



My Next Steps:

Food and Housing Support Resources for Your Family after Transition from the Military



Question

What resources are available to help my service member and our family with food or housing concerns after transition?



Answer

Planning for transition will be different for every military family. Some families have years to prepare, while others may receive short notice for transition or underestimate the time they need to fully prepare. Regardless of the timing, providing for your family's basic needs is likely your top priority. Even with the best-made plans, your family may face uncertainties, such as unemployment and financial challenges. If you find yourself in need of food and housing assistance for your family after transitioning from the military, multiple government-sponsored programs are available to help you.

To learn about available programs and services, connect with your state's Department of Human Services. The name of the office varies by state, but most offer similar programs for families who need help meeting their food and housing needs. Review the Healthfinder.gov website to connect to your state's website. At this local website, you can learn about the programs offered, how to contact your local office and how to apply for assistance. Let's examine a few of the programs available in each state.

If your family is in immediate need of food, locate and visit your local food bank. Use the Feeding America Food Bank Locator to find the food bank nearest you. For long-term support, explore the United States Department of Agriculture's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program,

which is referred to as SNAP. SNAP offers nutrition assistance to millions of individuals and families of low income throughout the country. SNAP benefits vary by state. To learn more about SNAP and to apply for benefits, contact or visit your local SNAP office. You can find local offices and each state's application for assistance on the SNAP website or on a state or local government website.

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If you or your service member is pregnant or if you have pre-school age children, you may be eligible for a program called Woman, Infants, and Children, or WIC. The WIC program provides supplemental food support, healthcare referrals and nutrition education for low-income pregnant women, breast-feeding women and infants and children up to 5 years old. For program and eligibility information, to learn how to apply and to find your local WIC office, visit the USDA's WIC website.

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Resources at a Glance

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services - [Social Services](#)
- Feeding America [Local Food Bank Locator](#)
- [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#)
- [VA Programs for At-Risk Veterans and their Families](#)



Answer (cont.)

If you have school-age children, your family may be eligible to receive free or reduced-price school meals. Review the USDA's website or connect with your children's school to learn how to apply.

Housing is another basic necessity, and lack of suitable housing can create a significant concern. Veteran homelessness is a serious issue, but resources are available through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to help your family if you find yourself in need. Your first step is to call the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at 1-877-4-AID-VET to connect to a VA staff member. The call center is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to provide free and confidential support. You can also call or visit your nearest VA facility for assistance.

Information about homeless assistance available from the U.S. HUD can be found on the Local Homeless Assistance page of the U.S. HUD website. From this site, you can select your state to connect with local homeless assistance support programs and find additional resources that can help your family.

There are also programs that provide assistance for more general needs of families of low income. One such resource is the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program,

also called TANF. TANF is a time-limited financial assistance program that helps families with children when the parents cannot provide for the family's basic needs. The program and services offered and rules for eligibility vary by state. To learn more about your state's TANF program, visit the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Family Assistance website. On the website, you can select your state to find contact information and the website for the TANF office or related services that may be able to assist your family.

The American Red Cross Veteran Services is also available to support your family after transition by connecting you with resources in your community to assist with emergency needs for food, clothing and shelter. To find your local chapter, use the office locator found on the American Red Cross website or call 1-800-RED-CROSS.

Transition from the military may mean significant changes to pay, benefits, housing and other support you are used to receiving as an active duty family. After transitioning, if your family needs some help with basic needs, such as food and housing, help is available. Connect with your state's Department of Human Services to learn about the programs available to you, and review the websites shared to learn how you can get the help you need.



Steps to Consider

These "Steps to Consider" are not meant as a checklist. Use the suggestions to facilitate a discussion with your service member.

- Attend transition training with your service member. To learn how transition training can help your family, review the MySTeP video, Military-Sponsored Transition Resources and Training.
- Understand how your family's finances may change after transition. To learn more and to find resources to help your family, review the MySTeP video, Preparing for Financial Success after Transition from the Military.
- Discuss where your family will be living after transition from the military. The cost of living and job opportunities may vary widely depending on where you plan to settle. Additionally, assistance programs are run by individual states, and the eligibility and type of assistance available will vary by state. The MySTeP video, Relocation

Considerations for Families Transitioning from the Military, can help you learn more.

- Get familiar with the state agencies that can help your family. Use the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [locator tool](#) to find an office near you. Review the website to learn about programs, and find contact information.
- For urgent food needs for your family, locate and visit your [local food bank](#). For long-term needs, review your state's United States Department of Agriculture's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program information to learn about eligibility and how to apply. To connect with your state, use the USDA's [SNAP application and local office locator](#).



Steps to Consider (cont.)

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- If you or your spouse is pregnant or if you have pre-school age children, determine your eligibility for the [Woman, Infants, and Children](#) nutrition supplement program.
- If you have a school-age child, your family may be eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. To determine eligibility, visit the [USDA School Meals](#) website, or contact your child’s school.
- If you need help to afford housing for your family, seek assistance. Begin by calling the VA’s National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at 1-877-4AID-VET. You can also call or visit a local VA facility for assistance. Use the [VA Facility Locator](#) tool to find a VA facility near you.
- Review the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s [Local Homeless Assistance](#) page to find housing support information for your state.
- Review your family’s eligibility for financial assistance through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program. Resources and eligibility vary by state. Find your local TANF program office [here](#).
- For emergency food, clothing and shelter needs, contact the American Red Cross. Your [local chapter](#) can also provide referrals to other organizations in your community.



Resources

Social Service Resources

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services - Social Services: <https://www.hhs.gov/programs/social-services/index.html>
- State Health & Human Services Website Locator: <https://healthfinder.gov/FindServices/SearchOrgType.aspx?OrgTypeID=8>

Food Assistance Support Resources

- Feeding America Local Food Bank Locator: <https://www.feedingamerica.org/find-your-local-foodbank>
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap>
 - SNAP State Directory of Resources: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/state-directory>
- Woman, Infants, and Children Program: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/about-wic>
- USDA Free and Reduced Lunch Program: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/applying-free-and-reduced-price-school-meals>

Housing Assistance Support Resources

- National Call Center for Homeless Veterans: <https://www.va.gov/homeless/nationalcallcenter.asp>; Phone Number: 1-877-4AID-VET
- VA Facility Locator Tool: <https://www.va.gov/find-locations/>
- VA Programs for At-Risk Veterans and their Families: https://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/for_at_risk_veterans.asp
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Local Homeless Assistance Finder: <https://www.hud.gov/topics/homelessness/localassist>
- National Coalition for Homeless Veterans: http://nchv.org/index.php/help/help/immediate_help/

Other Resources

- State Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Finder: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/help>
- American Red Cross Local Chapter Finder: <http://www.redcross.org/find-your-local-chapter>



Notes

Transition Assistance and Training

- ## Financial Planning for Transition

- ## Retirement and Separation Planning

- ### Emotional Health Support

- Managing Stress and Seeking Non-Medical Counseling Before, During and after Transition from the Military