

Support Serve Advocate



Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs

HOOSIER VETERAN

Newsletter

November 2025

From the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs Director, Jake Adams

Welcome to the November Edition of the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA) Newsletter.



Hot Topic!! We are recognizing the challenges faced by the veterans and their families who depend on SNAP. The IDVA has crafted an emergency food assistance program to ensure that no MFRF eligible veteran families go hungry. Eligible participants will receive support ensuring they have access to essential food resources. Refer to our website for eligibility and to apply. You can apply [here](#).

We appreciate your continued feedback and will keep seeking your insights to ensure this newsletter remains a valuable resource. We hope you enjoy this edition and find it informative and inspiring.

COVER STORY

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CVSO SPOTLIGHT

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VETERANS DAY DISCOUNTS

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[Travel & More](#)

VETERAN BENEFITS AND HEALTHCARE

CONNECT WITH IDVA



If you have purchased any of the license plates below

THANK YOU!!

All Revenue
from these license plates fund the
Military Family Relief Fund.



Learn more about [MFRF's Operation Emergency Food application](#)

Financial hardship for this application determined by
the loss of SNAP benefits.

Military Family Relief Fund **Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs**

by Lynn Dickey
Director, Military Family Relief Fund

The Military Family Relief Fund (MFRF) was created by an act of legislation in 2006 that became effective in 2007. Since the creation of the fund more than 16,000 applications have been processed. The MFRF has seen six significant changes to the Indiana code governing the fund, most of which have addressed eligibility concerns. However, the mission of the MFRF has been unchanged; it is designed to assist veterans, servicemembers, and their dependents that are experiencing short term financial hardship. This grant is awarded for needs such as housing, utilities, food, medical services, or basic transportation (car payments, insurance, and basic essential car repairs) which have become difficult to afford.



MFRF Basic qualifying criteria are as follows:

- The veteran must be a resident of the state of Indiana.
- The veteran must have an honorable, under honorable conditions, or certain other than honorable discharges.
- The gross taxable household income cannot exceed 2 times the US federal poverty guidelines.
- The applicant must prove genuine financial hardship. Financial hardship is determined by a combination of the applicant's income, spending habits, and the hardship situation.

The MFRF is funded solely by the sale of military license plates and donations. These proceeds allow the MFRF to assist many veterans and their families avoid eviction or foreclosure of their homes, catch up on car payments, and keep their utilities from being interrupted. The success of the program is evident in the number of applications processed and the award amounts. In the past three years the MFRF has had the following statistics:

Calendar Year	Applications Processed	Assistance Awarded
2022	2,259	\$1,249,360
2023	2,306	\$1,113,570
2024	2,086	\$989,840

Not only does the MFRF assist Indiana veterans financially, but we also work closely with our partners to facilitate assistance with employment and financial counseling. Additionally, we engage with veteran service officers throughout Indiana to help veterans receive all possible benefits. The MFRF application is available on the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs website. IN.gov/DVA. There is a downloadable/printable application that can be emailed, faxed, mailed, or dropped off at our office, as well as an online portal to apply. It is recommended that you read the cover letter on the printable

application carefully if you are applying online. There is a required documents checklist that can help you gather your supporting documents for submission. All documents on this list are required to process the application to completion. There is also a very comprehensive FAQ on the IDVA website that can answer many of your questions.

There is an appeal process set up if the veteran does not agree with the decision concerning their MFRF application. To appeal, the applicant needs to write a letter explaining why they disagree with the final decision and send it to us by email, fax, or postal service mail.

A telephonic hearing is set up for the veteran with the Indiana Office of Administrative Law

Proceedings. At this hearing the veteran can present their testimony and IDVA presents their evidence and testimony. The administrative law judge renders a decision and informs both parties. The whole process usually takes 2 weeks.

Lastly, the MFRF Program has been decorated with two notable awards. First, in 2022, MFRF won the Abraham Lincoln Pillar of Excellence award in the category of Innovative State Programs. This marked the first time the IDVA won this award. The MFRF Program was recognized for responding to the needs of Indiana veterans during the COVID pandemic. Second, in 2023, the MFRF was presented with the Governor's Public Service Award for its COVID program and for excellent service to the Indiana veteran community.

3 WAYS TO APPLY

Online/Mobile

- 1 Apply right from your computer or phone

Printable

- 2 Fill out your application and submit via mail, fax, or email

3rd Party

- 3 Need assistance with your application? Your **CVSO** can help!

[Find your County Veteran Service Officer \(CVSO\)](#)



MOBILE FRIENDLY

The MFRF online application is easy to complete with your smartphone

- Easily upload documents
- Scales to mobile screens

County Veteran Service Officer (CVSO) Spotlight

Jon Oswalt

Nov 3, 1948–Oct 11, 2025

Honoring a Legacy of Service: Jon Oswalt's Lifelong Commitment to Veterans and Education



Jon Douglas Oswalt dedicated his life to service—both in uniform and in the classroom. Jon's early years were shaped by a strong sense of duty and family entrepreneurship. His father, an Army veteran of World War II, returned to Indiana from Florida to establish Oswalt Menu Co. Jon's work ethic emerged early. By age 10, he was helping in the family business and later joined the workforce at A&P grocery store at just 14, becoming a union member. He also worked at Marsh, contributed to the family farm, and traveled to sell menus to restaurant clients.

Jon enlisting in the United States Marine Corps in 1969 and served honorably until 1971, achieving the rank of lance corporal. Proud to be "one of the few and the proud," Jon later used the GI Bill[®] and graduated from Ball State University, earning both a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Arts.

Jon's career in education spanned decades. He taught junior high Mississinewa and Blackford High School—industrial arts and history. He coached football for 20 years, including the 1979 state championship team, principal at Montpelier Middle School and Blackford High School. His impact on students, athletes, and colleagues was lasting.

Jon continued his service as Blackford County's Veterans Service Officer. In May 2023, he participated in an Honor Flight to Washington, D.C. with his daughter—a meaningful experience that celebrated his military service and lifelong dedication to veterans.

Jon Oswalt's legacy lives on through the many lives he touched—as a Marine, educator, coach, veteran advocate, and community leader. His story is a testament to the power of service, and his contributions continue to inspire those who follow in his footsteps.



Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs Employee Spotlight: Kelly Cherry



Kelly Cherry is our Agency Administrative Support Manager and a dedicated team member at the

Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA). Before joining IDVA, she worked approximately 16 years with the Indiana National Guard, bringing a wealth of experience and commitment to her role.

This month, we're spotlighting Kelly for one of many extraordinary achievements: she owns a 2002 Toyota Solara with over 400,000 miles! That's right—this is the very car she drives back and forth to work, covering a 90-mile round trip every day.

Kelly bought the Solara brand new and has meticulously maintained it with regular oil changes and routine upkeep. The vehicle has never been in a major crash or even a minor fender bender. She chose it for its sleek style and practicality—her tall husband fits comfortably behind the wheel, just in case he needs to take the reins.

The car's top speed? A zippy 85 miles per hour. As Kelly candidly shares, "I have been pulled over for speeding more times than I can count."

We appreciate your punctuality at work, Kelly—but please slow down and stay safe on the road! Thank you for your dedication to veterans!



Veterans Day Savings

Restaurants



Retail



Veterans Day Travel Deals



More Discounts/More Savings

NOW ON
**BUY MORE
SAVE MORE
MORE DISCOUNTS**





Veteran Affairs Benefits and Healthcare

All VA Indiana Healthcare System Facilities Remain Open Despite the Federal Government Shutdown



READ MORE

BEWARE OF CLAIMS PREDATORS!

You do not need to pay **ANYONE** to receive your benefits.

VA urges Veterans to use only VA accredited representatives and be on the lookout for aggressive **claims predators**.

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



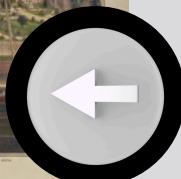
Your Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs is OPEN!

317-232-3910

IDVA website



History of VA and its Administrations



Veterans Crisis Line
DIAL 988 then **PRESS 1**

Military & Veteran Community Observances



NOVEMBER

National Veterans and
Military Families Month

November 10 Marine Corps Birthday
11 Veterans Day

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

Sat
1

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
9	10	11	12	13	14	15

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
16	17	18	19	20	21	22

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Fri	Sat	
23	24	25	26		28	29

Sun
30



[IDVA Calendar of Events](#)

[IDVA Calendar of Events](#)



Do YOU have an event you want to share?

[Submit Your Veteran Event](#)



**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

ABOUT IDVA

INDIANA VETERANS
MEMORIAL CEMETERY

INDIANA STATE APPROVING
AGENCY

INDIANA VETERANS HOME

