

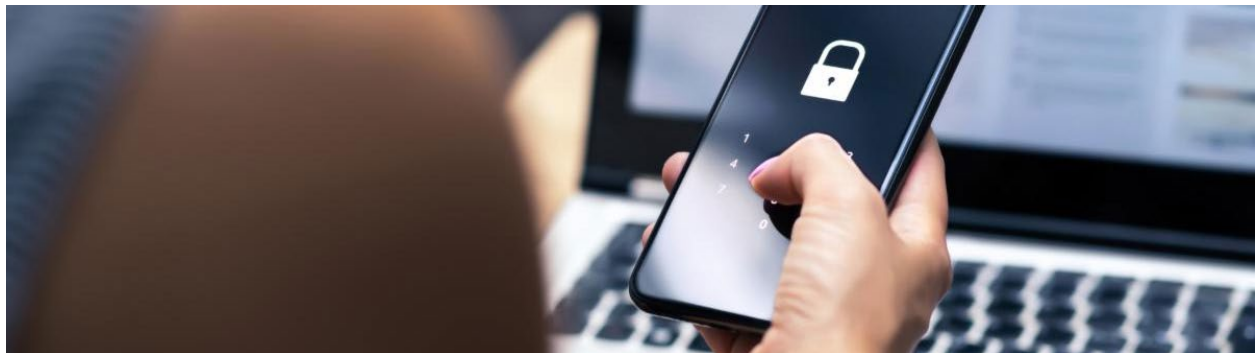
NVTAC Monthly Newsletter: August 2024

Monthly Newsletter

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AUGUST SPOTLIGHT



New Government-Wide Website and Call Center to Protect Veterans and their Families from Fraud

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), in collaboration with the Biden-Harris Administration, has launched the Veteran Scam and Fraud Evasion (VSAFE) Initiative and Task Force website [VSAFE.gov](https://www.vsafe.gov) and a new hotline (1-833-38V-SAFE) to protect veterans, service members, and their families from fraud and scams.

These resources offer a centralized hub for information on fraud prevention, tools to safeguard against common scams, and an easy way to report incidents. This initiative, part of a broader government effort, brings together expertise from multiple federal agencies to ensure that veterans can access the help they need without confusion, especially as more veterans receive benefits under the Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act. The VA is also launching a strategic communications campaign to raise awareness and combat fraud targeting the military community.

[Find Out More About VSAFE](https://www.vsafe.gov)

RESOURCES



Supporting Veteran Service Providers: Preventing and Healing Burnout and Secondary Trauma

The National Veterans' Training Institute (NVTI) offers an insightful course, [9612: Preventing and Healing Burnout in Veteran Service Providers](#), designed to address burnout in Jobs for Veterans' State Grant (JVSG) staff, Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP) staff, clinicians, and others who serve veterans. In this course, participants engage in self-reflective activities to identify signs of burnout, assess their stress levels, and explore their position on the burnout spectrum. The course also covers resources and strategies for preventing and overcoming burnout. For more information on NVTI classes, visit [NVTI Class Schedule](#) and [Registering for NVTI Classes](#).

In addition to this course, NVTI hosted the podcast [Episode 15: Addressing Burnout and Secondary Trauma for Veteran Service Providers](#). Guests Brian Bride, Latoya Henderson, and Stacey Owens discuss the impacts of burnout and secondary trauma and offer valuable guidance for recognizing and addressing these issues. This podcast is accompanied by the [Addressing Burnout and Secondary Trauma for Veteran Service Providers Resource Guide](#).



Podcast on Houselessness among Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Veterans

In a discussion with Drs. Marissa Sia and Sara Wong, clinical psychologists from the VA Pacific Islands Healthcare System, the issue of houselessness among Native Hawaiian

and Pacific Islander veterans is explored. The episode discusses cultural humility, the negative impacts of generational trauma, and why the term “houselessness” rather than “homelessness” is a better fit for this community.

[Listen to the Ending Veteran Homelessness Podcast](#)

NEWS UPDATES



VA Sets Record in Benefits Granted to Veterans, Surpasses \$137 Billion in 2024

The VA announced a record achievement in [**granting benefits to 1.1 million veterans and their survivors**](#), totaling \$137 billion, including \$127 billion in compensation and pension benefits, so far this fiscal year (FY). This milestone, reached by processing over 2 million claims, reflects a 27 percent increase from the previous year and a 64.6 percent grant rate, with the average disability rating at 70 percent. The significant rise in benefits, partly attributed to the PACT Act, is part of a broader expansion in VA services, including a record 127 million health care appointments and a 34 percent increase in veterans enrolling in VA health care since the Act's passage. This expansion has been supported by a large outreach campaign, leading to a 39 percent increase in claims applications. Veteran trust in VA services has also reached a high of 80.4 percent, demonstrating increased confidence in the system.



U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Announces \$40 Million in Grants to Prevent Evictions and Support Low-Income Tenants

HUD announced [**\\$40 million in grants**](#) for non-profit and governmental entities to provide free legal assistance to low-income tenants at risk of eviction. The Eviction Protection Grant Program (EPGP), initiated in 2021, aims to stabilize housing by

preventing evictions through legal aid, particularly benefiting people of color and those with extremely low incomes. The program has already helped over 35,000 households avoid eviction, demonstrating significant impact and growth. HUD plans to award up to 25 grants, ranging from \$500,000 to \$2.5 million each, to both current and new applicants. The program also includes a research component to evaluate and share effective practices for broader application.



Greensboro's Servant Center Expands to Provide Housing and Medical Care for Veterans Experiencing Homelessness and Vulnerable Populations

The Servant Center in Greensboro, North Carolina, which has long supported veterans and individuals experiencing homelessness, is expanding its services with the acquisition of a new building funded by the city and Guilford County. This facility will offer 21 single-occupancy rooms for veterans transitioning out of homelessness, including female veterans for the first time, and 22 beds for medical recovery care. The center's expansion addresses the growing needs of an aging homeless population, providing both housing and support services. The initiative underscores a broader commitment to attainable housing and comprehensive care for vulnerable groups in the community.

[Learn More about the Center's Expanding Services](#)



Concerns Mount Over VA's \$16 Billion Electronic Health Records System Amid Cost and Implementation Challenges

The introduction of the Oracle Cerner electronic health records system at the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center in North Chicago has sparked **concerns**

among lawmakers about the system's future at the VA. Although the March rollout was deemed "promising," it required significant support, including nearly 200 new staff and 800 temporary workers, raising questions about cost and scalability. The full deployment of the system, intended to provide a seamless medical record for service members and veterans, has been paused due to patient safety concerns and usability issues.

Lawmakers are worried about the VA's capacity to manage similar deployments at other sites, citing potential negative impacts on budget and veteran care access. The project's estimated costs could exceed \$50 billion, significantly higher than the initial \$16 billion budget, which does not account for long-term sustainment expenses. The VA plans to provide a revised cost estimate and deployment schedule to Congress as part of a program reset.



Tunnel to Towers Foundation Breaks Ground on Memphis Veteran Village to House Veterans Experiencing Homelessness

The Tunnel to Towers Foundation has initiated the construction of a new residential facility for veterans experiencing homelessness in Memphis, Tennessee, transforming a current hotel into the Memphis Veteran Village. This facility aims to provide dignified housing and comprehensive support services for over 100 veterans by 2025. The project will offer various services, including job training, benefits assistance, medical care, mental health support, and addiction treatment, to help veterans reintegrate into the community. The foundation's mission is to address the critical need for permanent housing for veterans, especially in areas with high homelessness rates, and to support first responders, Gold Star families, and military veterans across the country.

[More about the Memphis Veteran Village](#)



Veterans Facing Delays and Bureaucratic Hurdles for Prosthetics Push for Reform

Three army veterans, Travis Vendela, Scott Restivo, and Matt Brown, who each lost limbs due to their service, are facing significant bureaucratic hurdles and delays in [receiving prosthetics and accessibility equipment from the VA](#). Despite their sacrifices, they report being forced to repeatedly prove their need for prosthetic parts and spare prosthetics, encountering long waits and dealing with mismanagement. Their experiences, which include reliance on temporary fixes and a lack of necessary specialized equipment, highlight a larger issue within the VA's prosthetics program, particularly its failure to adequately meet the needs of younger, more active amputee veterans. Their frustrations have reached Capitol Hill, prompting site visits and inquiries by the House Veterans Affairs Committee, and the VA has acknowledged some delays while pledging to improve. Critics argue the VA's prosthetics process is outdated and not tailored to the high activity levels of the post-9/11 generation of amputees.



VA Faces \$15 Billion Budget Shortfall Amid Rising Costs and Strategic Challenges

The VA is facing a nearly [\\$15 billion budget shortfall](#) by the end of the next FY, with a \$2.88 billion deficit expected for the remainder of this FY and nearly \$12 billion for FY25. The shortfall is attributed to increased hiring, pharmaceutical costs, and the expansion of veteran benefits under the PACT Act, which has led to a surge in veterans enrolling for health care and benefits.

The VA's financial management has been criticized for strategic inconsistency and over-reliance on temporary funds, complicating the budget situation. Despite a record year of hiring, the VA is now slowing recruitment while still planning to increase its workforce, raising concerns about budget and staffing coherence. The VA is working with Congress and the Office of Management and Budget to address the funding gaps to prevent any impact on veteran care and benefits.

EVENTS



Master Class: New Year. New You. Get Your Job Hunt Back On Track

Join Jacey Eckhart, MA CPCC, Military.com's Transition Master Coach, on [Thursday, September 26, 2024, at 4 p.m. ET](#) for this Master Class, which introduces a new timeline tool designed to help service members seamlessly navigate their transition. This new tool ensures that service members can confidently conclude their military careers with a clear, well-defined plan for the future.

SUCCESS STORY



Do you have a success story you would like to share? If you are a grantee who helped a veteran who is struggling with housing or employment, we would love to hear from you at contact@nvtac.org.

OUTREACH AT NVTAC

The NVTAC Outreach Coach is available to provide information, answer questions, and guide interested organizations through the process of getting involved with HVRP. If you know of organizations that could benefit from learning more about HVRP, you can refer them to NVTAC Outreach Coach Miranda Moffat at:

Moffat.Miranda.M@dol.gov

(734) 406-7525

