

Air Force Veteran Forges His Own Path

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"I joined the Air Force right out of high school for financial independence, and so I could get a college education. I received extensive training with the Air Force as a vehicle mechanic, and that allowed me to secure employment as an instructor after being discharged in 2015."

Eric Rubio, 32, of Barstow, Calif., served 12 years in the United States Air Force as a special purpose mechanic. Serving with both the Air Force and the Army, he received an Army Commendation for his support of Operation New Dawn in 2010 and 2011.

Wanting to continue his education in a new field, he enrolled at ITT Technical Institute to pursue his Associate's degree in System Administration.

Rubio completed two semesters while employed full-time. When ITT Tech abruptly closed 130 of its campuses, he and his family were shocked. They soon lost the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) they had been relying on for income, since Rubio no longer qualified for benefits as a student.

Rubio was then referred by the VA to apply for a VFW Unmet Needs grant.

"The application process was easy and provided me with assistance towards my rent, utilities and food assistance," Rubio said. "This support was invaluable to my family when money I was relying on did not come."

Rubio has worked at Universal Technical Institute as a Diesel Instructor and Technical Team Leader for eight months following his separation from the Air Force, and has recently started to pursue a degree in Business Management at Devry University.

Rubio and his wife, Marisol and four children, Eric, Giovaney, Angelina and Clarisa are looking forward to the future.

“I look forward to joining the VFW soon, and being able to contribute to other veterans in my situation.”

[Learn more about the VFW’s Unmet Needs program.](#)

Photo courtesy of Eric Rubio.

During the month of November, participating BURGER KING® franchisees will be raising funds for the VFW’s Unmet Needs program for the 11th consecutive year. The VFW is grateful for the generosity of BURGER KING® and their loyal patrons who ensure America’s heroes can continue to count on the VFW for vital support.