In [helping new veterans’ families navigate civilian services and systems, the Branch highlighted situations where parent centers can make a crucial difference](https://branchta.org/military-family-leaves-military-help-civilian-services-matters/). New veterans’ families are those whose service member has recently transitioned to civilian life. They may be new residents or have lived for years in your state but are now new to all its resources as civilians and parents of a child with a disability. These families may have always used military-provided supports and services and may not even know parent centers exist.

How will veterans’ families know about your parent center?

One practical method is partnering with groups or organizations that are already in contact with new veterans. Possible benefits include:

* Long-term collaborations for ongoing contacts with newly arrived veterans’ families
* Becoming a known presence in military-connected communities
* Recruiting volunteers who further increase your center’s capacity to serve military-connected families
* Increases in events, public service programs, and physical locations available for parent trainings and workshops
* Increases in marketing and public relations support for events, programs, and trainings
* Listings as a community resource for veteran families under headings like “Education” or “Health and Wellbeing”
* Locations for your flyers, rack cards, other marketing materials.

Supporting veterans is popular, and the number and variety of veterans organizations can be overwhelming. How can you identify which organizations may be most helpful?

First connect with your state’s [**Department of Veterans Services**](https://www.va.gov/statedva.htm) (or similar name).

**State Departments of Veterans Services** can help you with:

* Demographic and geographic data on your state’s veterans
* Names of and contacts for veteran national, state, or county-based membership organizations
* Names and contacts for organizations serving veterans and their families
* Veteran benefit information, which may help you see where these benefits have limits and where resources like parent centers can help
* Forming collaborations and partnerships, especially at county or local levels, with military and veteran-serving organizations.
* On-the-ground information about current needs of newly arrived veterans and their families
* In some cases, names of military personnel who have recently returned to the state after their military service. This may be helpful at some point in your outreach process.

You may need to go on to the **County Veteran Services Offices** in each state to get some of this information; links to these offices should be on the state-level website or through the office phone contact.

 “County Veterans Service Officers: CVSOs are very localized resources, and every state has them (most states have many). They're county-based and task-organized, sometimes in the State Department of Veterans Affairs. They also have a clear picture of where the veterans may be in your community.” - [nationalservice.gov](https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/veterans-and-military-families/finding-and-recruiting-veterans-community-service)

You may wish to connect with **County Veteran Services Offices** because**:**

* Your center may have programs offered in specific counties which may be of assistance to veterans’ families
* Your front-line staff may be assigned by county or multiple counties
* You may choose to begin your new outreach initiative by focusing on a geographic area or areas as a “test run”
* Staff at these offices are “front-line” and have local information to help you build your outreach

Unfortunately, not all State Department of Veterans Services offices or websites even list local chapters and contacts for well-known organizations like [American Legion](https://www.legion.org/), [Student Veterans of America](https://studentveterans.org/), and [Veterans of Foreign Wars](https://www.vfw.org/), let alone smaller community groups. The next step may be an **internet search** to find potentially useful partners in your state.

**Internet Search Terms that help:**

* To find organizations which may welcome partnerships: “partner with” “alliance” “community” “community based” “coalition” “local”
* To find organizations where veterans work or lead the organizations: “veteran membership organization” “veteran led” “veterans serving veterans”
* For branches of national organizations like Veterans of Foreign Wars, add “[state name] chapters” to the name of the organization in your search
* Always helpful: “veteran family organizations” or “veterans’ families organizations”
* Add your state’s name to the search terms: “veterans’ families organizations in [state]”

Here are two examples of state or community organizations that appear to have partnership potential:

In **Ohio,** [**Tristate Veterans Community Alliance**](http://www.tristatevca.org/):

“The Tristate Veterans Community Alliance (TVCA) is an independent, veteran-led nonprofit organization dedicated to serving veterans and their families within the 16-county, Greater Cincinnati region as they transition from military to civilian life.

TVCA partners with more than 200 local service providers, corporations, academic institutions and government organizations to increase awareness and access to services in the areas of employment, education, health, wellness and family support.” -<http://www.tristatevca.org/about/who-we-are/>

This organization appears very familiar with their local veteran community and is specifically focused on the *needs of new veterans and their families*.

**In Arizona**, [Arizona Coalition for Military Families](http://arizonacoalition.org/):

Their website includes a [Military/Veteran Resource Network](http://arizonacoalition.org/network/). The network’s membership includes businesses, higher education institutions, state agencies (including the ADHS Office for Children with Special Health Care Needs and the Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council), health insurance companies and medical provider systems, Youth and Child services, mental health providers, and many more.

They have a partnership with the [National Guard Joint Family Programs](https://www.jointservicessupport.org/FP/Community.aspx) Office in Arizona—a natural fit when you consider the large numbers of veterans who go on to a second military career in the National Guard. The Joint Family Programs emphasize community capacity building. [Arizona Coalition for Military Families](http://arizonacoalition.org/)is also the **Inter-Service Family Assistance Committee (see below).**

**Other State- and Community-Level Programs and Offices:**

1. Look for **veterans’ programs and offices at your state’s community colleges, state colleges, and state universities.** There is often a staff contact person who may help your outreach to new veterans and their families. Many campuses have a physical campus location for these programs, so bring your pamphlets and flyers and get yourselves added to their event mailing list.

Note-These programs, and programs at private higher education institutions, may also be listed with the [State Departments of Veterans Services](https://www.va.gov/statedva.htm).

1. [**Joining Community Forces**](https://www.jointservicessupport.org/communityforces/) **Organization** (formerly the Inter-Service Family Assistance Committee, or ISFAC). A program of your state’s [National Guard Family Program](https://www.jointservicessupport.org/FP/Default.aspx)**, Joining Community Forces (sometimes still known as ISFAC)** is another path for outreach to returning service members, guard, reserve, and active duty families.
2. **United Service Organizations’** (USO) [Pathfinder program.](https://www.uso.org/programs/uso-pathfinder) “An estimated 200,000-plus service members transition out of the military each year. Each Transition from military to civilian life is unique, and USO Pathfinder® is there to help service members and military spouses through the process.” **If your state has a Pathfinder program, your parent center can become a listed resource for new veteran families**. [Locate a Pathfinder program](https://www.uso.org/campaign/ae0dd637-6bac-4e22-b185-3770750c1500/preview#component-449).