



Neighbors Helping Neighbors | Former Service Members are Answering the Call to Help Their Fellow Americans During the Coronavirus Outbreak

#Inthistogether

As communities combat the coronavirus outbreak, HUD is highlighting stories of communities coming together to help their neighbors in need.

Stockton, California – During the coronavirus outbreak, the Stockton area Emergency Food Bank experienced an increase in demand for food and other resources. Because volunteer numbers have decreased following stay-at-home orders, the Food Bank did not have enough support to fulfill the needs of communities. That is when the California National Guard stepped in to help. *“The California National Guard’s mission is not only to be active duty military soldiers but also to support the state in a time of need or emergency,”* said California Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Norman Johnson. *“In addition to that, a lot of soldiers here have been in combat and noncombat military deployment overseas.”* [Read the full story from Recordnet.com](#)



[Photo courtesy of Recordnet.com](#)

Los Angeles, CA – Team Rubicon, an International, non-government organization founded by U.S. Marines William McNulty and Jake Wood, is mobilizing its fellow veterans to serve those in need during the coronavirus outbreak. Wood has asked all the volunteers on his roster -- more than 120,000 -- to join the group's nationwide effort to help the most vulnerable members of society in a way that keeps at-risk populations safe and contains the spread of the coronavirus. *"These are men and women who have volunteered to serve in harm's way before. They've been deployed in some of the most austere and trying circumstances on the planet,"* said Wood. *"They may have taken the uniform off, but they still have service in their hearts (and) they still have those incredible skills."* Team Rubicon is a veteran service organization that uses disaster response to help reintegrate veterans back into civilian life. [Read the full story from CNN Heroes.](#)



[Photo courtesy of Team Rubicon](#)

New York, New York – As frontline healthcare professionals continue to work tirelessly in the fight against coronavirus, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio took action to address the physical and mental toll of the pandemic. In partnership with the Department of Defense, the City of New York will utilize the expertise of military trauma specialists with new programs geared toward training hospital staff to properly deal with stress management on a personal level. [Read the full story from Spectrum News New York 1](#)



[Photo courtesy of Spectrum News New York 1](#)

Guilford, Connecticut – Veterans at American Legion Post 48 in Guilford are paying it forward by donating a portion of their stimulus checks to the [Guilford Food Bank](#), the [Guilford Community Fund](#), and for veterans in "financial distress or any other organization the membership decides we should support" through the "Pay Forward Fund." The movement was started with a letter Legion Post 48 finance officer Fred Brisbois sent to members which included the quote: "*Ten percent of life is what happens to you, 90 percent of life is how you respond.*" Brisbois' hope is that when the community sees that veterans have stepped up, other residents will follow their lead. [Read the full story from Patch.com](#)



[Photo courtesy of the Patch.com](https://www.patch.com)

Washington, D.C. – The United States Veteran Reserve Corps (U.S. VRC), a veteran volunteer and service organization, is putting their skills to good use during the coronavirus outbreak. As many of their elderly and disabled neighbors are unable to leave their homes to complete routine errands, the group has stepped up to coordinate grocery, pharmacy, and other store pickups and deliveries to anyone who might be in need of the help. *“We know there’s a lot of people who can’t get out either because of medical reasons or the elderly,”* Master Sgt. Karen Kendra Holmes said. *“We would like to get out there and do whatever we can for the community.”* [Read the full story from WTOP News](#)

UNITED STATES VETERAN RESERVE CORPS

Bringing military organization to community response.

[Photo courtesy US-VCR.org](http://US-VCR.org)

Nationwide – The American Legion reconfigured their “Buddy Check” program to ensure the needs of fellow veterans are being met during this unprecedented global health crisis. The call is important as many of the Legion members’ age puts them at high risk for coronavirus infection. Traditionally, the “Buddy Check” program fulfills members’ responsibility to look out for each other and other fellow veterans by checking in with visits, emails, and calls twice yearly--on Veterans Day and on the Legion’s birthday. However, the group has retooled the program’s purpose to make sure members are well cared for and connected with any assistance they may need to fill gaps during the coronavirus outbreaks as well. *“If ever a veterans-service program was built for pandemic relief, it’s the Buddy Check,”* American Legion National Commander James W. “Bill” Oxford said in a statement. *“Sometimes, for a veteran who is alone and on orders to stay home, the most important thing is a phone call.”* [*Read the full story from The American Legion*](#)



[Photo courtesy The American Legion](#)

San Diego, CA – Military non-profits are ensuring their communities are stronger than ever in the mist of coronavirus. After Michael and Kris Spivey both lost their jobs due to the coronavirus pandemic, they received help from the Semper Fi Fund. Spivey, a Paralympic snowboarder and Marine Corps Veteran and his wife, Kris both received a financial grant from Semper Fi Fund that would cover the cost of groceries and other necessities. Susan Rocco, Vice President of Case Management for the Semper Fi Fund said, *“We want to be there for our veterans and just make sure they know they know they are not alone going through this.”* [*Read the full story from Stars and Stripes*](#)



[Michael and Kris Spivey / Photo Courtesy of Stars and Stripes](#)

HUD Resources – The HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program combines Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) rental assistance for homeless Veterans with case management and clinical services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). VA provides these services for participating Veterans at VA medical centers (VAMCs) and community-based outreach clinics. [Learn more about the HUD-VASH program here](#)

To find HUD resources related to the coronavirus, visit www.hud.gov/coronavirus.

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