

New Points of Focus

2025-2026 National Veterans & Family Support Ambassador Annie O'Connor

I'm so glad that our members are embracing the idea that a "*Rising Tide Lifts All Veterans to Success*" because no truer words have been spoken!

For my Program this year my main points of focus will be :

- VFW Based Veterans Assistance Programs
- Veterans Mental Health Issues
- Veteran and Veteran Spouses employment

The VFW has a plethora of ways to assist our veterans, their families and service members with their VA claims and benefits assistance

VFW Service Officers are trained professionals who help veterans navigate the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) system to secure the benefits they have earned. Services offered by these officers include:

- Case preparation
- Claims and appeals
- Transition support
- Advocacy

There's also the VFW's Financial Assistance Program for service members. The Financial Assistance for Service Members program is here to help America's active-duty service members (including activated Guard/Reserve members) and their families who have run into unexpected financial difficulties because of deployment or other military-related activity or injury.

This program provides financial assistance up to \$2,500 to assist daily necessities in the form of a grant – not a loan – so no repayment is required. To further ease the burden, the VFW pays the creditor(s) directly. Additional information about these programs may be found here:

<https://www.vfw.org/assistance/financial-grants>

Veteran Students also have VFW Resources to include the VFW Student Veteran Support Grant and the VFW "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship." Check out all the detail about these opportunities at the link located here: <https://www.vfw.org/assistance/student-veterans-support>

Veterans Mental Health is of course a key component of everything we do in this Program. In order to easily point a veteran in the direction of help for dealing with the Veterans Administration; keep the 988 number (or text 838255) handy after recognizing a veteran (or anyone for that matter) in crisis. Pressing option 1 will lead veterans to specialize assistance geared specifically for them. Learn the five signs of someone in trouble. You will never know

how much a difference that you may make in someone's life!

Employment is vital to ensure that our veterans and their families are in the best possible shape, both financially and mentally! This also includes helping their spouse enter or reenter the job market. Work with your local employers, county and state to organize opportunities such as resume assistance, job fairs and training opportunities so that our veterans have the best chance at maximizing their earning potential. Their success will be returned tenfold to their communities!

Many of the tools to help with this can be located in MALTA here:

<https://malta.vfwauxiliary.org/MemberResources>

Members may contact me at any time either via email at auxambassadorannie@gmail.com or call/text at 912-655-2726. I look forward to hearing from you all!

And once again, never forget, *"A Rising Tides Lifts all Veterans to Success"*!