

\$424,970 in Grants Help Wisconsin Veterans and Families

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DVA grants made Thursday to 13 nonprofit organizations and entrepreneurship recipients around the State.

MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers and Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) Secretary James Bond announced \$424,970 in grants on Thursday to 13 nonprofit organizations that provide financial assistance, entrepreneurship training, or other services to Wisconsin veterans and their families.



“As a state, Wisconsin is a national leader in providing for our veterans, and we continue to strive to provide our nation’s heroes with the support and resources they’ve earned through their service,” said Gov. Evers. “These organizations do great work, ensuring Wisconsin’s more than 300,000 veterans and their families have the services they need to be successful, and they deserve to be recognized for being a vital part of ensuring our veterans are cared for and uplifted.”

Since starting in 2015, DVA’s grant programs have been funding organizations that aim to

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ensure Wisconsin veterans and their families have the resources they need, as well as nonprofit organizations that provide entrepreneurship, technical, business, or other assistance to veteran entrepreneurs to improve employment outcomes.

“DVA is proud to work with these organizations to provide vital services to Wisconsin veterans and their loved ones,” said Secretary Bond. “From providing basic necessities to entrepreneurship training, these grants will directly fund bettering and enriching the lives of those who have served.”

DVA is grateful for these and other community and nonprofit organizations across the state, forming a network that has resulted in thousands of veterans receiving vital assistance and resources.

This year’s nonprofit grant recipients are:

- **Center for Veterans Issues Ltd.** (CVI) will receive \$25,000 to support a fully functional computer lab for veterans residing at Vets Place Central. This lab provides tools to veterans in employment and training programs to help them see beyond the physical and mental pain of their day-to-day life. This computer lab will provide a new opportunity to train veterans experiencing homelessness interested in seeking employment.

- **Great Lakes Dryhooch** will receive \$25,000 to bring its successful peer support program to Madison. Funds will allow Dryhooch to hire its first peer support specialist in Madison, train and equip the specialist, and fund their salary for the first six months to serve 60 veterans. Funds will also help furnish an outdoor space at Dryhooch’s Madison headquarters so that their veterans and families have an alcohol-free place to gather.

- **Herzing University** will receive \$25,000 to provide funding for a scholarship to help Wisconsin veterans with school-related expenses like testing fees, scrubs, or technology needs. A portion of the funds will be used to dedicate a Veteran Student Services Advisor to offer specialized support for veteran students for eight hours per week. The remaining funds will be used to provide professional development to Herzing staff so they can better support Wisconsin veteran students, especially those from underserved communities and populations.

- **Indianhead Community Action Agency Inc.** (ICAA) will receive \$25,000 for their Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF) program, which supports veterans in achieving self-sufficiency. The SSVF program currently provides rapid rehousing for homeless, or nearly homeless, veterans and their families throughout 19 counties in northern Wisconsin. Veterans in need can receive temporary housing with the goal of securing permanent housing shortly after enrolling in the program.

- **Milwaukee Homeless Veterans Initiative** (MHVI) will receive \$25,000 to support homeless and at-risk veterans in Southeastern Wisconsin. Specifically, MHVI will utilize the funds to support direct service staff, client expenses, and their Emergency Crisis Fund, which provides funding for veterans who have emergent needs with no other means to afford the basic need.

- **The Highground Veterans Memorial Park** will receive \$17,500 to support the

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Highground Veterans Retreats, Vets & Guitars Program and The Highground Veteran/Family Post-Traumatic Stress Peer Support Group. This directly relates to Highground Veterans Memorial Park's mission of honoring all who have served in the nation's military through tributes and events, providing education on the human cost of war through exhibitions, documentary projects, and educational events, and promoting and facilitating the healing of veterans, their families, Gold Star families, and the community.

- **Trinity Equestrian Center Kids Kamp Inc.** (Trinity) will receive \$25,000 to fund Trinity Equestrian Center's newest veteran initiative: RESTORING WISCONSIN WOMEN VETERANS (RWWV). RWWV is an innovative and aggressive approach to meet the unique needs of Wisconsin women veterans struggling with military sexual trauma.

- **University of Wisconsin-Superior Foundation** will receive \$25,000 to support programming for the Veteran and Non-Traditional Student Center (VNSC). The VNSC provides veterans, current military, and their families with "one-stop" academic and peer mentoring services. Veteran populations with significant personal responsibilities are more likely to build stronger relationships with a university, its faculty, and the student body when provided peer mentoring from others of similar age and life experiences.

- **Wisconsin Veterans' Network** (VetsNet) will receive \$25,000 to ensure the safety, well-being, and stability of veterans throughout Wisconsin. The VetsNet Intake, Assessment, and Advocacy Program was created to address the gaps in the veteran safety net. Upon completing the comprehensive intake process, Service Navigators can identify veterans' immediate and secondary needs, determine qualifications for support, and then match the veteran with the organization best able to help. This facilitation and coordination are provided at no cost to the veteran or family member.

- **Wisconsin Hero Outdoors** will receive \$7,500 to provide outdoor alternative therapy (Eco-Therapy) options to veterans and first responders with physical and mental disabilities. Eco-therapy has been a proven form of treatment for veterans and their families. With this funding, Wisconsin Hero Outdoors looks to serve over 800 Veterans in 2023.

- **Milwaukee County War Memorial Inc.** will receive \$25,000 to serve as a distinctive voice for veterans, illuminating the glory and sacrifice of service and building partnerships to meet the needs of veterans and their families. Programs and services offered to veterans and the community will remain focused on reducing the number of veteran suicides in Wisconsin by increasing the community's awareness of issues facing today's veterans and the resources available to veterans and their families.

This year's entrepreneurship grant recipients are:

- **Fox Valley Technical College** will receive \$99,970 to support the Fox Valley Technical College (FVTC) Innovation Accelerator for Veterans program. This builds on the program previously funded by DVA grants to address the needs of veterans who wish to realize their

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dreams of starting or expanding a business. This grant will help provide two Innovation Accelerator for Veterans cohorts, including entrepreneurial training and technical support, networking opportunities, one-on-one mentoring, and seed funds for startup/growth expenses for 30 Veteran-owned businesses.

- **Lakeland University** will receive \$75,000 to provide entrepreneurship activity and break down barriers to entrepreneurship for veteran populations. This includes a renewed focus on entrepreneurship at Jake's Café, a co-working space owned and operated by Lakeland University. This grant will allow new programs to fill gaps identified by community partners, including offering veteran-owned launch startups, accelerator programs, quarterly round tables, statewide virtual networks for veterans, co-working memberships, and promotional material and outreach.