



ILLINOIS JOINING FORCES

Supporting Service Members, Veterans and their Families

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Illinois Joining Forces Launches *Operation Connect-A-Vet* to Empower Friends and Families to Link Veterans with Resources

Designed to Ensure That Every Veteran Feels Connected and has an Added Layer of Support in Addition to their Friends and Family

ILLINOIS – As Veterans Day approaches and the holiday season draws near, Illinois Joining Forces is proud to unveil its latest initiative, *Operation Connect-A-Vet* as part of *Operation Connect Illinois CARES*. This initiative is designed to ensure that every Veteran feels connected.

"As we approach Veterans Day, we must remember the sacrifices made by veterans and raise awareness of the support they truly deserve. *Operation Connect-A-Vet* embodies our nation's spirit of unity and service. This Veterans Day, IJF is proud to unite our community to provide vital support for Veterans, Service Members, and their Families," said Erica Borggren, Board Chairwoman of Illinois Joining Forces.

Recognizing the genuine concerns loved ones have about the well-being of veterans, Illinois Joining Forces' *Operation Connect-A-Vet* offers a proactive and caring solution. It provides a streamlined avenue for friends and family to arrange wellness calls, ensuring veterans are doing well and connected with a dedicated team ready to assist them with housing, food, employment, healthcare, and more. With the mission to unite communities and serve those who have selflessly served us, *Operation Connect-A-Vet* becomes a beacon of hope and support during this meaningful season of gratitude and giving.

"*Operation Connect-A-Vet* is about our community caring for its heroes, ensuring veterans and their families are not alone in their challenges. This program brings incredible value to our state by offering a lifeline for veterans and their loved ones, ensuring they receive the support and resources they need when it matters most," said LTC (Ret.) John DeBlasio, IJF Board Vice Chairman.



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"This initiative emerged in response to the challenges faced by veterans and military families. Like everyone else, they struggle with rising living costs, food, and essentials. However, due to a self-sufficient military culture, they may not always seek the support they deserve. Join us in making a difference in our heroes' lives this Veterans Day. Let's unite Illinois to serve those who selflessly served us, ensuring that no veteran feels alone, and their loved ones have the means to care for them effectively," said Brenda Osuch, IJF Executive Director.

Accessing *Operation Connect-A-Vet* is simple:

1. **Reach Out:** IJF encourages family, friends, neighbors and acquaintances to call a Veteran in their life and simply ask them how they are doing.
2. **Submit a Connect-A-Vet request:** If you feel a Veteran in your life needs more, IJF is here to support. Your request can be submitted by calling the IJF Care Coordination Center at 1-833-INFO IJF (463-6453), sending an email to callcenter@illinoisjoiningforces.org or filling out the Connect-A-Vet form on our website at illinoisjoiningforces.org. Your request is the next step in extending support to the veterans in your life
3. **Identify Services:** Our dedicated team members are well-versed in connecting Veterans with the services they need. We work with our partners statewide to ensure that Veterans are connected to housing, food, employment, mental health and any other critical needs.

Operation Connect-A-Vet will begin November 1 and continue through the end of the year, ensuring that veterans and military families receive the support they need during the holiday season.

For more information, please visit www.illinoisjoiningforces.org.

About Illinois Joining Forces:

Illinois Joining Forces (IJF) is a non-profit organization in Illinois that collaborates with a statewide network of providers to connect service members, veterans, and their families with the resources they need, precisely when and where they need them.

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