

VETERANS & FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Goals and Objectives for 2025-26

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

Department President's Theme
Building Bridges for our Veterans

National President's Theme
**From Sea to Shining Sea
Honoring Veterans Who Keep Us Free**

VETERANS & FAMILY SUPPORT (V&FS) PROGRAM SUMMARY AND GOALS

The VFW Auxiliary remains dedicated to serving veterans and their families through diverse programs and initiatives. In this 111th year, we continue **Building Bridges for our Veterans** to strengthen that support. Military families encounter unique challenges, and while numerous support programs exist to enhance their well-being and provide necessary resources, these programs are ineffective if those who need assistance are unaware of them or how to access them. Therefore, throughout the year, we will promote some activities and events from the VFW, VFW Auxiliary, national and state governments, and corporate supporters of Veteran initiatives so that you can use your Post and Auxiliary to promote them; however, almost any activity under any program can be used to inform and educate those around you about resources available for Veteran support.

As one professor wisely said, 'Knowing the answer is great, but knowing where to find the answer is just as good', and this is especially true when connecting veterans to vital resources. It's crucial that every Auxiliary member be empowered with the knowledge of these Veteran assistance programs and how to directly facilitate a connection. With those tools we can ignite a renewed sense of purpose within our Auxiliary and boost participation to more fully achieve our mission and ensure we are, **From Sea to Shining Sea Honoring Veterans Who Keep Us Free!**

Program Objective #1 – Educate, Inform, and Promote Veterans and Military support programs and the National Veterans Service. The VFW offers extensive programs demonstrating its commitment to veterans. By utilizing all our resources, we can spread the word effectively and connect veterans with the vital support they need. With the VFW's National Veterans Service (NVS), Pre-Discharge, Military Assistance Program (MAP), Disaster Relief, Uniting to Combat Hunger (UTCH) programs, along with other government programs and organizations, the network of Veteran support is wide enough to help any Veteran, including those still serving, they just need to know that we are there to help them stand proud.

Program Objective #2 – Keep focus on Veteran Mental Health Awareness and support programs such as the Veterans Crisis Line. No veteran needs to face a crisis alone. Help is available and reaching out can make a critical difference. The Veterans Crisis Line connects the caller with caring, qualified VA responders who provide free, confidential support. **The Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is available to anyone and can be reached by dialing 988.** Pressing 1 connects the caller directly to the Veterans Crisis Line, where responders are trained to support veterans, service members, and their families. **You can also reach them by texting 838255 from any cell phone.** The Veterans Crisis Line has handled millions of calls, texts, and chats, connecting veterans and their families to immediate counseling. As we continue to promote and inform the public about this important service, we can help those in need find support.

Program Objective #3 – Encourage the employment of Veterans and their spouses in the job market. Transitioning from military service presents unique employment challenges for veterans and their families. Veterans may struggle to translate their valuable military training and experience into civilian careers, particularly in areas with limited job markets. Military spouses often face career hurdles due to frequent

relocations, state licensing differences, and employment gaps related to their service member's assignments. As a Post and Auxiliary, we can leverage our community connections to help bridge these gaps. By partnering with local employers, education centers, and workforce development programs, we can promote veteran hiring, share resources for skill enhancement, and facilitate networking opportunities. Together, we can empower our veterans and their spouses to secure meaningful employment, ensuring they thrive as vital members of our communities.

PROGRAM EXECUTION

- As the Auxiliary Veterans & Family Support (V&FS) Program Chairman, you hold a vital role. Your responsibilities include promoting all aspects of the V&FS Program and informing members about the focus set by the National Ambassador and Department Chairman. Please familiarize yourself thoroughly with the V&FS Program guidelines and goals
- Encourage member creativity in planning, executing, and reporting V&FS activities outlined in the National and Department Programs. Ensure members are welcome to actively participate in all project phases. Integrate V&FS efforts with other activities where appropriate. Utilize Department resources, like monthly promotion pages, to inform members, deepen your program knowledge, and guide your planning.
- Maintain up-to-date contact information for Auxiliary Officers and Chairmen at all levels and ensure your District/Department V&FS Chairmen have yours. Carefully read, save, and organize all V&FS program information received. Note all deadlines, especially for awards. Meticulously track all V&FS activity, including volunteer hours spent on planning, execution, and cleanup.
- Develop project ideas in coordination with the Auxiliary President and your VFW counterpart. Present proposed V&FS projects to the Auxiliary members during meetings, clearly outlining goals and requesting approval for any necessary expenses. Encourage member participation by actively soliciting volunteers. Delegate or coordinate publicity efforts to inform members and the community about upcoming events.
- Maintain communication with your District/Department Chairman as needed throughout the project lifecycle. Ensure projects are followed through to completion. Timely and accurate reporting is crucial. Complete reports immediately following an event while details are fresh – leverage your notes and records to make this easier. Consistent reporting is essential.
- Remember that a single activity can often be reported under multiple programs if it meets their respective goals. Given that V&FS is a core VFW Auxiliary value, many activities may qualify for reporting under this program – ensure you do so when applicable. **Note the exception: Auxiliary Outreach activities must be reported separately and cannot be cross-reported with other programs.**



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DEPARTMENT AUXILIARY AWARDS

- 1. Special Award to one Auxiliary in each of the five membership classes with the 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.**

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.

NATIONAL 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.