

# NVTAC Monthly Newsletter: October 2024

Monthly Newsletter

October 2024



## DISASTER RESOURCES FOR VETERANS

We are experiencing an unprecedented hurricane season, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has compiled [a list of all the resources and support](#) for veterans and their families.

These include the Veterans Crisis Line for immediate mental health assistance (Dial 988 then Press 1 or text 838255), housing support through the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at 1-877-4AID VET (1-877-424-3838), and help with VA home loans, health care, and prescription needs. Veterans can also access emergency pharmacy services, public contact teams, and assistance with benefits and compensation, including special one-time payments and loan support. Additionally, the VA helps prevent fraud and provides aid for caregivers and those affected by insurance or mail delays during disasters.

**For any life-threatening emergencies, veterans should dial 911.**

## OCTOBER SPOTLIGHT



### Congress Approves Cost-of-Living Increase for Veterans' Benefits

Veterans will receive a [cost-of-living increase in their benefits](#) next year after Congress passed a bill to align the adjustment with Social Security rates. The Senate

approved the measure by voice vote before recess, following the House's earlier approval. The increase applies to disability benefits, clothing allowances, and compensation for surviving spouses and children, ensuring benefits keep pace with rising costs. Lawmakers from both parties praised the bipartisan effort, emphasizing the importance of supporting veterans and their families amid rising living expenses.

## RESOURCES



### National Veterans' Training Institute (NVTI)

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), observed in October, is a time to celebrate the contributions of workers with disabilities and promote inclusive employment practices. NVTI offers a wide array of resources to help veteran service providers support individuals with disabilities in securing meaningful employment. Below are just a few examples of these resources, and you may visit [NVTI.org](https://www.nvti.org) for more.

- Article: [National Disability Employment Awareness Month](#)
- NVTI Useful Resources: [Serving Veterans with Disability and Accessibility Needs](#)
- Webinar: [Accommodations: Resources and Strategies to Help Veterans with Disabilities Obtain Employment](#)
- Course: [9610/DAAN: Career Coaching for Special Populations: Serving Veterans with Disability and Accessibility Needs](#)
- Podcast: [Episode 13 – Supporting Veterans with Accessibility Needs](#)



### Military to Mariner (M2M) Voluntary Credentialing Program

The [M2M Voluntary Credentialing Program](#) connects service members with credentialed mariners for mentorship and guidance on transitioning into the civilian maritime industry. Launched from Executive Order 13860, the program helps members align their military training with Merchant Mariner Credentialing requirements, offering

resources to explore maritime job opportunities and develop professional pathways. Early credentialing is emphasized, with a \$4,500 Credentialing Assistance benefit available to support service members' career development. The marketplace simplifies navigating the credentialing process, providing a forum for members to receive mentorship and plan their career transitions.



## Resources for Suicide Loss Survivors

For those who have lost a loved one to suicide, the VA provides [support and resources](#). While everyone's grief experience is unique, survivors are not alone. Coping with such a loss can bring intense emotions and unresolved questions, as suicide is often the result of multiple factors rather than a single event. The VA encourages seeking help, viewing it as a sign of strength, and offers services designed to promote healing and well-being. Connecting with others and utilizing available resources can aid survivors in their grieving and healing process.



## Comprehensive Podcast Mini-Series on the VA's Efforts to End Veteran Homelessness

The *Ending Veteran Homelessness* podcast released a [mini-series](#) that explores veteran homelessness and the VA's efforts to address it. In the first episode, experts define homelessness and explain factors that increase the risk, highlighting progress made under the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009. The second episode focuses on veteran demographics, such as race, age, gender, sexual orientation, and geography, to tailor services equitably. The

final episode features 12 experts discussing the VA's coordinated entry system and various interventions like housing, legal services, employment, and health care to support veterans experiencing homelessness.

## NEWS UPDATES



### **Fitness Competition Empowers Veterans to Achieve Wellness Goals**

Earlier this year, the Cincinnati VA launched the [Six Service Challenge](#), a 10-week fitness competition among veterans from different military branches to improve their health and wellness. Powered by wearable fitness trackers synced with the VA's [Share My Health Data app](#), veterans could monitor their steps, distance, and energy burned, with data segmented by service branch. Supported by the VA's [Digital and Remote Health Center for Innovation](#) along with health and wellness coaches, the challenge encouraged physical, mental, and social well-being. Participants reported weight loss, improved health, and motivation, highlighting the positive impact of the innovative, community-building initiative.





## **Veterans Benefit from Groundbreaking Osseointegration Prosthetic Technology**

In a recent episode of the [New Horizons in Health podcast](#), Under Secretary for Health Dr. Shereef Elnahal discusses a [groundbreaking prosthetic attachment method](#) with Marine and Army National Guard Veteran Ed Salau and Navy Veteran Joe Schutte. This method, called osseointegration or bone-anchored prostheses, eliminates the need for traditional sockets by surgically anchoring the prosthetic directly to the bone. Veterans who use the system praise its ease of use and improved mobility, highlighting benefits such as enhanced quality of life and a decreased sense of disability. While the procedure requires two surgeries and a year of rehabilitation, it offers significant advantages over the conventional socket system.



## **How Veterans Can Lead the Effort to Unite a Divided America**

Joe Plenzler, a retired Marine Corps officer, board member of We the Veterans, and co-founded the Vet the Vote campaign, wrote an article for [Military.com](#) about the ways veterans can help unite a politically divided America. Veterans can play a critical role in fostering unity in the U.S. by leveraging their unique experiences and leadership skills. They can help by staying informed on current events, fostering civil discourse, and rejecting violence in political disagreements. Veterans can further contribute by volunteering, such as becoming election officials, to promote civic engagement and support the common good. By prioritizing national interests over partisanship, veterans can lead by example, inspiring others to focus on collective well-being and unity. Their continued dedication to the country, even after service, is vital to strengthening societal bonds and overcoming divisions.

[Read the Article](#)



## Specialized Certification Programs to Enhance Care for Veterans with Military Environmental Exposure Concerns

The VA has launched [two specialized certification programs](#) to enhance care for veterans with military environmental exposure concerns—over 40 percent of veterans seeking VA health care report such exposures. Developed in collaboration with the American College of Preventive Medicine, these free online programs offer comprehensive training for health care professionals across various settings, including VA facilities, military health systems, and general health care environments.

The Level 1 certification, achieved by over 1,000 professionals since its introduction in April 2022, provides foundational knowledge on exposure-related health conditions like airborne hazards and Gulf War illness. The advanced Level 2 certification, launched in November 2023, focuses on exposure-informed care, covering topics such as Agent Orange and ionizing radiation.

## EVENTS



### Upcoming Stand Down (SD) Events

SDs are typically one- to three-day events providing supplies and services to veterans experiencing homelessness, such as food, shelter, clothing, health screenings, and VA Social Security benefits counseling. Veterans can also receive referrals to other assistance such as health care, housing solutions, employment, substance use treatment, and mental health counseling. They are collaborative events, coordinated between local VA Medical Centers, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), other government agencies, and community-based homeless service providers.

This non-competitive grant is awarded on a first-come, first-served basis to support one-day or multi-day events at up to \$7,000 or \$10,000, respectively.

Eligible entities include:

- state workforce agencies
- state and local workforce investment boards
- veterans service organizations
- local public agencies and nonprofit organizations, including community and faith-based organizations

For organizations that are Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP) grant recipients, the document attached below includes a link to the National Veterans' Technical Assistance Center (NVTAC) Find a Grantee Map where you can find their contact information.

[Full List of Upcoming SD Events](#)

## 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](mailto: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](mailto:Moffat.Miranda.M@dol.gov)

(734) 406-7525

