

*Olmsted County  
Veteran Services  
Veterans Advocate Newsletter  
March 2022*

**Veteran Services is now open for scheduled appointments ONLY.**

The Olmsted County Veteran Service office will meet with veterans by appointment ONLY. We hope this does not create a burden for our veterans, and families; however, we need the time to provide you the best customer service when you are in our office, without making you wait for an undetermined amount of time to meet with one of us. To make an appointment, please visit [www.olmstedcounty.gov/veterans](http://www.olmstedcounty.gov/veterans), or call our office at 507.328.6355.

**When you make an appointment, please write it down, or make yourself a reminder, as we have had many no shows and cancellations. This is time that another veteran could have used.**

We are unable to assist veterans outside of Olmsted County. Every county in Minnesota provides a veteran service officer to assist you. You can find your county veteran service officer by visiting [www.macvso.org](http://www.macvso.org).

Thank you for your service.

[Olmsted County Veterans Appointment Calendar](#)

**Veterans | Olmsted County, MN**

**Address:**

Olmsted County Veteran Services Office  
2100 Campus Drive SE, Suite 200  
Rochester, MN 55904

**Phone:** 507-328-6355

**Fax:** 507-328-7950

Email: [veteranservices@olmstedcounty.gov](mailto:veteranservices@olmstedcounty.gov)

# **VA proposes updates to disability rating schedules for respiratory, auditory and mental disorders body systems**

In a news release posted today, VA **proposed** changes to the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities (VASRD) specifically pertaining to the respiratory, auditory, and mental disorders body systems. The changes would incorporate medical advancements for treating certain disabilities and modern medical knowledge to accurately compensate Veterans. VASRD is used to determine the appropriate level of compensation for each service-connected disability based on the severity of the condition as documented by supporting medical evidence. VA is in the process of updating all the body systems in the VASRD to reflect modern evaluative criteria based on advancements in medical terminology, diagnostics, and treatment.

Since these are **proposed** changes, they will not affect evaluations of any Veteran currently receiving compensation for an impacted disability. Instead, this is an opportunity for Veterans and the public to comment on these proposed changes over the next 60 days. VA will consider the comments received and address them in a subsequent final rule which may make these changes effective.

Some of the proposed changes include modernizing the evaluation criteria for sleep apnea by evaluating it based on the symptoms' responsiveness to treatment. If symptoms are fully treated by a CPAP machine or other treatment, a Veteran would be rated at 0% and not receive compensation; VA will award progressively higher percentage evaluations based upon how symptomatic the condition remains after treatment. This will bring the rating criteria for sleep apnea more closely in line with the stated purpose of the rating schedule, which is to provide evaluations based upon average impairment of earning capacity.

**For respiratory conditions such as asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), the proposed rules would slightly lower the requirements for a 100% rating. For tinnitus, the proposed changes would recognize that symptom within the Veteran's broader ailment and provide service-connected compensation for tinnitus through the disease to which it is attributed.**

**The proposed rules for mental health conditions would increase the minimum disability rating from 0% to 10%. The rule would get rid of a dated part of VASRD that prevents a Veteran from getting a 100% rating for a mental health condition if they are able to work.**

VA will ensure Veterans get the compensation they need and deserve, especially when it comes to mental disorders. Under the proposed changes, VA plans to use new evaluation criteria to more accurately capture the different domains of impairment caused by mental disabilities and provide more adequate compensation for financial losses experienced by Veterans with service-connected mental disorders. Rather than assigning an evaluation based on the number and type of symptoms present, these changes would evaluate mental disorders based on how impactful the disability is across five domains of impairment: Cognition, interpersonal interactions and relationships, task completion, life activities and navigating environments, and self-care.

Once again, there will be no change to any Veteran's current rating based on these proposed changes. When the proposed changes are finalized, Veterans who currently receive compensation for a service-connected condition can apply for increased compensation. And even if a Veteran's symptoms no longer warrant the current evaluation they have based on the finalized changes, no reductions shall be made unless an improvement in the Veteran's disability is shown to have occurred based on the last schedule used to assign their evaluation.

# Women Veteran Over 40 Discussion Group

This group will provide an opportunity for women veterans 40 years old and over to come together for support and community while learning creative ways to choose joy, spread joy, and receive joy using evidence-based approaches to support stress relief, resilience, productivity, and healthy living.

Sessions include:

- Discussion on relevant physical, emotional, and spiritual health and wellness topics
- SMART goal development and accountability
- Aromatherapy education for overall wellness and application for targeted support
- Education and preparation of aroma stick, rollerball, or spray for application at home

**Hosted by:** Dr. Letticia N. Callies, DMin, MA, CCA

**Where:** VFW Post 1215, back conference room, 2775 43rd Street NW, Rochester, MN 55901

**When:** Tuesdays, Feb 1 Mar 1 Apr 5 May 3 Jun 7 Jul 5 Aug 2 Sept 6 Oct 4 Nov 1 Dec 6

**Time:** 6pm-8pm



## Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program and COVID forbearance set to end in May 2022

With the changes to the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program and COVID forbearance set to end in May 2022, **now** is the time to schedule a student loan appointment. We can help you navigate the confusing repayment and forgiveness programs so you know your next steps and how to move forward.

Direct Federal student loan payment pause has lasted for over two years. Bringing this payment back into your budget is a big change, and may be a challenge. LSS counselors understand what people are going through. Contact us to:

- Review payment options in light of your overall financial situation
- See if any of the changes to student loans or Public Service Loan Forgiveness apply to you
- Create steps on what to do moving forward

Avoid common student loan scams

Please reach out to set up a **free** phone or video-chat appointment please call our scheduling line 888.577.2227

"In 2005, I started my non-profit career. When the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program was announced in 2007, it was incredible news. Unfortunately, I was misinformed and led to believe that my consolidated student loans were no longer Federal and PSLF would never be an option for me.

Thankfully, I work at LSS Financial Counseling, where I was told *my loans were still Federally-backed AND as a result of new changes to Public Service Forgiveness, my loans WILL qualify.*

**I am on my way to have the last of my federal student loans forgiven!"**

- Ashley Hagelin, Senior Program Manager



Apply by March 19, 2022

Free Lodging and Meals

provided by our sponsors



# DISABLED *Veteran* TURKEY HUNT

Tuesday – Thursday

April 26-28, 2022



A safe, positive activity for disabled veterans

Must be a Minnesota Resident

Must be a veteran of the United States Armed Services

Camp Ripley, Little Falls, MN

Space is limited. For more information or to apply, visit us at  
[www.mnvetsoutdoors.org](http://www.mnvetsoutdoors.org) or email us at [mnvetsoutdoors@gmail.com](mailto:mnvetsoutdoors@gmail.com)



Minnesota Veterans & Veterans Trust Fund



VFW VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

# Free Options to File Your 2021 Taxes

If you worked in 2021, you may be eligible for up to \$6,728 at tax time from the Earned Income Tax Credit.

## VITA Tax Help

Through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, you will receive personal assistance with an IRS certified tax volunteer at a VITA preparation site.

**Appointment Information** - It is required to schedule an appointment for this assistance. Please utilize the United Way referral number 211 or 800-543-7709 or schedule online at [vitataxprep.as.me](http://vitataxprep.as.me) beginning Jan. 17, 2022. Appointments occur Feb. 1 – April 15, 2022.

Please pick up and complete the required intake forms and organize your documents before arriving at your scheduled time.

## Location Information

VITA sites in this area include:

125 Live

Hawthorne Education Center

The Salvation Army

Stewartville Center for Active Adults

Mantorville Senior Center

**Information Needed** - See page 2 for information needed by your VITA volunteer to assist with your tax preparation and restrictions on the type of taxpayers VITA can help.

## Filing taxes online

There are no cost options to file your own taxes if qualified. Go to [myfreetaxes.com](http://myfreetaxes.com) and complete both federal and state returns for free (some filers may have a cost nearing \$25 for certain forms). Phone and chat help are available on their website.

Other online options:

Both the IRS and the MN Department of Revenue provide options for completing fillable forms online beginning in mid-January, 2022.

For federal taxes, go to [irs.gov](http://irs.gov) and search for free filing options. For state taxes, go to [www.revenue.state.mn.us/file-income-tax-return](http://www.revenue.state.mn.us/file-income-tax-return)



# Now offering RELOCATION ASSISTANCE!



Tyson Foods of Waterloo, IA is RECRUITING!

General Production – Earn up to \$20 per hour!

Maintenance – Start up to \$23 per hour!

Let us know where your friends and family are and we will travel and bring them to work for Tyson!

## Tyson Foods' Relocation Include:

- Tyson Fresh Meats will reimburse bus transportation to Waterloo, IA to recruit after the completion of orientation. Recruit must provide a valid receipt with charges clearly listed.  
OR
- Tyson Fresh Meats will give Recruits 2 \$50 gift cards for gas at arrival for recruits that drives their own vehicle to Tyson Foods for employment. The Recruit must provide a copy of the vehicle registration.
- If a Recruit is unable to provide Proof of Identification for employment the recruit will be returned to the area that they were recruited from.
- When Requested, Tyson Fresh Meats will provide lodging in a hotel room for up to 14 days not to exceed 30 days, based on individual needs.
- If staying in a hotel, Recruits agree that they will be responsible for the costs of damages to the hotel. If a Recruit is evicted, Tyson Foods is no longer responsible for the recruits housing or transportation.
- Tyson Fresh Meats will provide 2 (\$5) meal vouchers per day (total of 28 meal tickets) while Recruits are residing in the motel for a maximum of 2 weeks. Breakfast will be provided by the hotel.
- For the purpose of housing, A maximum of \$750 payroll advance will be available for approval, for the purpose of housing with proof of signed residential rental agreement. This advance will be payroll deducted. Min of \$50 per week max \$100 per week in repayment.

**TAXES: THE RELOCATION ASSISTANCE BENEFITS ARE CONSIDERED AS INCOME AND WILL BE TAXED ACCORDINGLY**

Please notify AJ Royer of location to travel.

[aj.royer@tyson.com](mailto:aj.royer@tyson.com) or call/text 319-252-7327

- Successful applicants for this position must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 as a condition of employment. Vaccine verification will be required prior to being allowed into the facility for orientation for plant and warehousing team members.

aj.royer@  
tyson.com



# PTSD Support Group

Want to: Know that others are going through something similar to you? Learn tips on how to handle day-to-day challenges? Meet new friends or connect with others who understand you? Learn how to talk about things that bother you or how to ask for help? Learn to trust other people? Hear about helpful new perspectives from others? Then this is the group for you!

SEMCIL, and Olmsted County Veteran Services is offering a support group for Veterans that have been diagnosed with PTSD, or those who have signs and symptoms of PTSD, and their family members. Sometimes the most painful injuries aren't physical. Whether it's PTSD, TBI, combat stress, or any other mental health condition, we're here to help you get through it. The group will be facilitated by Jennifer

Shumaker, Veteran and Olmsted County Veterans Service Officer.

**Where:** VFW Post 1215, 2775 43rd St NW (back room)

**When:** Thursday's 2022 dates

**Jan 20, Feb 24, Mar 24, Apr 21, May NO MEETING**

**I have other commitments the entire month!**

**time:** 6:30PM-8:00PM

Questions call or email: Jennifer Shumaker, 507-328-6355 or

[shumaker.jennifer@co.olmsted.mn.us](mailto:shumaker.jennifer@co.olmsted.mn.us)

# **VETERANS RESOURCE FAIR**

BROUGHT TO YOU BY

THE DODGE CENTER AMERICAN LEGION



Saturday March 26<sup>th</sup>

2:00 PM – 7:00 PM

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*If you served our Nation.*

*Come find out about some of the resources available to you!!!!!!*

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To register a table, please contact Nathan Jensen-  
Nathan.jensen1@yahoo.com

Dodge Center American Legion Post 384 Wells- Peterson  
401 Hwy St W, Dodge Center, MN 55927  
507-633-6420

# LOCAL MEETINGS

Some organizations have resumed meetings. Call each one respectively for more information.

## **Rochester American Legion Post 92**

(507)282-1322  
915 21st Ave SE  
Rochester, MN 55904  
3rd Tuesday of each month  
6pm  
Auxiliary Unit 92  
3rd Tuesday of each month  
5:30pm  
Sons of the American Legion  
2nd Thursday of each month  
6PM  
Legion Riders  
3rd Thursday of each month  
7pm

## **Rochester VFW Post Meeting**

(507) 289-6818  
2775 43rd St. NW  
Rochester, MN 55901  
2nd Tuesday of each Month VFW Post 1215  
7pm  
Marine Corps League  
4th Tuesday of each month  
7pm

## **Byron American Legion Post 119**

(507) 775-6871  
505 Frontage Road NW, Byron, MN  
3rd Monday of the month  
6pm

## **Vietnam Veterans of America**

(507) 990-1347  
Meets 4th Monday each month  
at 7:00pm,  
Vietnam Veterans Spouse Support Group  
Meets 4th Monday each month  
At 7:00pm  
Thor Detachment 606 Marine Corp League Meeting  
4th Tuesday of the month, 7pm  
MOPH  
3rd Thursday of the month 6pm  
VFW Post 1215  
2775 43rd St NW, Rochester, MN 55901

## **Stewartville American Legion Post 164**

(507) 533-9281  
1100 2nd Ave NW, Stewartville  
Meeting 3rd Monday each month, 7:30pm

## **Stewartville VFW Post 8980**

(507) 533-9281  
1100 2nd Ave NW, Stewartville  
Meeting 1st Monday each month, 7pm

## **DAV Meeting**

(507) 773-5055  
1652 Hwy 52 N, Rochester, MN 55901  
2nd Monday, of each Month Rochester's Elks Lodge  
5:30pm dinner, meeting at 6:00pm  
DAV Auxiliary  
Meetings on hold through March 2022  
Contact Margo for more information:  
[MNDAVAux28@gmail.com](mailto:MNDAVAux28@gmail.com)

## **Korean Veterans**

Every Monday at Grandmas Kitchen  
1514 N Broadway, Rochester, MN 55906  
(Silver lake plaza)  
8 AM

## **Kasson American Legion Post 333**

(507) 634-4353  
212 West Main Street , Kasson, MN 55944  
Third Thursday of the month, 8pm

## **Chatfield VFW Post 6913**

(507) 867-3144  
9- 2nd St SW, Chatfield, MN  
2nd Monday of the month 7:00pm

## **Eyota American Legion Post 551**

(507) 545-2688  
2nd Monday each month 6:30pm  
11 Madison Ave NW  
Eyota, MN 55934  
Legion Riders  
4th Wednesday each month 7:30pm

## **Pine Island American Legion Post 184**

(507)356-8991  
108 1st Ave SE  
Pine Island, MN  
2nd Monday of the month 7PM

## **Oronoco VFW Post 9647**

(507) 367-4635  
5 MN Avenue S  
Oronoco, MN 55960  
First Tuesday of each month 7pm  
Auxiliary meeting same time, separate meeting

## **Dodge Center American Legion Post 384**

(507) 633-6420  
401 Highway St W  
Dodge Center, MN 55927  
2nd Monday each month 7pm

## **SPAM All Women American Legion Post 570**

First Monday of each month 530pm  
American Legion Post 91  
809 12th St SW  
Austin, MN  
For more info contact Eileen Chao (507) 4374583

*“To promote the interests and welfare of veterans, their dependents and survivors and to enhance their quality of life through counseling, claims assistance, education, advocacy and special projects.”*

Veteran Services  
2100 Campus Drive  
SE, Suite 200  
Rochester, MN 55904

