

News Release



For Immediate Release

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'Be Connected' Statewide, Free Helpline, Website Assists Military Members, Veterans

Helpline Matches Service Members and Families with Financial, Employment and Other Free Resources

Phoenix, Ariz. (July 1, 2020) – Arizona's [Be Connected](#)[®] program links military members, veterans and their families, to help, support and resources.

"The stressors that people are experiencing as a result of the COVID-19 situation, including the incredible challenges that come with financial insecurity, are impacting the military and veteran community as well," said Thomas Winkel, Director with the Arizona Coalition for Military Families. "We want every one of the 500,000 plus military members, veterans and their family members to know that all they have to do is pick up the phone and call 1-866-4AZ-VETS (429-8387). We are here to help them navigate the resources available and get them connected to the right solutions and support."

The [Be Connected program](#) was established in 2017 as a way to do more to meet and address the specific needs of military and veteran families in Arizona before there is a life-threatening crisis. "We know that with all of the previous efforts to prevent suicide, the numbers continue to rise," said Wanda Wright, Director of the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services, and a key Be Connected partner along with the VA. "Through the Be Connected program, we address the needs of military and veteran families before they reach a crisis. We want to intervene early with help and support to address financial, employment, housing and benefits issues so we can prevent suicide in the veteran and military population."

For more information on the Arizona Coalition for Military Families, email info@arizonacoalition.org or visit www.arizonacoalition.org. For more information on the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services, visit <https://dvs.az.gov/>.

If you, or a military member, veteran or family member are in need of assistance, please call 1-866-4AZ-VETS (429-8387) or visit www.BeConnectedAZ.org.

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About the Arizona Coalition for Military Families

The mission of the Arizona Coalition for Military Families is to connect the 500,000+ military members, veterans and their families in Arizona to the right resources at the right time through the [Be Connected](#) program. The Coalition is [recognized as a national leader](#) for its ability to bring together Arizona's public and private sector partners in a unified effort. Launched in 2009, the Coalition works nationally and locally to advocate for veterans and military families, build the infrastructure needed to expand and sustain Arizona's statewide capacity to care for, serve and support service members, veterans and their families. The Coalition's membership extends across all levels of local, county, state and federal government as well as a vast network of private companies, healthcare providers, faith-based organizations and non-profit partners. These groups come together each spring for the statewide [Arizona Symposium](#) that offers speakers, breakout sessions and workshops to further the Coalition's mission. To learn more about the Arizona Coalition for Military Families, visit www.arizonacoalition.org.

About the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services

The Arizona Department of Veterans' Services (ADVS) provides direct services to Veterans through the administration of 15 Veteran Benefits Offices throughout the state - helping Veterans connect with their VA benefits, two skilled-nursing Veteran Home facilities in Phoenix and Tucson provide short and long-term care, the original Arizona Veterans' Memorial Cemetery in Sierra Vista, and two cemeteries opened in 2016 in Northern Arizona at Camp Navajo and in Southern Arizona in Marana - north of Tucson.

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In addition, the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services provides critical, state-wide coordination and technical assistance to services and organizations serving Veterans. This includes activities such as coordinating services across private and public sectors in serving targeted populations such as Veterans experiencing homelessness, and special needs for the growing population of Women Veterans - many of whom are at-risk, as well as building community capacity to address Veteran employment and higher education.

About the Be Connected® Program

[Be Connected](#) links Arizona service members, veterans, families and community helpers to information, support and resources. Be Connected includes a support line, resource matching website, statewide team of community-based navigators and training for everyone. Launched with the help, support and guidance of the late Senator John McCain, and now operated with support from the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Be Connected is available to any member of the military, veteran and family community by [calling](#) 1-866-4AZ-VETS (429-8387) for [help and support](#). Organizations that want to [support](#) and join our efforts should begin by [completing an application](#). For more information, to find support and learn more, visit www.BeConnectedAZ.org.