

**US Department of Veterans Affairs**  
**Legal Services for Homeless Veterans and Veterans At-Risk for Homelessness**  
**Local Grant Award**

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**VA AWARDS \$11.5 MILLION IN FIRST-OF-THEIR-KIND GRANTS FOR  
LEGAL SERVICES FOR HOMELESS VETERANS:  
LOCAL AWARD TO NEIGHBORHOOD LEGAL SERVICES**

[Buffalo, NY] – On June 29, 2023, the Department of Veterans Affairs awarded \$11.5 million in legal services grants for Veterans experiencing or at-risk of homelessness as part of its national homeless prevention efforts. Neighborhood Legal Services, WNY’s largest free civil legal services agency, received one of the 79 nationwide grant awards from this program.

Through these [first-of-their-kind funds](#), available through VA’s new [Legal Services for Veterans Grant Program](#), Neighborhood Legal Services will help Veterans who are homeless or at risk for homelessness in several ways, including:

- Providing representation in landlord-tenant disputes to prevent eviction
- Helping Veterans obtain public benefits, including disability compensation
- Assisting with divorce and family court matters

Attorney Michael Reiser, director of Neighborhood Legal Services’ medical-legal partnership program, *PatientPath*, stated, “We are proud to offer free civil legal services to our local Veterans who are patients at the Buffalo and Batavia VA Medical Centers. Our services will assist them with obtaining essential quality of life needs and more equitable health outcomes. It is an honor to support them and to show our deep appreciation for their service.”

Ending Veteran homelessness is a top priority of VA and President Biden, who has made supporting Veterans a key pillar of his [Unity Agenda](#) for the nation. In 2022 alone, [VA housed more than 40,000 formerly homeless Veterans](#), prevented more than 17,700 Veterans and their families from falling into homelessness, and helped nearly 191,700 additional Veteran families who were experiencing financial difficulties retain their homes or avoid foreclosure. Thanks in part to these efforts, the number of Veterans experiencing homelessness [has fallen by 11% since early 2020](#) and by more than 55% since 2010. In 2023, VA has set a goal to house [at least 38,000 Veterans](#).

“For Veterans, legal support can be the difference between becoming homeless and having safe, stable housing,” said **VA Secretary Denis McDonough**. “With the award of these first-of-their-kind VA grants, more Veterans will have the legal representation they deserve — which will increase their access to housing and employment.”

This initiative is part of the Biden-Harris administration’s broader efforts to reduce [homelessness for all Americans by 25% by 2025](#) and [advance protections](#) for renters. These grants were created as a part of VA’s implementation of the [Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D., Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020](#), which authorized VA to award each recipient up to \$150,000 in grant funds, with at least 10% of funding being utilized for women Veterans.

The grant recipients successfully competed under a [Notice of Funding Opportunity published Oct. 6, 2022](#). Each grantee was permitted to apply funding to support legal services starting August 1, 2023.

For information regarding free civil legal services for Veterans in WNY, please call Neighborhood Legal Services at (716) 847-0650 or visit their website at [www.nls.org](http://www.nls.org).