

Unmet Needs Keeps Veteran Out of ‘the Rabbit Hole’

'If it wasn't for the existence of this program, I don't know where my family and I would be in this very moment'

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Nick Guerrero was behind on utility bills — the electric company shut off power — and car payments until the VFW stepped in to help.

Guerrero, who deployed four times during the Iraq War, said support through VFW's Unmet Needs program helped him get current on bills and purchase groceries.

“The grant saved us from falling further down the rabbit hole,”

Guerrero said. “I was in a point of my life where everything was collapsing around me, and if it wasn't for the existence of this program, I don't know where my family and I would be in this very moment. I cannot fully express my gratitude in words for this nonprofit to be there when we needed the help desperately.”

Guerrero served with the 1st Bn., 17th Inf. Regt., 172 Stryker Bde. (2005-06 and 2006-07) as an infantryman and with the 1st Bn., 18th Inf., 2nd Armd. Bde. Combat Team, 1st Inf. Div., (2008-09 and

2010-11) as a combat medic. He was medically discharged March 27, 2015, for PTSD, anxiety, depression, psychosis, anger disorder, paranoia and TBI.

Guerrero said his wife, Ana, found out about the program from a veteran who had received an Unmet Needs grant. He applied in September and was awarded the grant in December.

To anyone in a similar situation, Guerrero said, “Don't hesitate to give the VFW a call and ask for the help.”

“It's wonderful to know people out there care and are willing to spend a couple of minutes of their lives to do something special for a veteran...Our families are very grateful for the assistance you provide when the veteran is in a crisis,” Guerrero said. VFW's Unmet Needs program helps America's military families who have experienced unexpected financial difficulties. The program, supported by Burger King franchisees, provides financial aid to assist those with basic life needs in the form of a grant — not a loan.

Since 2004, Unmet Needs has given \$10 million to more than 8,800 military and veteran families. In the current fiscal year alone, the program has assisted nearly 4,000 service members and veterans.

This article is featured in the 2018 May/June issue of [Checkpoint](#), and was written by [Kari Williams](#), associate editor, VFW magazine. Photo courtesy of Nick Guerrero.