Veterans & Family Support Program 2022-2023

Department of Missouri

HANDS THAT SERVE, HEARTS THAT CARE
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Thank you for accepting the challenge to be the Veterans and Family Support Chairman of your Auxiliary and/ or district! I AM VERY EXCITED to be your Department Chairman again this year! Together we can make a difference!

VFW VETERANS & MILITARY SUPPORT PROGRAM

1. Military assistance program (MAP)
2. Unmet Needs
3. Sports Clips Help A Hero Scholarships

These programs serve active-duty and recently discharged military. Donations to Veterans & Military Support can be made online @ www.vfw.org/ways-to-help Select Veterans & military support, click on ‘contribute.’ Or donate by mail. Send funds to: the VFW earmarked for Veterans & Military Support VFW National Headquarters Attn: Veterans and Military Support 406 W 34th St. 9th Floor Kansas City, Mo 64111

1. Military Assistance Program or (MAP) funds ways to connect with our troops. This program helps posts and auxiliaries give more to their local military units; by providing financial assistance for posts, districts and departments to sponsor morale-boosting send-offs, homecomings and casual get-togethers. Posts 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 Veterans & Military Support office at: 816-756-3390.
2. Unmet Needs can help in a crisis. When a soldier is serving on foreign soil, but their family back home is in need. 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 www.vfw.org/assistance/financial-grants
3. Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship gives the gift of scholarships to our nation’s heroes. 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 www.vfw.org/student-veterans-support

VETERAN & MILITARY SUICIDE PREVENTION AND MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

We can make a difference in the life of a veteran or service member in crisis! TIP: add the Veterans’ Crisis line number in your cell phone for easy referral. Educate yourself and others about the warning signs of suicide. The Crisis Hotline connects veterans in crisis and their families with caring, qualified Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hot line, online chat, or text.

- Call 1-800-273-8255 and press 1
- Chat online at www.veterancrisistline.net
- Send a text message to 838255

Confidential support is available 24/7.. 365 days a year. Deaf and hard of hearing support is also available.
MENTAL WELLNESS SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

22 Veterans commit suicide every day! The VFW and VFW Auxiliary are committed to helping change the stigma of mental health in the United States. **Purchase the Auxiliary Suicide Awareness Prevention Pins** from the VFW store. Give them to all members that might want to wear them; they are a good way to start the conversation about suicide and the alarming suicide rate among veterans and military service members. We want everyone to be aware of the unique stress that our military face.

- **VFW MENTAL WELLNESS CAMPAIGN** [www.vfw.org/assistance/mental-wellness](http://www.vfw.org/assistance/mental-wellness)
- **THE CAMPAIGN TO CHANGE DIRECTION** [www.changedirection.org](http://www.changedirection.org)
- **GIVE AN HOUR** [www.giveanhour.org](http://www.giveanhour.org)
- **PATIENTS LIKE ME** [www.patientslikeme.com/join/vfw](http://www.patientslikeme.com/join/vfw)
- **ONE MIND** [www.onemind.org](http://www.onemind.org)
- **THE ELIZABETH DOLE FOUNDATION** [www.elizabethdolefoundation.org](http://www.elizabethdolefoundation.org)
- **HELP VETERANS HEAL** (therapeutic craft kits) [www.healvets.org](http://www.healvets.org)
- **VETERANS VOICES WRITING PROJECT** [www.veteransvoices.org](http://www.veteransvoices.org)

SUPPORT FAMILIES OF VETERAN SUICIDE

Suicide awareness is an important part of the Veterans & Family Support Program. Tragically, when Veteran suicide occurs, we should be supportive of those family members that are left behind.

- Direct them to a VFW Service Officer
- Have information about support services offered by the VA
- Let the family know that you are there for them
- Offer to help with every day jobs around the house like: meals, yard work, house cleaning. Helping with these types of things may ease the stress of losing their loved one
- Raise funds to help with financial issues that most likely will arise; utility or other bills

NATIONAL VETERANS SERVICE (NVS)

This program helps veterans, service members and their families get the benefits they deserve – **at no cost**. It provides nearly 300 nationwide networks of VFW service officers who help veterans navigate the Veteran Affairs System. They recover more than $1 billion annually in VA benefits for veterans and their dependents.

**They assist all veterans with:**

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

**NVS works to ensure that veterans receive quality, timely and accessible VA health care:**

- 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.

Donations to NVS can be made online @ [www.vfw.org/ways-to-help](http://www.vfw.org/ways-to-help), select National Veterans Service,
USING OUR WISDOM TO SUPPORT OUR VETERANS

HOMELESS VETERANS IN AMERICA

There are 630,000 homeless people in the United States; of those there are 67,000 veterans that are homeless. Veterans comprise 10.6% of the homeless population. More than 968,000 veterans lived in poverty last year. 76% of homeless veteran’s experience alcohol, drug, or mental illness struggles and 30% of veterans’ ages 18 – 34 are unemployed. Of homeless veterans:

- 89% received an honorable discharge
- 67% served 3 or more years in the military
- 47% are Vietnam veterans
- 15% served before Vietnam
- 5.5% are Iraq and Afghanistan veterans

This means that 9 out of 10 homeless veterans received an honorable discharge. 2 out of 3 veterans served at least 3 years. WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!!

WAYS THAT WE CAN SUPPORT HOMELESS VETERANS:

- Faith based programs
- Veterans Administration
- Local homeless veteran housing/assistance programs
- Participate in a Stand Down

Stand Downs are one-to three-day events during which volunteers and V.A. staff provide clothing, food and health screenings to the homeless and at-risk veterans. Also they receive referrals for health care, housing, employment, mental health counseling, substance abuse treatment and other important essential services. Contact your local V.A. for more info on local Stand Downs. Or visit www.va.gov/homeless

Other resources:

- National coalition for homeless veterans @ www.nchv.org
- help for homeless veterans www.va.gov/homeless 1-877-424-3838

MILITARY FAMILY CAREGIVERS

There are more than 5 million military care givers in the United States. Often times getting assistance in this role had been almost impossible. The job usually fell on spouses, children, or other family members. In October of 2020 spouses were finally able to receive benefits for being a care giver to a veteran. The Veterans Administration has many support services to help the care givers within the V.A. system. For more info visit www.caregiver.va.gov

WAYS TO SUPPORT FAMILY CAREGIVERS:

- Provide personal care gift cards for a spa day
- Send a thank you card/flowers
- Be a good listener. Visit with them or call them
- Offer to help with care giving for a short time

There are many ways for our Auxiliary to SHINE THE LIGHT on military family caregivers. They play a very important role in the lives of our veterans and the family members of our veterans!

MONTHES TO REMEMBER:

- National Family Caregivers – November
• Month of the Military Caregiver – May
Both recognize and honor the people who give so much of themselves to take care of our nation’s heroes!

DEPARTMENT AWARDS FOR AUXILIARIES

Award #1. - Most outstanding program/project that an Auxiliary hosted/co-hosted this year for the Veterans and Family Support Program.
1st Place - Citation and $40 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.

Award #2 - Most Outstanding Overall Chairman Award
1st Place - $25 and a citation to one chairman in each membership group who has promoted the Veterans & Family Support Program
2nd Place – a citation to the 2nd Place outstanding Chairman in each membership group who has promoted the Veterans & Family Support Program

Award money is subject to the approval of the 2022-2023 budget.

NATIONAL AWARDS FOR AUXILIARIES
1. Most outstanding activity and/or event that supports veteran, military and family caregivers.
• Citation to every Auxiliary that hosts an activity and/or event that supports veteran, military and family caregivers. Criteria and entry form (required) available @ www.vfwauxiliary.org/resources. Auxiliaries are to send entry forms to their Department Chairman by March 31, 2023. The Department Chairman must send a copy of all submitted entry forms to National Headquarters by April 30, 2023. Citations will be mailed directly to participating Auxiliaries from National Headquarters.
• Citation and $25 to one Auxiliary in each of the four conferences with the most outstanding activity and/or event that supports veteran, military and family caregivers. Winners will be announced and awards presented at the 2023 National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona.

2. Most outstanding activity and/or event that increases awareness of homeless veterans.
• Citation to every Auxiliary that hosts an activity and/or event to increase awareness of homeless veterans. Criteria and entry form (required) available @ www.vfwauxiliary.org/resources Auxiliaries are to send entry form to their Department Veterans and Family Support Chairman by March 31, 2023. The Department Chairman must send a copy of all submitted entry forms to National Headquarters by April 30, 2023. Citations will be mailed directly to participating Auxiliaries from National Headquarters.
• Citation and $25 to one Auxiliary in each of the four Conferences with the most outstanding activity and/or event that increases awareness of homeless veterans.