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VA, American Red Cross team up to provide virtual social engagement for Veterans during COVID-19 pandemic

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and American Red Cross announced a partnership to boost volunteer recruitment efforts for the department's [Compassionate Contact Corps](#) program, which provides companionship to Veterans experiencing social isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The program allows physicians, chaplains, nurses and social workers to pair volunteers with Veterans who are experiencing loneliness, are at risk for social isolation or could benefit from a companion.

"Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, VA has worked diligently to find viable ways to engage Veterans who are staying home per guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention," said VA Center for Development and Civic Engagement Director Sabrina Clark. "Compassionate Contact Corps was born out of a desire to help our Veterans who are at home to constructively engage with others while keeping them and our volunteers safe."

"We regard VA's Compassionate Contact Corps as a best practice and signature program," said American Red Cross Senior Vice President Koby Langley. "It directly aligns with our organization's mission and the expertise of its cadres across a vast nationwide network of volunteers to prevent and alleviate human suffering whenever possible."

Veterans and volunteers are matched based on common interests, with volunteers making regular phone or video calls to Veterans.

Volunteers must be 18 years of age or older, successfully pass a background check and complete training on confidentiality, privacy, customer service, empathy, compassion, active listening and boundaries. Volunteers do not have to be Veterans or clinicians.

Veterans interested in participating require a referral by a VA clinician. Interested volunteers can find available opportunities at their local VA or at the [American Red Cross](#).

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