

VETERANS AND MILITARY SUPPORT PROGRAMS



Clarke Christiansen
Director

321 E. 4th Ave.
New Lenox, IL 60451
Phone: (708) 205-4848

E-mail:
clarke@chicagomx.com

Post 9545-18

The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) is in the forefront of patriotism as the organization and its members find innovative ways to show support for America's veterans and her armed forces. The VFW Veterans and Military Support Programs are designed to give support to veterans, soldiers and their families. The keystone of this program is the involvement of local Posts with the military family or unit. This is especially important now that deployments are winding down.

ADOPT-A-UNIT: The Adopt-A-Unit program was developed as a means to pledge VFW Post and Auxiliary support to the service members and families of a unit from the local military community. When a Post "adopts" a unit, they make a commitment to the service members and families through moral and emotional support before, during and after deployment. To Adopt-A-Unit, fill out the Application for Sponsorship and submit it to VFW National Headquarters. A Certificate of Adoption will be mailed to the Post in approximately four weeks. An annual report is required.

MAP GRANTS: The MAP Grant program is intended as financial assistance for Posts, Districts, and Departments to sponsor events for military units of the Active-Duty, National Guard, and Reserves. These events are most successful when local Posts interact directly with the military unit, involving National Certified Recruiters and Veterans Service Officers. A MAP Grant Application should be submitted to VFW National Headquarters a minimum of three weeks prior to the event. The application must be filled out completely, and include a signature by the Commander or Quartermaster, an itemized event budget, description of VFW involvement with the event, Federal Tax ID number, and IRS tax-exempt status.

UNMET NEEDS: This program was created to assist military service members and their families who are experiencing a financial hardship directly related to military service. The financial assistance is in the form of up to \$2,500 in grants that do not need to be repaid. All grants are paid directly to the "creditor" companies (such as the electric company), and not to the individual. Each case is reviewed individually and acceptance is determined by a committee. Since the program began in 2004, over 3,500 military families have been assisted and over \$4.8 million has been disbursed in aid.

Some cases need even more immediate attention. There are procedures now in place for the State Headquarters to assist families with urgent needs. The Department must verify eligibility, need and get pre-approval from the Veterans and Military Support Programs Department Director to ensure reimbursement. A completed application along with copies of checks and the applicant's bills must be submitted to National with the reimbursement request.

VFW Unmet Needs also proudly stands ready to assist our service men and women when they are burdened by circumstances out of their control after state-declared natural disasters such as tornadoes, hurricanes, fires or floods. Service members must have served on active duty within the past 36-months and complete a one-page application. Assistance is limited to natural disasters which have damaged or forced the service member to vacate their primary residence. One time grants for \$300 or \$500 are available.

VFW's Sport Clips Help-A-Hero Scholarship: This program will provide scholarships of up to \$5,000 to help our veterans complete their educational goals. Contact HelpAHero@vfw.org with questions. Applications are available only at www.vfw.org/Scholarship. Eligibility requirements include:

- Active duty, retired or honorably discharged or a member of the National Guard/Reserves;
- Military rank 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

Forms: All applications and forms are available at www.vfw.org.

DONATIONS are needed for all these programs and VFW National Headquarters is encouraging Posts to donate to Veterans and Military Support Programs. Posts giving \$100 or more will receive a certificate of recognition. All Posts must donate a minimum of \$50.00 to the VFW Department Headquarters for the Military Assistance Program in order to receive credit on the State "X" Sheet.

Please remember the objective of all Veterans and Military Support Programs initiatives is to increase awareness of the VFW. This does not end when the troops re-deploy home. They and their families continue to need our backing and assistance.

Make them welcome in your posts. They are the future of our organization!