B, wheeled vehicle mechanic.

Amelia deployed multiple times in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom and was assigned to multiple units during her career. She retired from Active Duty in December 2021 after 20 years of service.

Amelia has three children Zoe (18), Macey (13), Gavin (9), 3 dogs and 2 cats and is also very involved with Four Foot Friends fostering animals.

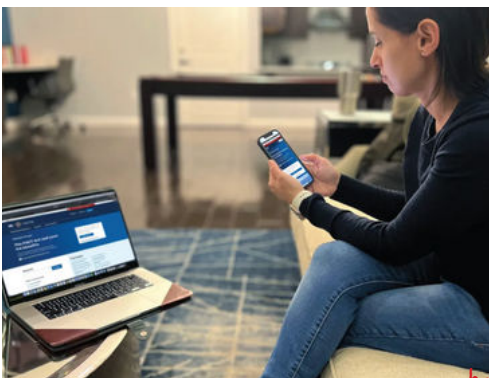


Claims predators want to prey on your benefits

Click here for full story

Have you noticed advertisements from companies offering to help with the VA claims and appeals process? Do their services seem too good to be true, leaving you wondering whether to trust them? If so, you are not alone.

More Veterans are getting VA health care and benefits than ever before, which also presents opportunities for scammers to commit fraud against Veterans and their families. These increased benefits have led to a rise in shady companies and individuals that are not accredited by VA, offering claims assistance services and charging hefty fees when they do.



Click here for full story

DMVA Provides Financial Assistance for Higher Education to Eligible Children of Veterans

With the start of another school year around the corner, the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) is providing financial assistance to eligible children of veterans for higher education. The DMVA's Educational Gratuity Program provides financial assistance to children of honorably discharged veterans who have service-connected disabilities and served during periods of war or armed conflict, or children of veterans who died in service during a period of war or armed conflict.

Prepare for VA's Secure Sign-in changes

Click here for full story

VA is committed to making it as easy as possible for Veterans to manage their benefits and health care online while protecting their identities and data. As part of this commitment, and in an effort to streamline Veterans' sign-in options, VA will transition to two modern, secure, sign-in options in 2025: a Login.gov or ID.me account.

How to report a Veteran's death to VA

Click here for full story

After a Veteran passes away, family members should report the death of the Veteran to VA as soon as possible to stop current benefits payments. If the death is not reported promptly, survivors or executors of the Veteran's estate may have to repay any overpayments received.

Resources

VA App Store

The VA App Store gives you access to dozens of VA apps designed specifically for Veterans — all in one convenient place. Take charge of your health through apps that help you securely manage your care and connect with your VA care team.



With VA apps, you can:

- Track and view your health data.
- Receive mental health support.
- Schedule, request, and manage your VA appointments.
- Build healthy habits.
- Communicate with your VA care team.
- Access educational resources.

VA apps are available on the VA App Store through your desktop or mobile browser. Many apps are also available on the Apple App Store or Google Play.

mobile.va.gov/appstore

DISCOUNT

Did you know there are hundreds of nationwide businesses that provide a military discount?



for Nationwide Military Discounts

COMING SOON

a new list of Indiana County military discounts!

Thank you for reading!

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



Requesting Military Records

The National Archives maintains military service records of veterans who have been discharged from the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Department of the Air Force and Coast Guard.

Through the National Archives site, veterans can request a copy of their Defense Department Form 214 called the “Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty,” Official Military Personnel File, replacement medals and medical and health records.

GET STARTED



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 HealthVet 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>