

VFW Voices of Service

Stories in Action

National Legislative Committee Member Toolkit

PURPOSE OF THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit equips National Legislative Committee (NLC) members with clear guidance and ready-to-use materials to help veterans, service members, and families ensure their experiences are heard by submitting their stories directly through the VFW's official story bank form VFW Voices of Service – *Stories in Action*.

As NLC members promote this effort, veterans and families may naturally share their experiences in conversation. When that happens, members should always encourage those individuals to submit their story through the official VFW Voices of Service – *Stories in Action* form so it can be captured accurately, securely, and with proper consent.

Stories submitted to the story bank may be used by VFW National staff (only with permission) to educate Congress and the public about how veterans' policies affect real people. This includes use in congressional meetings, briefings, testimony, oversight discussions, and other official advocacy and communications efforts where real-world examples help bring policy issues to life.

At the same time, NLC members should remain mindful of the VFW's legislative priorities. If a veteran from your state shares an experience that directly relates to a key talking point or priority issue, it is appropriate to ask respectful follow-up questions and to ask whether they would be willing to have their story referenced, by you, as a constituent example during meetings in Washington, D.C.

This does not replace submission to the story bank, and it does not involve collecting or storing stories. Rather, it allows NLC members to responsibly connect real constituent experiences to policy discussions while ensuring the VFW can use stories in a coordinated, professional way.

This effort is about access, accuracy, and impact, making sure real experiences are captured properly and used where they can most effectively educate, persuade, and protect veterans' earned benefits.

YOUR ROLE AS AN NLC MEMBER

Your role is intentionally limited and straightforward.

You are asked to:

- Share the official Story Bank QR code or link
- Encourage veterans, service members, survivors, and family members to submit their stories directly through the form

All Story Bank submissions go directly to VFW DC staff, where they are securely stored and used only when appropriate and only with consent, for legislative advocacy and official communications.

Think of this as opening a doorway, not handling what comes through it.

WHAT TO SAY (PLAIN-LANGUAGE EXPLANATION)

NLC members may use the following approved language when introducing VFW Voices of Service – *Stories in Action* at meetings, events, or in one-on-one conversations. These examples are designed to sound natural while clearly explaining how stories are used. You can rephrase to fit your personality and style.

Short Intro (Meetings or Announcements)

“The VFW is collecting real experiences from veterans, service members, and families to help strengthen legislative advocacy. These stories, submitted directly through an official form, help show Congress how policies affect real people.”

Slightly Longer Intro (Post or Department Meetings)

“When the VFW goes to Congress to fight for veterans’ benefits, data matters but real stories are what make lawmakers listen. That’s why the VFW is collecting experiences directly from veterans, service members, and families through an official story bank called VFW Voices of Service – *Stories in Action*. These stories help educate Congress and the public on how policies affect real lives.”

One-on-One Conversation

“If you’ve ever had an experience with VA care, benefits, or survivor programs, good or bad, the VFW wants to hear it. Sharing your story helps the VFW explain to Congress what’s actually happening to veterans and families.”

Event or Outreach Table Intro

“This is the VFW Voices of Service – *Stories in Action*, a story bank. It’s a way for veterans and families to share their experiences directly with VFW National in DC so those real-world stories can be used to educate Congress and strengthen advocacy.”

If Asked Whether a Story Will Be Used

“Not every story will be used publicly, but every story helps the VFW understand what veterans and families are experiencing.”

If Asked Who Sees the Stories

“Stories go directly to VFW National staff. NLC members do not have access to submissions.”

If Asked How Stories Are Used

“With permission, stories may be used in congressional meetings, briefings, testimony, and other official advocacy or communications efforts to show how veterans’ policies affect real people.”

Why This Matters

Clear, consistent explanations help build trust and ensure veterans understand why they’re being asked to share their experiences and how those stories will be used. This also protects the integrity of the story bank and the advocacy work it supports.

APPROVED OUTREACH MATERIALS (PROVIDED)

NLC members are provided with ready-to-use materials designed to make sharing the story bank simple, consistent, and easy to integrate into existing activities.

All materials direct individuals only to the official VFW Voices of Service – *Stories in Action* form.

Print Materials

Flyers (2 versions)

- Designed for printing and display at Post, District, or Department meetings or out in your community, think libraries, community centers or any place people gather.
- Can be placed on tables, bulletin boards, or handed out.
- They already include a QR code linking directly to the VFW Voices of Service – *Stories in Action* submission form.

VFW Voices of Service *Stories in Action*

The VFW is gathering firsthand stories from veterans and military families to help lawmakers understand the real-world effects of policy decisions.

Share Your Story. Shape the Future.

Scan the QR code to submit your story.



Stories may be used to support VFW advocacy efforts.

VFW Voices of Service *Stories in Action*



The VFW is gathering real stories from veterans and military families. These experiences help show how decisions made in Washington affect real lives.

Scan the QR code to
share your story.



Share Your Story. Shape the Future.

Postcards (3 versions)

- Designed for easy distribution at events or meetings
- Can be placed on tables, included in meeting packets, or handed out
- Suitable for tabling, outreach events, and Post activities



VFW Voices of Service *Stories in Action*

Honor the Contract. Hear the Reality.

Our nation made a promise to those who served. Help lawmakers hear directly from you about what keeping that promise really means.



Digital Materials

Social Media Graphics (3 versions)

- Designed for Facebook and other social platforms

- Sized for easy sharing by NLC members, Departments, or Posts
- Paired with approved caption language provided in this toolkit

VFW Voices of Service

Stories in Action

**Your Story Deserves
to Be Heard**



Honor the Contract

**Making the system work
as promised starts with
real stories from veterans.**



VFW Voices of Service
Stories in Action

All materials are optional and may be used as best fits your setting and audience.

WHEN AND WHERE TO SHARE THE LINK

You may share the Story Bank QR code or link:

Link to the form: <https://forms.gle/3R4toepnSpDFLpvU6>



VFW VOICES OF SERVICE



- At Department, District, or Post meetings
- At community events or outreach tables
- In Department or Post newsletters
- In emails to members or Posts
- In personal or official social media posts

There is no deadline, no reporting requirement, and no participation quota. This is an ongoing effort.

OPTIONAL: STORY BANK ASSISTANCE EVENTS

Some veterans, survivors, or caregivers may want to share their story but need help with technology or completing the online form.

NLC members may choose to host a simple Story Bank Assistance Event, where veterans and families are invited to submit their stories directly into the official VFW Story Bank form, with help available if needed. Posts or Auxiliaries may assist by providing volunteers or support.

These events are solely for helping individuals complete the form. Stories should not be collected, recorded, or retained outside the official submission process.

If you are interested in hosting an assistance event or would like guidance on how to do so, please reach out to Gabby.

What to Write (Approved Copy)

Email or Newsletter Blurb – Short Version

Subject: VFW Voices of Service – Share Your Story

The VFW is collecting real stories from veterans, service members, and families through VFW Voices of Service – *Stories in Action*, a story bank, to strengthen legislative advocacy.

Stories are submitted directly through an official form and may be shared anonymously. Submissions will be used to help show Congress how policies affect real people.

 Submit your story here: <https://forms.gle/3R4toepnSpDFLpvU6>

Email or Newsletter Blurb – Longer Version

Subject: VFW Voices of Service – Share Your Story

When the VFW advocates on Capitol Hill, real stories help lawmakers understand how veterans' policies affect real people.

Through VFW Voices of Service – *Stories in Action*, the VFW is collecting experiences from veterans, service members, and families through an official story bank. These stories, submitted directly through a secure form, will help educate Congress and the public and strengthen legislative advocacy.

Participation is voluntary, stories may be shared anonymously, and submissions are only used with permission.

 Submit your story here: <https://forms.gle/3R4toepnSpDFLpvU6>

Social Media Caption Options (pair with graphics above)

Option 1

The VFW is collecting real stories from veterans, service members, and families through VFW Voices of Service – *Stories in Action*.

Your experience can help educate Congress and strengthen advocacy for veterans' benefits.

 Share your story here: <https://forms.gle/3R4toepnSpDFLpvU6>

Option 2

Have an experience with VA care, benefits, or survivor programs, good or bad?

The VFW wants to hear from you.

Share your story through VFW Voices of Service – *Stories in Action* and help show Congress how policies affect real people.

 <https://forms.gle/3R4toepnSpDFLpvU6>

Option 3

Real stories help move policy.

Through VFW Voices of Service – *Stories in Action*, veterans and families can share their experiences to help strengthen the laws that protect earned benefits.

 Submit your story: <https://forms.gle/3R4toepnSpDFLpvU6>

Option 4

Veterans' voices matter in shaping the future of our nation.

Through VFW Voices of Service – *Stories in Action*, the VFW is helping ensure Congress hears directly from those who have served and their families because honoring the contract means listening to the people who fulfilled it.

 Share your story: <https://forms.gle/3R4toepnSpDFLpvU6>

Option 5

Veterans kept their end of the deal.

Honor the Contract means listening to them.

Share your story through VFW Voices of Service – *Stories in Action* so Congress hears it straight from the source.

 <https://forms.gle/3R4toepnSpDFLpvU6>

HASHTAGS

Use no more than 3-5. You can add others that relate to your department, branch of service, etc.

- #VFW
- #VFWVoicesofService
- #VFWStoriesInAction

- #VFWAdvocacy
- #StillServing
- #HonorTheContract
- #KeepThePromise
- #TellYourStory

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can I see the stories?

No. Submissions go directly to VFW National staff.

Will my story be used publicly?

Only with permission and only if it strengthens advocacy.

Is this tied to a specific bill?

No. Stories may inform multiple legislative efforts over time. However, there may be times when NLC members will be asked to promote a specific type of story.

Can family members or survivors submit stories?

Yes.

Can veterans living overseas participate?

Yes.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

Success is simple:

- Members know the Story Bank exists
- Veterans and families submit stories directly
- The VFW has stronger real-world context when advocating

No reporting or follow-up is required from NLC members.

QUICK REFERENCE

Your job: Share the link.

Their job: Share the story.

DC's job: Use it when it matters.