



Frequently Asked Questions

What is NAVSO? NAVSO is the National Association of Veteran-Serving Organizations, an IRS-approved nonprofit organization incorporated in the Commonwealth of Virginia. NAVSO's mission is to "Improve outcomes for veterans and military families through data-driven collaboration." By bringing together government service providers, corporations who serve veterans and the 46,000+ nonprofit organizations who are focused on veteran and military family needs, NAVSO will change the way veterans and military families receive needed services.

How will NAVSO benefit veteran serving organizations currently operating? Why should an organization join? The question isn't, 'why should an organization join NAVSO?' The question is, 'why aren't you already a part of NAVSO?' NAVSO represents an intentional effort to harness the collective best-practices of like-minded professionals serving veterans and military families to ensure everyone becomes more effective and efficient in delivering measurable programs and services. What part of that wouldn't an organization want? Isn't that what everyone wants for the clients they serve? Many foundations and donors tell us this is what they are looking for in the veteran nonprofit community: collective, integrated efforts that are more effective, more efficient, and offer a better return on investment (impact). If they're paying attention to these goals, shouldn't service providers be as well? NAVSO will offer the following benefits to association members:

1. real-time, location-based data about veterans and their needs that organizations can use to make informed decisions with regard to resource allocations,
2. a user forum to share promising practices and recruit assistance relating to an organization's most pressing challenges,
3. a library/repository of research, leading articles, and papers focused on meeting the needs of veterans and military families, and
4. consolidated news relevant to the daily work of organizations.

Who's involved in NAVSO? NAVSO has assembled a team of leading experts from around the country with a large range of experiences concerning the needs of veterans and military families. Over 20 individuals, between staff, the Board of Directors, and the Board of Advisors, are directly involved in NAVSO's development and operations. Background and specialties include big data science, legal, employment, disability, education, homelessness, social work, mental health, resource development, event planning, community solutions, philanthropy, marketing and brand reputation, veteran policy, information technology, communications, as well as perspectives from all four branches of service (officer and enlisted), military spouses and Gold Star families.

Who has partnered with NAVSO? NAVSO is proud to be partnered with visionary and forward leading organizations like Travis Manion Foundation (our lead investor), The Ahmanson Foundation, USC CIR, Veterans Legal Institute, and Volunteers of America. Additional partnerships are always a top priority at NAVSO.

How is NAVSO different from other organizations that claim to represent the unified, national voice? Although the need for an organization such as NAVSO has been discussed by many of the nation's thought leaders and echoed in several reports, no organization, prior to NAVSO, has stood up to exclusively answer this call. However, the timing of NAVSO's market entrance perfectly aligns with other recent efforts that dovetail nicely with NAVSO's vision, mission and goals. Unite Us, a for-profit company in New York City aims to serve as the technology platform that connects veterans and military families to the services they seek. Additionally, academic entities like the University of Southern California's Center for Innovation and Research on Veterans & Military Families (CIR) and Syracuse University's Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) have recently expanded their efforts concerning community-level collaboration. Lastly, the Council on Foundations has established a Veterans Philanthropy Exchange to improve awareness and understanding by current and future donors investing in nonprofits serving veterans and military families. All of these efforts will help inform the work of NAVSO to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of service providers that serve veterans and military families.

Who founded/started NAVSO? What was the inspiration or impetus? NAVSO was the vision of our CEO, Chris Ford. As early as December 2012, Chris recognized the need to organize the myriad of service providers, both public and private, to improve their effectiveness and efficiency. Through his work on the Joint Staff, Chris served as a knowledge broker, connecting like-minded professionals to facilitate their awareness of new and innovative practices relating to meeting veteran needs. As Chris often says, "for nearly 20 years as a security professional in the Air Force I told people 'no' for a living. It was the right things to do when it came to protecting billions of dollars of resources, facilities and associated personnel. However, when I started working in the Warrior and Family Support Office on the Joint Staff, I was able to help people find 'yes.' Nothing felt better." However, helping people find 'yes' was a very manual process and largely inhibited by the limited bandwidth of 4 to 5 action officers covering the entire nation. Upon his retirement from the Air Force, Chris put his vision of a nationally networked collaborative into action. NAVSO was designed to accelerate those connections, advance best-practice sharing to all corners of the country and dramatically change how veterans and military families access services.

Does NAVSO directly help veterans? NAVSO's motto, "Your Serve Them. We Serve You." emphasizes our commitment to serve as the backbone, or infrastructure, organization facilitating service providers as they strive to meet the complex and evolving needs of veterans and military families. As such, NAVSO does not provide direct services to veterans or military families. We remain focused on best serving our customers: public and private service providers, so they, in turn, provide highly effective and efficient programs and services to veterans and military families.

Is NAVSO a political (lobbying) organization? NAVSO complies with the requirements outlined for 501(c)(3) organizations which specifically state: Section 501(c)(3) organizations are restricted in how much political and legislative (lobbying) activities they may conduct. NAVSO complies with these requirements.

Is NAVSO an IRS-recognized 501(c)(3) organization? Yes, NAVSO received a letter of determination from the IRS in July 2014 acknowledging tax-exempt status. Individuals can confirm this status using the IRS online EO Select Check tool by entering NAVSO's EIN: 46-3624091.

How is NAVSO funded? Where does that money go? NAVSO is 100% privately funded through the generous donations of individuals, corporations and foundations. NAVSO is forever grateful for the forward-leading investment by the Travis Manion Foundation that enabled NAVSO's vision to become a reality. Donated funds cover operating expenses of the organization and excess funds, or targeted/restricted donations, go directly toward program grants designed to help association members meet the complex and evolving needs of veterans and military families.