

Veterans fear the VA's new foreclosure rescue plan won't help them



While Ed O'Connor was in the hospital losing his leg, loan servicers were telling him he might be losing his house too.

O'Connor is a 69-year-old Marine Corps veteran. Last year doctors amputated his right leg — a complication, he believes, of a blood infection he picked up serving in the Philippines. While he was recovering from the surgery, scary letters were arriving at home.

"They were going to do a foreclosure on me," he said. "Being in and out of the hospital, I'm talking on the phone, calling people up. You know, it's hard."

Following an [investigation](#) by NPR that found thousands of veterans were about to lose their homes through no fault of their own, the VA called for a pause on foreclosures in its VA home loan program while it rolls out a plan to help. But it now appears that may not be enough for many veterans like O'Connor.

O'Connor is among tens of thousands of veterans who took what's called a COVID forbearance on a VA home loan — in his case because his wife lost her job during

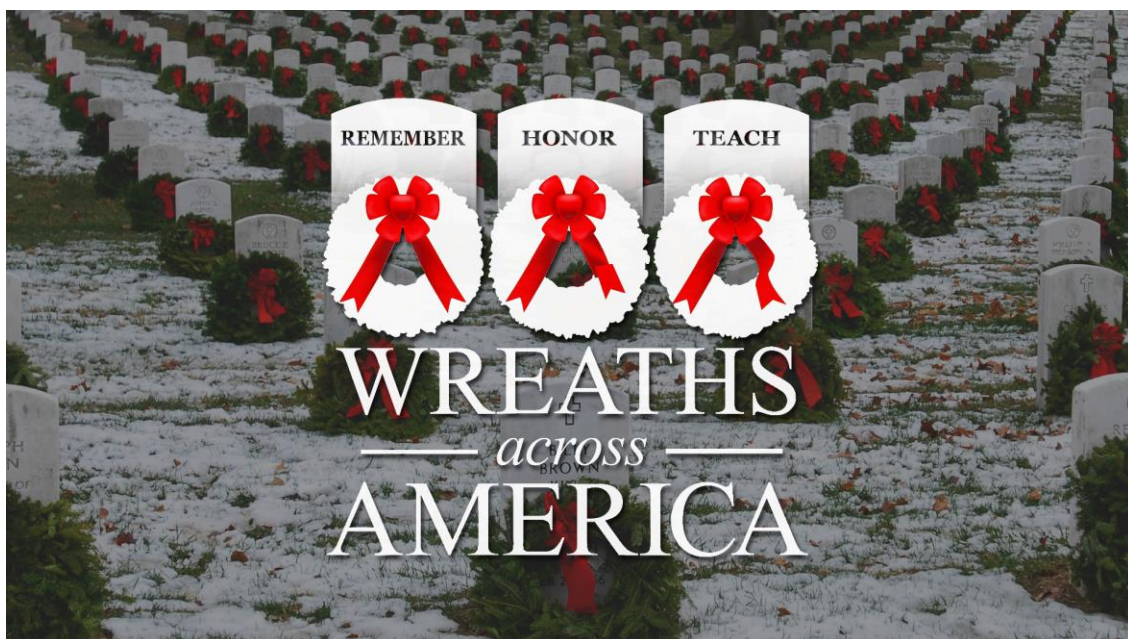
the pandemic. That allowed him to defer paying the mortgage and keep his home. Like many vets, he says he was promised he could resume normal payments after six to 18 months when the hardship was over, and simply add the missed payments to the end of the mortgage.

"Add the payments to the end of your mortgage ... your rate won't increase, the payments remain the same," is how O'Connor says it was described to him. "And I said, man, this would be a great relief."

That's not what happened though. Instead, in October of 2022, the VA ended the part of its forbearance program that allowed missed payments to be moved to the back of the loan term. And that suddenly stranded veterans who were still on a forbearance, leaving them with no affordable way to get current on their loans and resume normal payments.

O'Connor says he was told he needed to pay back more than \$32,000 in a lump sum to catch up. [\[READ MORE...\]](#)

Wreaths Across America: Cypress Hills National Cemetery (NYCHNB)



Next **Saturday, December 16, 2022 at 12:00 pm**, Wreaths Across America will be at [Cypress Hills National Cemetery](#) to Remember and Honor Veterans through the laying of Remembrance wreaths on the graves of our country's fallen heroes and the act of saying the name of each and every veteran aloud.

If you are interested in participating as a sponsor or would like to volunteer in the wreath laying ceremony at [Cypress Hills National Cemetery](#), click on the "Sponsor a Wreath or Volunteer" button below or visit [Wreaths Across America](#) for more information about the mission.

What does it mean to sponsor a wreath? It means you'll honor an American hero at one of more than 2,800 locations nationwide this year on Wreaths Across America Day. Your sponsorship will ensure that a wreath is hand-crafted of all-American balsam and hand-tied with a red velvet bow here in Columbia Falls, Maine. It will then be sent to one of our participating locations, where a volunteer will place it on the marker of a fallen hero. That volunteer will then "say their name" to ensure that the legacy of duty, service and sacrifice of that veteran is never forgotten.

What does it mean to volunteer? It means you'll honor an American hero by placing a wreath on the marker of a fallen hero. You will then "say their name" to ensure that the legacy of duty, service and sacrifice of that veteran is never forgotten.

History of Cypress Hills National Cemetery:

Cypress Hills National Cemetery, established in 1862, holds the distinction of being the first and largest national cemetery in New York City. Stretching 18 acres, it is the final resting place for some 27,000 individuals, spanning from the American Revolution to the Vietnam War. Among those interred are 24 Medal of Honor recipients, including three who received the honor twice. Last year's wreath-laying ceremony saw the placement of 6,048 wreaths, honoring the legacy and sacrifice of those interred there.

[Sponsor a Wreath or Volunteer](#)

Holiday Toy Drive (Toys for Tots)

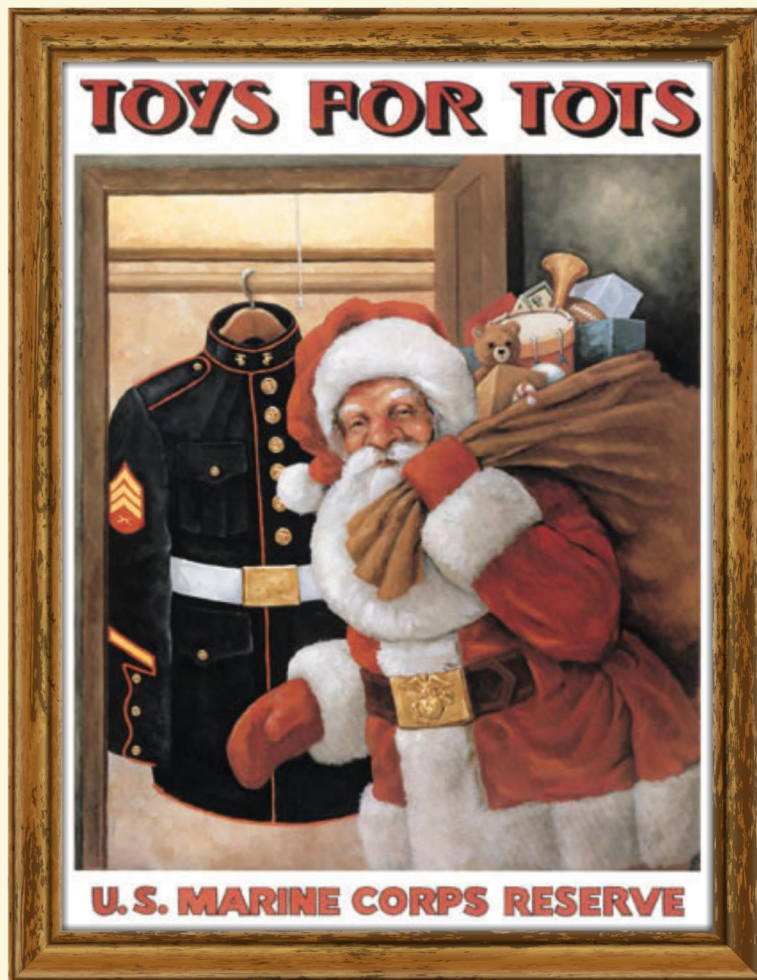


Holiday Toy Drive

Help make the holiday season merry and bright for the girls and boys in our community.

DVS will be accepting donations of unwrapped toys for children of all ages.

The last day to make donations will be December 20, 2023 by 4:00PM at 1 Centre Street, Suite 2213, New York, NY 10007



Our agency will be participating in Toys for Tots this holiday season in partnership with the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve! We are inviting the community to drop off new, unwrapped toys at our main office in the Municipal Building (22nd Floor, Suite 2213) between now and

Wednesday, December 20th. Official Toys for Tots boxes will be onsite to hold donated items.

There are many New Yorkers who need help this holiday season, and T4T is a great way to show support for our fellow neighbors—and ensure the Marines accomplish their mission!

📅 Ends Wednesday, December 20, 2023

🕒 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

📍 Municipal Building (1 Centre Street, 22nd Floor, Suite 2213)

NYSERDA Offshore Wind Open House Information Events



NYSEDA is hosting **educational Offshore Wind Open Houses** beginning in January 2024.

Join NYSEDA, New York State agencies, offshore wind project developers, and other industry partners to learn about the State's work to responsibly develop offshore wind to advance the critical clean energy needed to meet New York's Climate Act goals.

These events are open to the public and provide an opportunity for participants to engage directly

with individuals working on offshore wind energy development. Advance registration is not required.

Astoria, Queens	Tuesday, January 9, 2024 6:00 - 9:00 p.m. ET Variety Boys and Girls Club 21-12 30th Rd, Queens, NY 11102
Red Hook, Brooklyn	Wednesday, January 10, 2024 6:00 - 9:00 p.m. ET Joseph Miccio Community Center 110 W 9th St, Brooklyn, NY 11231
Capital Region	Wednesday, January 17, 2024 Location TBD
Long Island	Tuesday, January 23, 2024 12:00 - 2:00 p.m. ET and 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. ET Hofstra University Sondra and David S. Mack Student Center Hempstead, NY 11549
Long Island	Wednesday, January 24, 2024 6:00 - 9:00 p.m. ET Long Beach Public Library 111 W Park Ave, Long Beach, NY 11561

**Dates and locations are subject to change*

[Find More Offshore Wind Events](#)

VETERAN NEWS

5 million veterans screened for toxic exposures since PACT Act



BY KATHRYN WATSON

DECEMBER 12, 2023 / 10:00 AM EST / CBS NEWS

The Department of Veterans Affairs said Tuesday that it has screened 5 million veterans for potential toxic exposures since Congress passed and President Biden signed the PACT Act in 2022, although it's unclear how many have since been diagnosed with related medical issues.

Of those 5 million, the Department of Veterans Affairs said 2.1 million veterans self reported experiencing at least one potential exposure. The VA launched screenings at their medical centers and clinics as a part of the PACT Act, a law meant to expand health care coverage to veterans. The VA's goal is to screen all veterans enrolled in their health care for any toxic exposure.

The VA is aiming to screen all veterans enrolled in VA health care for any toxic exposure.

"We have made significant progress toward our goal to screen all veterans enrolled in VA health care for toxic exposures at least once every five years,"

said VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. Shereef Elnahal. "But most importantly, this milestone means we've had 5 million opportunities to provide veterans with the exposure-informed care they deserve." [\[READ MORE...\]](#)

More Veteran-related Headlines

Stars and Stripes: [California judge refuses to stop class-action lawsuit demanding housing for disabled veterans](#)

U.S. Army: [Sky Soldier makes history as first active-duty female Army sniper](#)

The Texas Tribune: [Congress greenlights psychedelic treatment bill for active duty service members suffering from PTSD](#)

Federal News Network: [House lawmakers seek higher pay for VA radiation specialists treating vets with cancer](#)

Military.com: [Advocates Call for Overhaul of Program to Help Military Personnel Move into Civilian Jobs](#)

A Message From Mayor Adams:

Each week DVS shares a brief update about how our administration is getting stuff done for New Yorkers.

New York City is the greatest city in the world - and we're taking action on all fronts to make sure that New Yorkers can live longer here, too. Last week, thanks to our partnership with Attorney General James, we awarded millions of dollars to Staten Island providers to help combat the opioid epidemic - one of the fastest-growing public health threats facing New York and the country. And here at DVS, we're actively checking-in on

our community through Mission: Vetchek, a program in partnership with New York Cares, that makes supportive calls to NYC Veterans across the city.



The Adams administration is dedicated to cutting through the noise and delivering information directly to you and all New Yorkers.

Sign up to "Hear From Eric" and get direct messages from City Hall, tailored to your interests and neighborhood, sent directly to your inbox – at [nyc.gov/hearfromeric!](https://nyc.gov/hearfromeric)

[Mayor Adams Announces Progress Connecting New Yorkers in Shelter to Permanent Housing, Technology Improvements Help Boost Shelter Access](#)

[Mayor Adams, Speaker Adams, DSS Commissioner Park Announce \\$20 Million Investment, Eligibility Expansion to Help Make More New Yorkers Eligible for Fair Fares Transit Discount](#)

[Mayor Adams Signs Bill To Create Fair Housing Framework For More Equitable Housing Production](#)



We are looking to highlight Veterans in the arts community! Whether it's an upcoming free exhibition, performance, or piece/installation you've created, we want to showcase your work and help spread the word. Submissions will be reviewed on a rolling basis and promoted at our discretion. We want this to be a space for Veteran artists to express themselves in an authentic way.

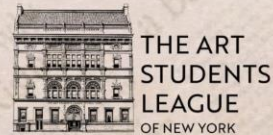
Please email submissions to connect@veterans.nyc.gov with a brief bio, an artist statement, art medium, and your affiliation to the Veteran community.

First virtual National Military Veterans Artist Network Symposium

The **Virtual** Military Veterans Artist Network Symposium

Thursday, January 25
1:00—4:00 pm EST




Register at zoomto.me/uZmzo



The first virtual National Military Veterans Artist Network Symposium is happening next month! This forum is hosted by Americans for the Arts and the Art Students League of New York with multiple distinguished guest speakers. Whether you're a—professional who has been in the industry for years, artist beginning your career, individual who has artistic interests or looking to heal through artistic expression—this symposium can provide you with the tools you need to further your artistic journey.

This summit offers: an introduction to the legacy of Veterans in America's modern and contemporary art history, an introduction to government and private sector

entities looking to support you, networking with fellow artists and professionals in your desired field, discussing "decrutment" and the transition to civilian life, as well as tips and tricks to make a career in the arts sustainable.

 Thursday, January 25th 2024
 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM EST
 Zoom Meeting

[Register for Symposium](#)

Join Our Team! Be Part of the Mission!



Current DVS Job Openings

Being part of our team is a great way to continue to serve.

[Visit NYC.gov/jobs and select "Veterans' Services" from the agency menu to learn more about and apply to the job below.](#)

Site Reliability Engineer - The Site Reliability Engineer will play a key role for DVS Information Technology (IT) Team and report directly to the Chief Information Officer. This position will support and develop the agency's core business applications while providing

secured network connectivity, asset management, and technical support for a highly mobile team.

VA Work Study Positions at DVS

The NYC Department of Veterans' Services (DVS) supports VA Work-Study Positions! Here is a current list of available VA Work-Study openings:

- [Administrative Intern](#)
- [Benefit Intern](#)
- [Care Coordination Intern](#)
- [Data Analyst Intern](#)
- [Information Technology Intern](#)
- [IT Support Intern](#)
- [Legal Intern](#)
- [Outreach Coordinator Intern](#)
- [Veteran Business Promotion Intern](#)

If you are interested in applying for a DVS-specific Work-Study position and meet eligibility requirements, please submit the following to VAWorkStudy@veterans.nyc.gov:

- Resume
- Job Specific Cover Letter
- Supporting Documents found in the Job Description

[Check Here for VA Work-Study Postings](#)

NYC Civil Service Job Openings and Exams



Open Competitive Exams

Environmental Police Officer - Environmental Police Officers perform and supervise staff performing duties involved in protecting the watershed areas, water supply systems and installations maintained by the Department of Environmental Protection of the City of New York; enforce the City's Watershed Rules and Regulations and other laws; and perform special duties or assignments as may be directed by superior officers. View the full job description [here!](#)

Associate Inspector (Consumer and Worker Protection) - Associate Inspectors (Consumer and Worker Protection), under direction, coordinate and supervise a major program of inspection and investigation, or act as a staff assistant to a major department officer, and may operate motor vehicles in the performance of assigned duties. View the full job description [here!](#)

Exterminator - Exterminators, under general supervision, perform work in the prevention, control, and elimination of insects, vermin and other pests from buildings and surrounding areas including parks; inspect areas of infestation; use the most effective insecticides, rodenticides, baits, traps, etc., for exterminating pests as required; keep records of equipment usage, work schedules, and exterminating operations performed; and may drive a motor vehicle. View the full job description [here!](#)

To view all available job listings, visit the exam board [here!](#)

To receive monthly updates on upcoming civil service exams click the button below to be directed to the Subscribe to the DCAS Newsletter page. On the registration form, select "City Jobs and Civil Service Announcements".

[Subscribe to the DCAS Newsletter Here](#)

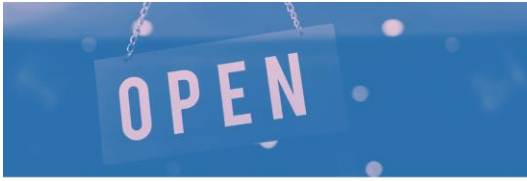
Programs and Initiatives

Affordable Housing For Veterans



The [NYC Department of Veterans' Services \(DVS\)](#) maintains a list of federal, state, and city programs that offers a limited, but selective list of affordable housing options for veterans seeking financial relief for their housing arrangements. Visit our [Affordable Housing for Veterans](#) page to learn more.

Empowering Veteran Business Owners



The primary mission of the [VBLA](#) is to serve Veterans seeking support and assistance with running a business and in their pursuit of New York City Government contracting opportunities. Our leadership association engages with the private sector, government, advisory board, and local partners to build a consortium that facilitates the growth and development of Veteran Businesses.

VetBizNYC: Supporting Veteran Entrepreneurship

DVS has launched [VetBizNYC](#), an interactive map that identifies Veteran-owned businesses across the five boroughs. New Yorkers can use our interactive map to find and support Veteran-owned businesses in their community.



Are You Getting the Benefits You Deserve?

The [NYC Department of Veterans' Services \(DVS\)](#) represents NYC Veterans in claims for benefits from the [U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs](#). Our team is also qualified to assist with PACT Act related claims. If you had a toxic exposure during your service, time is crucial for you to get the benefits you deserve. To file a claim, fill out the [VetConnectNYC.org](#) form and select **Benefits Navigation** as your preferred service.



[nyc.gov/vetjobs](#): Veteran-specific Employment Resources



Central to the agency's mission is our commitment to serving veterans who are looking for meaningful employment and opportunities to advance economically. DVS ensures that transitioning veterans receive access to the resources they need to start a new career in NYC.

Visit [nyc.gov/vetjobs](#) for veteran-specific job boards, vocational training programs, career fair listings, professional mentorship opportunities, and other employment resources.

Newsletter Sign-up

If you received this newsletter by way of a friend or colleague and have yet to sign-up on your own, click [here](#), and stay up-to-date with the latest news impacting the community, updates on city services, info on DVS programs, Veteran-specific resources & more.

Contact Us

- Complete a service request form at vetconnectnyc.org
- [Message the Commissioner](#)
- [Partner with DVS](#)
- [Press Inquiries](#)
- [Event Request Form](#)

Stay tuned on our website www.nyc.gov/vets and social media platforms [@nycveterans](#), or via email at connect@veterans.nyc.gov.

