



Veterans & Family Support

VFW Auxiliary Department of Maryland

Our veterans have sacrificed so much for us, and it's our time to do our part to give back to them. The VFW takes care of these "here" who took care of us "there."

Annie O'Connor, National Ambassador



VaNette Jones, PDP

P.O. Box 558

Fruitland, MD 21826

667-221-2199

beaveteranspal@comcast.net

DEPARTMENT OF MARYLAND - VFW AUXILIARY VETERANS & FAMILY SUPPORT SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION 2025



A FORCE FOR VETERANS - PRESIDENT WILLIAM SIPERREK

2025-2026 FOCUS POINTS

The Veterans and Family Support Program has three main focal points this year:

1. VFW Based Veterans Assistance Programs
2. Veterans' Mental Health Awareness and
3. Veteran and Veterans Spouses Employment

VETERAN MENTAL HEALTH & SUICIDE PREVENTION

Many of our veterans have physically returned home from the war lands they have fought in; however, they face a war within. How to cope with the aftermaths of war, reintegrating into a "normal" society and building maintaining and strengthening family and community ties.

NATIONAL VETERANS SERVICE (NVS)

- Established to help all veterans, service members, their families and survivors.
- It is a nationwide network of VFW Accredited Service officers and Pre-Discharge Representatives who are experts in navigating VA processes
- Service Officers assist the veterans and his/her family through the entire claims process
- **This is a 100% FREE service**

PRE-DISCHARGE ASSISTANCE

Established in 2001, the VFW Pre-Discharge assistance program ensures that separating and retiring and active-duty military personnel receive assistance in obtaining their VA entitlements & benefits once they are discharged.

For additional information visit the following site: <https://www.vfw.org/assistance/va-claims-separation-benefits>

MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (MAP)

This program serves as the link between the local VFW and the military community.

The Adopt-A-Unit program is one the largest parts of the MAP. The goal is to develop supportive relationships with units, before, during and after deployment. The purpose is to assist in the delivery of resources that the VFW has available.

- Provides the opportunity to "adopt" a military unit anywhere in the world

DEBORAH SAMPSON ACT

- focuses on enhancing and improving VA programs and health services for women veterans
- helps to ensure that women veterans receive the care and support they need
- it includes an expansion of the Women Veterans Call Center which has text functioning capabilities

Women Veterans Call Center
Call or Text: 1-855-829-6636)



VETERANS & FAMILY SUPPORT - PAGE 2

SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION 2025



STUDENT VETERANS SUPPORT GRANT



- grants that are administered by the VFW Washington office
- offers assistance to support specific student veteran events
- focuses on supporting the overall student veteran population within our communities
- grants are distributed to a VFW Post of Department that has submitted an application to support the student veterans at the university or college

VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship" provides service members and veterans with the financial assistance they need to complete their educational goals without incurring excessive student loan debt.

Scholarship Details:

- Scholarships of up to \$5,000 will be awarded to qualified applicants.
- Awarded scholarships are limited to one per family per semester.
- Applications for the fall semester will be accepted Jan. 1 through April 30.
- Applications for the spring semester will be accepted Aug. 1 through Nov. 15.
- Fall semester scholarships will be awarded in August, and spring semester scholarships will be awarded in January.
- Scholarships must be used by the end of the school semester for which the veteran is applying, or they will become null and void.
- Scholarships are restricted for tuition and fees only and will be paid directly to accredited schools.

Eligible Applicants Must:

- Be a citizen of the United States.
 - Be retired, honorably discharged, active duty, or a member of the National Guard or Reserve.
 - Have completed Basic Training and follow-on training (Advanced Individual Training, technical school, etc.).
 - Separated with or currently hold a military rank of E-5 or below.
 - Demonstrate a need for financial assistance.
 - Participate in, be accepted to or currently enrolled in a VA-approved program or school at an accredited post-secondary institution.
- 
- 

VETERANS & FAMILY SUPPORT - PAGE 3

SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION 2025



VFW FOUNDATION GRANTS

The VFW Foundation offers three grants annually:

- VFW #StillServing Grant
- Uniting to Combat Hunger Grant
- Post Assistance Grant

Applications are generally accepted from September through June 1 of the following year, or until grant funding is exhausted.

The application window for all three grants opens on September 1, 2025.

POST ASSISTANCE GRANT

The **Post Assistance Grant** is offered exclusively to VFW Posts to offset expenses incurred for building repairs and equipment that enhance or restore the applicant organization's ability to serve veterans and their community.

Auxiliaries, Districts, Departments, and other VFW subordinate organizations cannot apply.

VFW Posts may receive up to \$2,500 for qualifying projects. Applicants are limited to receiving this grant once every three years.

VFW #STILLSERVING GRANT

Application window opens up 9/1/2025

- Available exclusively to VFW Posts, Districts, and their Auxiliaries to offset expenses incurred during community service projects. To qualify, projects must involve direct engagement by the applying organization's members with their community.
- Both a VFW Post and its Auxiliary, and a District and its Auxiliary, can receive funding of up to \$1,500, but each applicant organization must have its own unique project.
- Applicants are limited to receiving a total of \$1,500 during the cycle.

DISASTER RELIEF

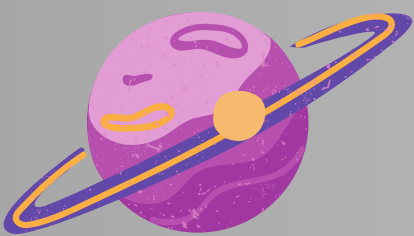
Donations to this fund are used to help veterans, service members and military families impacted by natural disasters.

UNITING TO COMBAT HUNGER (UTCH) GRANT WITH HUMANA

This is a grant of up to \$1,500 available to VFW Posts and Auxiliaries for monetary and food donations to local food banks and pantries in their communities.

The VFW Foundation will provide a \$1 match for every pound of food or dollar donated to food insecurity organizations.

A Post or its Auxiliary may receive this grant but not both.



VETERANS & FAMILY SUPPORT - PAGE 4

SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION 2025



VFW MENTAL WELLNESS CAMPAIGN

This campaign focuses on educate both VFW and VFW auxiliary members, veterans and surrounding community members about the importance of mental heal and wellness.

“A staggering 20 veterans die by suicide every day, and the VFW is committed to helping change the narrative and stigma surrounding mental health in America.”

In order to raise awareness, foster community engagement, improve research and provide intervention for those affected by invisible injuries and emotional stress, the VFW has teamed up with the nationwide organizations Give an Hour and the Campaign to Change Direction, One Mind, PatientsLikeMe and the Elizabeth Dole Foundation to combat this critical issue.



FACE the FIVE

Signs Someone is Struggling

Being a service member presents unique challenges that significantly impact mental health. Past experiences, high-stress environments, and exposure to traumatic events contribute to mental health struggles. Many service members have difficulty prioritizing their own health, with significant stigma surrounding seeking help, fear of being perceived as weak, and concerns over security clearances exacerbating the issue. As a trained mental fitness coach, it's important to recognize the signs of emotional struggles among your fellow service members. Give an Hour's "Five Signs" provides a common language to understand how emotional struggles can manifest, along with ways to show support and respond.

Know the Signs and What they Look Like



PERSONALITY CHANGES

Soldiers may seem different exhibiting behaviors that don't align with their usual self.

Stressed-out, checked-out, frequently anxious or depressed, acts differently than 'normal', eerily "at peace" or joyful when previously stressed/depressed.



UNCHARACTERISTICALLY ANGRY, ANXIOUS, AGITATED, OR MOODY

Soldiers may struggle with frequent mood swings.

Lashing out, angry outbursts, panic attacks, self-soothing. Always in 'crisis mode', feeling repeatedly triggered. May happen with or without a clear trigger.



WITHDRAWAL OR ISOLATION FROM OTHER PEOPLE

Soldiers might pull away from, peers, family and/or friends, signaling a need for support and understanding.

Not responding to texts, excessive malaise or sleeping. Needing to be alone. Not showing up for planned activities, housebound or signs of agoraphobia, avoidance when questioned.



MAY NEGLECT SELF-CARE AND ENGAGE IN RISKY BEHAVIOR

Financial strain, physical limitations, and emotional distress can contribute to neglecting self-care or engaging in risky behaviors.

Reckless or irresponsible spending, substance use, sedentary lifestyle/lack of physical activity, change in appearance, "Depression House", significant weight gain or loss. Excessive sleeping.



OVERCOME WITH HOPELESSNESS AND OVERWHELMED BY CIRCUMSTANCES

Soldier may experience extreme or prolonged grief, feelings of worthlessness, or guilt.

Verbal expressions of distress: "There's no point in going on", shutting down, masking feelings, making end-of-life plans, suicidal thoughts, self-harm, or worrisome verbal statements, "It's hopeless".

WHAT YOU CAN SAY:

"I've noticed that lately when we talk or hang out, you seem checked-out, you don't seem like your usual self. Can you tell me more about what's going on? I want to find ways to support you."

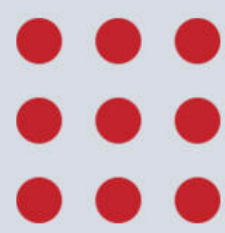
"Hey, I can see you're going through a tough time right now, and it's okay to feel that way. I want you to know that I'm here for you, and it's important to take care of your mental health just as much as your physical health. Let's talk about what's been bothering you and figure out a way to get through this together. It's not a sign of weakness to ask for help—in fact, it's a sign of strength."

"I've noticed that you've been crashing on the weekends, and you've been spending more time by yourself. It's important to catch up on sleep, but is there anything you want to talk about? You can lean on me for support, I'm here if you need someone to talk to."

"This might be difficult to talk about, but I've noticed you've been drinking more lately, and I'm really concerned about you. I just want to make sure everything is okay. I'm here for you. Do you feel comfortable opening up about that?"

"From a sincere place of concern I want you to know that I've noticed you've been really struggling lately. I understand it can be hard to talk about this, but I want you to know I'm here for you. Are you having thoughts about hurting yourself?"

For more resources visit www.giveanhour.org/military



Veterans
Crisis Line

1-800-273-8255 **PRESS 1**

VETERANS CRISIS LINE
EITHER NUMBER CAN BE
CALLED OR TEXTED

Veterans
Crisis Line



DIAL 988 then
PRESS 1

VETERANS & FAMILY SUPPORT - PAGE 5

SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION 2025



FIRST CONTEST OF THE 2025 - 2026 PROGRAM YEAR



First three auxiliaries who can:

- tell me who this character is
- what their powers are
- how their power can be applied to the Veterans & Family Support Program AND
- Putting the powers to work in your Auxiliary on behalf of our veterans

**All four things need to be addressed.
You can email, text, or snail mail me
your answers.**

REPORTING REMINDERS:

Make sure to have an email or phone number of you report form.

Make sure to complete everything in the yellow box.

Please do not wait until the end of the year to send all of your reports. If you do this they will only be counted in the month in which they were sent.

Email/Text/Call with questions.



CONTACT INFORMATION

V&FS Chairperson: VaNette Jones

Mailing Address: PO Box 558

Fruitland, MD 21826-0558

Phone: (667) 221-2199

Email: BeAVeteransPal@comcast.net

Resources to Find Help

Veterans Crisis Line

1.800.273.TALK (8255)

www.veteranscrisisline.net

Give an Hour providers

www.giveanhour.org

Click on “Search for a Provider”

Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

1.800.622.HELP (4357)

www.samhsa.gov

Patients Like Me online network

www.patientslikeme.com

VA Health Care

1.877.222.VETS (8387)

www.va.gov/health

PTSD Coach Online Apps

www.ptsd.va.gov/PTSD/apps/ptsdcoachonline

Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health & Traumatic Brain Injury

www.dcoe.mil

VA Vet Center Program

www.vetcenter.va.gov/

Know the Five Signs of Emotional Suffering

Personality Change: Sudden or gradual changes in the way someone typically behaves.

Agitation: When someone seems uncharacteristically angry, anxious, agitated, or moody.

Withdrawal: Withdrawn or isolated from other people; pulling away from family and friends.

Poor Self-Care: Has stopped taking care of themselves and may engage in risky behavior.

Hopelessness: Seems overcome with hopelessness and overwhelmed by their circumstances.

*If you recognize that someone
in your life is suffering,*

CONNECT, REACH OUT,

INSPIRE HOPE, and OFFER HELP!

FOR UNCOMMON HEROES™



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States

406 W. 34th Street

Kansas City, MO 64111

Phone: 816.756.3390

www.vfw.org



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

VFW MENTAL WELLNESS CAMPAIGN

Awareness, support
and intervention
for veterans

Our Objective:

The purpose of the project is to educate VFW and VFW Auxiliary members, veterans and communities about the important topic of mental health and wellness, and offer proven tools to intervene on behalf of veterans in crisis.

In order to help bring this complex set of issues to light for our members, veterans, the military and our communities, it is essential that the VFW and VFW Auxiliary work hand-in-hand on every level to bring the needed awareness and education to everyone.

Mental health issues for veterans and the military community are complex, often unseen, and affect more than just the service member or veteran. With 1.6 million members, the VFW and VFW Auxiliary are uniquely positioned to offer the support and educational base camp in more than 6,000 communities nationwide.

Join VFW in opening our hearts, homes and Posts to those who defended our freedoms.



Quick Facts:

Veterans report that their mental health issues are very similar to those in the civilian population, which commonly relate to interpersonal relationships and economic concerns. These issues have shown to increase with deployment.

One of the most common claimed conditions for clients who seek assistance from VFW service officers is a mental health condition.

Veterans who seek care for mental health through VA facilities are more likely to have positive health outcomes.

VA reports that as many as 20 veterans choose to end their lives every day. But contrary to popular belief, most veterans who attempt suicide are older or have not deployed to a combat area.

The VFW's community posture has historically provided a safe space for veterans to offer one another peer-to-peer support. This means that the VFW is uniquely poised to serve this therapeutic need for today's veterans.

Program Goals:

- ✓ Build partnerships to serve the needs of service members, veterans, and families suffering from invisible injuries
- ✓ Provide training and resources to VFW personnel who provide direct services to veterans
- ✓ Create templates for VFW Posts and Departments to raise awareness and host community-based events
- ✓ Offer opportunities for VFW members to share experiences and leverage partner resources
- ✓ Contribute to research efforts that advance the dialogue on brain health and foster the development of new evidence-based treatments
- ✓ Advocate for federal legislation to improve access to mental health care and transitional benefits

Strategic Partners



Give help | Give hope

www.giveanhour.org

MISSION: To develop national networks of volunteers capable of responding to both acute and chronic conditions that arise within our society, beginning with the mental health needs of those who serve and their families.

✓ Confidential and free mental health care for service members, veterans, and their loved ones through a network of nearly 7,000 licensed providers.

✓ Initiative to change the culture of mental health in America, called the Campaign to Change Direction: www.ChangeDirection.org



www.onemind.org

MISSION: To accelerate the development and implementation of improved diagnostics and treatments for post-traumatic stress (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI) -- through creating global public-private partnerships among governmental, corporate, scientific and philanthropic communities -- based on our belief in open science principles.

✓ Research collaborations with academic, medical, and veterans' service communities

✓ Online community tool for service members, veterans, and families coping with invisible wounds via "Patients Like Me"



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

www.vfw.org/BDD | BDD@vfw.org

WHAT TO BRING TO YOUR APPOINTMENT

VFW Pre-Discharge Claims Representatives proudly serve:

- Active Duty Personnel within 180 days of separation/retirement
- Veterans who are no more than 12 months beyond separation/retirement
- FREE Service/No Membership required
- We are professionally trained/**VA accredited** representatives
- VFW is a non-profit veterans advocacy organization, Congressionally Chartered

Please bring the following documents to your appointment:

- ☐ **Digitized copy of medical records (entry to present), where applicable:**
 - **AHLTA/Genesis/JLV**
 - **Hard copy records**
 - **Dental records**
 - **HAIMS**
 - **Behavioral / Mental Health records**
 - **Private/Civilian medical records**
- ☐ **Separation Health Assessment (SHA) Part A**
- ☐ **Dependents Information**



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

Adopt-a-Unit

- ❖ Over **121,000 military and family** members are being actively supported by VFW Posts and Auxiliaries through the VFW Adopt-a-Unit program.
- ❖ Popular examples of Adopt-a-Unit activities:
 - **Family Days**- VFW understands the importance of family to the military member and their mission
 - **Welcome Home & Deployment events**
 - **Holiday events**
 - **Meetings and Support Seminars**
 - **Community Projects**- Annually, VFW posts *donate \$45 million dollars* and *5 million volunteer hours* to community activities.
 - **Direct assistance**- lawn care, auto repairs, renovations to help accommodate a newly wounded service member
 - **And much more.....**
- ❖ VFW Posts work with unit commanders and senior enlisted personnel to develop supportive relationships with units before, during and after deployments. We offer a vast network of free resources and a variety of direct support for military members and their families.
- ❖ If your unit is interested in being adopted:
 - Check if someone in the unit is already a member of a local VFW Post.
 - Use the "Find a Post" locator on VFW's website: vfw.org/FindaPost
 - Contact VFW National HQs: m.a.p@vfw.org or 816.756.3390





How to Find a Unit to Adopt

The references and resources below are to help you *get started* supporting local military units and their families through **VFW's Adopt-a-Unit (AAU) program**.

Before submitting AAU paperwork to VFW National HQ or sending care packages to a unit:

- Get permission from the unit's Commanding officer or Senior NCO
- Review the information in the Adopt-a-Unit Application.

VFW HQs does not have a list of names &/or addresses of units or service members.

===== **R e s o u r c e s** =====

VFW Post/Auxiliary members are the BEST resources to make contact with a local military unit. Ask if anyone has a friend/relative currently serving in the military; or even knows of someone working/serving on a local base.

VFW & Auxiliary Department Chairmen are a critically important resource, they receive training on VFW troop support programs and receive regular communications from VFW HQs.

Your own hometown community (Churches, workplace, schools, VSOs etc.) As with your membership, ask around to see if anyone has a friend or relative currently serving in the military or working at a base or reserve center.

===== **Military/Internet Resources** =====

Active Duty Military Bases/Installations:

Military.com Assists 30 million Americans with military affinity stay connected and informed, including an online guide to military bases. <http://www.military.com/base-guide/>

My Base Guide primarily geared towards military and their families. Click on the link below to check the U.S. map and see if there is a base in your area. When you find a base, then click on the name. From the bases' webpage, look for the "Directory" and look for the "Public Affairs" office to make contact.

<http://mybaseguide.com/>

National Guard & Reserves:

1. **Army & Air National Guard**: The link below is to a U.S. map, just click on your state & it takes you to your state's guard website.
<http://www.nationalguard.mil/resources/statewebsites.aspx>
2. **Marine Reserves**: The link below has the most detailed contact information to work from.
<http://www.marforres.marines.mil/ContactUs/DirectoryByState.aspx>
3. **Army Reserves**: Look on the right side of the home page of the link below for "Find A Unit" to look up your state. <http://www.usar.army.mil/Pages/default.aspx>
4. **Navy Reserves**: <<still working on what the symbols on map mean, 4/26>>
<http://www.navyreserve.com/about/locations/>
5. **Air Force Reserves**: Lists units by states. Click on the unit/state and it will take to you that AF base website. You will then need to go to the contact us to get the telephone number for the Airman and Family Assistance Center.
<http://www.afrc.af.mil/units/unitsbystate.asp>

Military Medical (Wounded Warrior) units:

1. **Army- Warrior Transition Units (WTU)**: This link also uses a U.S. map. Once, you've verified there is a unit in your area, you can use the telephone number provided to make contact with an ombudsman. [http://wtc.army.mil/about us/wtu locations.html](http://wtc.army.mil/about_us/wtu_locations.html)
2. **Marines- Wounded Warrior Regiment (WWR)** detachments are units/locations: Contact one of the 2 Battalions below to see if there are Marines from the WWR in your area.
 - **Battalion-East Contact Center**: (*East of the Mississippi River, including Europe*)
910-451-1202, 910-451-2253, 910-449-9573
 - **Battalion West Contact Center**: (*West of the Mississippi River, including Japan, Guam and Hawaii*) 888-738-7044
3. **Navy- Safe Harbor**: This website lists the locations (scroll down) where Navy Wounded Warrior – Safe Harbor staff are located throughout the continental United States. <http://safeharbor.navylive.dodlive.mil/?s=locations>
4. **Air Force – Wounded Warrior**: Each Air Force base has an "Airman & Family Readiness Center"(AFRC). If the base has service members in transition, the AFRC will be the office to discuss possibly VFW support. Use the active duty base resources above to locate an Air Force base.

With all the changes in the military, websites and links can change quickly. Please contact the MAP office regarding any issues with the above links or if you need further assistance.

Email: m.a.p@vfw.org or call 816-756-3390

Adopt-A-Unit FAQ

The Adopt-a-Unit Program assists in building relationships between the VFW and our military members.

Who is Eligible to Adopt-a-Unit:

- VFW Posts
- VFW Auxiliary
- Combination of Both

Why you should Adopt-a-Unit:

- To support your local military members and their families. As VFW/Auxiliary members, you understand the challenges military members and their families face and the support they need.
- To help connect military members with the vast network of resources the VFW has available. Conducting Adopt-a-Unit activities is a great recruiting opportunity.

How to find a military unit:

- Contact your local National Guard, Reserve and Active Duty units.
- Access the “Find a Unit Flyer” which is available at vfw.org/TroopSupport/
- Speak with other VFW Posts and Veterans Organizations who may have knowledge of units in the area.

When to adopt a unit:

- There is no time like the present and our military members and their families need your assistance now more than ever. Your assistance is equally important whether the unit is home or deployed overseas.

What kind of activities should you plan:

- Welcome Home, Deployment, Yellow Ribbon, Family Day, Dinner/Picnics, Holiday Parties, Meetings/Briefings and Funeral/Memorial Services to name a few.
- You are only limited by your imagination when it comes to supporting our troops and their families.

Where to get assistance for Adopt-a-Unit Questions:

Call the Military Appreciation Program Office at 866.789.6333

Email the MAP Office at m.a.p@vfw.org

How to Apply:

Submit an Adopt-a-Unit Application to the MAP Office, the form is located on the VFW website at www.vfw.org/TroopSupport/

When to Report:

Submit a minimum of one AAU Activity Report annually per adopted unit.

Your first report is due at least one year from the date the application was received. You can also submit a report after every event that you conduct with your adopted unit.

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

406 W. 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111
Office 816.756.3390
Fax 816.968.1157

WASHINGTON OFFICE

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002
Office 202.543.2239
Fax 202.543.6719

info@vfw.org
www.vfw.org

Military Appreciation Program Grant FAQ

What is a MAP Grant?

It is financial assistance given to a VFW Post or Auxiliary for troop support activities to build relationships and provide information to their local adopted unit about VFW programs and services.

Who can apply for a MAP Grant?

VFW Departments, Posts and Auxiliaries that desire to support their local military. The actual MAP application can only be submitted by a VFW or Auxiliary member and must be signed by the appropriate individuals which are specified in the MAP Grant Guidelines.

What kind of events can MAP Grant funds be used for

The most common events that we see include:

- Family Days, Picnics, BBQ's, Welcome Home and Deployment Ceremonies, Holidays and Festivals.

Note: MAP Grants cannot be used for Public Events and/or Formal Military events such as: Military Dining In/Out, Military Balls, Change of Command/Responsibility Ceremonies, etc.

What items can be purchased with MAP Grant funds?

Basic food and non-alcoholic beverages for currently serving military and their family members only.

Where do I get a MAP Grant Application?

The MAP Grant applications can be found behind the login on the VFW website at www.vfw.org. After logging in go to the My VFW tab and choose VFW Training and Support under the "General Member Tools & Resources" heading, then select Veterans & Military Support to find all of our resources.

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

406 W. 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111
Office 816.756.3390
Fax 816.968.1157

WASHINGTON OFFICE

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002
Office 202.543.2239
Fax 202.543.6719

info@vfw.org
www.vfw.org

When should I submit the MAP Grant Application?

Grants are on a first come first serve basis while funding is available.

How do I submit a MAP Grant?

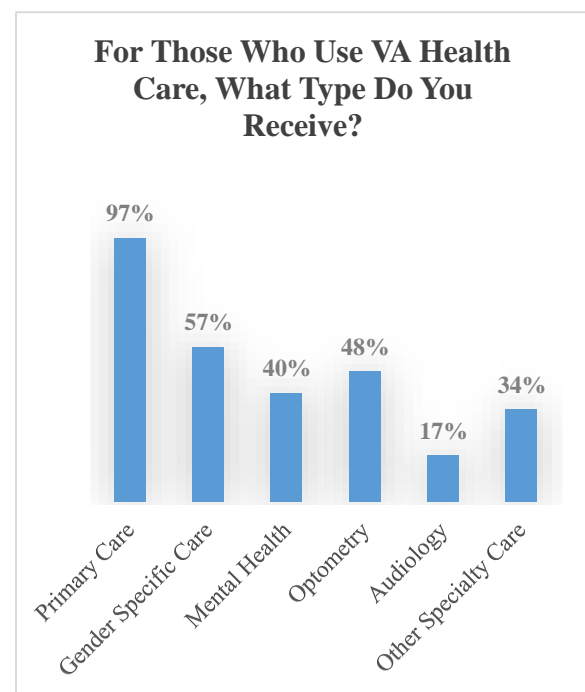
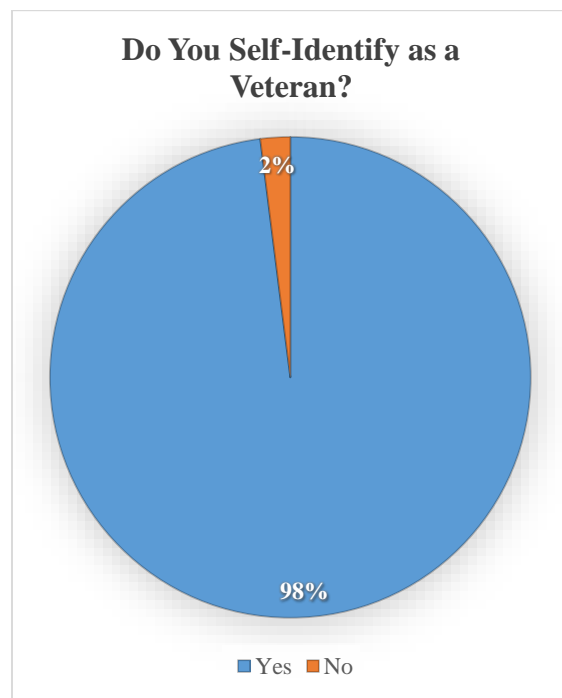
MAP Grants must be submitted through Formstack when the grant is open.

For any further questions or concerns please contact the MAP Office by phone at (866) 789-6333 or email m.a.p@vfw.org

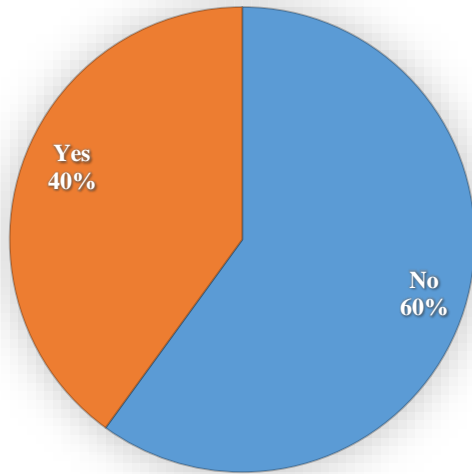
VFW WOMEN VETERANS SURVEY FINDINGS:

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States' (VFW) survey of women veterans was conducted from December 21, 2015 to January 18, 2016 and received 2,475 responses. The survey was logic-based, meaning the questions participants were prompted to answer were based on their initial responses. To ensure only women veterans answered the survey, the VFW screened for participants' gender and service status. Nearly 2,000 participants responded being female and active duty, reserve/guard, military retiree, or veteran. Below is a summary of the results.

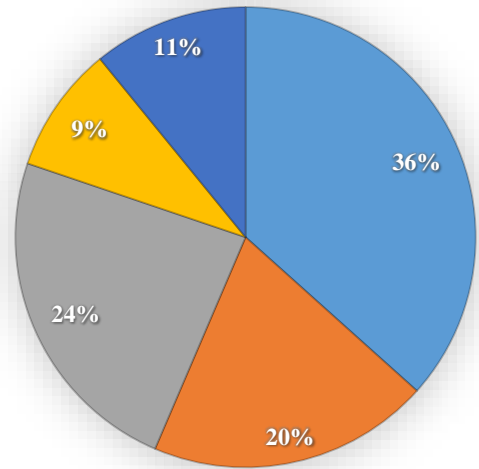
Health Care, Identity and Outreach



**Were You Given The Option To
Select The Gender of Your
Health Care Provider?**

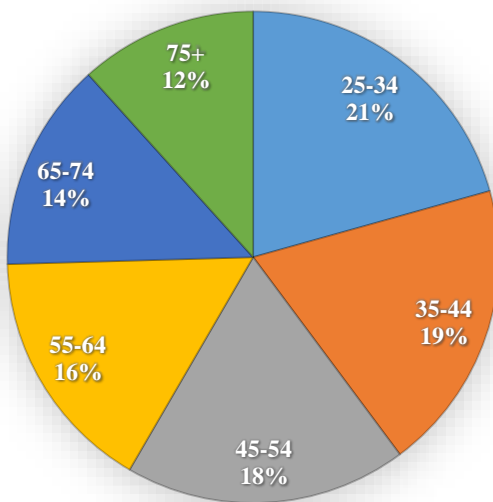


**How Likely Are You To Choose
a Provider Of The Same
Gender?**

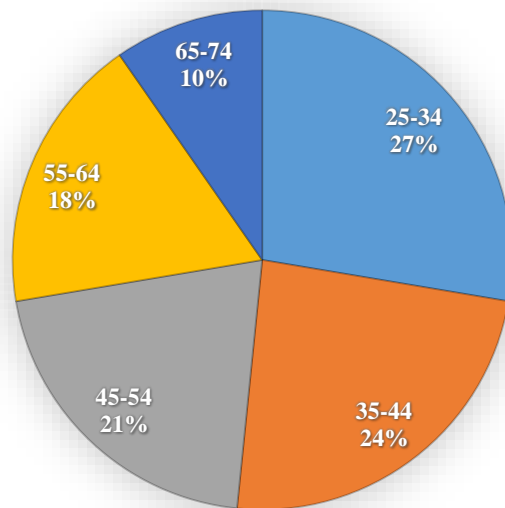


■ Extremely Likely ■ Very Likely ■ Moderately Likely
■ Slightly Likely ■ Not At All Likely

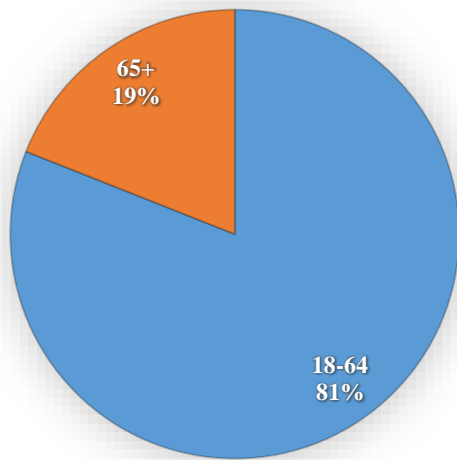
**Age Range of VA Gender-
Specific Care Users**



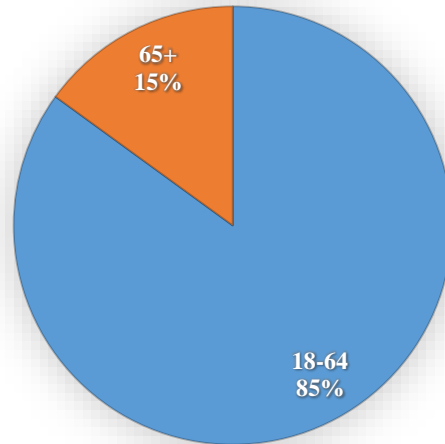
**Age Range of Mental Health
Care Users**



What is Your Age Range?



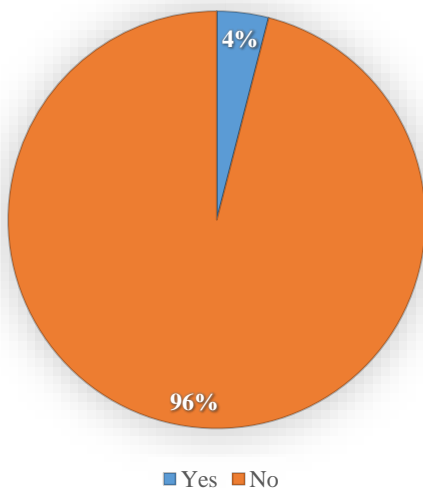
Of Women Who Report Receiving Disability, What is Your Age Range?



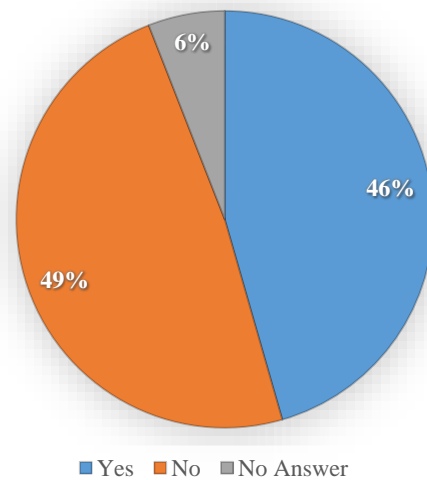
HOMELESSNESS

Of survey respondents, 72 women identified as being homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The VFW reached out to every woman veteran requesting assistance to aid in finding housing and employment.

Are You Currently Homeless or at Risk of Becoming Homelessness?

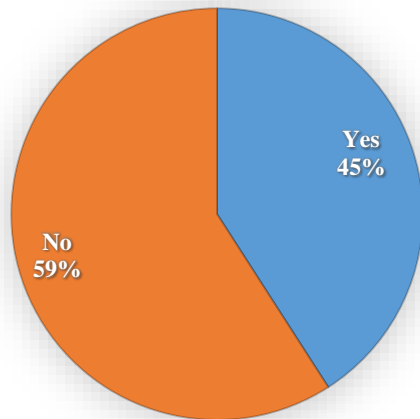


Are You Currently Living in Another Person's Home?*



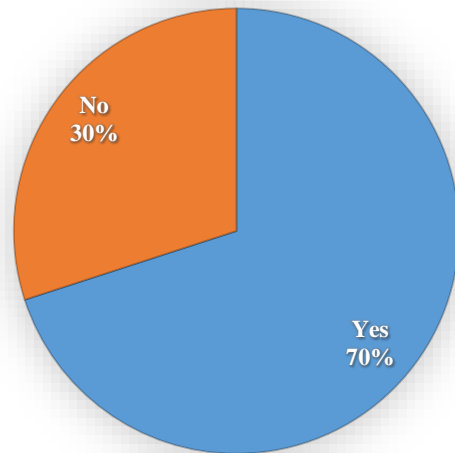
* Percentage of veterans who reported being homeless or at risk. (n=72)

Would You Like Assistance in Seeking Permanent Housing?*



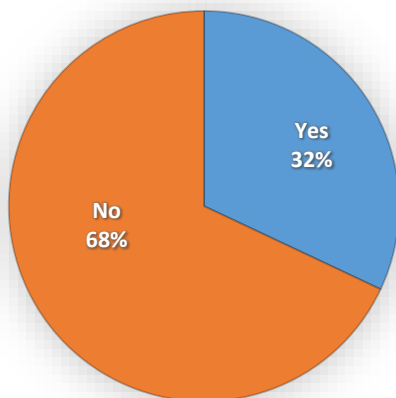
*Percentage of veterans who reported being homeless or at risk. (n=72)

Do You Have Children?*



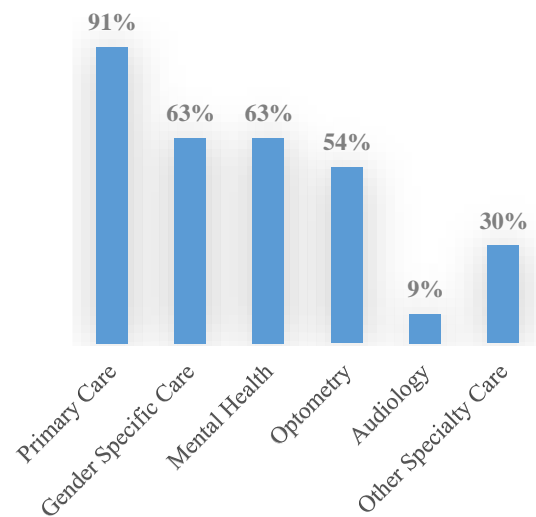
*Percentage of veterans who reported being homeless or at risk. (n=72)

Does Having Children Impact Your Ability to Receive Care at the VA?



*Of the 72 women who reported being homeless, 38 of them reported having children. However our survey did not ask if they currently have custody of their children.

For Homeless Women Who Use VA Health Care, What Type Do You Receive?





STUDENT VETERAN SUPPORT GRANT GUIDELINES

Purpose:

To provide financial assistance to VFW Posts, Departments and Auxiliaries who host or sponsor events in their community designed specifically to reach and support student veterans. These funds should be used to help build and foster community relationships and provide information on VFW programs and services. This grant is facilitated by VFW National Veterans Service to help promote partnership and outreach to nearly one million veterans currently enrolled on college campuses around the country.

How to apply for a Student Veteran Support Grant

The applicant will access and complete the online application at VFWPrograms.formstack.com/forms/SVAGrantApplication.

- Only a VFW member may submit a Student Veteran Support Grant Application on behalf of a VFW Post/District/Department.
- The online application must be authorized by the Post/District/Dept. Commander or Quartermaster
- The grant funds can and should be utilized to assist you directly with your event which could include, but are not limited to: Securing an event space, securing a guest speaker, providing snacks and refreshments, or having items available for distribution
- The grant application should be submitted **NO LATER THAN** 14 days prior to the event. Any exceptions to this must be submitted in writing to the Director, National Veterans Service for approval

An After Action Report (AAR) must be submitted to VFW National Veterans Service within 30 days after the event. Receipts are not required. However, a detailed breakdown of expenses should be included in the AAR.

If the event receipts total less than the grant amount provided, the Dept/Post/Auxiliary will not be required to refund the difference.

If the event is cancelled, the grant recipient must notify VFW National Veterans Service as soon as possible, and a full refund is required. However, if the event is rescheduled for a later date, a written explanation must be submitted to the Director, National Veterans Service detailing the new dates.

Note: Prior approval of similar events does not guarantee future approval. All applications must be signed and dated. For any further questions or concerns please contact the VFW Washington Office by phone at 202.608.8321.

1 STUDENT VETERAN

FAQs for Student Veterans

How do I find out what education benefits I'm eligible for?

Veterans can contact the VA's GI Bill® Hotline at 1.888.GI.Bill (1.888.442.4551).

How is my Post-9/11 GI Bill living stipend (BHA) determined?

Your BHA is based on the ZIP code for your school and paid at the rate of E-5 with dependents. To estimate of your BHA benefits, click here and enter your zip code:

<http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/bahCalc.cfm>.

If I attend school half time do I get BHA?

No. The law stipulates no BAH payment for less than full time students.

If I am a "distance learner" do I qualify for BHA?

Yes, but your payments will be for half of the national average (currently \$714.50).

What should I do or who do I contact about a payment delay?

First, contact your school certifying official first to double-check your enrollment verification. If you continue to have problems, email 1StudentVeteran@vfw.org.

Why didn't I get any payment over the break?

Payments are made based on the days actually spent in school; therefore no payments are made during breaks.

Can I transfer my benefits to my spouse or children?

Under certain conditions you may transfer your benefits if you are still serving on active duty, but benefit transfer is controlled by the Department of Defense (DOD) and requires additional military service. VA does not control the transfer of benefits. For a fact sheet on GI Bill transferability, click here:

http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/docs/factsheets/Transferability_Factsheet.pdf.

**GI Bill® is a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).*

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

406 W. 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111

Office 816.756.3390
Fax 816.968.1157

WASHINGTON OFFICE

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002

Office 202.543.2239
Fax 202.543.6719

info@vfw.org
www.vfw.org

1 STUDENT VETERAN

Little-known Facts for Students

1. Fry Scholarship

Qualifying children of service members who die in the line of duty after September 10, 2001 are eligible for the Post-911/GI Bill. For details on the Fry Scholarship, click here:

https://gibill.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/1411/~/_what-is-the-fry-scholarship-and-who-is-eligible%3F.

2. Rural Benefit

Certain veterans who relocate from highly rural areas to attend college may be eligible for a one-time \$500 payment to help defer costs associated with relocation. To view current maximum tuition and rural benefit rates, click here:

http://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/resources/benefits_resources/rate_tables.asp.

3. Yellow Ribbon

Allows approved institutions of higher learning in the US and the VA to partially or fully fund tuition and expenses that exceed the GI Bill® limits. To view a list of Yellow Ribbon participants, click here:

http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/yellow_ribbon.asp.

4. Scholarships

Several national scholarships may be available to help defray some out-of-pocket costs for higher education. VFW offers scholarships for student veterans in partnership with Sport Clips and Student Veterans of America (SVA) offers scholarships in partnership with Google for veterans pursuing STEM degrees.

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

406 W. 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111
Office 816.756.3390
Fax 816.968.1157

WASHINGTON OFFICE

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002
Office 202.543.2239
Fax 202.543.6719

info@vfw.org
www.vfw.org

- a. VFW scholarship info: <http://www.vfw.org/scholarship>
- b. SVA scholarship info:
<http://www.studentveterans.org/index.php/chapter/programs/scholarships>.

5. Career Counseling and Educational Services

VA offers free educational and career counseling to all GI Bill-eligible veterans under Chapter 36 beginning six months prior to leaving service. To learn about this benefit, click here: <http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/careerscope.asp>.

6. In-State Tuition

If you attend a public school, the Post-9/11 GI Bill will only reimburse the in-state tuition and fees rate even if the school considers you an out-of-state student. Fortunately, some states have taken the steps to acknowledge all veterans as in-state students. To learn which states help you maximize your GI Bill benefits, click here: <http://www.studentveterans.org/index.php/what-we-do/in-state-tuition>.

7. Hazlewood Act

Certain qualified veterans and dependent children are exempted from specific tuition and fees in the state of Texas. To learn more about the Hazlewood Act and to see if you qualify call 1 (800) 252- 8387 or click here: <http://www.tvc.texas.gov/Hazlewood-Act.aspx>.

**GI Bill® is a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).*

cut here first →

← cut here first

cut here
second



↑ cut here
second



Chat at **VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat** • Text **838255**
Confidential support is available 24/7.

cut here
second



↑ cut here
second



Chat at **VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat** • Text **838255**
Confidential support is available 24/7.

cut here
second



↑ cut here
second



Chat at **VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat** • Text **838255**
Confidential support is available 24/7.

cut here
second



↑ cut here
second



Chat at **VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat** • Text **838255**
Confidential support is available 24/7.

cut here
second



↑ cut here
second

cut here first →

← cut here first

cut here
second



↑ cut here
second



Chat at **VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat** • Text **838255**
Confidential support is available 24/7.

cut here
second



↑ cut here
second



Chat at **VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat** • Text **838255**
Confidential support is available 24/7.

cut here
second



↑ cut here
second



Chat at **VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat** • Text **838255**
Confidential support is available 24/7.

cut here
second



↑ cut here
second



Chat at **VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat** • Text **838255**
Confidential support is available 24/7.

cut here
second



↑ cut here
second

← cut here first

cut here
second

RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS OF SUICIDE RISK

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs 01/2023

← cut here first

FACE the FIVE

Signs Everyone Needs to Know



Personality
Change



Uncharacteristically
angry, anxious,
agitated, or moody



Withdrawal or
isolation from
other people



May neglect self-
care & engage in
risky behavior



Overcome with
hopelessness &
overwhelmed by
circumstances

THESE ARE FIVE SIGNS THAT MAY MEAN SOMEONE
IS IN EMOTIONAL PAIN & MIGHT NEED HELP.



Mental Health. For Life.

Know the Five Signs



Feeling like U?



R U Agitated?



R U Withdrawn?



Caring 4 U?



Feeling Hopeless?

IVFV

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.



The campaign to
changedirection[™]
A Give an Hour Collective Impact Effort

Healthy Habits of Emotional Well-being



TAKE CARE



CHECK IN



ENGAGE



RELAX



KNOW FIVE SIGNS

#[change](#)mentalhealth

www.changedirection.org

Tips for Military & Veteran *Caregivers*



Caregivers, often behind the scenes and with little recognition, shoulder a broad spectrum of responsibilities ranging from everyday home tasks to managing total emotional, mental, and physical care of their loved one as they navigate a complex medical system. Caregivers often find themselves working beyond their limits to provide care. While you're going above and beyond, it's important to take care of yourself.

Self-Care

Build time for self-care into your calendar. Make a list of your top 3 self-care activities and practice one a day.

Give yourself grace. While military caregivers are resilient, resourceful, and strong, it is normal to have feelings of guilt, irritability, or anxiety.

Move your body each day. Go for a walk, if the weather allows, if not, move about indoors and stretch for 10-minutes a day.

Take a time out and limit your media and social media consumption.

Managing Uncertainty

Establish a new routine. Set small daily goals and aim for consistency rather than perfection.

Seek out humor/ Laughing is a good prescription for an anxious mind.

Fact-check your thoughts. Recognize thinking that causes unnecessary stress or anxiety.

Staying Connected

Recruit a wing-person. Schedule hangouts, game nights with friends and family to help keep your spirits up.

Connect with virtual caregiving support. Talking with others who are in caregiving roles can generate ideas and provide a sense of support or community.

Take advantage of telehealth opportunities for yourself and loved ones. Give an Hour is here to help!

NOT A MILITARY OR VETERAN CAREGIVER?

Learn about how you can support Military Caregivers in the Guide. "Caring for the Military Caregiver: A Guide to Providing Mental Health Care to America's Hidden Heroes."

www.giveanhour.org

VETERANS & 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 Salt Lake City, Utah.

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 Salt Lake City, Utah.

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 on page 5 and for the promotion of the Program goals listed at the top of page 59.

Winners will be announced and awards will be presented at the 2026 VFW Auxiliary National Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah.



Veterans & Family Support Program

2025-2026 Report Form

VaNette Jones, Department Chairman

P.O. Box 558

Fruitland, MD 21826



667-221-2199 beaveteranspal@comcast.net

Auxiliary _____ District _____ Month _____ Chairman _____

Reporting Period: From _____ To _____

Hours _____ Projects Cost \$ _____ Mileage _____ Volunteers # _____

Did your Auxiliary promote, participate, host or co-host with your VFW post any activities for:

- | | | |
|---|-----------|----------|
| a. Disaster Relief | Yes _____ | No _____ |
| b. Military Assistance (MAP) | Yes _____ | No _____ |
| c. National Veterans Service (NVS) | Yes _____ | No _____ |
| d. Unmet Needs | Yes _____ | No _____ |
| e. Veterans & Military Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Awareness | Yes _____ | No _____ |

Did your Auxiliary provide direct aid to Veterans, service members and or their families? Yes _____ No _____
(example: meals, transportation, cards, packages, donations, etc.)

Total monetary value of donations and goods/services provided \$ _____

Total monetary donations provided \$ _____

Approximate number of veterans, service members and/or their families assisted. # _____

What did your Auxiliary do to provide aid to veterans, active-duty military and/or their families? (i.e. meals, transportation, cards, packages, donations, etc.)

Number of Get Well Cards sent - 25pts per card	Cost/Value of Get Well Cards	Number of Sympathy Cards sent - 25pts per card	Cost/Value of Sympathy cards	Other Cards sent - 25pts per card	Cost/Value of Other cards

Other Veterans & Family Support projects (use an additional sheet if necessary):