

Support Veteran Suicide Prevention Funding and Initiatives

In 2023, the suicide rate among veterans was **more than double** that of non-veteran U.S. adults.ⁱ Too often, veterans face compounding risk factors for suicide. **We can help prevent suicide among veterans.**

The Facts



In 2023, suicide was the 12th leading cause of veteran death. That same year, 6,398 veterans died by suicide.ⁱⁱ



Suicide risk is higher in the first 12 months of return to civilian life.ⁱⁱⁱ



Veterans are at higher risk of firearm suicide than non-veterans.

AFSP Recommendations

- **Improve access to affordable behavioral health care**
- **Support veterans in their first year of return to civilian life, including proactive outreach**
- **Support policies to prevent firearm suicide in veteran households**

We can save veterans' lives by supporting access to care, crisis services, specialized and active outreach, and firearm safety.

Background

- Mental health care and crisis services help prevent veteran suicide; this includes care given through the [Veterans Health Administration \(VHA\)](#) and community providers
- Initiatives such as the [Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program](#) fund innovative suicide prevention initiatives nationwide
- Dedicated funding for the [Veterans Crisis Line](#) – integrated as the Press 1 option in the [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#) – ensures free, confidential support for veterans
- Support for veterans in their first year of separation from the Armed Forces is critical – risk is higher in this period, especially for those with existing behavioral health conditions; initiatives such as the [Solid Start Program](#) help prevent suicide by providing outreach and care coordination^{iv v}
- Secure firearm storage prevents suicide among all populations, including veterans and their families – male veterans have a 70.5% higher firearm suicide rate than non-veteran men and for female veterans, the rate is 168.3% higher; research also shows that 79% of firearm suicides among children involve a family member's gun^{vi vii}

ⁱ Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. (2026). 2025 national veteran suicide prevention annual report https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/data-sheets/2025/2025_Annual_Report_Part_2_508.pdf.

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} Vogt, D., Borowski, S., Hoffmire, C.A., Maguen, S., Iverson, K. M., Pugh, M. J., & Galovski, T. (2026). Impact of veterans' military-to-civilian transition experiences on their longer-term mental health. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00127-025-03035-7>.

^v Ibid.

^{vi} Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. (2026). 2025 national veteran suicide prevention annual report https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/data-sheets/2025/2025_Annual_Report_Part_2_508.pdf.

^{vii} Barber, C., Azrael, D., Miller, M., & Hemenway, D. (2022). Who owned the gun in firearm suicides of men, women, and youth in five U.S. states? *Preventative Medicine*, 164. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ypmed.2022.107066>.

