

Combating Hunger

VFW Headquarters and Humana team up to fight against food insecurity

May 18, 2023

VFW and Humana have joined forces again this year to provide more than 1 million meals to food insecure families.

The *Uniting to Combat Hunger* campaign has provided more than 4 million meals for families in need. In 2017, VFW and Humana teamed up help give healthy meals to needy Americans. Last year, the program produced more than 1 million meals for food-insecure families across the country.

Food insecurity does not necessarily mean people are going without regular meals. People who don't have access to healthy foods and fresh produce are considered food insecure.

Food Insecurity affects 1-in-8 people in the U.S., and it is an issue for people living above and below the poverty line, according to Feeding America, a nonprofit national network of food banks.

One in nine working-aged veterans "live in food insecure households," according to Feeding America. The organization also reported that almost one in four active-duty military members were food insecure in 2020.

According to a June 2020 report from the U.S. Census Bureau, about 43 percent of post-9/11 veterans have disabilities. And, according to a May 2021 study by the Department of Agriculture, disabled veterans are about 22.5 percent more likely than the general population to be food insecure.

With these statistics in mind, VFW Foundation Donor Donations Director Richard Freiburghouse said having food insecure veterans and military members in the U.S. is unacceptable.

"This year at the VFW's 124th National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona, the *Uniting to Combat Hunger* program will begin seed sorting," Freiburghouse said. "These seeds will go

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to VFW Posts across the country to help with community gardens. This will help us feed people nationwide.”

The *Uniting to Combat Hunger* campaign also started a grant program for VFW Posts to support local food banks. Posts may be eligible for a \$1,500 matching grant.

VFW Foundation Grants Manager Jason Couch said that helping give VFW Posts across the country a means to feed food-insecure people is the goal of the program.

“Food insecurity among veterans and the military has been a pressing concern for VFW,” Couch said. “This program always was intended to go nationwide, and now that we are able to give these reimbursements to Posts helping their local food banks, we are beginning to see that reach.”

Couch said VFW has already given \$100,000 in grants to VFW Posts. He added Posts have donated more than \$100,000 to *Uniting to Combat Hunger*.

The Uniting to Combat Hunger grants program will close on July 17, but Couch said it will likely reopen in the fall.

For more information or to get involved with the *Uniting to Combat Hunger* campaign, visit www.vfw.org/UTCH.