



VFW STUDENT VETERANS LIAISONS GUIDE

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Who Are Student Veterans?

- ✓ 73%-80% of Student Veterans are male; 21-27% are female.
- ✓ With only 10-14% of military personnel being women, female Student Veterans are over represented in postsecondary education.
- ✓ Only 15% of Student Veterans are traditionally aged college students. Most Student Veterans are between the ages of 24 and 40.
- ✓ 47% of Student Veterans have children.
- ✓ 47.3% of Student Veterans are married.
- ✓ 62% of Student Veterans are first-generation students.

Student Veteran Demographics

The majority of student veterans are enlisted (90.35) and current conflict era. The chart provided below are for reference. More information on Student can be found at studentveterans.org.

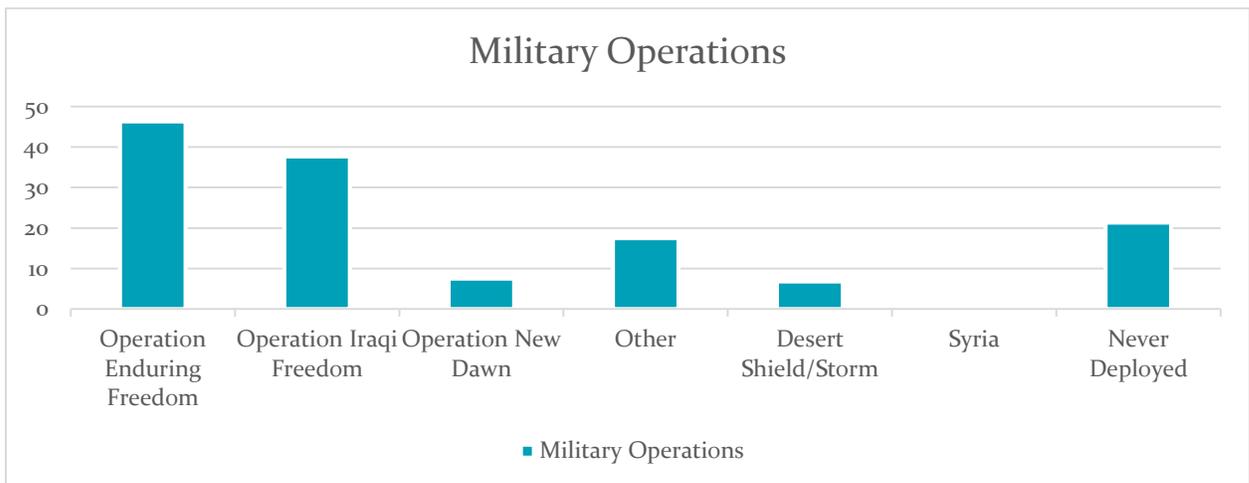


Figure 1: The sum is greater than 100 because many veterans have supported multiple operations over the span of their career.

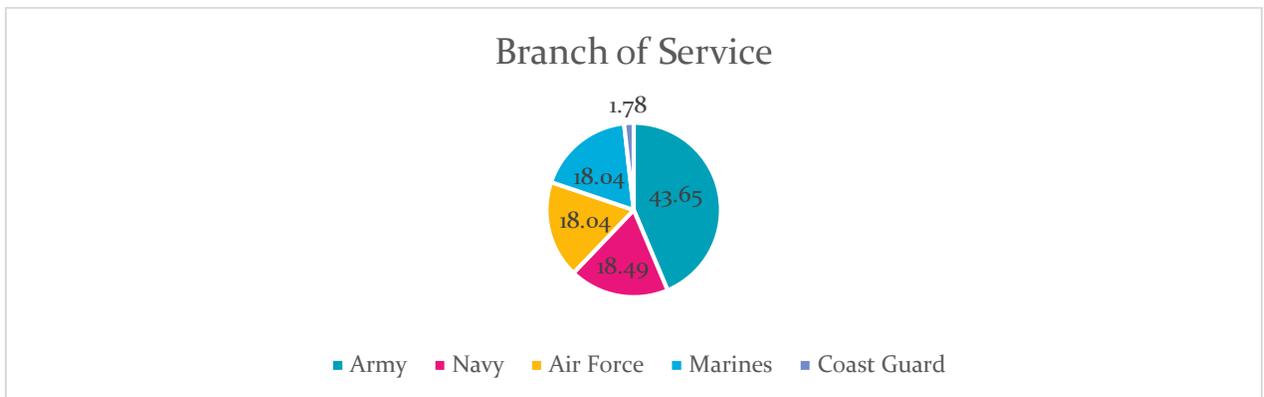


Figure 2: The rank breakdown is 90.35% Enlisted, 1.2% Warrant, and 8.45% Officer

What is VFW Student Veteran Outreach?

The VFW and Student Veterans of America have partnered under the common goal of student veteran success. The intent of the partnership is for departments to build relationships with local chapters through VFW Liaisons. As of May 2016, there are 1355 chapters.

What Makes a Good Liaison?

- ✓ Anyone with a passion for student veterans.
- ✓ Someone that is comfortable with Social Media/Communication platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, texting and emails.
- ✓ Someone willing to stay informed with VFW-SVA initiatives geared towards student.
- ✓ Must be willing to attend events on campus.
- ✓ Focuses on developing relationships, not membership- if you build it, they will come!

How to Get Started?

Locate your local chapters at www.studentveterans.org/chapter/directory and contact the POC. It is probably better to reach out to the faculty advisor because there is high student turn over. If the information is not up to date, you can try finding the chapters social media pages or reaching out to the veteran services office at the educational institution. Not all chapters are called Student Veterans of America, for instance, the University of Kansas was called the Collegiate Veterans Association while other chapters are called simply "Veteran's Club" or "Students Affected by the Military", the latter was open to the spouses and dependent children.

- ✓ Attend SVA events on and off campus.
- ✓ Ask to be added to their mailing list so you can stay up to date.
- ✓ Engage SVA members -- invite them to your Post.
- ✓ Educate student veterans about the VFW.
- ✓ Find out how your Post can help.
- ✓ Most university's or colleges clubs are required to do volunteer work ask for their help.
- ✓ Create a VFW information package for enrollment handouts.

A lot of chapters are light on funds so a liaison can offer to purchase food like pizza for chapter meetings.

Current VFW Student Veteran Initiatives



- ✓ Scholarships of up to \$5,000
- ✓ Separated with or currently hold a military rank of E-5 or below
- ✓ Demonstrate a need for financial assistance
- ✓ Must be accepted or enrolled in a VA-approved program or school at an accredited post-secondary institution
- ✓ Limited to one per family per semester
- ✓ Applications for the fall semester will be accepted January 1 through April 30
- ✓ Applications for the spring semester will be accepted August 1 through November 15
- ✓ Fall semester scholarships will be awarded in August, and spring semester scholarships will be awarded in January
- ✓ Scholarships must be used by the end of the school semester for which the veteran is applying or they will become null and void
- ✓ Be a citizen of the United States

The VFW and one of its major supporters, Sport Clips Haircuts, have again partnered to help our veterans and their families. The VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship" will provide service members and veterans with the financial assistance they need to complete their educational goals without incurring excessive student loan debt. It's just another way to say "thank you" to those who deserve it the most. <http://www.vfw.org/Scholarship/>

1 STUDENT VETERAN

- ✓ Resolution of wrongly denied or delayed educational benefits
- ✓ Provides expert assistance for veterans who need:
- ✓ Guidance in filing for GI Bill benefits
- ✓ Help accessing education benefits
- ✓ Answers to VA benefit questions

Today's veterans can face any number of obstacles while furthering their education. Taking advantage of all the benefits they've earned and DESERVE shouldn't be one of them. That's why the VFW, in conjunction with the Student Veterans of America (SVA), developed the **1 Student Veteran** program. 1 Student Veteran offers direct assistance to student veterans who have questions or are experiencing problems accessing their VA benefits.

The VFW seeks to ensure student veterans receive their benefits in a timely manner and have a place to turn to if they need help. Our direct access to VA Regional Offices across the country means that we can work quickly to provide our student veterans with timely and accurate answers regarding the complex claims process. Furthermore, our direct access to education claims adjudicators means that those whose education benefits have been wrongfully denied, delayed during a transfer from one school to another or paid in error, will not have to wait the months it would traditionally take to file a formal appeal.

Veterans who send a message to 1 Student Veteran (1studentveteran@vfw.org) will receive a reply from a VFW staff member who specializes in student veteran issues within 24 hours or the next business day.

If you have already confirmed your benefit eligibility through the VA's GI Bill Hotline, **888-GI BILL 1** (888-442-4551), and double-checked your enrollment verification with your school, take the next step and contact 1 Student Veteran today. www.vfw.org/1StudentVeteran/



Fellows will be selected based on the following criteria:

- ✓ VFW membership
- ✓ Enrollment at a college or university with an active SVA chapter
- ✓ Studying political science, government, communications, history, law or a related field
- ✓ Submission of an essay based on an issue outlined in VFW's Legislative Priority Goals
- ✓ Final over-the-phone interview with the selection committee

In keeping with VFW's commitment to student veterans' success, the VFW has partnered with Student Veterans of America to host the VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship program, providing 10 exemplary student veterans the opportunity to make their voices heard on Capitol Hill and in their community. The program started in 2014.

Selected Fellows will conduct research on an approved policy area which affects veterans. They will, through this research, identify specific problems and propose solutions which would help veterans. Additionally, while supported by VFW mentors, the Fellow will take action on their proposed solutions using a grassroots based campaign to convince members of Congress of the importance of the issue. Further, the chosen Fellows will be flown to Washington, D.C. where they will participate in the VFW National legislative Conference, where they will walk the halls of Congress, educating their legislators on the issues facing today's student veterans. Fellows will also have the opportunity to accompany the VFW advocates from their respective states, as well as break into teams to meet directly with leadership from the committees of jurisdiction on veterans' issues to include the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees. VFW-SVA Legislative Fellows will also be highlighted during the VFW National Commander's testimony before a special session of the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees and the VFW's annual Congressional reception. VFW and SVA national leadership will also host the VFW-SVA Legislative Fellows for a congratulatory dinner during the conference.

Expenses covered for the fellowship include airfare, hotel accommodations, local transportation to/from meetings and a per diem allowance. For more information about the program, please check out the following [op-ed](#) written by one of the 2014 fellows.

www.studentveterans.org/programs/vfw-sva-legislative-fellowship

Current Student Veterans of America Initiatives



SVA's Local Leadership Summits bring student veterans together to exchange chapter best practices and to explore campus-level concepts that can ease a veteran's transition from the military to higher education and then to the workforce. These events are hosted in multiple locations throughout the country every summer. Each Summit is hosted with an SVA corporate partner, which gives veterans the opportunity to network and learn from business leaders.

Summits focus on strategic planning and business plan development for chapter leaders. Chapters who attend the Summits will get a 3-day crash course on how to put together a winning business plan, as well as the opportunity to pair with mentors to help craft it. On the last day, chapters will present their plan to a panel of distinguished judges from the local business community who will provide them with expert feedback and advice. www.studentveterans.org/programs/leadership-institute-series



Does your campus need a dedicated place where student veterans can socialize, study and connect? Do you have space on campus for a veteran center, but no furniture? Have you always wanted a veteran center on campus, but lack the resources to build one? If your answer is “yes” to any of these questions, you’re in the right place!

Since 2014, the SVA Vet Center Initiative has built and improved veteran spaces on 61 campuses impacting over 30,000. Recognizing the successes of the last two years, The Home Depot Foundation continues its commitment to student veterans by offering a total of \$400,000 to 50 deserving SVA chapters! www.studentveterans.org/programs/vetcenter-initiative

SVA Chapter grants

Chapter grants are designed to encourage student veterans to think about long-term sustainability strategies and compete with their peers to develop the best possible plans for their chapter. They can be used to fund events, conference travel, or purchases needed to enhance the experience for student veterans in an SVA chapter. www.studentveterans.org/programs/chapter-grants

Reporting your Activity

Before you report, please consider the value of your outreach. Every interaction is valuable but not every interaction is reportable. For instance, contacting a school without a veterans group to discuss starting one is a necessary step towards the reportable activity of holding an informational meeting. The acronym QUICK was created as a guide of things to consider before submitting a report.

Quantifiable- Only report events that are measurable. Although doing things like donating flags are great, the people that are affected by it cannot legitimately be accessed. Planned social events are measurable.

Unifying- The relationship should be mutually beneficial. How is your presence helping to strengthen chapters? How have the student veterans been enriched by their nearest post?

Impactful- Simple, how are you improving the lives for student veterans? Are you an advocate? Do you know university issues they are working on?

Community- Are your chapters and your posts working together to be assets in the community? How are you cultivating opportunities for veterans to still serve?

Knowledge- Today's student veteran leader is tomorrow's VFW leader. How are you passing on your knowledge of the VFW on to them?

As of May 2016, we are using a PDF form that can be mailed, faxed or emailed to studentoutreach@vfw.org (preferred). We are in the process of streamlining the reporting process that will allow reporting to happen through vfw.org.



Additional VFW Programs



As the nation's largest organization of combat veterans, we understand the challenges veterans, service members and military families can face and believe that experiencing financial difficulties should not be one of them. That's the premise behind the VFW's [Unmet Needs](#) program.

Unmet Needs is there to help America's service members who have been deployed in the last six years and have run into unexpected financial difficulties as a result of deployment or other military-related activity. The program provides financial aid of up to \$5,000 to assist with basic life needs in the form of a grant -not a loan- so no repayment is required. To further ease the burden, we pay the creditor directly.

Since the program's inception, Unmet Needs has distributed over \$5.4 million in assistance to qualified military families, with nearly half of those funds going directly toward basic housing needs.

The needs of our veterans, service members and their families should never go unmet. Let us offer you a hand up when you need it!

Review the Unmet Needs eligibility criteria to see if you or someone you know qualifies for a grant through the Unmet Needs program.

www.vfw.org/uploadedFiles/VFWorg/MY_VFW/UnmetNeedsEligibilityCriteria.pdf

Contact Unmet Needs at 1-866-789-6333 or by email at unmetneeds@vfw.org with any questions.



The VFW *Action Corps* is the VFW's national grassroots advocacy network comprised of more than **60,000** VFW members and patriotic supporters of veterans. Members of the VFW Action Corps stay up-to-date on the issues facing our veterans, our military and their families, standing ready to email, write, call and visit our nation's lawmakers to make their voices heard.

The VFW Action Corps is *free* and open to all patriotic Americans who care about the military and veterans' communities.

VFW Action Corps members receive:

- ✓ The VFW Action Corps Weekly, an easy-to-read electronic newsletter that highlights the VFW's advocacy efforts on Capitol Hill.
- ✓ Immediate access to a nationwide database of contact information for all elected officials.
- ✓ VFW "Action Alerts" telling them how they can get involved when our nation's veterans, service members, and their families need their voices heard on Capitol Hill.

The VFW Action Corps is what gives the VFW its strength in advocating for our nation's heroes. Working hand-in-hand with the VFW's National Legislative Service -- whose office is in eye-shot of the Capitol dome in Washington -- members of the VFW Action Corps are armed with all of the tools and information they need to help the VFW in its mission to support our nation's veterans. So join the VFW Action Corps today and add your voice to the thousands of veterans' advocates making a difference every day, and if you're already a member of the VFW Action Corps, encourage your friends and neighbors to join the effort!

Visit www.vfw.org/VFW-in-DC/Action-Corps/ to learn more and to join today!

VFW Additional Services

In addition to programs specifically designed to serve the needs of student veterans, the VFW National Veterans Service offers a series of programs and services that may benefit student veterans. Each of these programs is offered to all veterans free of charge and without obligation.

Disability Claims Assistance: The VFW accredits more than 1,700 of Veterans Service Officers around the country who can assist veterans in filing service-connected benefit claims with the Department of Veterans Affairs. When a veteran's claim is approved, the monthly payments from VA help make up for potential lost wages that result from health problems caused or aggravated by military service.

To student veterans, service-connected benefits can mean the difference between focusing on their studies or needing to find a part-time job just to make ends meet. Filing a claim can also be a gateway to other VA benefits such as health care, housing, employment assistance, even additional education benefits through the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program.

Every year, the VFW serves nearly 75,000 veterans, recovering nearly \$2 billion in earned benefits. Most VFW-accredited service officers receive up to 80 hours of training every year to understand veterans' benefit policies, so they can offer sound advice on what veterans can claim; what evidence is required to establish service-connection; and how VA makes its decisions. Plus, if you are denied benefits, the VFW will help you decide whether to appeal and provide skilled assistance throughout the appeals process.

While you have the right to file a VA claim on your own, why go through the hassle of sorting through reams of health care records and deciphering complex legal terminology? VFW's highly-trained service officers can shoulder that burden for you.

For details about the VFW Veterans Service Officer program and to find local points of contact, visit:

www.vfw.org/NVS

VA Health Care Intervention: The VFW works every day to hold VA accountable for its obligation to deliver timely, quality health care to veterans. If you are having problems accessing your health care benefits or if you have questions about VA care, VFW offers casework consultants who can help.

To student veterans, access to timely, quality health care is critical to educational success – especially for veterans who need treatment for service-connected conditions. Plus, veterans who utilize VA health care could save thousands of dollars each academic year, since most schools recognize VA health care as qualifying coverage to waive mandatory health insurance requirements. Student veterans will still have to pay their school's health services fees, allowing them to use on-campus clinics for routine care concerns, but they will likely not have to bear the burden of purchasing additional costly insurance.

For direct assistance with your VA health care questions or concerns, call 1-800-VFW-1899 (1-800-839-1899) or visit:

www.vfw.org/VAWatch

VA Voluntary Service: The VFW's legacy of service through the VA Voluntary Service program is unmatched in the veterans' community. Every year, more than 6,000 VFW volunteers give more than 700,000 hours of their time in assisting fellow veterans at more than 150 VA health care facilities nationwide. VFW volunteers also generate more than \$1.5 million in donations every year to support VA volunteer efforts.

For student veterans looking to give back to the veterans' community, volunteering through the VFW is a natural fit. Whether you want to explore a new career path, hone job skills, help veterans become physically active, or offer your companionship, the VFW's network of VA volunteers can help match your skills, and even your post-educational career goals, to volunteer opportunities at nearly every VA health care facility in the country.

The VA Voluntary Service program is flexible, meaning student veterans can volunteer whenever it is most convenient for them, such as school break periods or on days when class schedules may be lighter. Plus, by volunteering through the VFW, the VFW's experienced volunteer coordinators can guide student veterans through the Voluntary Service program and make sure that their experience is a rewarding one.

To find out how to get involved, visit:

www.vfw.org/VolunteerService

