



Uniting to Combat Hunger VFW Encourages National Convention Members to Participate

'Food insecurity and homelessness are both serious risks for suicide and other health issues'

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In anticipation of the 2025 VFW National Convention in August in Columbus, Ohio, the VFW and Humana are continuing the Uniting to Combat Hunger (UTCH) program which has provided more than 5.6 million meals for food-insecure families since 2018.

Last year, at the 125th VFW National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky, volunteers participated in a UTCH seed-packing event aimed at helping families affected by food insecurity. Those seeds were sent across the country to distributors that provide healthy and fresh produce for those in need.

As part of the initiative to address the issue, volunteers packed 4,000 seed packets that were distributed to VFW Posts, Auxiliaries and community gardens. A partnership with the Society of Saint Andrew, a Virginia-based non-profit that provides hunger relief to communities in the U.S., has yielded about 72,000 pounds, or nearly 2.9 million servings of fresh produce, for communities in need.

VFW's partnership with Humana has garnered more than 5.6 million meals for families in the United States. In 2024, 158 VFW Posts and Auxiliaries in 41 states participated. VFW Foundation Director of Donor Relations Richard Freiburghouse said that the UTCH campaign exhibits VFW's commitment to serving veterans and their communities, as well as addressing one of the most pressing issues facing many veterans.

"The core goals of the Uniting to Combat Hunger program are to alleviate food insecurity in communities around the country and engage with VFW members participating in meaningful service projects," Freiburghouse said. "By leveraging our networks and resources, VFW Posts can make a significant impact, often involving veterans and their

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families in these efforts.”

For this year’s UTCH campaign, VFW and Humana partnered with Volunteers of America. The program focused on helping homeless veterans overcome food insecurity.

Tracy Nolan, senior vice president of Humana MarketPoint, said the health care insurance company and VFW have a long-standing commitment to veterans, service members and their families.

“Food insecurity and homelessness are both serious risks for suicide and other health issues,” said Nolan, who was a guest speaker at the 125th VFW National Convention in Louisville. “We continue our collaboration with the VFW on the Uniting to Combat Hunger campaign to ensure our nation’s veterans have access to healthy foods and resources that can help decrease the risk of common health problems — both physical and mental.”

According to Feeding America, 1-in-9 working-age veterans are food insecure. The organization also claims that about 1-in-4 active-duty service members were food insecure in 2020, and about 1.2 million low-income veterans use the government’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. As of 2021, 12.8 percent of U.S. households were considered food insecure, according to the Department of Agriculture.

For more information about the Uniting to Combat Hunger initiative, visit <https://www.vfw.org/UTCH>.

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