

Veterans and Family Support Department of Missouri

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Program Book 2025-26

We are on the road again going down Missouri's Yellow Brick Road led by President Patti Burge with her theme **"Be the Reason a Veteran Smiles Today"** and Lois Callahan, our National President, picked **"From Sea to Shining Sea Honoring Veterans-Who Keep Us Free."** as her theme. I think the two themes work beautifully together and express how all the hard work we do is for our veterans.

Every one of us joined this organization to show our love for our veterans by serving and honoring them in any way we can. The Veterans and Family Support program has lots of different ways to help and honor our veterans and their family.

This year the Veterans & Family Support program will have three primary points of focus:

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

Military Assistance Program

The Military Assistance Program (MAP) helps VFW and Auxiliary members give more to their local military units by providing funds to connect with troops. It helps forge and nurture bonds with those units by providing financial assistance for Posts, Districts and Departments to sponsor morale-boosting send-offs, homecomings, and casual get-togethers.

Post and Auxiliaries participating in Adopt-a-Unit and Family Readiness Group events can also receive assistance. MAP keeps care packages circulating by covering postage costs.

For guidelines to apply for MAP funds, contact the VFW Veterans & Military Support office at (816) 756-3390.

National and Missouri Veterans Service Programs

The VFW's National and Missouri Veterans Service helps veterans, service members and their families obtain the benefits they deserve - at no cost to the veteran. NVS/MSV provides a nationwide network of nearly 300 VFW Service Officers who help veterans navigate the Veterans Affairs system. Those VFW Service Officers recover more than \$1 billion annually in VA benefits for veterans and their dependents.

These highly skilled professionals assist all veterans, whether they are VFW members or not, in filing claims for:

- Disability compensation.
- Rehabilitation and educational programs.
- Pension and death benefits.
- Employment and training programs.

NVS/MVS also works to ensure veterans receive quality, timely and accessible VA health care, including:

- Hospital care.
- Outpatient care.
- Specialized health care for female veterans.
- Alcohol and drug dependency treatment.
- Medical evaluation for disorders associated with military service, exposure to Agent Orange, radiation, or other environmental hazards.

Pre-Discharge

The VFW Pre-Discharge program was established in 2001 through a cooperative initiative with the Pentagon and the Department of Veterans Affairs. This program ensures separating and retiring active-duty military personnel receive assistance in obtaining their VA entitlements and benefits upon discharge. Pre-Discharge offices are located on or near major military installations across the country.

Additional information, links and forms are located on the VFW website:

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

Unmet Needs Can Help in a Crisis

Veterans, service members and military families face many unique challenges – financial difficulties should not be one of them. Unmet Needs is there to help America's military families who have run into unexpected financial difficulties because of deployment or other military-related activity or injury. Grants of up to \$1,500 payable to a creditor can bridge the gap to make a mortgage or rent payment or to fund home and auto repairs, insurance, utility costs, food and clothing. To learn more, visit [vfw.org/assistance/financial-grants](https://www.vfw.org/assistance/financial-grants).

Veterans & Military Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Awareness

Every day in the United States, 22 veterans succumb to suicide —losing their personal battle to invisible wounds of war. "We need to stand up to do something to help veterans struggling with PTSD. We as an auxiliary need to help our veterans and their families to find the tools to help themselves. We need to help our Veterans bridge the gap to help with their suicide /mental health awareness. Be mindful of the characteristics associated with thoughts of suicide and be watchful of our veterans' mental health. One veteran lost to suicide is one veteran too many!

What will you do for our veterans, service members and their families this year?

The Veterans Crisis Line connects veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, or text. Veterans and their loved ones can:

- Call 988 and Press 1.
- Call 1-800-MyVA4 11 to access all VA departments.
- Chat online at veteranscrisisline.net.
- Send a text message to 838255.

Confidential support is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Tip: Add the Veterans Crisis Line number as a contact in your cell phone for easy referral.

Here are some great resources for Mental Wellness Support:

- **VFW Mental Wellness Campaign:** vfw.org/assistance/mental-wellness
- **The Campaign to Change Direction:** ChangeDirection.org
- **Give An Hour:** GiveAnHour.org
- **Patients Like Me:** PatientsLikeMe.com/join/vfw
- **One Mind:** OneMind.org
- **The Elizabeth Dole Foundation:** ElizabethDoleFoundation.org
- **Help Heal Veterans (Therapeutic Craft Kits):** HealVets.org
- **Veterans Voices Writing Project:** VeteransVoices.org

VFW Foundation Grants

- **VFW #StillServing Grant**

The #StillServing Grant is offered exclusively to VFW Posts, Districts and their Auxiliaries to offset expenses incurred while doing community service projects.

- **Uniting to Combat Hunger Grant**

The Uniting to Combat Hunger & Homelessness Grant is a limited matching grant available to VFW Posts or Auxiliaries for monetary, food, or item donations to local food banks, pantries, or homeless relief organizations in their communities.

- **Post Assistance Grant**

The Post Assistance Grant is offered exclusively to VFW Posts to offset expenses incurred for building repairs and equipment that enhances or restores the applicant organization's ability to serve veterans and their community. More information about VFW Foundation Grants is located on the VFW website: <https://www.vfw.org/community/community-initiatives/post-grant>

VFW "Sport Clips® Help A Hero Scholarship" Program

The VFW and Sport Clips are giving the gift of scholarships to our nation's heroes as a way of thanking them for their dedicated service to our nation. The VFW "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship" awards scholarships of up to \$5,000 to qualifying veterans and service members to help them complete their educational goals without incurring excessive student loan debt. To learn more, visit vfw.org/student-veterans-support.

Monetary Donations

Donations to these wonderful support programs can be made online or by mail. To donate online go to vfw.org/ways-to-help and select the program you wish to donate to, then click the Contribute button. Donate by mail by sending funds to the VFW. Be sure to earmark which program or programs you are donating to (Disaster Relief, Veterans & Military Support, National Veterans Service, Unmet Needs, Military Assistance Program, or VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship"). Mail checks to:

VFW National Headquarters
Attn: NVS
406 W. 34th Street, 11th Floor
Kansas City, MO 64111

“Be the Reason a Veteran Smiles Today”



Department Awards for Auxiliaries

Most outstanding program/project in the Veterans and Family Support Program.

1st Place – a citation and \$20 to one auxiliary for the most outstanding program/project in each of the four membership groups.

2nd Place – a citation to one auxiliary for the most outstanding program/project in each of the four membership groups.

National Award 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 forms are required and are available on the department website and in MALTA Member Resources. Auxiliaries must send the entry forms to the Department Veterans & Family Support Chairman by March 31, 2026 for judging.