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WDVA Awards \$550,000 to Veteran Nonprofits

Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) Secretary-designee James Bond announced \$550,000 in grants were awarded to 15 nonprofit organizations that provide financial assistance, entrepreneurship training, or other services to Wisconsin veterans and their families.

“I am thrilled that WDVA can help these nonprofits with their innovative work on behalf of our state’s veterans,” said Secretary-designee Bond. “These grants will help provide mental healthcare, basic amenities, job training, assist veteran entrepreneurs, and more. Wisconsin is lucky to have so many folks stepping up for those who have served in the armed forces.”

The grants are from two programs: the Veteran Nonprofit Grant, available to all registered nonprofits that serve veterans, and the Veteran Entrepreneurship Grant, open to nonprofits that specifically provide entrepreneurship or technical, business, or other assistance to veteran entrepreneurs to improve employment outcomes.

This year’s Nonprofit Grant recipients (\$250,000 in total) are:

Community Outreach Temporary Services (Outagamie) received \$19,735 to reduce veteran homelessness by maintaining a community facility with capacity for over 80 residents, of which 10-15 percent are historically veterans.

Fox Valley Veterans Council (Outagamie) received \$25,000 for their Veterans Emergency Assistance Program, which provides immediate financial aid to veterans and their families for housing, utilities, food, transportation, dental care, and other essential needs.

Heroes for Healthcare (Milwaukee) received \$25,000 to recruit, align, and incentivize transitions from military medical roles into civilian healthcare. Partners with healthcare providers to align veterans into open jobs and training programs; aligns previous training and advocates to maximize credits given for previous medical experience to expedite the transition process.

Indianhead Community Action Agency (Rusk) received \$25,000 to provide programs and services to low-income and at-risk veterans, with an emphasis on supporting homeless veterans.

Lost Creek Ranch (Pierce) received \$25,000 to provide equine therapy and post-program supports including scholarships, work-to-ride, and volunteer programs. The 6-week “Ride On” equine-assisted therapy program focuses on anxiety, depression, and PTSD.

Milwaukee County War Memorial (Milwaukee) received \$25,000 to support the “Veterans Operations Center” (VOC), which provides incubator-style support to small start-ups serving Veterans and provides ~\$500,000 annually in in-kind services to Veterans.

The River Food Pantry (Dane) received \$5,265 to provide meals and community space for Dane County Veterans and families, working with the Vets Connect program.

Trinity Equestrian Center (Eau Claire) received \$25,000 for equine and relationship-focused therapy facilitated by a team consisting of a licensed mental health therapist, a certified horse professional, and horses that have been highly effective in treating PTSD, depression, anger, anxiety, and suicidal tendencies. The funding will focus on supporting Trinity’s full-time Veteran Wellness Program, called “Find Your Fit,” and the newest initiative, “Brave Beyond Service: The Female Veteran’s Empowerment Network.”

Veterans Outreach of Wisconsin (Racine) received \$25,000 to provide services for homeless and at-risk Veteran households, including provision of food, clothing, shelter, and other basic needs. The program includes 15 “Tiny Homes” for homeless Veterans and its supporting food pantry, “The Marketplace.”

Wisconsin Veterans Network (Milwaukee) received \$25,000 to provide immediate financial assistance and other support to at-risk Veterans, with the bulk of resources allocated to rent/mortgage assistance and utility expenses.

Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans Memorial Project (Clark) received \$25,000 for mental health treatments for veterans engaged in Highground Veteran Retreats, creative arts programs, support groups, and suicide prevention efforts, with an emphasis on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and military sexual trauma (MST).

This year’s Entrepreneurship Grant recipients (\$300,000 in total) are:

Ashland Area Development Corp (Ashland) received \$27,105 for their Veteran Entrepreneur training program, which includes free classes in business development, resources, and networking.

Develop America Inc. (Milwaukee) received \$73,000 to expand the efforts of their Veterans Connect program to support the growth of Veteran minority-owned or/and Social and Economically Disadvantaged Individual (SEDI)-owned businesses in Wisconsin. The program connects existing veteran-owned businesses with additional services.

Fox Valley Technical College Foundation (Outagamie) received \$99,895 to provide Innovation Accelerator training for two cohorts (Winter 2024 / Spring 2025) involving entrepreneurship training, networking, mentoring, and seed funds (\$1,000) for program graduates.

Wisconsin Women’s Business Initiative Corporation (Milwaukee) received \$100,000 to promote veteran entrepreneurs through Guided Business Planning courses and regional small-group

seminars, provides laptops and QuickBooks access, and distributes seed money to select participants upon graduation.

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