



Hope For The Warriors letter of support for funding to pilot veteran response teams in Florida

In times of crisis and dire need, first responders are equipped with the tools and tactics necessary to diffuse a situation for everyone to walk away safely. "To serve and protect" isn't a blanket statement. Each instance is as unique as the people involved.

When it comes to responding to veterans in crisis, law enforcement must be fully trained in military culture to effectively serve, protect and mentor a population who understands the sacrifice and deep camaraderie of service to our country.

Hope For The Warriors (HOPE) supports the efforts of Congresswoman Salazar in her request to the Attorney General for funding to pilot veteran response teams in Florida.

As other states have witnessed the benefits of veteran response teams in action, HOPE has experienced firsthand how veteran peer-to-peer connection enables life-saving conversations and opens access to resources for immediate crisis relief and long-term success.

In our 15 years of serving the post-9/11 military community, we have actively listened to this population and evolved our programs and services to meet their most critical needs. However, the first step is breaking down barriers and opening lines of communication to clear the way for positive change.

A population in crisis

For those who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, more than 400,000 have sustained traumatic brain injuries, and nearly 20% have symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder or major depression.

Besides the effects of war itself, there are challenges in transitioning to civilian life that put veterans at greater risk of drug use, marital problems, unemployment and homelessness than those who have not served. Death by suicide among post-9/11 service members amounts to more than three times the number of those killed in combat, averaging as many as 17 suicides each day.

Finding and receiving help is often a new battle veterans face at home. Government programs can be difficult to navigate, short-term only, or altogether nonexistent. Warriors can also have strong and realistic fears that seeking help (especially with mental health challenges) will harm their career, present custody issues with their children, negatively affect their medical or disability benefits, or cause them to relive the pain of traumatic memories.

Our veterans deserve a chance to thrive beyond service. A chance to find purpose and connection. They deserve hope.





The power of peer connection

The majority of HOPE staff are veterans or military spouses, so we understand how military experience can open doors. Our robust team of clinicians, social workers and case managers pull on their training and life experiences to connect veterans and military family members to the help they need to thrive at home, work and in their communities.

The Military Relations Program is at the core of HOPE's mission. This unique, proven program is based on a peer-to-peer mentoring relationship with veterans by trained staff members who are themselves veterans. Having the support of a Military Relations team member means each veteran receives personal guidance transitioning to civilian life, resources for career and education advancement, and assistance in connecting to community resources for the ultimate goal: long-term well-being.

HOPE is willing to support veteran response teams with military cultural competency training, access to our evidence-based resiliency programs and best practices in effectively communicating with the veteran population.

HOPE applauds Congresswoman Salazar in her determination to better equip first responders and ensure the veteran population sees hope, even in their darkest days. We commit as part of the service community to empower our veterans and their families to walk confidently into a successful future.

Robin Kelleher
President/CEO of Hope For The Warriors





About Hope For The Warriors

The mission of Hope For The Warriors is to restore self, family and hope to the warrior communities we serve — service members, veterans, military families, caregivers and families of the fallen. It's more than a mission, however; it's who we are. HOPE is a 501c3 founded by military families aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, in 2006, as we felt the effects of war on our friends, colleagues, families and ourselves. What began as post-combat bedside care and support has evolved to a national organization that has adapted to ongoing changes within the military community. We stayed the course with our country's post-9/11 veteran population as physical wounds healed, but emotional wounds still needed care. We recognize that there are many factors aside from combat that can contribute to mental health, including trauma from life events not directly associated with service. We've opened our arms to those who seek hope.

Our work today is still just as individualized and community-based as it was in HOPE's earliest years. We provide more than 12,000 services to over 4,200 military families in all 50 states annually. We believe warriors can thrive with access to integrated services focused on their individual and collective well-being. We recognize every service member and military family has their own goals and needs, and ideal resources do not always exist in their communities. We will restore SELF, FAMILY and HOPE through our national services, virtual capabilities and partners in mission.

Note: Hope For The Warriors President and CEO Robin Kelleher is also a co-founder of the organization.

