

Organizations Offering Assistance to Veterans

List compiled by Bob Handy of Veterans United for Truth (bhandy@vuft.org, www.vuft.org) and reporter Joshua Kors (joshua@joshuakors.com, www.joshuakors.com).

Suicide / Crisis

1. **Veterans Crisis Line**
(800) 273-8255 (TALK), ext. 1
www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/Veterans

If you're thinking about hurting yourself or others, call this number. It's a hotline set up by the Veterans Health Administration, giving you 24/7 access to trained counselors who know what you're going through.

Assistance with Your VA Benefits, Health, Continuing Education and more

1. **Wounded Warrior Project**
877-832-6997
alumni@woundedwarriorproject.org
www.woundedwarriorproject.org

The Wounded Warrior Project offers a wide range of assistance, from help collecting disability benefits, to help in healing PTSD wounds, to continuing education for a post-military life. WWP can connect you with benefits counselors who can guide you through the VA maze. And their programs include Project Odyssey, a retreat with fellow vets that involves hiking, kayaking and whitewater rafting. With the WWP's Track program, vets receive a scholarship to attend Florida State College at Jacksonville or The Alamo Colleges in San Antonio.

If you call the organization's phone number and explain your situation, the advisor will tell you about the WWP programs that are right for you. Their staff also replies to email and to messages left on their Facebook page: <http://bit.ly/wwpfacebook>.

2. **National Veterans Foundation**
888-777-4443
www.nvf.org

Like the Wounded Warrior Project, the National Veterans Foundation offers an impressive range of free services to vets. Call their number and speak to a NVF staff member about your situation. You can also use this link (www.nvf.org/livehelp) to chat with a staff member online.

NVF will help you if you're in crisis, need legal help, assistance with a disability claim, help finding a job, treatment for PTSD or Traumatic Brain Injury, or simply want to connect with other vets. The organization also helps military families who are having a hard time affording groceries.

Career Training

1. **NextGenVets**

424-259-3803

info@nextgenvets.org

www.nextgenvets.org/contact.html

NextGenVets is a job placement organization. Go to their contact page, fill out their form, and answer questions about your education and military rank. You'll be placing your profile in the organization's database. A case worker at NextGenVets will then contact you and reach out to companies that are hiring so that they can match the right vet with the right company.

2. **Jewish Vocational Service of Los Angeles — Veterans First**

Veterans First Coordinators:

Travis McElroy, 310-309-6000 x266, tmcelroy@jvsla.org

Aron Wilburn, 661-942-5700, awilburn@jvsla.org

John Tyler, 661-942-5700, jtyler@jvsla.org

Wendy Metz, 323-904-4900 x3916, wmetz@jvsla.org

JVS of LA's Veterans First program provides career coaching to veterans, helping them navigate the civilian business world. The organization will help you assess your job skills and, if needed, will help you get additional education and training.

Note: You do not have to be Jewish to use the JVS's services, but you do have to live in the Los Angeles area.

3. **Wall Street WarFighters**

888-439-3935

info@wallstreetwarfighters.org

www.wallstreetwarfighters.org

If you're interested in pursuing a career in finance, Wall Street WarFighters can help. The organization provides education and training to wounded vets, so they can make the transition from the battlefield to Wall Street. Even if you don't have a college degree, you can still call them.

The organization is designed to assist wounded soldiers. Veterans interested in the program need at least a 10 percent disability rating from the VA to participate.

4. **Farmer-Veteran Coalition**

530-756-1395

info@farmvetco.org

www.farmvetco.org

The FVC offers veterans training in becoming farmers. For many vets, training on the organization's Sacramento Valley farm is a pathway to a new career in agriculture. For others who just need some peace after the chaos of war, the organization's weekend retreats offer some much needed calm.

The coalition has partnered with Air Compassion to fly any Iraq/Afghanistan vet to the farm for free. For more info, check out this article from the NY Times:

<http://bit.ly/tradingswordsforplows>.

Healing Your Body, Mind and Family

1. Combat Paper Project

Drew Cameron, project co-director: drewcameron@combatpaper.org
www.combatpaper.org

The Combat Paper Project conducts hands-on workshops across the country where veterans take their uniforms, cut them up, process them into pulp, and use that pulp to create art. While molding their old uniforms into something new, veterans get a chance to talk about their battlefield experiences with other vets who have been there and understand.

For many soldiers, these workshops have been transformative experiences, helping them process the pain lingering from their war-time tours while reshaping their identity: from warrior to artist. The healing power of the workshops was captured in director Sara Nesson's Oscar-nominated documentary "Poster Girl" (trailer: <http://bit.ly/postergirltrailer>) and will be explored in her upcoming film "Iraq Paper Scissors" (trailer: <http://bit.ly/IraqPaperScissorsTrailer>).

For the locations of upcoming workshops, click here: www.combatpaper.org/tour.html.

2. Warrior Writers Project

Lovella Calica, project director: lovella@warriorwriters.org
www.warriorwriters.org

The Warrior Writers Project brings together recent veterans and current soldiers to express themselves through art. The organization holds workshops across the country, where soldiers write stories, create poetry, and develop art projects through photography, drawing and music.

Like the Combat Paper Project, the Warrior Writers workshops have proved to be powerful experiences for many soldiers who, through art, find a way to express their feelings about their time at war. For the locations of upcoming workshops, click here: www.warriorwriters.org/happening.html.

3. New Directions

310-914-5966
www.newdirectionsinc.org

New Directions is a resource center for veterans, located in Los Angeles. It provides an array of services, including substance abuse treatment, counseling, remedial education, job training and placement, as well as parenting and money management classes.

4. The Pathway Home

800-404-8387
Admission and further info: Kathy.Loughry@thepathwayhome.org
www.thepathwayhome.org

The Pathway Home is a recovery facility for traumatized veterans, located in a scenic stretch of California's Napa Valley. At the facility, soldiers get a chance to cool down, learn about PTSD, develop relaxation techniques, get treatment for insomnia, depression, nightmares as well as anger, guilt and other war-related emotions. The Pathway Home also offers couples therapy and family therapy.

5. **Home Base Program**

617-724-5202

homebaseprogram@partners.org

www.homebaseprogram.org

The Home Base Program provides care to vets who served in Iraq and Afghanistan and are now suffering from PTSD or Traumatic Brain Injury. The program, which is located in Boston and sponsored by Massachusetts General Hospital, offers high-quality medical and psychological care.

Home Base also has programs for the families of wounded soldiers, helping children who are adjusting to a parent's return and spouses who are dealing with the challenges of PTSD and TBI.

6. **Operation Home and Healing**

215-382-6680

www.operationhomeandhealing.org

Operation Home and Healing reaches out to vets shaken by the trauma of war. The group has 140 therapists across 13 offices providing counseling to vets struggling with grief, depression, PTSD and chronic pain. The group also provides couples therapy.

Note: The organization is based in Philadelphia and designed for families in southeastern Pennsylvania and southern New Jersey.

Goods and Services for Vets

1. **USA Together**

www.usatogether.org

info@USAtogether.org

USA Together is a wonderful way to connect veterans in need with civilians interested in helping them. Think of it like a Craigslist for soldiers: military families go to the USA Together website and post a note about something they need. Then civilians visit the site and fill the need.

Reading from posts currently on the site: one wounded veteran needs help with his electric bill, another needs to purchase a printer for his new business, and the mother of a deceased Marine needs help moving across the country to be with her surviving son. The organization's founder, Dave Mahler, says that in the years his site has been up, virtually every request has been filled.

If you need assistance, click here (<https://app01.usatogether.org/newapplicant.html>) and tell readers how they can help you.

2. **Gathering of Eagles — Laptops for Wounded Warriors**

Dawn West, program coordinator: eaglesvt@gmail.com

Facebook page: <http://bit.ly/gatheringofeagles>

The Gathering of Eagles provides laptops to soldiers recovering at medical treatment centers. Wounded soldiers can then use email and Skype to connect with family and friends while they recover from their injuries.

If you are recovering in a military medical center and need a laptop, email the organization or post

a message on its Facebook page. For more info on the program, check out this excellent piece by reporter Eric Levy of WTKR, a CBS affiliate in Virginia: <http://bit.ly/gatheringofeaglesvideo>.

List of Lawyers in Your Area Helping Vets

1. **National Organization of Veterans' Advocates (NOVA)**
www.vetadvocates.com/directory.html

The non-profit group NOVA maintains this excellent directory of lawyers who practice veterans law. Their easy-to-navigate directory is organized by state. Simply visit the directory, click on your state and scroll through the names, numbers and email addresses of the lawyers in your area.

Note: In a previous version of our list, we named several of NOVA's lawyers here. A much better way is for you to visit their directory directly.

Law Firms Offering Pro Bono Assistance

1. **Foley & Lardner LLP**
Steve Lambert
Washington Harbour
3000 K Street, N.W., Suite 500
Washington, D.C. 20007-5109
(202) 672-5300
slambert@foley.com
2. **King & Spalding LLP**
Aaron Holstromberg
1700 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Suite 200
Washington, D.C. 20006-4706
(202) 737-0500

Other Attorneys Specializing in Veterans Law

1. **R. Edward Bates**
1801 N. Mill Street, Suite J
Naperville, Illinois 60563
(708) 355-2090
2. **Joseph Nathaniel Baron**
(800) 338-6074
jnbaron@aol.com, ucdinc@aol.com

- 3. Louis M. DiDonato**
245 E. Liberty, Suite 250
Reno, Nevada 89501
(775) 322-7877
lmdatcls@aol.com

Organization That Will Assist You with Your VA Benefits and Other Legal Matters

- 1. National Veterans Legal Services Program**

PO Box 65762
Washington, D.C. 20035
202-265-8305
www.nvlsp.org
info@nvlsp.org

NVLSP provides legal information and assistance for veterans, survivors of veterans and veterans advocates who are seeking service-related VA benefits.

- 2. Lawyers Serving Warriors**

www.LawyersServingWarriors.org
LawyersServing@nvlsp.org
(202) 265-8305, ext. 152

LSW is a project of National Veterans Legal Services Program that provides free legal services to U.S. military personnel and veterans who served in Iraq or Afghanistan, and who need help with disability, discharge or veterans benefits cases.

- 3. Disposable Warriors**

Sgt. Chuck Luther, Director
202-465-2059
chuckluther@disposablewarriors.com

Many know Sgt. Chuck Luther from news coverage of his brave service (www.joshuakors.com/part3) and from his powerful Congressional testimony (<http://bit.ly/torturehearings>). Luther's organization, Disposable Warriors, assists soldiers who are being wrongfully discharged and denied benefits. Currently he works at Fort Hood in Texas, where he has been able to take rapid action on soldiers' behalves.

- 4. Georg-Andreas Pogany**

202-286-8253
gapogany@gmail.com

Andrew Pogany is an independent veterans advocate, helping soldiers receive proper discharges and assisting wounded veterans with their disability claims. A former investigator for the National Veterans Legal Services program, Pogany's work on behalf of soldiers has been highlighted by ABC News, NPR and the Washington Post.

5. Vietnam Veterans of America

The VVA can connect you with a knowledgeable, supportive veteran who can guide you through the VA system. To find a vet assistant in your area, click here:
<https://benefitsforum.org/Rep.aspx>.

6. The Veterans Pro Bono Consortium

701 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Suite 131
Washington, D.C. 20004
(888) 838-7727
mail@vetsprobono.org

If the VA has rejected your disability claim—or given you a troublingly low disability rating—you can appeal your case to the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. Vets Pro Bono will help you with your appeal.

7. Urban Justice Center – Veteran Advocacy Project

Coco Culhane, Project Coordinator
Veterans and Servicemembers Project
123 William St., 16th Floor
New York, NY 10038
646-602-5620
cculhane@urbanjustice.org
www.facebook.com/VeteranAdvocacy
www.twitter.com/VeteranAdvocacy

The UJC's Veteran Advocacy Project provides veterans with several services. It helps vets find housing, and if a veteran is going to be evicted, it will defend the vet in Housing Court. The organization also helps vets access medical care, mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment and counseling.

8. The Veterans Legal Support Center

Nick Henry, Administrative Director
The John Marshall Law School
315 S. Plymouth Court
Chicago, IL 60604
Phone: 312 427 2737 ext. 346
vlsc@jmls.edu
www.jmls.edu/veterans

The VLSC is one of the nation's first law school clinics dedicated solely to addressing the legal needs of veterans seeking their benefits from VA.

9. GI Rights Hotline

800-395-9544
<http://www.objector.org/girights/>

The hotline provides advice to members of the military seeking information about discharges, grievance and complaint procedures and other civil rights.

10. National Lawyers Guild, Military Law Task Force

415-566-3732

<http://www.nlgmltf.org/>

The NLG assists those working on military law issues as well as military law counselors working directly with GIs.

11. Yale Law School's Veterans Legal Services Clinic

(203) 432-4992

Yale's VLSC assists Connecticut's veterans in a range of litigation, including VA benefits, employment and housing. The clinic's mission is to assist the most vulnerable vets.

12. Swords to Plowshares

1060 Howard Street

San Francisco, CA 94103

(415) 252-4788

supportvets@stp-sf.org

www.stp-sf.org

Swords to Plowshares provides legal assistance to low-income veterans who are in San Francisco. The group also helps vets who are filing disability claims with the VA. It provides counseling to wounded and traumatized soldiers as well as housing and employment training.

Soldiers who live outside San Francisco are encouraged to call anyway. The knowledgeable staff can direct you to assistance in your area.

13. Womble Carlyle Pro Bono Veterans Project

Karin Lennon

kalennon@wcsr.com

(919) 755-2100

Womble Carlyle assists veterans in North Carolina with the first stage of VA benefits applications.

Your Congressional Representatives

1. You can find all of your Congressional representatives by entering your address here: www.contactingthecongress.org. Start by calling your senior senator. Call the senator's D.C. office; ask who handles veterans' issues there; then ask to speak to that person.

Having a high-ranking senator and his staff working on your side can open previously closed doors and fix once broken situations. Note, though, that these people are extremely short on time. Before calling, make sure you can summarize your entire situation in 30 seconds or less, ending with the question: "Can help me?" If you can't do it in 30 seconds, practice in front of a mirror until you can. Let the senator's veterans' advocate ask the follow-up questions. If you ramble, they will not assist you.

Note, too, that one of the first questions will be: "Do you have all of your military and VA papers, including your medical, discharge and military performance papers?" Do not call until the answer to that question is yes. Also, once you obtain your papers, never send the originals to anyone.