

Arizona Federal Credit Union joins national Veterans Benefits Banking Program



Veterans' Voice
Paula Pedene
Guest columnist

Arizona Federal Credit Union hopes to help veterans achieve greater financial literacy, independence, and resiliency through its membership in the Veterans Benefits Banking Program (VBBP). Developed by the Department of Veterans Affairs and Veterans Benefits Administration, this program provides veterans and their families secure ways to electronically receive their VA benefits, manage their monetary benefits and reduce the number of fraud cases.

As the only Arizona-based financial institution to be approved and added by VBBP, Arizona Federal was chosen for their understanding of veterans' unique financial needs and willingness to work with veterans to achieve financial independence.

"As an institution who truly believes in empowering our member-owners to take hold of their financial future, joining a coalition of like-minded credit unions and banks with intent to help those who have served our country was an easy decision," says Jason Paprocki, EVP and chief operating officer at Arizona Federal Credit Union. "Veterans face many challenges after exiting the military. Whether finding a job befitting of their training or affordable housing for themselves and their families, we hope this program can ease some of their financial decisions and set them on a path to success in their civilian life."

According to the VA, more than 250,000 veterans and their beneficiaries receive their benefits through a Direct Express pre-paid card or U.S. Treasury-issued paper check but do not utilize a bank or credit union for deposits and other transactions. Although veterans may receive their monetary benefits through any bank or credit union that accepts direct deposits, the VBBP partnership seeks to promote the benefits of opening an account and exploring what



USMC veteran Michael Tanner at Arizona Federal Credit Union. AFCU

other financial products and benefits might be available to them.

Arizona is home to nearly 500,000 veterans, with more than 250,000 residing in Maricopa County alone. To assist this population, Arizona Federal offers a full menu of financial services, including VA mortgage loans and small business loan services for veteran entrepreneurs.

"As a 14-year veteran of the United States Marines, I'm beyond proud to work for an organization that supports our veterans," says Michael Tanner, an Arizona Federal Credit Union branch manager. "Arizona Federal is committed to supporting our veterans with no-cost and low-cost banking solutions. And our team is ready to assist in other ways, like providing one-on-one financial consultations on topics like budgeting, identity protection and managing and improving credit. In the Marines, Semper Fi means 'Always Faithful,' and Arizona Federal remains faithful in helping our veterans with their financial needs."

For information on the Veterans Benefit Banking Program and its member financial institutions, go online to www.veteransbenefitsbanking.org or www.arizonafederal.org.