



HOOSIER VETERAN

IDVA Newsletter

September 2025



Welcome to the September Edition of the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA) Newsletter. We're glad you're here! This monthly newsletter is one of the many ways IDVA remains committed to serving and supporting our veteran community. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to the recent recipients of the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) grants. A special shoutout goes to the Logansport Memorial Center, which will soon begin much-needed exterior restorations—ensuring that the legacy and sacrifices of Cass County veterans continue to be honored with dignity and respect. Congratulations once again to all involved! We hope you enjoy this edition and find it informative and inspiring.

Jake Adams
Director

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Support Veterans' Mental Health

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National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic

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Submit an Event on the IDVA Events Calendar

CONNECT WITH IDVA

79848



Text IDVA to 79848 and Join Our Text System

Tour the IDVA Agency Data Transparency.



Strength in Connection: Suicide Prevention and Support for Indiana Veterans

By Carlye Gibson, Indiana Department of Health–Public Health Coordinator

September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. Suicide prevention is a deeply important issue, particularly within our veteran community. Millions of individuals have been affected—whether through personal loss, experiencing suicidal ideation, or silently grappling with mental health challenges. In military culture, where stoicism is often valued, expressing emotional vulnerability can be especially difficult.

As part of the Indiana Community Challenge, we are committed to bridging the gap between Service Members, Veterans (SMVs), and the support systems they need. This includes connecting individuals to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, local mental health services, peer support networks, and other vital community resources.

Fostering a culture of support is an important. Preventing suicide requires collective effort. It takes all of us to support one another. It begins with the courage to ask a difficult but potentially life-saving question: “Have you thought about suicide or dying?”

Asking is only the first step. Knowing how to respond and where to turn next is equally critical. Fortunately, there are numerous free resources available, including:

- Mental health professionals
- Veterans Affairs’ S.A.V.E. training (Spot, Ask, Validate, Encourage)
- QPR training (Question, Persuade, Refer)
- The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

These tools empower us to recognize warning signs and take meaningful action.

Park Bench Program

Another initiative under the Indiana Community Challenge is our Park Bench Program. This initiative, inspired by the concept of buddy benches, aims to provide a place for individuals to connect and talk. IDVA and the Indiana Pendleton Correctional Facility . Pendleton constructs the benches and lasers the 988 information into the wood. Communities and organizations can purchase these benches and place them in parks and

Introducing the HereNOW Help App

The Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs is proud to introduce a new free resource for our veterans: **HereNOW Help**. A free mobile application designed is a simple resource which can be downloaded on any phone and offers resources for emotional, social, and physical well-being. Features include journaling, assessments, message boards, chat rooms, and fitness tools. Check it out!



Mental Wellness App for Veterans

Our goal is to use this mental wellness platform to engage and empower our community of veterans to better understand and improve their mental well-being.

Features & Benefits

EMOTIONAL

HelpLines - Free 24/7/365 anonymous access to licensed therapists, crisis intervention hotlines, and community resource lines

Daily Inspiration - positive messages to inspire you each day

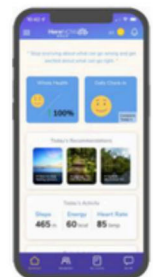
Meditations - videos to help you calm your mind and relax

Journal - a place for you write down whatever thoughts come to mind

Set Goals - set goals for yourself and receive reminders to keep yourself on track

Self-Assessments - better understand your current mental state and top areas of need

Library / Resources - Video, audio and written content focused on improving your mental health. Suggested content will populate daily based on your areas of need.



SOCIAL

Community Message Boards - post messages, announcements, pictures, links and more

Community Chat Rooms - customized groups or an open forum for everyone

Calendars - see upcoming community events



PHYSICAL

Fitness - Educate and support healthy eating, exercise, sleep and daily activity

How To Download

Scan: Use your phone's camera to scan the QR code (tap the link).

Download: Choose the iPhone App Store or Google Play Store.

Access: Use the following unique access code: **655678**



Stronger Veterans, Stronger Communities

Hamilton County Coalition on the Prevention of Suicide for Service Members, Veterans, and their Families/Caregivers

Exciting news from Hamilton County as the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA) and the Stronger Veterans, Stronger Communities (SVSC) Coalition announce a significant drop in veteran suicide rates. This milestone showcases the SVSC Coalition's relentless dedication to supporting Service Members, Veterans, and their Families/Caregivers. Since its start in 2022, the Coalition has teamed up with IDVA, as IDVA launched the Indiana Community Challenge to Prevent Suicide among the Indiana Veteran community. This initiative equips community coalitions with crucial resources, like data, training, and funding, to tackle this vital issue head-on.

Carlye Gibson, the Indiana Community Challenge Public Health Coordinator, shared the positive news: "Provisional data for 2024 from Hamilton County shows a decrease in suicide deaths compared to 2023." The Hamilton County Health Department reports that veteran suicides have dropped from 13 in 2021 to fewer than 5 in 2024, marking an impressive 62 percent reduction. This achievement reflects the community's unwavering support for its veterans and highlights the powerful results of collaborative efforts.

Kristen M. Ludeker-Seibert, BA, Director of SVSC, remarked "This milestone, met through three years of collaborative work, demonstrates the collective commitment that continues to remain strong as we move through 2025 and into 2026, continuously reassessing suicide prevention needs in Hamilton County and evolving our approach to better serve the military-connected community." The SVSC is a vibrant network comprising local veterans, veteran-serving organizations, community service providers, government leaders, and passionate volunteers.

IDVA is eager to continue its mission of reducing suicide rates and boosting the well-being of Indiana's Veteran Community. The Community Challenge program is currently collaborating with five community coalitions across the state and is eagerly planning to expand these community coalition partnerships. Along with community coalition support, the IDVA also aligns prevention efforts statewide through its Grants for Veterans Services Program (GVS). The GVS recently allocated \$1,200,000 this fiscal year (July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026) to 32 Indiana nonprofits dedicated to offering essential services and suicide prevention initiatives.

County Veteran Service Officer (CVSO) Spotlight

Kevin Herp-Perry County.



I served in the US Army 2001-2011 as an AH64-D "APACHE" Attack Helicopter repairer. I served two combat tours one in Balad from 2005-2006 and Kandahar from 2007-2008.

I navigated through the VA claim process myself after service and learned the process. I used to help fellow Veterans secure their benefits and knew then I needed a job helping my fellow brothers and sisters. In 2020, the County Veteran Service Officer (CVSO) job came open here in my county and instead of applying I went and talked to the outgoing CVSO about wanting the job. The rest is history.

The most common services we provide are helping Veterans with their disability claims, securing VA Healthcare, and connect homeless veterans with resources to get off the streets. Also, I help Veterans in mental health crisis find treatment. These benefits are life changing and will not only help you, but will also attain security for your family which ultimately is most important.

Upcoming events in Perry County, Indiana: Veteran Day Car Show second Saturday in November; and the annual Hope Gala in the summer (date to TBD), veteran stand downs, and other benefit and health type events through out the year.



Follow Veterans of Perry County on social media.

Kevin Herp

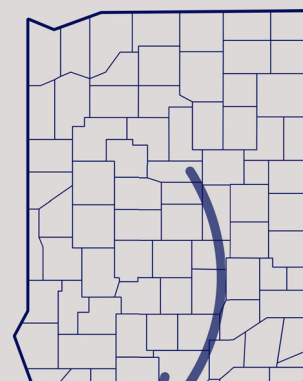
PERRY COUNTY

pcveterans@perrycounty.in.gov

Courthouse Square
2219 Payne Street, Room W6
Tell City, IN 47586

M T W T H F

8:00 AM-11:30 AM & 12:30 PM-4:00 PM



"As a veteran of the GWOT I suffered for years with a minimal disability rating because I had such trouble understanding the process and how to submit things. I was intimidated by the VA process due to its horror stories. My day to day life continually got harder as I faced financial pressure due to my sustained injuries on top of dealing with my injuries. Things were becoming impossible to survive. Josh Tolen came into my life and saw what I was going through, heard my story and witnessed my pain. With His help I was able to book my proper appointments, see the proper specialist, properly be evaluated for my conditions and within months I was rated 100% T&P. A title I have unfortunately earned but now deserve. Without the assistance of Mr. Tolen I can't imagine where I would be today. When my back was against the wall, he delivered."

Rocky LaPorte, U.S. Army Veteran who served 2009 to 2013.

"Had a good experience, my rep Josh went above and beyond and listened to me. I was against meeting someone at first due to prior experience and bad stories from the older veteran community, but my experience with Josh was well above any expectations I had."

Tim Gilbrech, Army Veteran who served August 2003 to 2009.

"To me, this isn't a job. It's a mission to stand beside veterans and fight for the benefits they have earned," Josh Tolen.

Josh Tolen, the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs Central West District Service Officer, served in the Marine Corps from 1997 to 2001. He comes from a long line of Marines including his younger brother, his younger sister, and his grandfather, Ret. Colonel Noble L. Beck.

We invite you to share your story with IDVA and each other!

- Let us know about your experience with our team.
- Post your personal stories and experiences that have shaped your lives while in service, as a veteran, or as a family member.
- Your narratives can serve as a guiding light, encouraging fellow veterans to open up and share their own meaningful journeys.



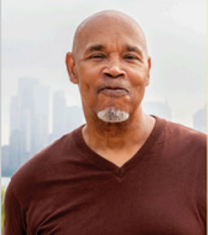


Veteran Affairs News & Notes

Benefits and Healthcare

How your surroundings
support Whole Health
Clear your space, clear
your mind

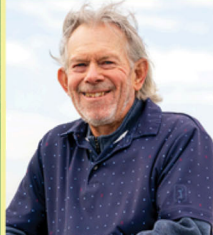
READ MORE



SUPPORT VETERANS'
MENTAL HEALTH

SEPTEMBER IS
NATIONAL RECOVERY
MONTH

MakeTheConnection.net/recovery



Veterans share
how mental health
care shaped who
they are now
'Every day of my
life is better'

LEARN MORE

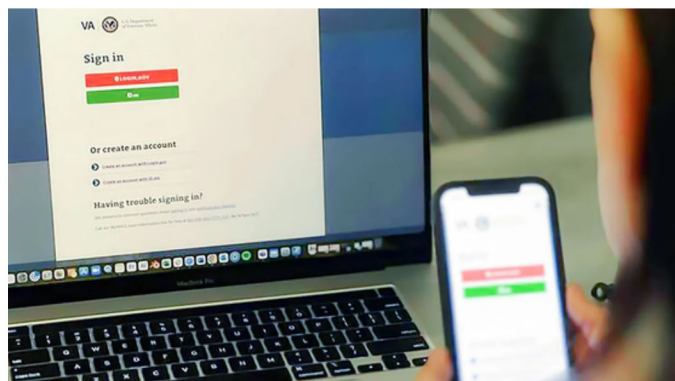


ACTION REQUIRED

Switch from DS Logon to
Login.gov or ID.me by
September 30

August 28, 2025

[Here's How](#)



Veterans find strength,
new beginnings at 2025
National Veterans
Summer Sports Clinic

Military & Veteran Community Observances

Happy Birthday Air Force



SEPTEMBER



National Suicide Prevention Month

- September
- 1 Labor Day
 - 2 Victory Over Japan-the End of WWII, 1945
 - 11 Patriot Day (National Day of Service and Remembrance) 2001
 - 18 Air Force Birthday Day, 1947
 - 19 POW/MIA Recognition Day
 - 28 Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day

[See Details of the
IDVA Calendar of Events.](#)

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Sun	Mon	Tue				
28	29	30				



IDVA Calendar of Events

[IDVA Calendar of Events](#)





**Stay connected!
Join our IDVA text
system today!**

**Text IDVA to
79848**

**You will only receive
messages curated just
for you!**

317.232.3910

outreach@dva.in.gov

[Tour the IDVA Transparency Portal on
Our Website](#)

Veteran Community Support

FEDERAL VA

[REQUEST YOUR DD214](#)

[VETERAN CRISIS LINE 988](#)

[HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
VETERAN AFFAIRS](#)

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AGENCY](#)

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