

FACE THE FIGHT®

# STRATEGIC PLAN

2026 - 2028





# LEADERSHIP LETTER

When we launched Face the Fight in 2023, we did so with a clear and urgent mission: to dramatically reduce veteran suicide by inspiring hope, fostering collaboration and advancing proven solutions. From the very beginning, we have believed that no single organization can solve this crisis alone – and that the private sector can be a powerful force multiplier, complementing the work of the departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs, and the many organizations that have been tackling these issues for decades.

Since then, Face the Fight has grown into a national movement uniting more than 250+ organizations across corporate, nonprofit, and government sectors. Together, we are expanding what's possible. We are saving lives.

Looking ahead, we will lead with purpose to ensure Face the Fight is a trusted source of connection, care, and hope. On behalf of all the Face the Fight partners, thank you for standing with us. We hope this plan inspires you to act, partner, and lead in the months and years ahead.

As we chart the way forward, we want to add a special acknowledgement to Justin Schmitt, the former President of the USAA Foundation and visionary leader behind Face the Fight.

**Together, there is hope.**

Lt Col Chris Ford, USAF (Ret.)  
*Face the Fight Principal, USAA*

Dr. Katy Dondanville  
Chief Scientific Advisor, *Face the Fight*  
*UT Health San Antonio*

Babs Chase  
Executive Director, *Face the Fight Coalition*  
*Elizabeth Dole Foundation*



# A MOVEMENT WITH A PURPOSE

Veterans are not statistics – they are parents, siblings, children, friends, teammates, caregivers, and community leaders. In 2022, an average of 17.6 U.S. veterans died by suicide each day – a rate 58% higher than the non-veteran population.

Face the Fight began as a bold, cross-sector effort to help address this crisis. Launched in 2023, Face the Fight was founded by USAA, Reach Resilience, and The Humana Foundation to bring together businesses, nonprofits, government liaisons, and philanthropic leaders around a shared aspirational goal: to imagine a day where veterans are at no greater risk for suicide than non-veterans.

From the start, Face the Fight strategic partners, the Elizabeth Dole Foundation and UT Health San Antonio, have played an essential role – guiding coalition engagement and governance, and translating research into real-world impact. We've also aligned closely with the departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs to share insights and support national initiatives like VA's Buddy Check Week. And we are committed to learning from veterans and families, as well as from evidence like RAND's ground-breaking landscape analysis, which was made possible by Face the Fight.

As we embark on the next three years, our Strategic Plan is a blueprint to save lives. We've updated our aspirational goal: to save 15,000 lives by 2032. This commitment is driven by an evidence-informed strategy, scaling interventions that are proven to be effective, the momentum of our coalition, and the profound truth that every life saved creates a ripple of impact far beyond one individual.

Our Strategic Plan outlines our vision, identifies our priorities, and sets the course for meaningful and quantitative impact. Above all, it is an invitation to coalition members, community leaders, subject matter experts, and most importantly, veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors: we see you, we need you, and we are fighting alongside you.



# WHERE MOMENTUM MEETS MISSION

In just two years, Face the Fight has sparked critical conversations, reduced stigma, and built trust among partners. We've supported frontline providers, delivered life-saving resources to communities, and demonstrated what's possible when we come together with focus and intentionality.

Our work is rooted in the voices and values of our coalition. From grassroots organizations to Fortune 500 companies, our partners have brought passion, expertise, and creativity to this shared mission. Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors have courageously shared their stories, guiding every step forward.

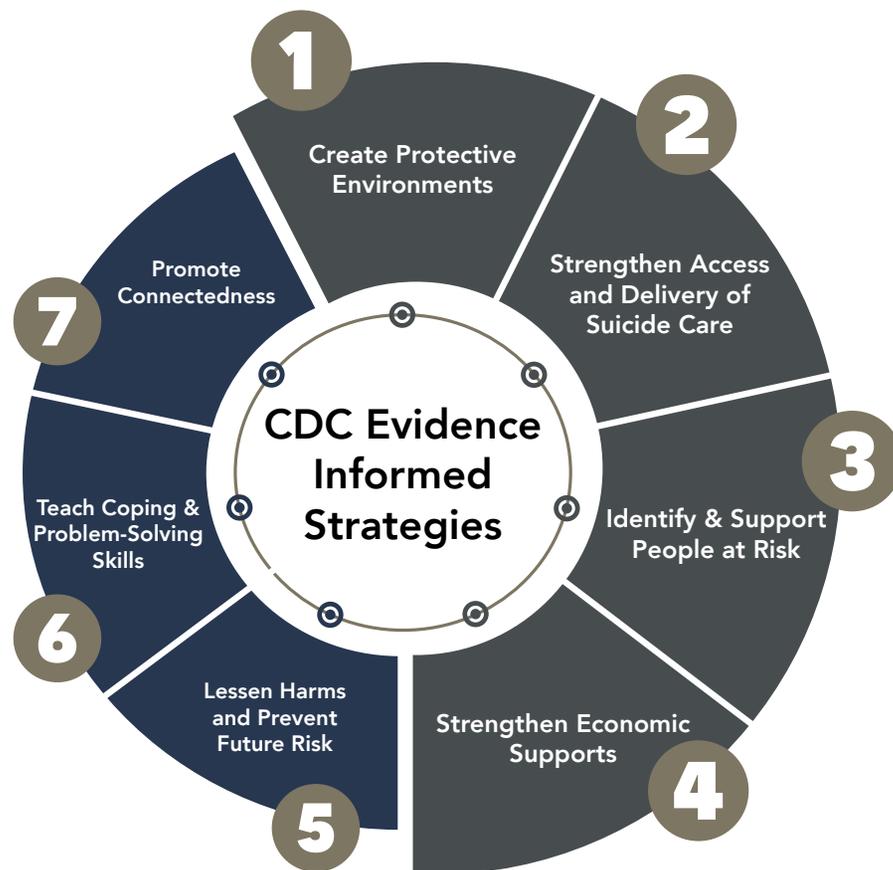
Our grantmaking is grounded in CDC evidence-informed strategies—proven approaches that help prevent suicide and save lives.

This next chapter will require more from all of us.

Our Strategic Plan sets the direction for what comes next. With it, we will:

- Align around proven practices
- Deepen the coalition through broad-based, strategic engagement
- Inspire grantmaking capacity to fund and scale what works
- Build awareness and empower action to prevent veteran suicide

Most importantly, it reinforces a simple but powerful truth: preventing veteran suicide is not the job of any one group. It's a shared responsibility. And by facing the fight together, we can build a future where veterans feel truly connected, fully supported, and optimistic about their futures as thriving and highly-valued members of our communities.



*Note: Face the Fight activities, campaigns and grantmaking and resources are aligned with CDC-evidence informed strategies; our grantmaking and educational resources are prioritized with focus areas 1-4 (highlighted in charcoal).*



# ASPIRATIONAL GOAL, VISION, MISSION, SHARED VALUES

## ASPIRATIONAL GOAL

*To save 15,000\* veteran lives by 2032.*

## VISION

*A future where every veteran and those who stand beside them are celebrated for their strength, backed in tough times, and never left to fight alone.*

## MISSION

*To inspire urgent, united action through proven solutions to dramatically reduce veteran suicide.*

## SHARED VALUES

### Collaboration

We lead with partnership and purpose – bringing together communities, organizations, and systems to scale life-saving solutions.

### Innovation

We evolve based on scientific data and lived experience to meet the changing needs of veterans and those who support them.

### Accountability

We lead with hope and urgency to break stigma, scale life-saving solutions, and mobilize every voice in the fight.

### No One Left Behind

We honor every veteran, their family, caregivers, and survivors. We are committed to reaching those most at risk and eliminating barriers – ensuring everyone has the care they deserve and a chance to thrive.

\*This figure driven by the Face the Fight dynamic data model and is established in coordination with our Chief Scientific Advisor based on an expected ~17M annual philanthropic giving budget. The figure is subject to change based on increased grantmaking capacity as well as potential adjustments to the duration of Face the Fight (the dynamic data model currently forecasts estimated lives saved through 2032).



# STRATEGIC PILLARS AND FRAMEWORK

Face the Fight will unite a cross-sector coalition, scale proven suicide prevention solutions, dismantle the stigma around mental health, and strengthen support systems that protect and honor those who have served.

## Mobilize a Coalition to Increase Cross-sector Collaboration

Foster a powerful collaboration between businesses, philanthropists, nonprofits, and government to amplify the mission, share best practices, and elevate resources.

## Build Awareness, Empower Change, and Drive Action

Use storytelling, awareness campaigns, and engagement to normalize conversations around mental health and suicide, reduce stigma, and encourage help-seeking.

## Advance Proven Solutions for Veteran Suicide Prevention

Scale strategies aligned with prioritized CDC evidence-informed interventions through partnerships, coalition activation, and intentional grantmaking.

## Engage and Support the Military and Veteran Community

Champion solutions that uplift service members, veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors – empowering them to both give and receive meaningful support.

## Guiding Principles

- **Do no harm.** Ensure all messages, events, and coalition efforts follow best practices for safe suicide prevention messaging.
- **Measure, Learn, Evolve.** Across all pillars, we will dedicate resources strategically, guided by enhanced outcomes measurement and accountability to maximize impact and continuous improvement.
- **Stay Grounded.** Include at-risk veteran, suicide survivor and loss survivor perspectives when designing solutions.



# MOBILIZE A COALITION TO INCREASE CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION

*Foster a powerful collaboration between businesses, philanthropists, nonprofits, and government to amplify the mission, share best practices, and elevate resources*

OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Expand philanthropic investment and activations to scale coalition impact</li><li>• Increase and strengthen coalition engagement through opportunities designed to foster connection, collaboration, and shared learning</li><li>• Mobilize coalition members to actively embed veteran suicide prevention into their strategies, programs, and organizational culture</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Facilitate strategic partnerships to inspire others and expand reach</li><li>• Recruit high-value sponsors for philanthropic and in-kind support</li><li>• Convene the coalition through impactful events</li><li>• Prioritize collaboration with high-impact coalition members and allies to drive unified action, amplify advocacy, and align efforts for maximum reach, influence, and lasting outcomes</li><li>• Coordinate sharing of best practices, resources, and lessons learned</li><li>• Equip coalition members with tools to integrate FTF resources and proven prevention strategies into their programs aligned with their priorities and culture</li></ul>

## INDICATOR OF PROGRESS:

Reduction in veteran suicide through strengthened cross-sector collaboration, increased coalition engagement, and shared resources that amplify prevention efforts.



# BUILD AWARENESS, EMPOWER CHANGE, AND DRIVE ACTION

*Use storytelling, awareness campaigns, and engagement to normalize conversations around mental health and suicide, reduce stigma, and encourage help-seeking*

OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Elevate national awareness, destigmatize help-seeking behaviors, and empower everyone to be part of the solution</li><li>• Position Face the Fight as a trusted, national voice advancing cross-sector collaboration and culture change to prevent veteran suicide</li><li>• Develop and implement inclusive, community-driven initiatives that elevate authentic voices, build trust, and inspire action</li><li>• Develop and share communication campaigns grounded in research and delivered by trusted messengers</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lead national narrative on veteran suicide prevention with public awareness initiatives and brand building communications strategies</li><li>• Deploy multichannel communications campaigns highlighting the authentic voices, stories, faces and lives of impacted communities</li><li>• Drive a narrative of impact and momentum with spotlights on success stories of coalition members and philanthropic supporters</li><li>• Pitch or partner with media outlets to amplify our message to wider audiences</li><li>• Shape and advance the national conversation on veteran suicide prevention by sharing real-world insights, coalition impact, and data-driven outcomes across high-visibility platforms from journals and media to national conferences and policy forums</li></ul>
<b>INDICATOR OF PROGRESS:</b>  Reduction in veteran suicide through heightened public awareness, reduced stigma, and empowered communities actively engaged in prevention and help-seeking behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leverage tentpole calendar moments, live events, and community gatherings to uncover stories and inspire participants to use their voice</li><li>• Partner with broadcasters, sports teams, and brands to create innovative and meaningful moments of awareness and support</li></ul>



# ADVANCE PROVEN SOLUTIONS FOR VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION

*Scale strategies aligned with prioritized CDC evidence-informed interventions through partnerships, coalition activation, and intentional grantmaking*

OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Invest in scalable and sustainable evidence-informed strategies for suicide prevention</li><li>• Elevate innovative approaches addressing social drivers of health</li><li>• Equip organizations and communities with resources to integrate suicide prevention strategies</li><li>• Elevate authentic voices and evidence-informed strategies to demonstrate real-world change</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fund and scale evidence-informed suicide prevention programs</li><li>• Provide technical assistance to help organizations implement evidence-informed interventions, build capacity, and ensure sustainability</li><li>• Support the use of technology solutions which leverage public data to identify veteran needs – and help nonprofits improve services, fill gaps, and better coordinate care</li><li>• Help nonprofits that focus on social drivers of health integrate suicide prevention strategies into their programming to ensure veterans at risk are identified and connected to care</li><li>• Maximize the FTF Training and Resource Center to prepare organizations and individuals to best serve the military and veteran community</li><li>• Partner with organizations and communities to deliver tailored consultation, training, and to strengthen suicide prevention and healing after loss</li><li>• Support organizations in the development of policies, procedures, and staff capacity that reflect best practices and are responsive to veteran needs</li></ul>
<p><b>INDICATOR OF PROGRESS:</b></p> <p>Reduction in veteran suicide through expanded access to evidence-informed, community-integrated prevention strategies</p>	

# ENGAGE AND SUPPORT THE MILITARY AND VETERAN COMMUNITY

*Champion solutions that uplift service members, veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors—empowering them to both give and receive meaningful support*

OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritize lived experience by activating veterans, families, caregivers, and survivors as co-creators of solutions</li> <li>• Build trusted partnerships with local and national stakeholders to embed suicide prevention practices in communities and trusted spaces</li> <li>• Strengthen coordination with federal, state, and local partners to expand impact</li> <li>• Bolster support systems for transitioning service members to reduce risk, enhance well-being, and foster long-term connection and purpose</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with trusted organizations to capture the perspective of the communities they serve ensuring their insights shape coalition strategies, resources, and public messaging</li> <li>• Build and strengthen relationships with organizations representing high-risk and other underserved populations identified through research</li> <li>• Expand support for high-risk and underserved populations by improving access, aligning resources, and deepening partnerships</li> <li>• Amplify and measure the use of tools and resources, community involvement in programs, and engagement from veterans and families to guide continuous improvement</li> <li>• Engage with federal, state, and local partners to inform policy, align efforts, and share data</li> <li>• Partner with organizations supporting transitioning service members and veterans navigating high-risk life moments to integrate proactive, upstream prevention strategies</li> </ul>

## INDICATOR OF PROGRESS:

Reduction in veteran suicide through expanded access to evidence-informed, community-integrated prevention strategies

LET'S KEEP FACING THE FIGHT—  
**TOGETHER**





# MOVING FORWARD, TOGETHER IN HOPE

We believe in a future where every veteran feels connected, valued, and empowered.

This Strategic Plan is more than a roadmap—it's a reflection of what's possible when we come together with purpose. It captures the collective energy, compassion, and determination of more than 250 organizations across the country who are committed to preventing veteran suicide and building a culture of connection and care.

Our impact is already growing, and with your continued partnership, we can go even further.

Every organization, every leader, every person has something to offer this movement. Whether you're sharing a message, hosting a training, or supporting a loved one, your actions matter.

*Together, we can change the story.*

Join us at [www.wefacethefight.org](http://www.wefacethefight.org) or reach out to [join@wefacethefight.org](mailto:join@wefacethefight.org) to connect, collaborate, and carry this mission forward. There is hope in every conversation, every partnership, every step.

The future is not written yet – but with your help, we're shaping one that's full of hope.

**Let's keep facing the fight – together.**



**FACE  
THE  
FIGHT<sup>®</sup>**



Humana  
Foundation

