

Honoring and Supporting Our Military Caregivers

Military Caregiver Month is a time to recognize and honor more than 5.5 million spouses, parents, children, relatives, friends, coworkers, and neighbors who provide care and assistance while warriors heal from their injuries. The caregiver's dedication can lead to swifter recovery times for their loved one, a better quality of life, and saves the United States billions of dollars in health care costs.

The month of May is when the nation formally recognizes a caregiver's dedication. It's an understanding and appreciation that caregiving can sometimes come at a cost to their emotional, physical, and financial well-being. One of the goals of Military Caregiver Month is to get the word out regarding the life-changing work that caregivers are doing every day to support our nation's wounded warriors, but also to take the time to spotlight resources that are available for Military Caregivers and advocate for additional resources to fill any gaps that have been identified.

Available Resources for Military Caregivers

Veterans' Affairs

These caregiver support programs within Veterans' Affairs (VA) are open to all caregivers regardless of the warrior's years of service.

- **VA Caregiver Support Program**—based out of local VA Medical Centers, this program supports military caregivers with one-on-one and group coaching, mobile/telephone support, skills training, information regarding online programs, and referrals to available VA

and community resources.


- **Caregiver Support Line (1-855-260-3274)**—Military caregivers can call to learn more about navigating barriers to accessing care and community resources available to help the veteran and receive supportive counseling for themselves from licensed social workers. Caregivers can also use the Support Line to network and obtain advice by participating in monthly telephone education groups where they can ask questions and learn additional skills regarding their own self-care.
- **VA Peer Support Mentoring Program**—New military caregivers are matched with more experienced caregivers to obtain ongoing monthly support and consultation with the National Peer Mentoring Support Program Managers. Through this supportive program, the military caregiver can socialize and create supportive friendships with individuals who understand the issues faced by caregivers and can provide support and advice.
- **VA Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers**—This program is specifically geared towards those providing care for veterans with serious injuries who have served on or after 9/11. It provides approved caregivers support options, including a monthly stipend, respite care, payment of approved travel expenses, health insurance, and mental health services.

The Department of Defense

The Department of Defense (DoD) provides resources and information exclusively for military caregivers who assist wounded, ill, or injured Service members with activities of daily living.

- **Military Caregiver PEER (Personalized Experiences, Engagement, and Resources) Forum Initiative**—This initiative utilizes Military Family Life Counselors to organize and conduct forums that provide non-medical counseling opportunities for military caregivers. At

these forums, attendees discuss topics they would like to focus on, such as managing stress, nutrition, financial wellness, and employment, among other issues. The Military Caregiver PEER Forums aim to reduce stress, provide emotional support, and be a resource for valuable information through guided discussion among military caregivers, allowing them to share practical, accurate, and thorough information based on their personal experiences.

-  **Caregiver Resource Directory (CRD)**—The CRD is designed to help empower military caregivers with information about national and local resources and programs specifically for them. Topics include helplines, advocacy and benefits information, career transitions and employment, military caregiver support, children's needs, education and training, financial support, rest and relaxation, and more.

You can [access the 2022 CRD online](#) or request a CRD at OSD.Caregiver@mail.mil.

- **[National Resource Directory](#)** – The NRD is an online database containing thousands of validated Federal, State, and local level resources that support recovery, rehabilitation, and reintegration for service members, veterans, family members, and caregivers.
- **Virtual PEER Forums**—Military caregivers may join their peers through virtual teleconference lines during forums scheduled on the first Thursday of every month at 11 a.m. ET and the fourth Thursday at 2 p.m. ET. Virtual Peer Forums allow caregivers to share their expertise and network with others who are experiencing similar challenges. [Click here to RSVP](#).
- **Warrior Care Recovery Coordination Program** – A Defense Health Agency program where caregivers can learn more about navigating the various DoD programs developed for [Wounded Warriors](#).

- [Military Caregiver webinars, events, and specialized resources.](#)

While caregiving is rewarding, it can also be challenging and overwhelming. That's why spending awareness about the resources available to military caregivers is essential.