



# VETERANS VOICE

Winnebago County Department of Veterans Services Newsletter

April 2021

## VA Extends Debt Relief For Veterans

VA is extending debt relief for Veterans through September 30, 2021, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. VA will suspend collection of all Veteran benefit overpayments incurred between April 6, 2020 and September 30, 2021. No adverse actions or collections attempts will occur during this suspension period. Additionally, all copayments for medical care and pharmacy services incurred from April 6, 2020 through September 30, 2021 will be cancelled, along with any fees or interest. Any payments for this time period will be refunded. VA is committed to keeping Veterans informed about their debt and the expansive relief options available.

### What will happen next

With regard to benefit overpayments, Veterans will receive a letter from the VA Debt Management Center (DMC) showing current debt amount as well as available options. Subsequent letters will be sent showing updates to Veterans' accounts.

### What Veterans can do now

For benefit overpayments, no action is required through September 30, 2021. That said, if Veterans would like to resolve debts sooner, there are options they can exercise now. VA can work with Veterans to determine what option is best. Options include:

- Making a payment
- Establishing a repayment plan
- Submitting a compromise offer
- Disputing the debt
- Requesting a waiver

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**“The greatest discovery of all time is that a person can change his future by merely changing his attitude.”**

**- Oprah Winfrey**

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Contact us to make arrangements for outstanding VA benefits debts

**FOR HELP** contact Debt Management Center,  
Call or submit your request online

📞 1-800-827-0648

🌐 <https://iris.custhelp.va.gov>

If you have questions about your VA benefits or the status of your claim

VA Regional Office

*for other VA benefits*

**1-800-827-1000**

Health Resource Center

*for health care debts*

**1-866-400-1238**

VA Education Call Center

*for education benefits*

**1-888-442-4551**

## Continued...

For benefit debt, information is available online at <https://www.va.gov/manage-va-debt/>, or by calling the DMC at 800-827-0648, or via IRIS at <https://iris.custhelp.va.gov/app/ask/>.

## Your VA health care continues

There will be no change in the quality and availability of VA health care during this time. You can schedule appointments and communicate with your providers in the same manner you have been.

If you are concerned about copayments you owe for health care and pharmacy provided prior to April 6, 2020, you can apply for a debt relief program. For more information on financial relief, Veterans can visit [https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/revenue\\_ops/Financial\\_Hardship.asp](https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/revenue_ops/Financial_Hardship.asp) or call the Health Resource Center (HRC) at 866-400-1238, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET.

Charges for medical care and prescriptions incurred from April 6, 2020 through September 30, 2021 will be cancelled. VA will refund payments that Veterans have already made. For [medical care copayment questions](#), please review the information found on the following website: [https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/revenue\\_ops/Financial\\_Hardship.asp#Relief](https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/revenue_ops/Financial_Hardship.asp#Relief) or call the HRC (866-400-1238). VA will work with all Veterans who apply for debt relief to determine the best possible solution.

## Contact information

- For questions about VA benefit debt, including information on how to make voluntary repayment arrangements, or for information about how to request a waiver, how to dispute a debt, or how to submit a compromise offer, call the DMC (800-827-0648) from 6:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. CT Monday through Friday. Visit <https://iris.custhelp.va.gov/app/ask/> to submit your request online.
- For medical care copayment questions, please contact the HRC (866-400-1238) from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. CT Monday through Friday.
- If a Veteran's debt was referred to the U.S. Department of the Treasury (Treasury), the debt is suspended through September 30, 2021. For questions on debts referred to Treasury, contact the Treasury Cross-Servicing Program (888-826-3127) or the Treasury Offset Program (800-304-3107).

VA is here to help Veterans during the COVID-19 pandemic. Please follow national and local guidelines to stay healthy and safe.

# April is STRESS Awareness MONTH

## Stress Awareness Month

Have you ever been in a situation that was a little (or a lot) overwhelming, you had deadlines approaching and a mile-long to do list, and you were just in way over your head? Well, you're definitely not alone. Everyone feels stressed from time to time, especially as we get older and the responsibilities really pile onto our plate. The thing about stress is, a little bit of it isn't necessarily a bad thing, but too much of it can be detrimental to our emotional and physical health. Learning to find that healthy balance is the best way to live a productive, happy life.

A small amount of stress once in a while is a good thing. However, too much stress doesn't allow us to think straight, and is overbearing and counterproductive. Prolonged stress even leads to real physical problems and can cause strokes, IBS, ulcers, diabetes, muscle and joint pain, miscarriages, and many more. This month, recognize the difference between good and bad stress and try to find your happy place within the madness.

This month we are all challenged to keep our stress levels low, and our peace levels high. Here are some great ways to keep your mind clear and de-stress if you find yourself getting too overwhelmed.

1. Exercise
2. Take natural supplements to help you feel more at ease.
3. Light a candle or turn on the oil diffusers; put on some soft, soothing music; dim the lights, and take a deep breath.
4. Reduce your caffeine intake.
5. Spend time laughing with friends and family.

# VR&E Support-and-Services Tracks

If you're a Veteran or service member with a service-connected disability that impacts your ability to work, the Veteran Readiness and Employment program (formerly called Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment) may be able to help. The VA offers 5 support-and-services tracks to help you find and keep a job, and live as independently as possible. To be eligible for these you must have an employment barrier or handicap **and** be enrolled in VR&E.

## [Reemployment Track](#)

As a Veteran, you're protected under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). This means you can't be disadvantaged in your civilian career because of your service. If you're a Veteran with a service-connected disability, the Reemployment track can help your employer accommodate your needs. Your Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) can provide a full range of services, and can refer you directly to the Department of Labor to begin the process. You may be eligible for help if you're a Veteran with a service-connected disability, and would like to return to your former job.

## [Rapid Access to Employment Track](#)

If you want to follow an employment path that uses your existing skill set, the Rapid Access to Employment track can help you with your job search. The VA offers counseling and rehabilitation services that address your abilities, aptitudes, and interests. You may be eligible for these benefits if you're a service member or Veteran with a service-connected disability and you already have experience, education, or training in your field of interest.

## [Self-Employment Track](#)

If you're a service member or Veteran with a service-connected disability and employment barrier who has the strong desire, skills, and drive to run a successful business, you may be interested in the Self-Employment track. You may be eligible for these benefits if you're a service member or Veteran with a service-connected disability and your disability makes it hard for you to prepare for, obtain, and maintain suitable employment (a job that doesn't make your disability worse, is stable, and matches your abilities, aptitudes, and interests).

## [Employment Through Long-Term Services Track](#)

If you have a service-connected disability that makes it hard for you to succeed in your employment path, you may be interested in the Employment Through Long-Term Services track. The training you receive can help you find work in a different field that better suits your current abilities and interests. You may be eligible for these benefits if you're a service member or Veteran with a service-connected disability and your disability makes it hard for you to prepare for, obtain, and maintain suitable employment.

## [Independent Living Track](#)

If your service-connected disability limits your ability to perform activities of daily living (like bathing, dressing, accessing the community, and interacting with others) and you can't return to work right away, you may qualify for independent living services through the Independent Living track. You may also receive these services as you work to find a job if that's a goal you and your Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) have created. In both cases, your VRC can help you restore your daily living activities. You may be eligible for independent living services if you're a service member or Veteran with a service-connected disability who is eligible for VR&E benefits, and you meet all of the requirements listed below:

- You have a serious employment handicap (SEH), **and**
- Your disabilities prevent you from looking for or returning to work, **and**
- You're in need of services to live as independently as possible.

# Upcoming Events

## MVMEC Open House

&  
WWII Allied & Axis re-enactment



Free Admission  
Sunday, May 2, 2021  
10:00 am - 3:30 pm



Food and Beverages available for purchase  
by AMVETS Post 7

All Day Presentations and Displays  
10:00 am Flag Raising  
11:00 am Weapons Demo  
1:00 pm Vehicle parade  
2:00 pm WWII Allied and Axis re-enactment

4300 Poberezny Road  
Oshkosh, WI 54901  
(920) 426-8615  
[www.mvmec.org](http://www.mvmec.org)



## CONTACT US

Winnebago County  
Veterans Service Office

Oshkosh Location  
112 Otter St.  
Oshkosh, WI 54901  
(920) 232-3400

Neenah Location  
211 N. Commercial  
Neenah, WI 54956  
(920) 729-4820

Stay informed about benefits; join our e-mail list.  
Send a request to:

[CVSO@co.winnebago.wi.us](mailto:CVSO@co.winnebago.wi.us)

Visit us on the web at:

[www.co.winnebago.wi.us/  
veterans](http://www.co.winnebago.wi.us/veterans)



[www.facebook.com/  
WinnebagoCVSO](http://www.facebook.com/WinnebagoCVSO)

For a list of more events,  
check out our calendar!

## 9th Annual Carsen Rettler's Memorial Fund Golf Outing

Saturday May 22, 2021

10AM Shotgun Start • \$60 Per Golfer

Shotgun start at 10:00am

Shamrock Heights Golf Course • New London, WI

**Golfing for Veterans in  
memory of Carsen Rettler  
Proceeds going to  
Fox Valley Veterans Council**

Event Hole Prizes...  
Chance to win cash and  
great prizes on designated holes!

2-8pm Silent Auction  
& Meat Raffle  
at River Rail Shiocton, WI



SPECIAL GUEST APPEARANCE BY THE NASTY BOYS, MOUTH OF THE SOUTH  
JIMMY HEART, AND HACKSAW JIM DUGGAN FAMOUS FROM WWF...

Ways to Register:

Tara Rettler [tkay1078@gmail.com](mailto:tkay1078@gmail.com) or 920-585-4122

Contact Tara to sponsor a hole. \$50 which includes name  
on a Shirt and Hole Sign

**PAYMENT AND REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS MAY 10, 2021**

Donations can be mailed to:  
In Memory of Carsen Rettler  
Fox Communities Credit Union  
P.O. Box 238  
Black Creek, WI 54106

