



Caring for Those Who  
**Protect  
and Serve**

# Addressing Military and Veteran Social Care

Military service members, veterans, and their family members deserve access not only to the best healthcare but the best social care. The social care needs of our service members and their families are of critical importance and must be addressed holistically. At Unite Us, we bring our lived experience and knowledge of this community to every solution we develop. **This brief explores the ways in which our first-to-market, end-to-end social care solution is rooted in serving the military community, and is poised to meet the needs of all people.**

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# A Unite Us History

Unite Us was established in 2013 by Dan Brillman, an Air Force Reserve pilot, and Taylor Justice, an Army veteran. As Dan and Taylor navigated their return to civilian life, they each faced significant obstacles to getting assistance. Through observations and conversations with other veterans, they realized their experiences were not unique. Veterans and their families were suffering every day because they couldn't access the care they needed in a straightforward and efficient manner.



Dan Brillman, Air Force Reserve pilot



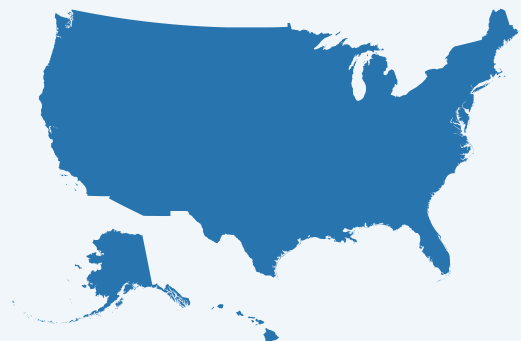
Taylor Justice (left), Army veteran

Dan and Taylor decided to take action, founding Unite Us to address the fragmented health and social care delivery system and its negative impact on people's health and wellbeing.

“ My co-founder, who is also a veteran, and I started Unite Us, initially focused on just the veteran and military population, then quickly expanded when we realized that the challenges that the veteran and military population face are not unique—they just happen to be the perfect petri dish of American society when you look at age, race, socioeconomic status and so it was a perfect segway into the boarder market.

– Taylor Justice

What began as a solution to help veterans has grown exponentially. Without losing sight of its founders' original vision, Unite Us now has a presence in more than 44 states and continues to expand its networks serving veteran and military-connected families.





# Scaling Innovations



## Unite Us named a finalist in VA’s Mission Daybreak!

We are proud to announce that Unite Us has been named a finalist in [Mission Daybreak](#), a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs grand challenge and call on innovators to develop suicide prevention solutions that meet the diverse needs of veterans.

Unite Us is among the 30 finalists selected from over 1,300 submissions to advance to the Phase 2 virtual accelerator. Our solution, Saving Veteran Lives Through Empowered Community Networks, is designed to reduce veteran suicides by identifying and predicting the social care needs of veterans who present risk factors for suicide, enrolling those veterans in services, and ensuring those veterans receive services that meet their social care needs.



## Building a Statewide Infrastructure

Unite Us technology supports Georgia Department of Veterans Service (GDVS), Georgia Veterans Education Career Transition Resource (VECTR), and the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) in implementing a **statewide support network** focused on getting **veterans back to work**. This digital network will link state agencies, healthcare, and community-based organization partners to connect veterans and their families with health, social, and child care, and with workforce development support as they seek and work to maintain competitive employment. Find more information at [www.georgia.uniteus.com/](http://www.georgia.uniteus.com/).

“While veteran unemployment rate and social needs have been increasing due to the pandemic, we launched this initiative to ensure that no veteran is left behind during Georgia’s recovery. Building a network infrastructure across the state, including rural areas, we can enable veterans to immediately access coordinated care and comprehensive services designed around their needs. This effort positions Georgia as an innovator in supporting veterans, transitioning, and military family members, and in adopting a data-driven approach to promote efficiency and accountability across government services. – Patricia Ross, Commissioner, Georgia Department of Veterans Service



# Social Determinants Impacting Military Members, Veterans, and Their Families

A growing body of research shows that a person's community, socioeconomic status, education, and other social and cultural factors significantly affect their health outcomes. These factors, known as social determinants of health (SDoH), are defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as "the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age, as well as the complex, interrelated social structures and economic systems that shape these conditions." To truly improve health and wellbeing, Unite Us believes we must integrate social care and healthcare.



Military service members, veterans, and their family members face unique social determinants that impact their holistic health and wellness. Many of them experience recurring and co-occurring needs that require a coordinated care approach. For example, among the 50,000 veterans represented in Unite Us data who had a housing need in 2020, 15 percent also needed food and utilities assistance. Veterans who had a demonstrated transportation need in 2020 requested assistance for that same service an average of 2.24 times.



Because network partners on the Unite Us Platform can screen for and easily coordinate care for these additional and recurring services, the client never has to tell their story more than once.

**Understanding comprehensive needs, we can deliver coordinated health and social care interventions:**

**Behavioral Health Care**



A **2018 report** on active-duty U.S. military personnel who sought civilian-sector health services found that 72 percent were diagnosed with depression; 62 percent were suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder; and 27 percent were battling alcohol use disorder. Barriers to accessing mental health care have devastating consequences. A **Defense Department report** found that military suicides increased by 20 percent in 2020 compared to the same period in 2019. The same report suggested that incidents of violent behavior had spiked in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, societal unrest, war-zone deployments, and national disasters.

**Financial Instability**



A **2017 report** by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) found that in 2015, 4.7 percent of veterans in the labor force were living below the poverty line. The VA has also found that veterans are **overrepresented among the homeless population**, accounting for 10 percent of the total adult population and 16 percent of the homeless adult population.

**Food Insecurity**



**One study** involving more than 6,700 veterans found that 24 percent reported food insecurity between 2002 and 2008. More recently, a **2014 study** showed that approximately 27 percent of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans experienced food insecurity between 2011 and 2012. Research also consistently finds higher rates of food insecurity among Black, Latino, and other **non-white veterans**, and one report showed **28 percent of female veterans** reported suffering from food insecurity in 2013 and 2014.

**Social Isolation**



**Humana reports** that nearly 90 percent of military spouses disclose “feeling lonely.” A **2019 report** found that military caregivers were significantly more likely to report a need for information or support to make end-of-life decisions and manage physical and emotional stress compared to civilian caregivers.

With our ability to monitor real-time data on emerging risk and impact of services, we have been able to track evolving needs and identity gaps as well as opportunities to deliver effective interventions and optimize resource allocation.

During the pandemic, the top five needs or services indicated for military and veteran populations within our network have been those related to Benefits Navigation (27.9 percent), Income Support (16.9 percent), Food Assistance (15.7 percent), Clothing & Households (10 percent), and Transportation (6.3 percent).

**Top five needs or services for military and veteran populations**

Housing and Shelter	23.5%
Income Support	12.1%
Transportation	8.6%
Food Assistance	8.5%
Employment	8.1%

Percent of service episodes since March 2020

# Federal Policies Align with Social Care Movement to Address Root Causes

At Unite Us, we carefully track federal policies and initiatives designed to address SDoH for active-duty members, veterans, and their families. We see signs of rising interest and investment in mitigating the root causes of poor health outcomes experienced by these individuals and families. We applaud these investments and encourage continued efforts to improve connections to community-based care for these individuals:



➤ **Department of Defense (DoD) TRICARE program**

Tricare provides health services to military service members, retirees, and their families. In its latest procurement for TRICARE managed care, the agency emphasized the importance of providing robust connections to community-based services, and preventing more serious health conditions.

➤ **The White House Joining Forces Initiative**

This effort supports families of service members and veterans, caregivers, and survivors. Guided by life experiences and the perspectives of military families, this initiative provides resources in the areas of employment and entrepreneurship, military child education, and health and well-being.

➤ **The U.S. Department of Defense Strengthening Food Security in the Force**

This [Strategy and Roadmap](#) (2022) outlines a plan to address food insecurity with a holistic and evidence-informed approach that includes goals across six areas: 1) increase access to healthy food; 2) enhance spouse economic opportunities; 3) review service member pay and benefits; 4) reinforce financial resources and awareness; 5) encourage service members and families to seek available resources and services; and 6) expand data collection and reporting.

➤ **The VA's Community Partnership Challenge and ACORN Project**

This annual contest, hosted by the Office of Community Engagement, highlights nonmonetary, community-level partnerships between the Veterans Health Administration and non-governmental organizations that serve veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors. In addition, the Office of Health Equity supported the development of the Assessing Circumstances Offering Resources for Need (**ACORN**) social needs screener used in the VA New England Healthcare System to identify any SDoH deficits that patients face, and local-level resources that can help alleviate those issues.

➤ **The VA Pantry Project**

This public-private partnership between the VA and Feeding America—which has a nonprofit network of more than 200 food banks nationwide—aims to address food insecurity among veterans, a key social determinant exacerbated by the pandemic. This partnership is evidence of a recognition by the VA that healthcare doesn't just take place within the four walls of a clinic.

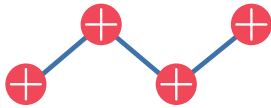


# The Only End-to-End Social Care Solution for Military Members, Veterans, and Their Families

At Unite Us, we are well-positioned to identify, predict, and meet the needs of military service members, veterans, and their families. Our end-to-end solution facilitates coordination between health and social services and analyzes impact to inform investment in social care services. This approach places people at the center of community-focused care, acknowledging that having one’s social needs met is just as important as having access to clinical care.

## What We Do

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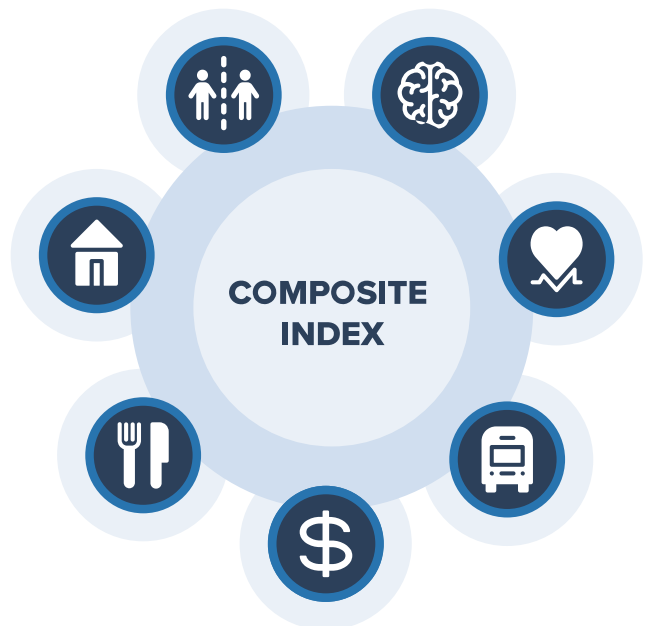


### Predict

**Identifying the Needs of Military Service Members, Veterans, and their Families**

Unite Us’ Social Needs System (SNS) uses predictive analytics to proactively identify the social needs of high-risk, high-need populations, including veterans.

Unite Us is currently working with the New York City Department of Veterans’ Services (DVS) to leverage SNS, which would enable the agency to better understand the key social factors for which veterans in the city are most at risk, such as housing insecurity, environmental stress, and social isolation. These insights help inform DVS’ outreach strategy, facilitate appropriate resourcing, and—most importantly—reduce the risk of this group becoming high utilizers of healthcare.






## Enroll

### Take a whole-person approach

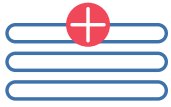
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Unite Us' robust support system enables a whole-person approach through social needs screenings, closed-loop referral tracking and completion, accountable care coordination, and self-referral assistance request fulfillment. In one example, Unite Us is supporting the **Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Veteran Peer Access Network (VPAN)**, which prioritizes hiring veterans as "battle buddies" and systems navigators to connect their brothers and sisters in need to helpful resources. This partnership demonstrates how Unite Us seeks to serve each individual through our community-wide infrastructure that connects health, human, and social service providers on a single network.

A blue-tinted photograph of a smiling man in a U.S. Army uniform. The uniform has "U.S. ARMY" visible on the chest.

“Unite Us is helping VPAN achieve our mission by bringing a coordinated network that provides us not only a platform but a new method of access to care for our veterans and families in LA County.

– Cristina Garcia  
Director, SCG Veteran Program



## Serve

### Build a community-wide infrastructure

Unite Us’ community engagement team has deep local, on-the-ground expertise. These teams are deployed into each community to build quality and accountable coordinated networks of health and community services. Our flexible and scalable platform helps all network partners track every step of each patient’s total health journey inside and outside their four walls.

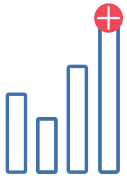
The Unite Us Platform makes referrals and care coordination among community organizations easier. While it does not take the place of systems of record for the organizations that use it, it does serve as the connective tissue between them. Our platform replaces the phone calls, emails, faxes, and other inefficiencies of care referrals and tracking, making the work more efficient and allowing for better documentation and tracking.



### Examples of this community infrastructure in action:

- Unite Us has partnered with the [Georgia Veterans Education Career Transition Resource \(VECTR\) Center](#) to help veterans in Georgia find and access educational and employment resources, leveraging our social care referral platform. The VECTR Center was established by the state and provides a one-stop shop for veterans seeking benefits, educational opportunities, employment services, and links to community resources. In Year One, VECTR led to a **300-percent reduction in wait times** for case resolution, from more than nine days to approximately 2.5 days, facilitating access to support organizations, workforce resources, food providers, housing providers, and more.
- Through a partnership with the [Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute](#), Unite Us has expanded the veteran footprint of the Unite Texas network. Our team is working to bring on 34 CBOs supporting veterans and their families’ mental health in West Texas, greater Houston, and the Dallas metro area.





## Measure

### Measure Network Impact with Real-Time Social Care Data Analytics

The Unite Us end-to-end solution measures network impact with real-time social care data analytics that empowers network efficiency and drives efficacy.

Through our data expertise, we recognize that military-affiliated individuals tend to seek multiple overlapping or correlated service types within a network. The robust data tool we created enhances understanding of these clients and services and bolsters future resource investments.

Unite Us provides a curated Military Dashboard and Health Equity Dashboard, alongside standard network activity dashboards, to empower decision-makers with the data and insights they need to make evidence-based decisions and drive improved health outcomes.



The network has 100% of my endorsement because of the data. Data should drive the services needed to be provided to our veterans and their families, and initiatives like RIServes provide us with that vehicle to deliver those services.

– Kasim Yarn

Director, Rhode Island Office of Veterans Services



## Invest

### Invest in the Community

With Unite Us, partners can invest in and build upon existing community capacity through payment for specific interventions that drive improved health outcomes for military populations and their families. Adding payment abilities to the referral platform improves the end-to-end functionality and adds value to community investment efforts. Providing community-based organizations with reimbursement for their services, with margin, allows them to innovate their offerings and improve their services going forward. Ultimately, this infrastructure facilitates social care funding at scale through funds distribution, invoice management, and reimbursement for social services.

# The Unite Us Commitment

“ When you think about the needs of veterans, what we know and what we surveyed is that it’s not so much about the mental health, it’s the issue of navigating all these silos of healthcare, government, and social services. As a client in need, that is the most frustrating part. To remove those barriers is the key. It’s not like those services do not exist at all, it’s about creating the right infrastructure to access those services efficiently.

– Taylor Justice  
via *Military Times*

Unite Us is deeply invested in the health and wellbeing of all military service members, veterans, and their families. With increased investments and funding for SDoH in the military and veteran space, Unite Us is ready to support partners with the nation’s only end-to-end solution to address the comprehensive needs of service members and their families.



To learn more, visit [www.UniteUs.com](http://www.UniteUs.com)