

'It's A Win-Win'

VFW and Humana's Uniting to Combat Hunger (UTCH) seed sorting event yielded 31 tons of food for food-insecure families nationwide

Nov 25, 2025

Volunteers at the 126th VFW National Convention in Columbus, Ohio — the birthplace of the VFW — participated in the seventh-annual Uniting to Combat Hunger (UTCH) seed-sorting event, which aims to help families affected by food insecurity.

The event, hosted by VFW in partnership with Humana on Aug. 9, welcomed waves of volunteers throughout the convention, amassing more than 9,500 seed packets for distribution to VFW Posts and Auxiliaries, as well as community gardens across the country.

VFW Foundation Director of Donor Relations Richard Freiburghouse said the UTCH campaign exhibits the VFW's commitment to serving veterans and their communities by addressing one of the most pressing issues facing many veterans.

“The Uniting to Combat Hunger program is dedicated to addressing food insecurity and veteran homelessness in communities nationwide, while empowering our members to take action and create meaningful impact,” Freiburghouse said. “Our incredibly dedicated membership is uniquely equipped to drive local efforts that contribute to broader national change.”

In partnership with the Society of Saint Andrew, a Virginia-based non-profit providing hunger relief across the U.S., VFW and Auxiliary members from all walks of life shared the seed sorting tables at the convention. According to the Society of Saint Andrew, volunteer efforts yielded 63,511 pounds (31 tons) of nutritious produce for communities in need.

Among those who participated were Gina and LaRee Adams from Cullman, Alabama.

“At our Post, to get younger veterans in, we want to instill this mentality of community service because it will take away this stigma of us being just a bar,” said LaRee, junior vice commander at VFW Post 2214 in Cullman. “Plus, it helps people in need — it's a win-win.”

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Like the Adamses, William King of VFW Post 10624 in Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina, shared a similar sentiment. “It helps feed people,” said King, a past District 1 commander for the VFW Department of South Carolina. “Anything that helps the community is worth doing.”

“It is also a good way to show our support like our communities show support for us veterans,” added Brigitte Rhew, a dual member of VFW Post 684 and its Auxiliary in Memphis, Tennessee.

UNITING TO COMBAT HUNGER NOW CALLED UNITING FOR VETERANS PROGRAM

A day after the seed sorting event, at the Joint Opening Session, then-VFW Commander-in-Chief Al Lipphardt and Cara Brown, director of Key Relationships for Humana’s MarketPoint, announced the joint decision to rename the program.

“While hunger and homelessness remain critical issues, we recognize the necessity to adapt our program to offer additional support as necessary,” Lipphardt said. “The Uniting for Veterans name change better suits our ever-expanding mission and dedication to provide responsive and comprehensive assistance through our Posts and Auxiliaries that truly adapts to the needs of our veterans and their families.”

On behalf of Humana, the VFW’s long-standing partner since UTCH’s inception in 2018, Brown expressed their shared enthusiasm for the program’s evolution. To note the growth, Brown added that in 2024 alone, UTCH raised more than 800,000 meals for those suffering from food insecurity and provided 325 nights of housing for homeless veterans.

“Since our partnership began, we have helped distribute more than 6 million meals together, an incredible milestone that reflects our commitment to our nation’s heroes,” Brown said. “Now the Uniting for Veterans program will allow us to address a wider spectrum of needs for our veterans.”

To learn more about the expanded Uniting for Veterans program, visit <https://vfw.org/UnitingforVeterans>.

This article is featured in the November/December 2025 issue of [VFW magazine](#), and was written by [Ismael Rodriguez Jr.](#), senior writer for VFW magazine.