



How the government supports military families

When U.S. veterans serve, their families sacrifice, too. That's why the Department of Defense offers military families several resources to help them meet the unique challenges they face.



Military OneSource

This one-stop shop for military support offers everything from advice on parenting to tax tips for U.S. veterans. It's a comprehensive source of help for all things military and is available to all service members and their families. 800-342-9647; militaryonesource.mil



Army and Air Force Exchange Service

AAFES offers tax-free shopping, with a huge variety of products offered. Despite its name, it's available to all armed forces members, both online and through stores located on military installations around the country. 800-527-2345; shopmyexchange.com



Counseling

When life hands U.S. veterans difficult situations, the government is there to help. Free counseling is available both online and in person through various programs offered by each service, including the VA and Military OneSource. Most programs offer a certain number of sessions for free. 800-273-TALK (800-273-8255); veteranscrisisline.net



Legal Support

All currently serving reservists and National Guard soldiers have access to legal support through the military's legal specialists. The judge advocate general, or JAG, office on each military installation can help with documents like wills or powers of attorney, and can advise on a wide range of legal matters. Individuals can contact the information desk or website of their nearest installation for a phone number and nearest legal assistance office.



Veterans Affairs

Service members who have deployed for a certain amount of time, or who have served stateside for a number of years, are eligible for benefits through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The two most used are home loan programs, which let first-time homebuyers take advantage of a government-secured loan, and VA hospitals, which provide free or low-cost medical services for U.S. veterans. 800-827-1000; va.gov



TRICARE

This is a government-sponsored health insurance program that is available to UPS employees who are members of the Reserve and National Guard. These low-cost insurance plans for individuals and their families can be used as secondary insurance for those enrolled in regular UPS health coverage. North Region: 877-874-2273; South Region: 800-444-5445; West Region: 877-988-9378; tricare.mil



Family Readiness

Each service branch has its own support groups for families. They have different names—family readiness groups (Army), family readiness programs (Marines), key spouse programs (Air Force), ombudsman programs (Navy), work-life programs (Coast Guard)—but they're all designed to help families and give them the chance to connect with others who share the specific challenges of being a military family. The groups can be especially helpful for troops who are deployed, serving as a source of information and support for their loved ones back home. Individuals should talk to their unit family support group representative for contact information.



Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health & Traumatic Brain Injury

This Department of Defense organization focuses on developing treatments for service members suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI) or other combat-related health issues. They manage a toll-free hotline for anyone who suspects they're suffering from these issues (even non-service members), along with research centers that provide in- and outpatient treatment. 866-966-1020; dcoe.mil



GI Bill

The GI Bill is a specific program run by the VA that helps U.S. veterans afford an education. It's not just for college, either, as the GI Bill can often be used for certification courses and advanced degrees. The program lets veterans receive a check each month that they're in school. The amount is based on the number of credits the student is taking. In some cases, the GI Bill allows troops to transfer those benefits to family members. 800-827-1000; benefits.va.gov/gibill

Find more support resources at www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/nrd

Learn more at www.UPSjobs.com/military