

VETERANS & FAMILY SUPPORT 2025-2026

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The Veterans and Family Support program is not a single-focused program, but a multifaceted one. Each part could stand alone on its own merit. Each one is equally as important as another. Collectively, they form a symbolic embrace of our veterans, service members, and their families.

The VFW's National Veterans Service (NVS) was established to help all veterans, service members, their families and survivors. It is a 'free of charge' service for anyone seeking assistance with navigating through the VA processes for filing claims. A nationwide network of VFW Accredited Service Officers and Pre-Discharge Representatives, that work with veterans from the first step through the last step, are ready to help. Our veterans should not have to struggle to obtain the benefits that they deserve for all their sacrifices. For more information and forms, go to the VFW website:

<https://www.vfw.org/assistance/va-claims-separation-benefits>.

Veterans and Military Support Programs - encompasses a few smaller components that help veterans in times of need. For instance, the VFW Military Assistance Program (MAP) and Unmet Needs assist veterans to overcome hard times. Both offer an outstretched hand by sponsoring events to support service members and their families. MAP also provides support for military units around the world by building relationships before, during, and after deployments via its Adopt-A-Unit program, utilizing the numerous resources of the VFW. For more information on this program, go to the VFW website:

<https://www.vfw.org/community/troop-support>.

To continue our support of veterans, service members and their families, there are a few grants available. A way to say 'thank you' for your service. The VFW's Student Veteran Support Grant provides funding for those who choose to pursue higher education. The process can be intimidating, but the VFW makes it easier. This grant is administered by the VFW Washington Office, which focuses on the overall student veteran population. For more information about the Student Veteran Support Grant, go to the VFW website:

<https://www.vfw.org/assistance/student-veterans-support>.

The VFW Foundation Grants offer more opportunities of support. The first one is the VFW #StillServing Grant, which is exclusive to VFW Posts, Districts, and their Auxiliaries. Its purpose is to offset expenses incurred by posts, districts, and auxiliaries for community service projects. Another grant is the Post Assistance Grant, which is exclusively for VFW Posts that are repairing, renovating, or restoring their 'home' to further serve veterans and their local community. The final grant is Uniting to Combat Hunger & Homelessness

Grant. Both hunger and homelessness have become more prevalent in our communities. No veteran, service member and their families should endure either. Therefore, VFW Posts and Auxiliaries can apply for this limited matching grant for monetary, food, or item donations in their community. Posts and Auxiliaries are vital to make a dent in both. For more information on these grants, go to the VFW website:

<https://www.vfw.org/community/community-initiatives/post-grants>. For more information about Uniting to Combat Hunger (UTCH), please contact the VFW Foundation at foundation@vfw.org.

The VFW and VFW Auxiliary care deeply about our veterans in crisis, especially when it relates to mental health and wellness. Their battle on the field may be done, but the battle inside is not. The 'demons' make unexpected visits – some stay for a brief time and others may linger longer – being aware of the warning signs is vital. Raising awareness in local communities, providing intervention, and teaming up with nationwide organizations to fight this issue cannot be stressed enough. A few nationwide organizations are Give an Hour, the Campaign to Change Direction, One Mind, Patients Like Me, and the Elizabeth Dole Foundation. Also, help is only a phone call/text away. The Veterans Crisis Line connects veterans and their families and friends with qualified responders at the Department of Veterans Affairs via a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat or text at 988 (Press 1), chat online or text 838255. Confidential support is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. For more information, go to the VFW website: <https://vfw.org/assistance/mental-wellness>.

There are still a few more ways to help our veterans, service members and their families. One way is to host a job fair and bring in local employers. When a service member separates from the military, they will need a job, and in some cases, so would their spouse due to a change in their lifestyle – relocation, military skills not translating into civilian job market, etc. In many instances, this transition could take a while and VFW Posts and Auxiliaries should be ready to assist. Another hardship that can have an impact on our veterans, service members and their families is natural disasters. The VFW's Disaster Relief Fund reacts immediately to provide relief in the areas needed. This has been witnessed this past year by VFW and VFW Auxiliary members. The call for action was loud and was answered definitively. For these programs to work, donations are greatly appreciated to keep them funded. Donations can be made online at vfw.org/ways-to-help, select the program and click "contribute", or through the mail by sending a check (earmarked 'donation') to:

Veterans of Foreign Wars, Processing Center
P.O Box 2002
Milford, NH 03055-2002

As evident, all the components of the Veterans & Family Support program embrace our veterans, service members and their families. They provide needed assistance in every aspect of life – from benefits to education to home to work to mental health and more. The VFW and VFW Auxiliary will always take care of those that sacrificed so much for our country and for its citizens. The VFW and VFW Auxiliary are there for America's veterans!

Veterans & Family Support Program Awards

NATIONAL AWARDS

Awards for Auxiliaries

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 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 is 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 the winning VFW Auxiliaries from National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary account after the 2026 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

DEPARTMENT AWARDS

A citation will be issued to each Auxiliary that has promoted the Veterans & Family Support program.

At the Department Convention in 2026, the following awards will be given. To be eligible for an award, all submissions must be in a two-pocket folder with documentation, photos, newspaper article(s), and a write up about your promotion, activity, and/or event.

1. An award will be given to the Auxiliary with the best promotion of resources to assist veterans, service members and families.
2. An award will be given to the Auxiliary with the most outstanding activity and/or event to increase the support of veterans, service members and families.