



## ILLINOIS JOINING FORCES

Supporting Service Members, Veterans and their Families

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# **Illinois Joining Forces Hosts Southern Illinois Summit to Support Veterans and Families**

*Free Dinner and Resource Fair to Address Rural Veterans' Needs in Southern Illinois*

**Marion, IL** — Illinois Joining Forces (IJF) invites Illinois veterans, military members, and their families to attend a Town Hall and resource fair with free dinner at The Pavilion in Marion, IL, on Thursday, February 27th, from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The evening will connect attendees with local service providers and create a space for veterans to share their experiences in an intimate, town hall-style discussion. This unique opportunity encourages camaraderie and conversation among those who have served.

Earlier in the day, local organizations will participate in round table discussions about supporting service members, veterans, and their families and improving connection and collaboration between resources for veterans in Southern Illinois.

Recent findings from the [SIU System Veterans Summit Report](#) highlight the challenges rural veterans face in Southern Illinois, including limited access to mental health care, legal assistance, and higher education opportunities. Veterans in rural areas are 70% less likely to receive mental health treatment compared to their urban counterparts due to geographic barriers and provider shortages.

“Illinois Joining Forces events help give veterans in more rural areas of Southern Illinois opportunities to forge the connections they need, both to vital services and to one another. With our veteran organization partners, IJF is focused on bridging the gaps in access that come with living in these communities, whether connecting veterans to resources, building community, or addressing the isolation so many face after military service,” said Erica Borggren, Board Chairwoman of IJF.

“These events provide tangible solutions for veterans and families in rural Southern Illinois who encounter obstacles in accessing help. IJF connects veterans with essential benefits, mental health support, and housing and employment programs right in their local areas. said Brenda Osuch, Executive Director of IJF.

**Registration is required.**



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### Event Details:

- **Date:** Thursday, February 27, 2025
- **Time:** 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm
- **Location:** The Pavilion, 1602 Sioux Dr, Marion, IL 62959
- **Admission: FREE** for Illinois military personnel and veterans with valid identification

The event will provide attendees with a complimentary meal, the opportunity to connect with service providers, and insights into local resources. It is free; however, registration and valid military or veteran identification will be required for entry. Interested individuals should register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/veterans-town-hall-resource-fair-at-the-pavilion-tickets-1124734082919> or visit the Illinois Joining Forces website at [www.illinoisjoiningforces.com](http://www.illinoisjoiningforces.com) for further details and registration.

### About Illinois Joining Forces:

Illinois Joining Forces (IJF) is a non-profit organization in Illinois that collaborates with a statewide network of providers to connect service members, veterans, and their families with the resources they need, precisely when and where they need them.

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