

VETERANS FOR CHRIST, INC.
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Essential resources for Veteran families with special needs

The sharing of any non-VA information does not constitute an endorsement of products and services on the part of VA. Veterans should verify the information with the organization offering.

Caring for someone with special needs—whether a child, sibling or other loved one—can be both incredibly rewarding and deeply challenging. Fortunately, there are many resources available that provide support, education and connection. From early intervention programs to adult services, understanding what’s out there can make all the difference.

VA Programs

[Spina Bifida Health Care Benefits Program](#)

Spina bifida is a spinal cord birth defect that can be caused by a parent’s past contact with Agent Orange. If the dependent of a Veteran who served in Vietnam, Thailand or in or near the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) has spina bifida, the dependent may be eligible for compensation (payments), health care and job training benefits.

[Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs \(CHAMPVA\)](#)

Provides health care benefits for a spouse, dependent or survivor of a Veteran who meets certain service-connected disability requirements. If the dependent became permanently unable to support themselves before age 18, a disability rating letter can be submitted for the dependent (sometimes called a “helpless child” rating).

[Camp Lejeune Family Member Program \(CLFMP\)](#)

From Aug. 1, 1953, to Dec. 31, 1987, people living at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, were potentially exposed to contaminated drinking water. VA provides health care to Veterans who served on active duty at Camp Lejeune and to reimburse eligible Camp Lejeune Family Members (CLFM) for eligible health care costs related to specified illnesses or conditions.

[Children of Women Vietnam Veterans \(CWVV\)](#)

If a dependent’s biological mother served in Vietnam, and the dependent has certain birth defects, the dependent may be able to get compensation (payments), health care and job training benefits.

Government Programs

[Exceptional Family Member Program \(EFMP\)](#)

Provides information, resources, skills and support to help military families with special needs. Contact Military OneSource at 800-342-9647 and ask for a referral to a special needs consultant for enrollment information.

[Expanded Hourly Child Care Options](#)

Offers free access to a national database of more than a million caregivers; military families residing in the U.S. can find hourly, flexible and on-demand childcare.

[TRICARE](#)

Offers several services under the basic TRICARE benefit along with several special programs for beneficiaries with special needs.

[Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account \(DCFSA\)](#)

Funds can be used to pay for eligible dependent care services, such as preschool, summer day camp, before- or after-school programs and child or adult day care.

[Supplemental Security Income \(SSI\)](#)

A federal program that provides financial assistance to disabled individuals who are under the age of 18 or over 65. SSI helps pay for living expenses, such as food, shelter and clothing.

[IRS Able Accounts](#)

The Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act of 2014 allows states to create tax-advantaged savings programs for eligible people with disabilities (designated beneficiaries).

Community Programs and Resources

[Easterseals](#)

Offers tailored disability and community services that meet the unique needs of families, fostering many aspects of health and well-being.

[FOCUS, or Families Over Coming Under Stress](#)

Provides resilience training to military children, families and couples.

[Military Child Education Coalition Programs \(MCEC\)](#)

Supports all military-connected children, youth and teens by educating, advocating for and collaborating to resolve education challenges associated with the military lifestyle. MCEC offers programs, initiatives and resources to both military families and educators.

[Shriners Hospitals for Children](#)

Provides specialized care to children with special health care needs, regardless of the ability to pay.

[Council for Exceptional Children](#)

An international professional organization dedicated to improving educational outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities. Resources include publications, a clearinghouse on disabilities and the gifted, education resources and discussion lists.

[National Council on Independent Living \(NCIL\)](#)

Information and resources for people with disabilities and their families regarding independent living.

[Parent to Parent USA](#)

Peer support from trained parents of children with disabilities.

This list is not all-encompassing; additional resources are available depending on your specific needs or circumstances. For additional resources, check with your State Department of Veterans Services to find resources available in your area and visit the [National Resource Directory \(NRD\)](#).

Navigating the complex landscape of special needs resources can be overwhelming, but with the right information and support, families and caregivers can ensure that their loved ones receive additional care and support. By staying informed and connected, we can work together to build a more supportive community for individuals with special needs.

**Be on your guard, stand firm in the faith, being men of courage, be strong."
1Cor 16:13**

Sincerely,

William A. Harris, Jr.

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President, Veterans for Christ, Inc.

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Need to contact VA?

[Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255](#) and press 1, [Chat](#), or Text 838255

[Homeless Veteran Resources: 1-877-424-3838](#) or [Chat](#)

[White House VA Hotline: 1-855-948-2311](#)

[1-800-MyVA411 \(800-698-2411\)](#) is never the wrong number