

**VA**U.S. Department  
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# News Release

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## VA and NFFE reach key agreements to better serve Vets and support VA employees

**WASHINGTON** — This month, VA reached three key agreements with the National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE) that will help VA better serve Veterans and support VA’s employees. Specifically, VA and NFFE agreed to memorandums of understanding that will:

- Significantly expedite the hiring process for NFFE’s bargaining unit employees, which will help VA implement the [PACT Act](#) and deliver toxic exposure-related care and benefits to millions of Veterans;
- Allow NFFE’s bargaining unit employees to use an additional 160 hours of unpaid leave related to the birth of a child, adoption, or foster care;
- Allow the President of NFFE to delegate official time, which will help NFFE grow and develop future leaders and successors.

These new agreements are part of VA’s broader efforts to support bargaining unit employees and execute [President Biden’s Executive Order on Worker Organizing and Empowerment](#). More than 9,000 of VA’s public servants are represented by NFFE, including VA nurses, medical officers, pharmacists, and social workers.

“These new agreements provide critical support for VA’s public servants – which, in turn, helps us better serve our nation’s Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors,” said **VA Secretary Denis McDonough**. “A unionized VA workforce is a strong VA workforce, and we at VA are proud to work with NFFE to continue delivering for Vets.”

More than 79% of all VA public servants are bargaining unit employees, and VA is committed to supporting them as they serve our nation’s Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors.

Over the past two years, VA has taken several key steps to support these employees, including 1) reestablishing the National Partnership Council, a forum for open communication between labor leaders and VA leadership; 2) restoring official time for Doctors, Nurses, Physician Assistants, and other Title 38 employees, meaning that these employees can use work hours to conduct union business and advocate on behalf of their coworkers; 3) reestablishing yearly and Semi-Annual Labor Management meetings with VA union partners; and 4) including the unions in the decision-making process for critical employee-centric decisions, such as the creation of the [VHA REBOOT Task Force](#) to address employee burnout.

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