

Recognizing Agent Orange Awareness Day



August 10, 1961 is the date thought to be the first day that the herbicide and chemical defoliant Agent Orange was sprayed in Vietnam. Agent Orange Awareness Day marks the anniversary of the substance being sprayed in Vietnam for the first time and is meant to raise awareness of the effects of the herbicide used during the Vietnam War. Not only does Agent Orange Awareness Day bring honor to Vietnam Veterans, but it also brings light to the continuing toll of Agent Orange exposure.

Agent Orange has affected the lives of thousands of Veterans and Veterans who served in Vietnam may have certain related illnesses as a result of exposure to Agent Orange and other herbicides.

In 1980, President Jimmy Carter formed the Interagency Working Group to foster and oversee federal activities relevant to Veterans' concerns about the possible adverse effects of Agent Orange. The panel, which included officials from the [VA](#), and the [Defense](#), and [Health and Human Services Departments](#), was created to oversee Agent Orange studies and supervise the work of the VA.

The [Agent Orange Act of 1991](#) responded to the many health-related concerns expressed by Vietnam Veterans in relation to herbicide exposure by requiring the VA to presume that Veterans who served “boots on the ground” in Vietnam were exposed to Agent Orange. Additionally, this landmark legislation cemented a presumption of service connection in which certain diseases were presumed to be service-connected and resulting from exposure to herbicides. In 2019, [Congress](#) passed the [Blue Water Navy Veterans Act](#), which extends

VA benefits and disability compensation for Agent Orange exposure to Blue Water Navy Veterans who served in Vietnam and the offshore waters.

Part of the broader conversation that is happening over Veterans' rights, the [PACT Act](#) is a new law that provides healthcare benefits for Veterans who were exposed to toxins during their service. To ensure Veterans can receive high-quality healthcare services related to toxic exposures, the PACT Act establishes expanded healthcare eligibility to Veterans exposed to burn pits and other toxic substances. Vietnam war era Veterans and survivors also stand to benefit from the legislative triumph. Whereas the VA has for decades presumed certain deployments to Vietnam exposed Veterans to Agent Orange, the PACT Act now includes post-9/11 and pre-9/11 war operations in presumptions of service connection related to toxic exposure.

FreshConnect Checks Offered for Veterans and Their Families



In collaboration with the [New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets](#), the [New York State Division of Veterans' Services](#) is offering [FreshConnect Checks](#) to assist Veterans, servicemembers, and their immediate family members with access to healthy foods.

Each eligible Veteran, servicemember, or family member may receive \$20 worth of FreshConnect Checks for redemption at participating farmers' markets and farm stands. Recipients can shop with these FreshConnect Checks and redeem them for dairy, produce, meat, fish, eggs, or any SNAP eligible food items at any farmer's market or farm stand in New York.

You may be eligible to receive FreshConnect Checks through the New York State Division of Veterans' Services on a first come, first served basis, while supplies are available.

If you are a Veteran, servicemember, or immediate family member of a Veteran, please call [\(888\) 838-7697](tel:8888387697) for more information on how to obtain FreshConnect Checks.

[Click here](#) to find a farmer's market near you.

Mayor Eric Adams and DVS Commissioner James Hendon Celebrate Victory for Veterans as PACT Act Signed into Law



[President Joe Biden](#) signed the Veterans' healthcare legislation on Wednesday, August 10 that ended a long battle to extend benefits for Veterans who were exposed to toxins during their time in the Armed Forces.

After a long battle, [DVS Commissioner James Hendon](#) and [NYC Mayor Eric Adams](#) celebrate [POTUS Joe Biden's](#) signing the [PACT Act](#) into law. The historic bill expands access to VA healthcare services for Veterans who became exposed to toxic substances during their military service.

See Commissioner Hendon and Mayor Adam's full [statement](#).

In Their Own Words: Volunteers Share Their

Thoughts on the Furniture Build-a-Thon



On Saturday, August 6, 2022 Veterans, First Responders, Veteran allies, civilians, and elected officials gathered for the agency's latest Furniture Build-a-Thon to build furniture for formerly unhoused Veterans. The diverse group of volunteers set up shop at [Juniper Valley Park](#) in Queens to put together countless tables and stools.

Volunteers share their stories:





[Fuller Center for the Housing of Greater New York City](#) volunteer:

"I volunteered with the [Fuller Center](#). What I love about volunteering is that you get to meet new people each time!"



[Fuller Center for the Housing of Greater New York City](#) CEO Jim Killoran (left):

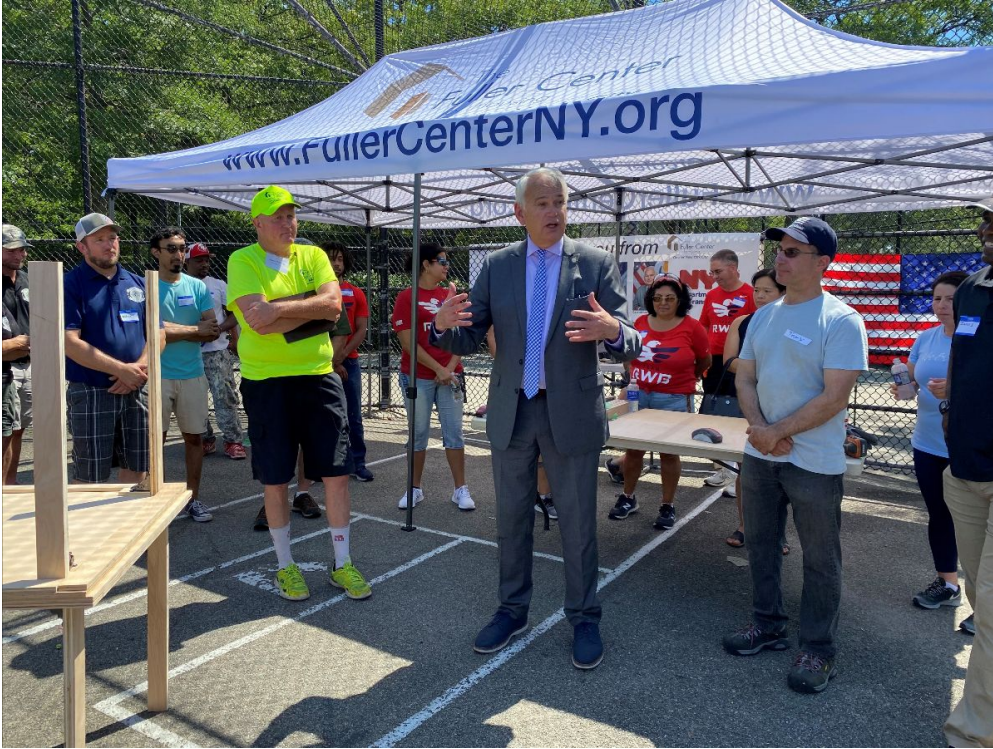
"We at the [Fuller Center](#) believe every Vet, every person, every family should have a decent home to live in. That's the heart of our mission."





Veteran-led humanitarian organization [Team Rubicon](#) volunteer Ray (far left):

"Happy to be here! [Team Rubicon](#) will always be there to help our Veterans!"



[NYC Council Member Robert F. Holden:](#)

"New York City is home to over 200,000 Veterans and active-duty servicemembers. It is an honor to be here to serve the needs of our Veterans."

Help build foldable tables and stools for formerly unhoused Veterans!

Head to our next Furniture Build-A-Thon, which will be held on Saturday, August 27 from 9:00 am - 1:00 pm at Juniper Valley Park in Queens on 80th St between Juniper Valley Blvd. N. and Juniper Valley Blvd. S.

Join Our Team! Be Part of the Mission



Department of Veterans' Services

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

Department of Veterans' Services College Aide

Have a passion for helping students? Students interested in a new career as a Department of Veterans' Services College Aide can apply online on the [NYC Jobs Portal](#).

Human Resources Generalist

Do you have a knack for good employee relations? Applications for the Human Resources Generalist are being processed. Apply online on the [NYC Jobs Portal](#).

Digital Communications Manager

Do you have a love of social media and see it as a place where you could help others? Applications for the Digital Communications Manager are being accepted. Apply directly using the [NYC Jobs Portal](#).

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

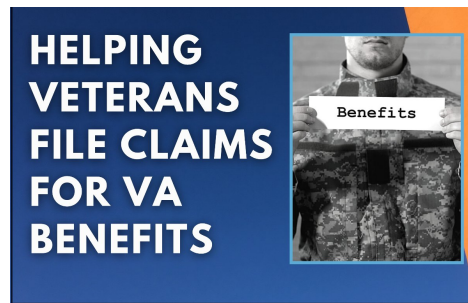


[VetConnectPro](#), is a new employment tool designed to help Veterans find employment within NYC government. The platform features a military skills translator that can match your service experience and Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) to City jobs and civil service exams. Upload your resume and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



Mission: VetCheck: An Aid to Veterans

[Mission: VetCheck](#) volunteers make check-in calls to Veterans throughout the five boroughs. Dedicated volunteers provide Veterans with information regarding vital public services, including free meals, information on COVID-19 testing and vaccination sites, and mental health resources. To volunteer with [Mission: VetCheck](#) or request a check-in call, [click here](#).



MISSION:
VetCheck *Let Us Move Forward Together*

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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