



# EAGLE STUDENT VETERAN NEWSLETTER

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USI.EDU/VETERANS



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## Stay Informed

Find out about events involving the Student Veteran campus community by following us on GroupMe, Facebook and Engage!

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### University Winter Recess

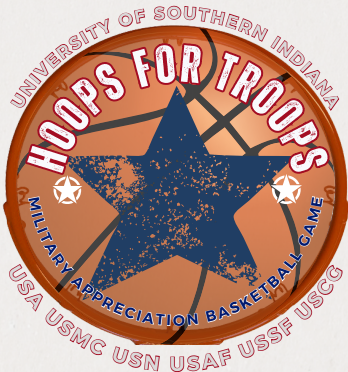
December 23 – January 4

University closed for winter break

### Hoops for Troops – Military Appreciation Basketball Game

Saturday, January 24

Veterans of all eras and their families are invited to our annual game. See details on page 2.



### River City Veterans Resource Meeting

Thursday, January 29

USI Campus – Griffin Center 10:00

Join veteran support organizations from across the region to learn about different programs aimed at supporting veterans and their families.

# HAPPY HOLIDAYS

## Program Spotlight

## Semester Benefit Request Forms Needed for Spring 2026

If you are a VA Education Benefit recipient, you must submit a new Semester Benefit Request Form to ensure your claim for benefits can be processed in a timely manner.

This form is required EACH semester you want to claim benefits. It is a good practice to complete this form once you have the next semester scheduled. This ensures that you have completed your requirements and places the task to the Veteran Military and Family Resource Center to complete.

If you haven't already done so, please complete yours today by selecting the link below: [NEW Semester Educational Benefit Request Form \(For ALL VA requests\)](#).

## UNIVERSITY CAMPUS CLOSED FOR WINTER BREAK

The University will close all offices on campus for the winter break from December 23 – January 4, 2026.

If you have administrative items that need addressed by any campus office, including ours, please ensure you make an appointment with that office before this date so you can resolve any matters before the closure.

USI staff will not be available during the break so please plan accordingly.

## Staff Feature

## 2024 Hoops for troops scheduled for January 24, 2026

On January 24, 2026 the USI Student Veteran Association will offer FREE tickets to all veterans and military on our campus and in the community for the 12th annual "Hoops for Troops - Military Appreciation Basketball Game".

The Screaming Eagles will take on Western Illinois University Leathernecks in the Screaming Eagles Arena (SEA). The game times are 1:00p.m. for the women and 3:30p.m. for the men.

"This is something we look forward to doing every year. While we would like to see more of our community come out to support the teams, it's just a fun day to see everyone within the veteran community" said Joel Matherly, Assistant Director of the Veteran Military and Family Resource Center.

The event is open to veterans of all eras and includes up to five (5) tickets for all guests. Tickets can be picked up the day of the game at the veteran ticket window in the SEA.

"We have arranged a court-sized flag again this year and will have members of Honor Flight of Southern Indiana, Rolling Thunder, Indiana Chapter 6, and the Wounded Warrior Project help us with the presentation and National Anthem."

"We hope that the veterans will come out so we can expand on what we can offer to our campus and community," said Matherly. The celebration begins with a court-sized flag in which all veterans are invited to come to the court to participate in.



**What is 375' long,  
7' tall,  
and travels over 20,000  
miles a year including a  
stop at USI?  
FIND OUT IN 2026!**

## Community Veteran Resources

## River City Veteran's Resource Resume Meetings Jan 29

The River City Veteran Resource Group finished its first year strong as community organizations celebrated in October to mark the first anniversary of its re-branding.

"This has been an exciting year as we reconvened a group that has helped so many tri-state veterans", said Joel Matherly.

The RCVRG meets in person to provide information and further discussion on Veteran related topics. The meetings are open to all veterans and organizations that have a veteran support factor attached to their business or non-profit.

The next meeting will be held on January 29, 2026 from 10 - 11a.m. at the Griffin Center.



## Staff Feature

## JD Sheth Foundation Aid's in Veteran Home Ownership

The Home of the Brave Program is a new initiative by the JD Sheth Foundation (JDSF) to assist local veterans in becoming homeowners. Phase 1 of the project will include building three homes in the Jacobsville Community of Evansville, IN with ground breaking in 2022 (funding dependent). JDSF is currently screening applicants to be considered for home ownership.

### Home of the Brave Requirements

- Applicant must be an honorably discharged veteran of the U.S. Military (DD214 form is required), a child of a veteran, or widow of a veteran.
- Client must be a current resident of Indiana, Illinois, or Kentucky.
- Applicant must demonstrate a need for housing:
  - Unable to get a secondary market loan.
  - Current living situation is overcrowded.
  - Current living situation has unsafe issues the landlord will not fix.
  - Overburdened by the cost of current rent.
  - Current living situation is not a safe environment.
- Applicant must be willing to volunteer at least 25 hours with a local nonprofit whose mission is something other than affordable housing.
- Applicant must attend a financial literacy class through Fannie Mae, Hope of Evansville, Evansville Christian Life Center, or other HUD approved program. Client must cover the cost of the class.
- Applicant must have a credit score of at least 600.
- Applicant has not owned a home in the past three years.
- Applicant must work towards a goal of saving \$1,500.
- Applicant must have the ability to pay the mortgage, including insurance and property taxes. Client's income must be within 50%-120% of AMI.

- Applicant must qualify for and acquire a mortgage. The lender may not charge excessive fees, high and/or variable interest rates, or balloon payments. A reputable mortgage lender may require:
  - The monthly payment (including principal, interest, taxes, homeowner's insurance, and PMI) not exceed 30% of the client's monthly gross income.
  - A credit score of at least 600, with an ideal score of 640.
  - At least two years of continuous employment and/or, if disabled, currently receiving the minimal requirements through disability payments.
  - A maximum of \$1,000 in general collections.
  - A disqualification if a previous foreclosure.
  - The ability to be able to pay necessary utilities.
  - No current liens or judgements.
  - No bankruptcy in the last 4 years.

The JDSF Team wants to set all clients up for success and to help them thrive as homeowners. JDSF is willing and able to assist clients in making connections with other nonprofits for educational opportunities, social work services, and potential down payment assistance, as well as assisting clients in finding the necessary services to help them be successful following closing. While homeownership is a big step and ultimately, it is the client's responsibility to meet the obligations and requirements from companies and/or organizations providing: mortgage assistance, additional financial aid, educational training, and/or post-closing services, JDSF is committed to providing resources and assistance to our clients that are beyond the purchase of one of our homes. We encourage our clients to reach out to us as needed throughout the process of buying and owning their home. Please know that if you don't currently meet all of the guidelines, JDSF is committed to providing resources to help remove any barriers you have for homeownership. For additional information, please visit our website, [www.jdshethfoundation.org/](http://www.jdshethfoundation.org/), or email us at [info@jdsheth.org](mailto:info@jdsheth.org).

## Community Opportunity

## Leadership Everyone Looks for Tri-State Leaders

Leadership Everyone has extended the nomination window for their Celebration of Leadership Awards, and they are specifically hoping to highlight Veteran leaders and Veteran-serving organizations this year.

This is a perfect opportunity to lift up those in our community who demonstrate exceptional service, leadership, and impact—whether a Veteran making a difference, a military family member who leads with heart, or an organization dedicated to serving those who served.

### **Extended nomination deadline: This Friday**

Nomination link: [\*\*Celebration of Leadership\*\*](#)

If you know a person or organization who deserves to be recognized, please consider submitting a nomination. Even a few sentences can help shine a light on their contribution to our Veteran community.

## Progress on Claims and Student Support Returning to 'Normal'

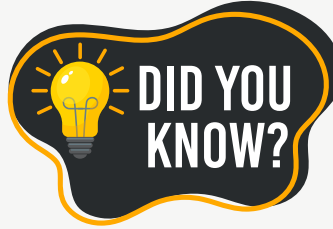
VA Education Service continues to make steady progress in restoring timely service for students, especially for those using Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (Chapter 35) benefits.

Students can check the status of their payments and complete common self-service actions such as updating direct deposit information or changing contact details using their [My Education Benefits page](#).

Call the VA at 888-GIBILL-1 (888-442-4551), or 001-918-781-5678 if calling from overseas, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. EST.

If a student has a debt due to enrollment changes, they can submit a message through [Ask VA](#) or call the Debt Management Center at 1-800-827-0648.

## National Statistical Information



Here are some data that highlight the ongoing need for higher education in the United States. Online and Adult Learning is dedicated to providing resources and opportunities to lower these numbers and make a meaningful impact on students' lives.

- There are approximately 37.6 million adults under the age of 65 who have some college but no degree.
- Ten million individuals who were admitted to an academic degree program never matriculated.
- For 2024-2025, there were 6.3 million adult learners (over the age of 24) enrolled in an academic degree program.
- There were another 4.1 million adult learners enrolled at a community college in a non-credit certificate or credential in 2024-2025.
- The median household income for households with a bachelor's degree or more in 2024 was \$132,700. The household income with a high school education was \$58,400.

