

A History of Service: Native Americans in Our Nation's Armed Forces



Celebrated on the second Monday of October, Indigenous Peoples' Day honors the cultures and histories of Native American people. Indigenous communities have lived on American lands for thousands of years.

Native Americans have served with distinction in every major U.S. conflict for more than 200 years. From the battlefields of Lexington and Concord, to the D-Day landing beaches of Normandy to the frontlines of today, Native American people have defended this country for centuries. Native Americans have and continue to play a pivotal role in the history of the United States. U.S. Army officer and tribal diplomat General Ely S. Parker, a member of the Seneca Nation, served as adjutant and military secretary to General Ulysses S. Grant during the Civil War. Parker would eventually write the final draft of the Confederate terms of surrender.

Today's military success depends heavily on the more than 31,000 Native American active duty, reserve, and National Guard servicemen and women currently serving around the world. 133,000 Veterans identify as Native American. These Veterans are Purple Heart recipients, Bronze Star honorees,

and a few have been among those warriors to be distinguished by receiving the Congressional Medal of Honor.

A rich history and story exists with Native Americans and military service. Despite decades of discrimination and persecution, Native Americans step forward when duty calls.

Are You a Veteran? Watch Out for PACT Act Scams



The Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act is a new law that expands VA healthcare and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits and other toxic hazards. This new law extends VA healthcare eligibility for Veterans with toxic exposures, and Veterans of the Vietnam, Gulf War, and Post-9/11 eras. Scammers are taking advantage of this enormous victory for Veterans to commit fraud.

There has been a significant increase in scams targeting Veterans for their PACT Act benefits. While Veterans wait for the benefits they've earned, scammers are reaching out to our nation's heroes with promises claiming they can help Veterans get their compensation more quickly for a small fee. These PACT Act-related scams can come in the form of email (phishing), phone (vishing), and social media scams.

Protect yourself against scammers and scams with these tips

- Never provide personal or financial information over the phone to unsolicited callers
- Don't click or open suspicious links. Spam is often used to spread malicious software.
- See if the web address starts with "http://" or "https://."
- Set up multi-factor authentication on all your online accounts.
- Work with Veteran service providers you already know.
- [Report](#) any suspected fraud to the [Federal Trade Commission \(FTC\)](#)

Veterans should be wary of anyone who guarantees a lucrative financial benefit

or service. To report suspected fraudulent activity, please contact vaoighotline@va.gov or call (800) 488-8244. Remember, reporting scams makes it easier to stop scandals and turn in scammers.

For more information, read the VA's tips to avoid PACT Act scams below:



BE VIGILANT OF PACT ACT SCAMS

On August 10, President Biden signed the [Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act \(PACT Act\) into law](#). This law helps millions of Veterans and their survivors by:

- Extending VA health care eligibility for Veterans with toxic exposures and Veterans of the Vietnam, Gulf War, and Post-9/11 (Post-September 11, 2001) eras
- Expanding benefits eligibility for Veterans exposed to toxic substances and their survivors



Tips to Avoid PACT Act Scams

Scammers are taking advantage of new opportunities to commit fraud. There's been an increase in PACT Act-related [phishing \(email\)](#), [vishing \(phone\)](#), and [social media scams](#) targeting Veterans to access their PACT Act benefits or submit claims on their behalf.

Veterans should be cautious of anyone who guarantees a lucrative financial benefit or service.

Do's

- ✓ You may submit your application securely [online](#) via VA.GOV or in person at any Regional Office. You may file your claim directly with VA and then, VA will assist in gathering evidence necessary to support it. There are no costs or hidden fees to apply.
- ✓ Be cautious of companies who advertise VA benefits can only be obtained with their help. These companies may not be recognized by VA and may be attempting to charge illegal fees.
- ✓ Be cautious of aggressive companies who may try to pressure you to sign their contract through frequent communications or by insisting "you must act now or lose your chance for benefits."
- ✓ Be cautious of companies who claim to be contacting you on behalf of VA or to have a special relationship with VA. Contact VA at 1-800-827-1000 if you are unsure about the authenticity of any message received.
- ✓ Validate: If you are interested in working with a Veteran Service Organization (VSO), agent, or attorney, use the Office of General Counsel [Accreditation tool](#) to confirm and validate their credentials.

Don'ts

- ⊘ Do not sign a contract agreeing to pay an unauthorized company a percentage of your benefit payment in exchange for their assistance with your VA claim. If you need help filing a claim, there are representatives of VSOs, agents, and attorneys who have been [accredited by VA](#) to assist you.
- ⊘ Do not sign a blank form for someone else to complete later. Always review the completed form before signing and keep a copy for yourself.
- ⊘ Do not be fooled by companies who advertise they have special relationships with medical professionals and can guarantee your benefits award. If they are defrauding the Federal government, you could be held responsible for paying those benefits back.
- ⊘ Do not provide your social security number, medical records, or other personally identifiable information to anyone offering claims assistance before confirming their credentials using the Office of General Counsel [Accreditation tool](#).
- ⊘ Do not sign forms that are not [VA generated](#) or third-party authorization for someone to provide "behind-the-scenes" claims assistance.

www.VA.gov/PACT is the official source of PACT Act information.

We want Veterans and survivors to apply now for their PACT Act-related benefits. To report suspected scams, please contact the VA Office of Inspector General ([OIG Hotline \(va.gov\)](#)). File a complaint with the [Federal Trade Commission](#). Visit the [Cybercrime Support Network](#) for additional [resources](#) to help Veterans, service members, and their families combat cybercrime.

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Learn more and sign up at VA.gov/PACT
Download the [VA Health and Benefits App](#)
Call us at 1-800-MyVA411 (1-800-698-2411)
Find a VA at VA.gov/find-locations/

Suicide Prevention Tools: Columbia Protocol



THE COLUMBIA LIGHTHOUSE PROJECT

IDENTIFY RISK. PREVENT SUICIDE.

“We all have the potential to use the C-SSRS to save a life.” – Keita Franklin, Director, [U.S. Department of Defense Suicide Prevention Office](#).

Suicide among servicemembers and Veterans is a public health crisis. Nearly 22 Veterans die by suicide per day, or one every 65 minutes.

The [Columbia Lighthouse Project Suicide Severity Rating Scale \(C-SSRS\)](#), also known as the Columbia Protocol, is a simple series of questions that anyone can use anywhere in the world to help prevent suicide. The suicide assessment method was developed by [Columbia University](#) in collaboration with other academic medical centers. The Columbia Protocol is used in education and healthcare systems across the country. Statewide suicide prevention programs, the U.S. Armed Forces, and academic research foundations also make wide use of the screening tool.


The protocol, developed by Dr. Kelly Posner Gerstenhaber and a community of researchers, supports suicide risk assessment through a series of plain-language questions that anyone can ask. The answers help users identify whether someone is at risk for suicide, assess the severity and immediacy of that risk, and gauge the level of support that the person needs.

Keeping the conversation on suicide alive with tools like the Columbia Protocol is key to prevention. Only by working together, in mutual understanding, can we lead the fight against suicide.

For a closer look at the Columbia Protocol, follow the [link](#) to the [Columbia Lighthouse Project homepage](#).

If you are a Veteran or servicemember in crisis, you can connect to the Veterans Crisis Line: Dial (800) 273-8255 or call 988 then press 1, text 838255, or [chat online](#) at [veteranscrisisline.net/get-help/chat](#).

NYC Veterans Advisory Board Meeting - October 19



**NYC VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD
PUBLIC SESSION**
Wednesday, October 19, 2022 – 6 PM

IN-PERSON: David N. Dinkins Municipal Building 1 Centre Street, 22nd Floor New York, NY 10007	ZOOM: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86113259398? pwd=R1d2dk1BUWpLUVVVIOXBsbHo1ZFhRUT09 Meeting ID: 861 1325 9398 Passcode: 355418
RSVP: https://tinyurl.com/NYCVAB	

Questions? nycveteransadvisoryboard@gmail.com

The [NYC Veterans Advisory Board \(VAB\)](#) is made up of 11 NYC Veterans who have been appointed by either the [Mayor of NYC](#) or the Speaker of the [NYC Council](#). The members, who represent the five boroughs of NYC, advise [NYC Department of Veterans' Services \(DVS\)](#) on all matters concerning NYC Veterans and their families.

Conducting regular public meetings, this diverse body of NYC Veterans keeps an open line of communication with the public. VAB offers NYC Veterans a place to grow by discussing the issues that matter to them.

DVS encourages the public to attend VAB meetings. Please [RSVP](#) to the VAB public meeting on October 19 at 6:00 pm at 1 Centre Street (David N. Dinkins Municipal Building).

Join Our Team! Be Part of the Mission!



Being part of our team is a great way to continue to serve. The [NYC Department of Veterans' Services \(DVS\)](#) empowers communities with Veteran talent, skills, and preparedness. Join us in serving again - your community.

See below for current job openings at DVS:

Current DVS Job Openings

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

Community Outreach Coordinator

Procurement Analyst

Director of Housing & Support Services

Director of Mental Health & Care Coordination Unit

Director of Veteran Benefit Claims Unit

Veteran Benefits Coordinator – Bronx

Veteran Benefits Coordinator – Brooklyn

Veteran Benefits Coordinator - Staten Island

Human Resources Generalist

Burials Care Coordinator

Department of Veteran Services' College Aide

NYC Civil Service Job Openings and Exams



You served your country. Now serve your city!

Do your part to keep the city running! The [NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services \(DCAS\)](#) makes City government work for all New Yorkers.

There are many diverse career opportunities with NYC DCAS.

Veterans are no longer required to pay application fees for NYC Civil Service examinations.

See below for open competitive NYC Civil Service exam highlights:

Open Competitive Exams

Heating Plant Technician

Are you passionate about all things heating related? Applications for the Heating Plant Technician will be processed until October 25. Click [here](#) to

register for the exam.

Landscape Architect

Do you have strong design skills and knowledge? Applications for the Landscape Architect are being processed until October 25. To sign up for the exam, click [here](#).

Occupational Therapist (DOE)

Are you dedicated to helping children work on functional skills? Applications for the Occupational Therapist (DOE) are being reviewed until October 25. To apply to take the exam, click [here](#).

VetConnectPro: A First-in-the-Nation Employment Tool

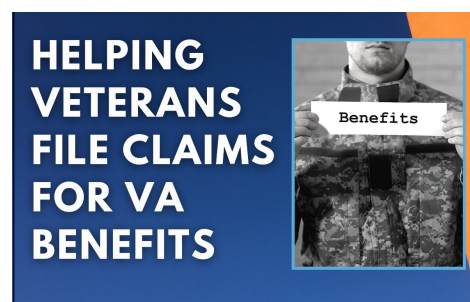


[VetConnectPro](#), is a new employment tool designed to help Veterans find employment within NYC government. The platform features a military skills translator that can match your service experience and Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) to City jobs and civil service exams. Upload your resume and get started today: nyc.gov/vetconnectpro.

Programs and Initiatives

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](#). During a time of economic crisis and high unemployment, we want to ensure that all Veterans get the financial benefits they earned and deserve. To file a claim, fill out the VetConnectNYC.org form and select **Benefits Navigation** as your preferred service.



To request claims support, visit VetConnectNYC.org.



Our Fight to End Veteran Homelessness



Over the past five years, our [Housing Support Services \(HSS\)](#) team has found homes for over 1,000 formerly unhoused Veterans. Click [here](#) to learn more about DVS's efforts to end chronic homelessness among Veterans in New York City.

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.



Veterans Voices Project: Changing the Narrative of Veterans



Administered by the [NYC Department of Veterans' Services](#), the [Veteran Voices Project \(VVP\)](#) is an oral history initiative designed to preserve the stories of New York City's Veterans across all military branches and service areas. For more information, visit [nyc.gov/vetvoices](#).

Contact Us

- Complete the services request form at [vetconnectnyc.org](#)
- [Message the Commissioner](#)
- [Partner with DVS](#)
- [Press Inquiries](#)

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



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