



DECEMBER 2023

NEWSLETTER

FPAC Veterans Special Emphasis Program



CALENDAR

FPAC Veterans Day Wellness Challenge Results

More than 26,000 miles
699 Strava members
Over 50 Teams

*Happy
Holidays*

December 1 - Civil Air Patrol
(USAF Auxiliary) Birthday

December 5 - World Soil Day

December 7 - Pearl Harbor
Remembrance Day

December 7-15- Hanukkah

December 13 - US National
Guard Birthday

December 18 - National
Wreaths Across America

December 21 - Monthly
Meeting

December 21 - Winter Solstice

December 25 - Christmas Day

December 28 - Pledge of
Allegiance Day

December 31 - New Year's Eve



Upcoming Training Opportunities from the Civil Rights Division

1/24/24 Micro-Aggressions
2/7/24 Program Complaint Overview
3/6/24 EEO and ADR: The Road to Resolution
7/18/24 Program Complaint Overview
9/18/24 EEO and ADR: The Road to Resolution

Work Life and Wellness Events

12/6-Make and Take Holiday Entertainment
12/7-Understanding Self Care
12/12-Taking Care of Yourself Webinar



Remember the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program This Season

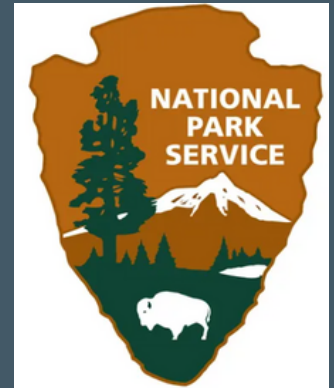
As you make your holiday plans during this season of giving, please consider donating to your colleagues in the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program (VLTP), who have personal or other family medical emergencies and who have exhausted their own leave. It's a great way to use your annual leave if you have use-or-lose leave and won't be able to use it yourself. It's easy to donate leave to VLTP recipients through WebTA.

There is no limit on the amount of donated annual leave a leave recipient may receive from donors.

However, any unused donated leave must be returned to the leave donors when the medical emergency ends. To learn more, including the names of employees eligible to receive donations, please visit the [VLTP page on OneUSDA](#)

Veterans, Gold Star Families
get free lifetime pass to national
parks, wildlife refuges, other public
lands.

https://news.va.gov/110751/free-lifetime-pass-to-national-parks/?utm_source=feature&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=VetResources&utm_id=22NOV2023



Employee Discrimination Complaints

If you are a Federal employee or job applicant, the law protects you from discrimination because of your race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity, sexual orientation, and pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability, or genetic information. The law also protects you from retaliation if you oppose employment discrimination, file a complaint of discrimination, or participate in the EEO complaint process (even if the complaint is not yours.)

There are also Federal laws and regulations and Executive orders that prohibit discrimination on bases such as sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, or political affiliation.

If you are a Federal employee or job applicant and you believe that a Federal agency has discriminated against you, you have a right to file a complaint.

File an EEO Complaint Electronically

<https://intranet.usda.gov/agencies/farm-production-and-conservation-fsa-nrcs-rma-fpac-bc/civil-rights>

<https://intranet.usda.gov/civil-rights-complaints>

<https://www.eeoc.gov/federal-sector/overview-federal-sector-eeo-complaint-process>



Coping with Stress and Depression During the Holidays

- Keep expectations for the holiday season manageable. Try to set realistic goals for yourself. Pace yourself. Organize your time. Make a list and prioritize the important activities. Be realistic about what you can and cannot do. Do not put entire focus on just one day remember it is a season of holiday sentiment and activities can be spread out (timewise) to lessen stress and increase enjoyment.
- Remember the holiday season does not banish reasons for feeling sad or lonely; there is room for these feelings to be present, even if the person chooses not to express them.
- Leave “yesteryear” in the past and look toward the future. Life brings changes. Each season is different and can be enjoyed in its own way. Don’t set yourself up in comparing today with the “good ol’ days.”
- Do something for someone else. Try volunteering some time to help others.
- Enjoy activities that are free, such as driving around to look at holiday decorations; going window shopping without buying; making a snow person with children.
- Be aware that excessive drinking will only increase your feelings of depression.
- Try something new. Celebrate the holidays in a new way.
- Spend time with supportive and caring people. Reach out and make new friends or contact someone you have not heard from for a while.
- Save time for yourself! Recharge your batteries! Let others share responsibility of activities.



During the holidays, make sure you check in with yourself as you would with your loved ones.

If you recognize you need help, reach out to the people around you, or you can contact the Veterans Crisis Line at Dial 988 then Press 1.

Some things to look out for are:

Anxiety, agitation, sleeplessness or mood swings
Feeling excessive guilt, shame or sense of failure
Increasing alcohol or drug misuse
Neglecting personal welfare and appearance

You can also take a confidential, anonymous self-check quiz to see if stress and depression might be affecting you.

<https://news.va.gov/126296/suicide-prevention-touch-friends-family-myself/>

Employee Assistance Program

If you need help, you may contact the EAP to obtain free professional counseling, legal, financial support, and more to help manage work and life responsibilities. A wealth of helpful information and resources are located on the EAP website at <https://care.espyr.com/>. Use the following password to login: usdafpac. You may reach the EAP 24/7, 365 days a year for assistance by calling 1-866-869-0276.

In addition, if you or someone that you know find it difficult to manage personal or workplace challenges and feel hopeless with suicidal thoughts, please reach out to the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline for immediate help or call 911. The Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is available 24/7, 365 days a year and you can reach them by texting or calling 988, and by chat.

