

WASHINGTON STATE
DEPARTMENT OF
**VETERANS
AFFAIRS**



"Serving Those Who Served"

September 2025



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Greetings from your WDVA Director: David Puente

Last year, 212 Veterans in Washington died by suicide and behind each number is a name, a story, a family forever changed. We can carry their memory forward by taking action.

September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month (SPAM) and this year's theme, "*Speak Up, Save Lives*," reminds us that healing begins with connection. Talking about suicide breaks down stigma and opens doors to support. You don't need to be an expert, just willing to listen, learn, and lead with compassion.

WDVA offers free trainings, resources, and community partnerships to help you support service members, Veterans, and their families. We also remind you that [free counseling services](#) are available to both the Veteran AND their family member. Remember, whether you're a neighbor, provider, or friend, you have a role in this mission.

So, let's stand together. Let's speak up. And let's save lives,

For additional Suicide Prevention Awareness Month (SPAM) resources and to access our WDVA toolkit visit: [Suicide Prevention Awareness Month Toolkit | WDVA](#)

To reach the Veterans Crisis Line Dial **988 then Press 1**. To learn more visit: [Veterans Crisis Line](#)



WDVA News and Current Events

[Serving Those Who Served Conference 2025 Recap](#)



The Yakima Convention Center hosted the 8th annual Serving Those Who Served (STWS) Conference on August 20–21, bringing together more than 300 attendees from 30 Washington counties and beyond. The conference saw numerous tribal representatives and more than 100 federal, state, county and non-profit organizations present with a shared theme of putting 'Veterans First: Focusing on our Mission of Serving Those Who Served'.

Photos & Videos

- **Check out photos from the event here:** [2025 Serving Those Who Served Conference Photos | Flickr](#)
- **Video recordings from our breakout sessions can be found here:** [2025 Serving Those Who Served \(STWS\) Recap Testimonials Video](#)
- **Serving Those Who Served Recap Video:** <https://youtu.be/1by8P9bUCSk?si=G6IRPUBwx232NQ7T>

Partner Appreciation

Thank you to our sponsors: [Washington Department of Veterans Affairs](#), [Employment Security Department](#), [Washington State Arts Commission \(ArtsWA\)](#)

Read More: [Serving Those Who Served Conference 2025 Recap | WDVA](#)



SPEAK UP! September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month (SPAM)

SAVE LIVES

Your WDVA Suicide Prevention Team is proud to support this vital month with a simple reminder: **One voice, one check in, one moment of courage can make all the difference.**

Contact Us: connect@dva.wa.gov

SPAM Toolkit & QR code website: www.dva.wa.gov/spam

Open conversations break stigma, build hope, and connect people to life-saving support. **#SpeakUpSaveLives**

IDENTIFY CONNECT SAVE
SERVICE MEMBERS VETERANS AND FAMILIES

Veterans Crisis Line
DIAL 988 then PRESS 1

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
"Serving Those Who Served"

September is *Suicide Prevention Awareness Month*. Your WDVA invites you to join our efforts to inspire care and hope among service members, Veterans, and their families.

We acknowledge the lives lost to suicide and all impacted by losing loved ones and recognize we still have work to do to prevent tragedy by instilling hope! Our theme this year, **“Speak Up, Save Lives”**, encourages us to come together and support those who may be struggling. By talking about suicide, we shine a light on the need to dismantle barriers to wellness such as stigma, fear, and judgment.

The hopelessness, pain, and suffering experienced by those left behind is immeasurable and highlights the need to support SMVF in our communities and reduce deaths by suicide together.

Suicide is a public health crisis and can be prevented. **The [Veterans Crisis Line](#) is free and confidential and is available by calling 988, then pressing 1.** Individuals supporting a Veteran in crisis may also call 988 to receive assistance from crisis counselors.

Our Suicide Prevention Awareness Month ([SPAM](#)) [Toolkit](#) offers individuals, families, friends, and the community resources to connect SMVF in need of help to the services and supports individuals having difficulties with behavioral health concerns.

Read more: [September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month \(SPAM\) - Available resources and SPAM Toolkit from Washington Department of Veterans Affairs | WDVA](#)

1:00 P.M., September 10, 2025

SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS DAY VIRTUAL TRAINING

“SPEAK UP, SAVE LIVES!”

Join your Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs Suicide Prevention Team’s free, virtual training and attend our LEARN: Suicide Prevention Training in honor of an important month for Service Members, Veterans, and their Families (SMVF) who lost their lives to death by suicide and their survivors.

Register: Connect@dva.wa.gov
or join via [MS Teams](#)

Forefront’s LEARN Saves Lives for Veterans offers perspective on the unique challenges Veterans and their families face and teaches essential skills for support and suicide prevention, specifically tailored to those who have served, their loved ones, and those who work with or support them.



Scan to check out
our Suicide
Prevention
Awareness Month
Toolkit



Act Now! Get your 988 Emblem and Support Veterans in the Fight against Suicide

Heroes should never suffer in silence. Every day, Veterans face invisible battles. You can help make sure they know they're not alone.

By adding a [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline emblem](#) to your Washington license plate, you're sending a powerful message: *There is hope.*

Stand with our Veterans. Start the conversation. Drive change.

Visit [Suicide Prevention Emblem | WDVA](#) or scan the QR code in the image to take action today.

2025 marked the third anniversary of the nationwide launch of the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, a pivotal step toward accessible mental health support. In recognition of this milestone, the [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#) has released new resources urging policymakers to strengthen and expand crisis response systems across the country. Their message is clear: while 988 has opened doors, sustained investment is essential to ensure every call for help is met with compassionate, effective care.

Read more: [Three Years of 988: Awareness Grows, Support Needed | NAMI](#)

HEROES SHOULD NEVER SUFFER IN SILENCE

Support Veterans in the fight against suicide by adding a 988 emblem to your license plate!

988 LIFELINE | THERE IS HOPE!

WASHINGTON 988HOPE

Act now.
Scan to support our Veterans.

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

"Serving Those Who Served"

www.dva.wa.gov/SuicidePreventionEmblem

Hot August Night at Washington Soldiers Home - Recap

A joyful summer gathering in Orting brought together Veterans, residents, families, and community members for an evening of music, connection, and celebration on Aug. 26.

Highlights included:

- A classic car and motorcycle showcase
- Military vehicle displays
- Music at the WSH Gazebo by Entertainment Masters
- Veteran-Owned food trucks serving BBQ, Kona Ice, and ice cream
- Volunteer recognition and Best in Show awards

WDVA information tables offered resources on:

- Soldiers Home eligibility
- Veterans Benefits
- Employment and Volunteer Opportunities

Click the links below for photos and videos of the event:

- [Event Photos](#)
- [Individual Awards Video](#)
- [Group Awards Video](#)



Final Call for Outstanding Service to Veterans Awards: Celebrate Service. Elevate Impact. Nominations due September 30!

Award Categories

- **Superior Award** – Honoring exceptional achievements that truly stand out
- **Distinguished Service Award** – Recognizing meaningful, lasting contributions
- **Team Award** – Celebrating the power of collective dedication

Submit a nomination by **September 30, 2025**, Share the story of someone whose service deserves to be seen. Nominate [here](#).

To learn more or explore past honorees, visit the [Veterans Hall of Fame](#).

Let's make sure these everyday heroes don't go unnoticed. Your nomination could be the moment their quiet dedication gets the recognition it truly deserves.

Submit your nomination today and help us honor those who make service their legacy.

Learn More: [Outstanding Service to Veterans Awards - Now Accepting Nominations | WDVA](#)



Nominate Outstanding Service to Veterans Award -Shellie Willis - Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee

VIDEO - [Nominate Outstanding Service to Veterans Award -Shellie Willis - Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee](#)

Check out what's happening at our Veterans Homes

Washington Veterans Home



Residents and staff enjoyed a lively, educational bingo day with Lionel Kraft from the [Senior Housing Crime Prevention Foundation](#). Each number came with a quick fraud prevention tip, and winners chose from prizes like flashlights, magnifying glasses, and snacks.

Thank you, Lionel, for combining fun with safety and helping our community stay informed!



Washington Soldiers Home in Orting

Residents enjoyed a sunny day of fishing, laughter, and connection at the Soldiers Home Pond in Orting. With help from dedicated volunteers, the event became a celebration of camaraderie and care.

Special thanks to VFW Dept. of WA, VFW 2224, Behr Paints, the Pappas and Tucker families, and all volunteers who made it possible!



Walla Walla Veterans Home

tossing!

Scooters, flags, and plenty of spirit! Our residents brought energy and pride to [Walla Walla Fair and Frontier Days](#) parade, earning top honors in the senior's category. A joyful celebration of community, service, and a whole lot of candy



Spokane Veterans Home

Gone Fishin' at Deer Lake!

On Thursday, August 21st, residents from Spokane Veterans Home hit the water for a fishing trip at Deer Lake and what a day it was! Thanks to the West Shore Association, we were welcomed with open arms and treated to an unforgettable adventure.

Pontoon boats carried our Veterans across the lake as they cast lines, swapped stories, and caught (or *almost* caught!) some great fish. Of course, the best fish stories are about the ones that got away...

The day wrapped up with pizza, friendly visits, and a scenic drive home.

Huge thanks to our hosts and everyone who made this outing special!

WDVA Job Opportunities

Take a look at our [available opportunities](#) with WDVA!



Events & Observances Calendar

[Click Here to View Upcoming Events](#)

< > today **September 2025** month week day list [Submit an event for posting consideration.](#)
 Submissions accepted will be added within 2 business days if your submission meets the criteria.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	12:15 Veteran Rites 12-Day Rite of Return Ceremony -	17:30 Forward2gether TBH Peer Group -	10:30 VERG Monthly Meeting September 2025 - 12:00 Suicide Prevention Awareness Day Virtual Training -	09:00 The Wall That Heals, Port Townsend -	09:00 Washington National Guard CSM Abby West Organizational Day 2025 - 15:00 Bikes For All Community Resource Fair -	08:30 Redefining Your Future Symposium - 11:00 JSLM Housing Block Party & Resource Fair -
14		15	16	17	18	19
The Wall That Heals, Port Townsend -		09:00 Hire Heroes USA / Lacey Veterans Hub Career Prep Workshop -	09:00 The Complete Federal Resume -	09:30 Preventing Veteran Suicide by Combating Stigma: Building Awareness and Support -	09:00 2025 VA Community Mental Health Summit - 10:00 Skamania & Klickitat County Veteran Standdown -	14:00 Music for the Cause
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
		12:00 VA New Patient Orientation -				
28	29	30				
				09:00 Port Angeles Stand Down -	09:00 Snohomish County Veteran Stand Down -	

[Submit an Event](#)

Program Spotlights

SSG Fox Community Based Suicide Prevention Grant Program

The Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program enables the WDVA to provide resources toward community-based suicide prevention efforts to meet the needs of eligible Veterans and their Families through outreach, peer support, suicide prevention services, and connection to VA and community resources.

To learn more visit: [SSG Fox community-based suicide prevention | WDVA](#)

Watch the Program Video: [SSG Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program Video](#)

STAFF SERGEANT PARKER GORDON FOX SUICIDE PREVENTION GRANT PROGRAM

Supporting Veterans at risk of suicide through early identification and connection to vital resources like VA Health Care, financial assistance, counseling, peer support, and community programs.

Services

- Suicide Risk Screening
- Mental Health Assessments
- Peer Support Case Management
- Community Service Referrals
- Veteran Benefits Assistance
- Public Benefits Assistance
- Financial assistance with:
 - Transportation
 - Childcare
 - Food Support
 - Lethal Means Storage

Regions

Map showing service regions in Washington state.

For more information contact
 SSGFox@eva.wa.gov
 www.dva.wa.gov

Seal to Apply

Additional Information

Attorney General's Office releases report highlighting veterans' legal support needs statewide.

Click the link to read more. [Attorney General's Office releases report highlighting veterans' legal support needs statewide](#)



Download the VA Health and Benefits App

With the VA Health and Benefits App, you can refill prescriptions, message your care team or check your VA benefits using your smartphone. [Read the full article.](#)