

# News Release

For Immediate Release

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## Faithful Arizonans Invited to Veteran Supportive Initiative

July 9 Event Launches Be Connected Faith Network

**Phoenix, Ariz. (May 26, 2021)** – People of all faiths from communities across Arizona are invited to become a part of the Be Connected Faith Network. The initiative kicks off on June 9 with a [virtual online summit](#) from 9:30 a.m. to noon.

The cultivation of a statewide, veteran supportive faith network is a collaborative effort supported by the Arizona Coalition for Military Families, the Governor's Office of Youth, Faith and Family and the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services.

"Faith is an important part of health and healing for some service members, veterans and their families," said Thomas Winkel, MA, LPC, NCC, Director, Arizona Coalition for Military Families. "We're on a mission to launch the Be Connected Faith Network to add faith communities into our [Ecosystem of Support](#) for Arizona's military and veteran community."

The virtual summit will feature several prominent guest speakers, including:

- Maria Christina Fuentes, Director, [Governor's Office of Youth, Faith and Family](#)
- Wanda Wright, Col (Ret.), MBA, MPA, Med, Director, [Arizona Department of Veterans' Services](#)
- Conrad Washington, USMC (Ret.), M.Div, Director, [VA Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships](#)
- Chaplain Matthew A. Cassidy, M.Div., BCC-MH, National Program Manager, VA Community Clergy Training and Chaplain Virtual Education
- Mike Wold, Regional Coordinator, [Institute for Healing of Memories North America](#)
- Thomas Winkel, MA, LPC, NCC, Director, [Arizona Coalition for Military Families](#)

There is no cost to attend this summit. Registration is requested before June 6 at <https://bit.ly/BCFNJun09>.

For more information on the programs and services offered to Arizona service members, veterans and their families through the Arizona Coalition for Military Families' Be Connected program, visit [www.ConnectVeterans.org](http://www.ConnectVeterans.org) or call 866-4AZ-VETS (866-429-8387).

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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 service members, veterans and their families. The Coalition works collaboratively to build and sustain an [Ecosystem of Support](#) needed to 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, higher education institutions and non-profit partners. To learn more about the Arizona Coalition for Military Families, visit [www.ArizonaCoalition.org](http://www.ArizonaCoalition.org).

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## **About the Be Connected® Program**

[Be Connected](#) is the program of the Arizona Coalition for Military Families that links Arizona service members, veterans, families and community helpers to information, support and resources for employment, healthcare, wellness benefits and more. Be Connected includes a support line, a resource matching website, a statewide team of community-based navigators and no-cost training. Launched with the help, support and guidance of the late Senator John McCain, and now operated with support from the Governor's Office, the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and other partners, Be Connected is available to any member of the military, any veteran and their family members regardless of era or length of service, discharge status or disability status. Anyone who served or anyone supporting those who served can call 866-4AZ-VETS (866-429-8387) for 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.ConnectVeterans.org](http://www.ConnectVeterans.org).