



VETERANS AFFAIRS



Remembering Their Service. Honoring Their Sacrifice.

Dear Veterans, Families, and Members of Our Community,

September is a month that carries deep meaning for me and, I imagine, for many Veterans, military families, and Americans across our country. This year marks the 25th anniversary of September 11, 2001—a day that changed our nation and the lives of so many who answered the call to serve. Like most people, I remember exactly where I was when the terrorist attacks happened. I was attending IUP and walking into class when the news appeared on a television in the lobby. Students began gathering around the television, trying to understand what was happening. I remember walking outside and standing with everyone else in disbelief. I was scared.

At the time, I had only recently enlisted in the Army National Guard. I was also dating an Army Soldier stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina—my now husband. Shortly after the attacks, family and friends began asking if we were going to war. Little did we know those events would change the course of America—and our lives.

Over the next 20-plus years, my military career consisted primarily of peacetime assignments, while my husband deployed and survived six combat deployments during the wars that followed September 11. While he was away defending our freedoms, I was home waiting, worrying, raising our girls, and hoping each day that he would return safely. Those long days, weeks, and months shaped me in ways I will carry forever. They also shaped my understanding of what it means to serve Veterans and their families.

Today, serving as the Director and Veterans Service Officer for Indiana County is the most rewarding position I have ever held. This work allows me to continue honoring those who did not make it home and those who returned carrying the visible and invisible scars of service.

September also gives us an opportunity to remember the families who made sacrifices alongside their loved ones—and those who experienced the greatest loss. September 27 is Gold Star Mother's and Family Day. In October 2012, my husband's team lost a Soldier who was killed in Afghanistan. He left behind a spouse, two sons, and an unborn daughter. There is not a day that goes by that I don't think about their sacrifice and the family he left behind. There are more than 450,000 Gold Star families across our nation. Each has a story, memories, and a loved one who will never be forgotten.

This September, let us remember those we lost on 9/11, the first responders who answered the call, the service members who gave the ultimate sacrifice, the Veterans who served and returned home, and the families who stood beside them through it all.

We remember their service. We honor their sacrifice. And we remain forever grateful.

Jessica

Jessica Walker
Director

Highlights

Walk for a
Wonderful Life

Senior Day in
the Park

Justice Involved
Veterans

1973 Records
Fire

PA CareerLink
Day

Vet Center
Services

Military Veterans
Outdoors

RUMMAGE SALE

★ GREAT FINDS ★ GREAT CAUSE ★

DATE: SEPTEMBER 5TH

TIME: 9AM TO 4 PM

LOCATION: SUN-KISSED COUNTRY ANTIQUE STORE (PARKING LOT) 1365 PA 286

ITEMS FOR SALE: ALL OF THE ABOVE!

★ ALL PROCEEDS WILL GO TO ★
THE VETERANS OUTREACH GROUP
TO HELP VETERANS AND FAMILIES IN NEED

★ CASH DONATIONS ARE APPRECIATED ★

★ **CONTACT:** ★
LISA HENRY
724-464-8551
JOE TOY
360-621-3325

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK!
<https://www.facebook.com/share/185BqZrvHn/>

SAVE THE DATE!

14th Annual WALK FOR A Wonderful LIFE

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2026
MACK PARK GRANDSTAND/TRACK
INDIANA, PA

10:15 AM Registration Opens
10:30 AM Visit Agency Tables
11:00 AM Walk Start

REGISTER THE DAY OF THE EVENT OR PRE-REGISTER ON **EVENTBRITE!**
*This event is FREE to attend!
Donations are always appreciated BUT NOT REQUIRED!*

EVENTBRITE REGISTRATION

DONATIONS CAN BE MADE:

- ONLINE** Donations will remain open until 9/23/26.
- IN PERSON** At the walk or at our office.
- MAILED** Suicide Task Force of Indiana County 300 Indian Springs Road, Suite 203 Indiana, PA 15701

RAIN OR SHINE EVENT! We'll walk together no matter the weather.

FOLLOW OUR FACEBOOK for more updates!

QUESTIONS? Contact Leo Buck stf32@indianacountypa.gov

SUICIDE TASK FORCE OF INDIANA COUNTY
AWARENESS PREVENTION INTERVENTION POSTVENTION

Small Donations. Big Impact. ♥

FOOD DRIVE

HELP FEED. HELP SUPPORT. HELP OUR SENIORS

Join us in collecting non-perishable food items to support seniors in our community. All donations will be distributed to local seniors at our Senior Day at the Park!

COLLECTION RUNS JULY 1- AUGUST 31, 2026

COLLECTION SITES at All Social Centers in Indiana County

Look for donation bins at your local Social Center

Senior DAY IN THE PARK

FOOD. RESOURCES. COMMUNITY.

SPONSORED BY asi AGING with COMFORT

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2026

10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

MACK PARK PAVILION INDIANA, PA

Join us for a fun and supportive day in the park! We will have resources, community partners, and food available for seniors.

Want to Help?
Contact Beth Heller 412-730-3900
bheller@agingwithcomfort.com

FREE RESOURCES for Seniors!

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR SENIORS! ♥

FREE

MISSION OF MERCY PITTSBURGH

DENTAL + HEARING SERVICES

Friday & Saturday, October 16-17, 2026
David L. Lawrence Convention Center • 1000 Fort Duquesne Blvd • Pittsburgh, PA 15222

DENTAL

- X-rays
- Cleanings
- Fillings
- Select root canals (no molars)
- Limited extractions
- Limited partials
- NO BRIDGES | NO CROWNS
- NO IMPLANTS | NO FULL DENTURES
- NO DEEP CLEANINGS

HEARING

- Hearing evaluations
- Free hearing aids
- Hearing aid fittings
- Hearing aid troubleshooting
- Hearing aid repairs
- Hearing protection

NO ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS - NO INSURANCE NEEDED - AGES 2 +

DOORS OPEN AT 6:00 AM | CLINIC BEGINS AT 7:00 AM
WALK IN ONLY - NO APPOINTMENTS
First come, first served basis. Doors close when capacity reached.

SCAN HERE TO LEARN MORE OR VISIT WWW.MOMPGH.ORG

VA News and Information



Justice Involved Veterans

Justice-involved Veterans face significantly higher risks of homelessness, but early legal and VA support can help prevent housing instability. In FY 2025, justice-involved Veterans served by VA were 6.2 times more likely to experience homelessness than Veterans without justice involvement. Legal barriers, including missing identification, unpaid fines, unresolved citations, debt, and employment challenges, can make securing housing difficult. Early intervention during re-entry can connect Veterans with critical resources before legal challenges become housing crises. VA's Veterans Justice Programs connect Veterans with legal assistance, health care, mental health and substance use treatment, and housing resources during critical points in re-entry. Programs include Veterans Justice Outreach, Health Care for Re-entry Veterans, and Legal Services for Veterans. Addressing legal, health, and housing challenges together can help Veterans achieve stability and avoid homelessness. Veterans who are homeless or at risk can call the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at 877-424-3838 or connect with a [Veterans Justice Outreach specialist](#). [Read More](#)



Investigate Before You Invest

Veterans are increasingly targeted by investment scams that exploit trust and military camaraderie. Common scams include affinity fraud, cryptocurrency schemes, precious metals, pyramid schemes, real estate investments, and costly "training" programs. Warning signs include unsolicited offers, high-pressure sales tactics, Veteran-only opportunities, promises of little or no risk, and unusually high returns. Be especially cautious of social media messages, unsolicited calls, or invitations to "Veteran-only" investment events promising exclusive benefits or opportunities. Protect yourself by researching investments, getting information in writing, consulting a trusted financial advisor or VA representative, and verifying that investment professionals are licensed and registered. Legitimate investment opportunities will allow you time to ask questions, review details, and make informed decisions without pressure or urgency. Never share your VA.gov login, DD214, Social Security number, military records, or financial information with unverified individuals. Take your time before investing and report suspected fraud. Contact VA at 1-800-827-1000 or VSAFE at 833-388-7233. [Read More](#)



1973 NPRC Records Fire

The 1973 National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) fire destroyed an estimated 16-18 million military personnel records, leaving many Veterans without critical service and medical documentation. VA is making the claims process easier for Veterans whose records were affected. Instead of repeatedly requesting NA Forms 13055 and 13075, VA will provide one comprehensive packet and reuse information already submitted. Better access to documentation will reduce delays and duplicate requests. Veterans may receive sympathetic evidentiary consideration, including credible statements from Veterans, fellow service members, or others. If affected, file or reopen a claim and consider working with an accredited representative. [Watch the video: Your Right to VA Benefits Didn't Burn in the 1973 Fire](#). [Read More](#)



Need Personal Records?

VA has redesigned its FOIA and records request page to make requesting records easier for Veterans. Clearly labeled boxes help users quickly find the correct form or submission system for records such as DD214s, medical records, benefits letters, cemetery records, and employment verification. Veterans no longer need to understand the difference between FOIA and Privacy Act requests or determine which VA administration handles their request. This simple redesign means less time searching and more time getting the records Veterans need when they need them. Since the redesign, misdirected requests have dropped by 90%, helping Veterans reach the right office faster and reducing delays. The [updated page](#) provides direct links and clear descriptions, making the process more convenient for Veterans seeking important records. [Read More](#)



Appraisal Requirements

VA has updated its Minimum Property Requirements (MPRs) for VA-guaranteed home loans to reduce appraisal delays, eliminate outdated rules, and help Veterans compete in today's housing market. Changes include revised radon requirements, updated standards for properties built before and after 1978, streamlined guidance for detached improvements and Specially Adapted Housing, and updated requirements for non-vented heaters. VA is also adjusting appraisal fees in select regions to maintain a qualified appraiser network. As of May 31, the average VA appraisal takes about seven business days. These updates support safer, more accessible housing while making the VA home loan process clearer, faster, and more responsive for Veteran homebuyers. [Read More](#)

Resources

Pennsylvania CareerLink™ 300 INDIAN SPRINGS ROAD
INDIANA, PA 15701
724-471-7220

join us!
SEPTEMBER 11, 2026
10:00 AM - 2:00 PM
INDIANA PA CAREERLINK® DAY

CAREER SERVICES **MUSIC**
GIVEAWAYS **PRIZE WHEEL**
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES **FOOD TRUCK**
HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES **COMMUNITY RESOURCES**

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://www.pa.gov/about/2022/03/22/PA-CareerLink-is-an-equal-opportunity-employer-program>

DID YOU KNOW?

VA may provide eligible Veterans with a **Fitbit®** as part of their treatment plan.



 Wearable devices can help you track activity, sleep, and more—so you and your VA care team can work together toward your health goals.

LEARN MORE ABOUT:

 **WHO MAY QUALIFY**
Find out if you're eligible for a VA-provided Fitbit.

 **HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS**
Learn how VA uses Fitbit devices as part of your treatment plan.

 **SECURE DATA SHARING**
See how your health information is securely shared with your VA care team.

 **WATCH THE VIDEO TO LEARN MORE!**
Scan the QR code or visit:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UMXnZLaoFQk>



VETCENTER EST. 1979 Connection. Camaraderie. Community.

COUNSELING SERVICES AT VETERAN COMMUNITY INITIATIVES (VCI) -HIRAM G ANDREWS CENTER
727 GOUCHER ST JOHNSTOWN PA
OFFERING NO COST COUNSELING TO ELIGIBLE VETERANS, SERVICE MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

- COMBAT ZONE OR AREA OF HOSTILITY SERVICE
- MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA (MST)
- MILITARY DEPLOYMENT AND SERVICE TRANSITION

CONTACT INFORMATION:
Call the White Oak Vet Center at 412-678-7704 for more information and to schedule



Military Veterans Outdoors is a Non Profit 501(c)3 which offers over 600 acres for free hunting, trapping, and fishing land. MVO is staffed by Veterans who give selflessly to ensure the well-being of our Veterans 100% of all donations go toward developing the hunting and fishing experiences on the land.

If you are intersted in becoming a member, click below and submit application to membership@militaryveteransoutdoors.com

 **JOIN NOW**

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



Thank you for reading!