



AFSA Retiree and Veteran Affairs Newsletter

- VETERANS DAY

While many realize that Veterans Day, which always falls on November 11, is a day to honor our Veterans, few realize the historical significance behind the day.

Veterans Day originated as Armistice Day and marked the end of hostilities of World War I that occurred at the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month. Therefore, the day is always recognized on November 11th, regardless of the day of the week the 11th falls on.

Americans are encouraged to say thank you to those who fulfill this patriotic duty to maintain the freedoms of our country.

- HAVE YOUR VOICE HEARD BY PARTICIPATING IN THE 2020 AFSA LEGISLATIVE SURVEY

The AFSA International Legislative Team has launched our most comprehensive legislative survey to date. The survey can found at: www.hqafsa.org/takeaction.html

We are asking that you take the approximate 15 minutes to complete the survey so that your AFSA Legislative Team can better gauge and assist you and our members with their legislative needs and desires.

We would also ask that you share and encourage others to participate and complete the survey. This is your opportunity to share your thoughts and help focus our Legislative Platform for the coming year.

- AFSA VETERAN & RETIREE AFFAIRS VIRTUAL TOWN HALL

On 19 Nov 20 at 1600 Central Time, AFSA International Trustee for Retired and Veteran Affairs will be hosting a Virtual Town Hall Meeting for AFSA via Zoom. The Town Hall Meeting will be focusing Veterans Affairs (VA) access, benefits, healthcare, and some claims processing. There are several other areas that we may discuss, but it will be dependent on time and questions.

The Town Hall is scheduled for 60-90 minutes and we will have some guest speakers who are experts in these topic areas with us to field your questions. Please, keep your questions short, because we want to field as many questions as possible, if more in-depth information is needed we will ask that you provide your name, e-mail and question in the chat area and we will get back with you.

Please mark calendar and join us for the AFSA Veteran & Retiree Affairs Virtual Town Hall on 19 Nov 20.

Below is the Zoom Meeting Information.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84824084185?pwd=UE8yZW9Xek9zTHA3dm95cEJlOGxRZz09>

Meeting ID: 848 2408 4185 **Passcode:** 966607

Dial by your location

- +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)
- +1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)
- +1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)
- +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)
- +1 301 715 8592 US (Washington D.C)
- +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

- VA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM VISITOR POLICY

In order to protect Veterans and staff from possible exposure to COVID-19, all of our VA Health Care System facilities are continuing to limit all non-patient visitors to one individual over the age of 18 who is providing direct medical assistance to the patient. Anyone who is not a direct caregiver for the Veteran's appointment will not be permitted entry.

We also want to remind our Veterans that if you have an appointment at our main campus or one of our VA community clinics, you will be screened prior to entry and asked to answer a few simple questions by the screening staff. If you have symptoms of fever, cough, and shortness of breath, please contact the Nurse Advice Line at 1 (877) 252-4866 before visiting us. For other healthcare concerns, you may be able to access VA care from home by phone or using VA virtual care options. Please contact your PACT Team to learn more about virtual care options.

- RESOURCES FOR VETERAN CAREGIVERS

Caregivers will now be included in Veterans' health care teams, VA Secretary Wilkie announced in the latter part of October as part of the Inclusive Care Program.

The Elizabeth Dole Foundation also offers no-cost, short-term aid from at-home care professionals to help with bathing, cooking, exercising, transportation, and companionship, among other tasks. Caregivers in every state can now apply for no-cost professional caregiver support made possible through the cooperation and donations of CareLinx, Wounded Warrior Project, AARP, and VA.

- TRICARE AND OTHER ENROLLMENTS DURING FEDERAL BENEFITS OPEN SEASON

Prepare for 2021 Enrollment, TRICARE Open Season Begins: Open season is almost here. Now is the time to consider whether you or your family members want to make changes to your current health, dental, and vision plan coverage.

TRICARE Select Enrollment Fees Begin Jan. 1: Starting on Jan. 1, 2021, TRICARE Select Group A retirees must pay monthly enrollment fees in order to maintain their TRICARE health coverage. You must set up an enrollment fee payment during TRICARE Open Season to start on Jan. 1, 2021.

Federal Benefits Open Season Begins Nov. 9: Your chance to enroll in the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP) or make changes to your existing plan is during the Federal Benefits Open Season. This year, Federal Benefits Open Season runs from Nov. 9 to Dec. 14. Your coverage will start on Jan. 1, 2021. This is a separate enrollment from TRICARE Open Season.

Your Options for Getting Health Care this Fall: Since March, military hospitals and clinics adjusted policy and procedures to keep you safe during the national health emergency due to the coronavirus pandemic. After a pause in the spring, routine appointments and elective surgeries have generally resumed but may vary depending on location. Be sure to check with your local health care provider or facility.

TRICARE Qualifying Life Events: What You Need to Know: You know you can enroll in TRICARE Prime or TRICARE Select during TRICARE Open Season. Nevertheless, did you know that certain Qualifying Life Events (QLEs) might also give you and family members the chance to enroll in a new health plan?

- DISCOVER FAMILY BENEFITS

If you're the spouse or dependent child of a Veteran or Service member, you may qualify for certain benefits like health care, life insurance, and money to help pay for school or training. Find out which VA benefits you may qualify for and how to access them visit at www.va.gov/family-member-benefits/

Some of these benefits include: Health Care, Education & Training, Home Loan Programs, Life Insurance Options, Burial Benefits, Survivors Pensions, Compensation of Surviving Spouse & Dependents, Family Caregivers, VA Fiduciary Program, Fisher House Program, Coaching into Care and much more.

- SWITCH TO DIRECT DEPOSIT WITH VBBP

As we celebrate Veterans this November, the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) strives to provide benefits faster and better than ever before! If you're a Veteran, you can receive your VA benefit payments in a more secure, reliable, and inexpensive way by signing up for the Veterans Benefits Banking Program (VBBP). With VBBP, you can have your VA benefits deposited directly into your bank account instead of receiving a pre-paid debit card or paper check!

If you don't have a bank account, visit benefits.va.gov/banking or call one of VBBP's participating banks. If you have a bank account but are not using direct deposit, visit va.gov/change-direct-deposit or call 1-800-827-1000 (711).

- NEW ID CARDS FOR RETIREES, FAMILY MEMBERS ARE HERE

Defense Department began issuing Next Generation Uniformed Services Identification Cards, the first time since 1993 that changes to the card have been made. The complete transition to the new ID card is targeted for January 2026, said Michael Sorrento, director of the Defense Manpower Data Center. In the meantime, the current cards will continue to work. In an effort to conserve resources and limit the impact on ID card issuance

facilities, cards will not be reissued solely for the purpose of obtaining the Next Gen USID card. Sorrento discussed the new ID cards that are for military family members, retirees and other eligible card holders. The new ID card uses a much more durable plastic material, similar to that used for the common access cards used by military members and DOD civilians, he said. Also, the new ID cards feature enhanced security measures that will reduce the likelihood of them being compromised, Sorrento said. Although the new ID cards are available now, Sorrento said, only about 20 Real-Time Automated Personnel Identification Card System sites currently offer the card.

All RAPIDS sites worldwide likely will have the new equipment by the end of the year, he said. To reduce foot traffic -- particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic -- Sorrento said that unless a card is about to expire, it would be better to wait until next summer to get a new one. Even then, he added, it would be good to call ahead first to schedule an appointment.

- VA HONORS CAREGIVERS OF VETERANS THROUGHOUT NOVEMBER

During National Family Caregivers Month this November, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will honor the caregivers of Veterans for their invaluable health care, acknowledging the critical role they play in caring for Veterans every day — and even more so during the COVID-19 pandemic.

VA medical centers nationwide will host virtual events to raise awareness of the Caregiver Support Program's recent expansion and to highlight the contributions of Veterans' caregivers. "Caregivers are important members of a Veteran's health care team and the pandemic has amplified their significance," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "We recognize their ongoing commitment to the well-being of Veterans and the roles they play in Veterans' lives daily. Providing a wide range of resources to help them care for Veterans and themselves is paramount."

As part of VA's historic change to the Caregiver Support Program, the department began the first phase of expanding its Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC), Oct. 1, which extended the program to eligible Veterans who incurred or aggravated a serious injury in the line of duty on or before May 7, 1975. The second phase, effective Oct. 1, 2022, will expand the program to eligible Veterans who incurred or aggravated a serious injury in the line of duty between May 7, 1975 and Sept. 11, 2001. PCAFC offers assistance to Family Caregivers of eligible Veterans, including education and training, respite care, a monthly stipend and more.

VA also offers caregivers of Veterans services under the Program of General Caregiver Support Services (PGCSS). PGCSS is available to all caregivers who provide personal care services to covered Veterans enrolled in VA health care. PGCSS participants have access to education and training, respite care, and additional services such as VA's Peer Support Mentoring. To learn about local events or more about VA's Caregiver Support Program, contact your local facility's VA Caregiver Support Coordinator or call the Caregiver Support Line at 855-260-3274.

- VETERAN DISCOUNTS AND FREE MEALS ON VETERAN'S DAY

Below is a list of few place across the country offering a free meal, a free item, or a discount to veterans with proof of service on Veteran's Day.

Applebee's: Veterans and active-duty military receive a free meal from a limited menu at participating Applebee's on November 11. Dine-in only.

Bakers Square: Bakers Square will offer a free Rise & Shine breakfast to veterans on Veterans Day; this meal includes two eggs with seasoned hash browns or fresh fruit, plus your choice of toast, buttermilk pancakes, English muffin, bakery muffin or biscuit. Veterans will also receive a 20% off coupon for a future dining experience between November 12 and November 30.

Bob Evans: Bob Evans Restaurants is offering a special menu of seven home-style favorites available to veterans and active duty military free at their local Restaurant.

Bombshells Restaurants: All 10 Bombshells Restaurant & Bar locations in Texas will provide free meals and soft drinks for veterans and active service members on Veterans Day. Accompanying family members will receive a 20% discount.

Bowl & Barrel: Bowl & Barrel is offering a free burger for all veterans with a valid ID on Nov. 11.

Buffalo Wild Wings: Buffalo Wild Wings is offering a free order of 10 boneless wings and fries for all past and present armed services members this on November 11. The offer is available for dine-in or takeout and proof of service must be shown for redemption.

Cattlemens Steakhouse: Cattlemens Steakhouse offers current and former military members a complimentary 8 oz. Sirloin Steak dinner on Veterans Day, November 11.

Chili's Grill & Bar: All veterans & active military members can get a free meal on Veterans Day November 11, 2020 at all participating Chili's Grill & Bar restaurants. Available for in-restaurant only. Please call ahead to your local Chili's restaurant if you have any questions about your Veterans Day meals. Choice of one of the following: Chicken Crispers®; Margarita Grilled Chicken; Bowl of Chili or Soup & Salad; Chicken Bacon Ranch Quesadillas; Just Bacon Burger; Oldtimer with Cheese; Cajun Chicken Pasta.

Cicis Pizza: Cicis Pizza is offering a free adult buffet with a valid military I.D. on November 11, 2020 in honor of Veteran's Day.

Cotton Patch Café: Veterans and active duty are honored with a free Chicken Fried Steak or Chicken Fried Chicken on Veteran's Day.

Country Cookin': All active, reserve, retired, and honorably discharged members of the U.S. military will save \$5 off any entrée or get a free salad bar.

Cracker Barrel: Cracker Barrel is giving veterans the choice between a free Double Chocolate Fudge Coca-Cola Cake dessert, a slice of Fruit Cobbler, or their All-American Apple Pie.

Denny's: All Veterans and active duty service members with a valid military ID or DD 214 receive a free Build Your Own Grand Slam at participating Denny's locations on November 12, 2020, from 5 am to noon. Visit the Denny's website for details.

Eat'n Park: Eat'n Park Restaurants (www.eatnpark.com) is showing its appreciation for all active and former United States military personnel and their families by offering a 10% discount on their entire check during the month of November. The discount applies to all meals on the active or former military personnel's check. The

discount runs for the FULL month of November, from Sunday, November 1 through Monday, November 30, at all Eat'n Park locations in Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia.

Fogo De Chao: Offering Veterans and active duty personnel 50% off any meal on November 11 for dine-in only. In addition, up to three (3) guests per military Veteran or active-duty may receive 10% off their meals. Please contact your nearest Fogo De Chao location for details.

Golden Corral: Golden Corral will hand out free meal and beverage cards to all active duty and veterans from Nov. 1-30. The card will be valid for use once from Nov 1 thru May 31 for lunch or dinner on weekdays.

Glory Days Grill: Enjoy a free appetizer or an order of boneless or grilled boneless wings at Glory Days Grill restaurants in Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, and West Virginia.

Hopdoddy: On Wednesday, Nov. 11, Hopdoddy Burger Bar is offering a free Classic Burger (with or without cheese) to all Veterans and active military servicemembers. This offer is redeemable for in-store dining or to-go orders placed by phone.

Little Caesars: Veterans and active military members can visit Little Caesars on Wednesday, November 11th, from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM for a free \$5 Lunch Combo.

Logan's Roadhouse: On Wednesday, Nov. 11, all active duty and retired U.S. military personnel to enjoy a free meal between 3-6 p.m. from the American Roadhouse menu at participating Logan's Roadhouse restaurants.

Lucille's Smokehouse Bar-B-Que: Vets receive 20% off the entire month of Nov for Military Family Month.

McCormick & Schmick's: Veterans of the U.S. Military, National Guard, Gold Star Parents and Gold Star Spouses can enjoy a select half-priced entrée on Sunday, November 8, 2020.

O'Charley's : Get a free meal from the Veterans Thank You Menu, or \$10 off any meal on the regular menu, on Wednesday, November 11. Additionally, O'Charley's provides a 10% military discount all year long.

Old Chicago Pizza & Taproom: Free individual Pizza to military service members on Veterans Day, Nov. 11 when they show their U.S. Military ID.

Red Lobster: Red Lobster is offering a free appetizer or dessert to veterans, active duty military and reservists with a valid military ID on Wednesday, November 11. Dine in only. Guests may choose their free appetizer or dessert from a special menu that includes: *Appetizers* include Lobster and Langostino Pizza, Seafood-Stuffed Mushrooms, Parrot Isle Jumbo Coconut Shrimp, Langostino Lobster-Artichoke-and-Seafood Dip, NEW! Crab-Stuffed Shrimp Rangoon, Signature Jumbo Shrimp Cocktail, and Mozzarella Cheesesticks. *Desserts* include Chocolate Wave, Vanilla Bean Cheesecake, Warm Apple Crostada, and Key Lime Pie.

Red Robin: Veterans and active duty military who are Red Robin Royalty members are being offered a free Tavern Double Burger and Bottomless Steak Fries anytime between Nov. 11-30 for dine-in or to-go.

Shari's and Coco's Restaurants: Shari's and Coco's Restaurants are offering all veterans and active duty service members a free slice of pie, along with a "Buy One, Get One" free deal at all locations across the Pacific Northwest. Buy one entree and receive one of equal or lesser value at no charge; valid for breakfast, lunch or dinner, November 11 only.

Shoney's: Free All You Care To Eat, Breakfast Bar from 6 am - 11 am.

Texas Roadhouse: Texas Roadhouse will hand out dinner vouchers at store parking lots on Wednesday, November 11, from 11 am – 2 pm. Veterans and active military can redeem their dinner vouchers when they choose in-store until June of next year.

Twin Peaks: Corporate Twin Peaks locations are showing their appreciation to Armed Forces on Nov. 11 with a free meal from these options: chicken tenders, Carolina pulled pork sandwich, cheeseburger and the wedge.

The Rustic : The Rustic is offering free Rustic Burgers for all veterans and active military with a valid ID.

Village Inn: Village Inn will offer a free Village Inn Breakfast (V.I.B.) on Veterans Day. Additionally, veterans will receive a coupon with their meal to receive 20% off their next meal with Village Inn when dining between November 12 and November 30.

Wendy's: Wendy's nationwide is offering a free small breakfast combo with valid military ID. No purchase necessary. The deal runs from 6:30 – 10:30 a.m. Check your local Wendy's as breakfast hours may vary by location.

Whiskey Cake: Whiskey Cake Kitchen & Bar will be offering a free Whiskey Cake to military service members on Veterans Day, Nov. 11 when they show their US Military ID.

White Castle: White Castle is giving out a free Combo Meal (#1-#6) or a free Breakfast Combo Meal to veterans or active duty military on Veterans Day.

World of Coca Cola: From Nov. 2 to Nov. 12, 2020, members of the Armed Forces may purchase up to four general admission tickets at half-price for their friends and family to join them on a memorable visit to the World of Coca Cola. Tickets must be purchased online using promotional code “vets2020” and members will be asked to present their valid Armed Forces ID when they arrive at the attraction.

Yard House: To honor and celebrate those who have served our country, we invite veterans and active duty military to join us for a complimentary appetizer on Veteran's Day.

- **AFSA MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION**

Founded in 1961, the Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA) legislates, advocates and educates America's elected, military and community leaders in support of the quality of life for our 100,000 military members and their families. AFSA continues to work long and hard to ensure the many benefit reductions being proposed are minimized or nullified. Your membership will continue to pay dividends in terms of fair and equitable pay increases, retirement programs, educational benefits, and affordable and available health care.

AFSA MEMBERSHIP is open to all: UNIFORMED SERVICES: Active Duty, Guard, Reserve, Retired and Veteran Military Members (Joint Services Enlisted and Commissioned Officers), Public Health Services (PHS), and National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) personnel; FAMILY MEMBERS of Uniformed Service Members, and ASSOCIATE MEMBERS: DoD Civilians, Civil Air Patrol, JROTC, Mission Partners/Sponsors and all Military Supporters. Visit: WWW.HQAFSA.org for more information and to join.

- **ARE YOU A VETERAN IN CRISIS OR CONCERNED ABOUT ONE?**

Did you know that VA offers same day services in Primary Care and Mental Health at 172 VA Medical Centers across the country? Contact the Veterans Crisis Line (1-800-273-8255 and press 1, Chat, or Text 838255.)