



VFW and Humana Provide 30 Tons of Food

In its fifth year, the Uniting to Combat Hunger campaign has provided more than 4.5 million meals to food insecure families across the country

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If you attended the 124th VFW National Convention in Phoenix this year, you probably noticed a group of volunteers lined up at tables with bowls of seeds in front of them.

They were a part of the Uniting to Combat Hunger seed-packing event that will provide about 30 tons of vegetables for families suffering from food insecurity. Those seeds will be sent across the country to provide healthy and fresh produce to those in need. Since 2018, the program has provided more than 4.5 million meals for food insecure families.

VFW Foundation Grants Manager Jason Couch said the event at the national convention garnered dozens of volunteers from VFW Posts and Auxiliaries, as well as VFW Departments. Couch added that Uniting to Combat Hunger is an “incredibly important endeavor” not only to VFW but also to Humana, a company based in Louisville, Kentucky, that offers health care coverage.

“VFW was established on the principle of helping veterans, and when we learned about how many veterans are affected by food insecurity, we knew we needed to do everything we could to prevent it,” Couch said. “We would not be able to help as many veterans as we are without our partnership with Humana. We are proud of what we have accomplished with the Uniting to Combat Hunger program through the past several years.”

Since 2018, VFW has teamed with Humana for the Uniting to Combat Hunger campaign. It remains a staple in fighting hunger and food insecurity across the country.

1-IN-4 POST 9/11 VETS AFFECTED

The Department of Agriculture in 2021 said more than 34 million people, including 9 million children, experience food insecurity in the U.S. during the year — that is about 1-in-

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

406 W. 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111

Office 816.756.3390
Fax 816.968.1157

WASHINGTON OFFICE

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002

Office 202.543.2239
Fax 202.543.6719

info@vfw.org
www.vfw.org

10 households in the country.

Feeding America says that about 125,000 active-duty military troops experience food insecurity — about 7 percent of troops in the active military. However, according to the Department of Agriculture, only about 2 percent of active-duty troops qualify for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Feeding America also says 1-in-4 Afghanistan and Iraq War veterans are affected by food insecurity.

‘WE MUST FACE THE ISSUE TOGETHER’

Humana’s Stephanie Muckey, who leads the company’s health equity and social impact work focused on the veteran population, said that veterans, military members and their families should not have to be concerned about their next meal.

“Food insecurity is impacting the everyday lives of many veterans in communities across the country,” Muckey said. “We must face this issue together to ensure any veterans, active service men and women, and their families who are struggling have access to healthy meals.”

Since 2021, the VFW Foundation has offered grants to VFW Posts and Auxiliaries supporting the Uniting to Combat Hunger campaign. For every dollar raised by local VFW Posts and Auxiliaries, the VFW Foundation will match the full amount up to \$5,000.

Also, for every hour that a VFW Post or Auxiliary member volunteers to address food insecurity in their communities, the VFW Foundation will provide a dollar match in the form of an unrestricted grant. A minimum of 500 hours must be documented to qualify for the volunteerism grant.

For more information, visit [vfw.org/UTCH](https://www.vfw.org/UTCH).

This article is featured in the 2023 October issue of [VFW magazine](#), and was written by [Dave Spiva](#), associate editor for VFW magazine.