

Veterans And Family Support Program

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This Year's Main Focal Points

- **VFW-Based Veterans Assistance Programs**
- **Veterans' Mental Health Awareness**
- **Veteran and Veteran Spouses Employment**

Veterans and Military Support Programs and National Veterans Service

The VFW supports veterans through dedicated Veteran Service Officers in every department, helping them access the benefits they've earned. Additional programs like VFW Financial Assistance for Service Members and the Military Appreciation Program (MAP) offer further support during challenging times. Support can be provided to Units whether your National Guard or any Military Branch throughout all deployment phases, from pre-deployment training to homecoming. The VFW offers financial grants to help Auxiliaries and Posts host events for troops. Remember, today's service members and their families are future members. Learn more at vfw.org/assistance

Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Awareness

Many combat veterans experience ongoing challenges as they adjust to post-service life, including mental and emotional difficulties related to their experiences. The transition from military service can mark the beginning of new struggles for many veterans. It is important to maintain awareness of potential warning signs in anyone who may be experiencing suicidal thoughts. Support resources are available, including the 988 lifeline (Press 1).

Employment Assistance for Veterans

When service members leave the military, they face major adjustments to civilian life, often alongside their spouses, who may also struggle due to frequent relocations or gaps in

employment. Both veterans and spouses must adapt to the current job market. Partnering with local employers to offer job fairs or skills seminars can help support them. Let's recognize and assist our veterans and their families, ensuring they have opportunities for success.

**VFW National Veterans Service • VFW Veterans & Military Support
Programs Assist Veterans, Service Members, and their Families
Promote Veteran & Military Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Awareness**

Spread the Word about National Veterans Service (NVS) VA Claims & Separation Benefits

The VFW's National Veterans Service (NVS) offers free assistance to veterans, service members, and their families through a network of Accredited Service Officers with experience in VA claims. The Pre-Discharge program, established in 2001 in collaboration with the Pentagon and VA, assists active-duty personnel in obtaining entitlements and benefits during their transition out of service, with offices located near major military bases. Additional information and resources are available at <https://www.vfw.org/assistance/va-claims-separation-benefits>

Military Appreciation Program (MAP)

The VFW Military Appreciation Program (MAP) connects local VFW Posts with military communities worldwide, supporting service members and families since 2005. A major component is Adopt-A-Unit, which helps Posts build supportive relationships with military units before, during, and after deployments. VFW Auxiliaries can no longer request MAP funds but may still apply for Foundation grants. For more details, visit: <https://www.vfw.org/community/troop-support>

Student Veteran Support Grant

The VFW's Student Veteran Support Grant helps fund events for student veterans, especially those not part of a Student Veterans of America chapter. Administered by the VFW Washington Office, grants are awarded to VFW Posts or Departments supporting student veterans at colleges or universities nationwide. For more details and application forms, visit <https://www.vfw.org/assistance/student-veteranssupport>.

VFW Foundation Grants

- **VFW #StillServing Grant:**

For VFW Posts, Districts, and Auxiliaries to help cover community service project expenses.

- **Uniting to Combat Hunger Grant:**

Matching funds for VFW Posts or Auxiliaries donating money, food, or items to local food banks or homeless organizations.

- **Post Assistance Grant:**

For VFW Posts to support building repairs or equipment needed to serve veterans and the community. More information about VFW Foundation Grants is located on the VFW website: <https://www.vfw.org/community/communityinitiatives/post-grants>

Disaster Relief: The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. is collecting donations to quickly support veterans, service members, and military families affected by natural disasters through its Disaster Relief Fund.

Uniting to Combat Hunger: Established in 2018 through a partnership between the VFW and Humana, Uniting to Combat Hunger (UTCH) seeks to address food insecurity nationwide, with particular attention to the military community. VFW Posts and Auxiliaries play a pivotal role in reducing food insecurity and homelessness among veterans.

For more information about UTCH, please contact the VFW Foundation at foundation@vfw.org.

VFW Mental Wellness Campaign: The project aims to provide education for VFW and VFW Auxiliary members, veterans, and communities about mental health and wellness, as well as share established tools to assist veterans experiencing crisis. To increase awareness, encourage community participation, support research, and offer interventions for those affected by invisible injuries and emotional stress, the VFW is collaborating with several national organizations, including **Give an Hour**, the **Campaign to Change Direction**, **One Mind**, **Patients Like Me**, and the **Elizabeth Dole Foundation**. Additional resources and support information regarding mental health stigma are available on the VFW website: <https://www.vfw.org/assistance/mental-wellness>

Veterans Crisis Line: The Veterans Crisis Line offers confidential support 24/7 via hotline, chat, or text for veterans and their loved ones. Dial 988 and press 1, chat online, or text 838255 for assistance. To donate, visit vfw.org/ways-to-help, choose your program, and click "Contribute," or mail a check to: Veterans of Foreign Wars, Processing Center, P.O.

Box 2002, Milford, NH 03055-2002. Please note your chosen program on your check to ensure your donation goes where it's most needed.

Other Resources

The VFW and VFW Auxiliary supported the Deborah Sampson Act, improving VA programs and health services for women veterans. The Women Veterans Call Center now offers text messaging: 855-829-6636 or 1-855-VA-WOMEN. For more info, visit [Women Veterans Health Care](#).

Veterans and Family Support Program Awards

Awards for Auxiliaries:

1. Most outstanding activity and/or event to celebrate/assist service members and/or veterans in the community. To include veterans job fairs, unit homecomings, mental health-related stand downs, etc.

- Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions that **hosts the most outstanding activity and/or event to celebrate/assist service members or Veterans in your community.**

Entry form is required and available in MALTA Member Resources.

VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to the Department Veterans & Family Support Chairman by March 31, 2026, for judging.

The Department Veterans & Family Support Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department-winning entry form to the National Veterans & Family Support Ambassador by April 30, 2026, for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to winning VFW Auxiliaries from National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary account after the 2026 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

Awards for Departments and Department Chairmen:

1. \$25 VFW Store gift certificate to one Department Veterans & Family Support Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the best promotion of resources to assist veterans, service members and families.

Winners will be announced, and awards will be presented at the 2026 VFW Auxiliary National Convention in Reno, Nevada.

2. \$25 VFW Store gift certificate to one Department Veterans & Family Support Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the **most outstanding activity and/or event to increase the support of veterans, service members and their families.**

Winners will be announced, and awards will be presented at the 2026 VFW Auxiliary National Convention in Reno, Nevada.

3. The Outstanding Performance Award and Second-Place Outstanding Performance Award will be awarded in each of the 10 Program Divisions based on the criteria listed and for the promotion of the Program goals.

Winners will be announced, and awards will be presented at the 2026 VFW Auxiliary National Convention in Reno, Nevada.