

WDVA ENTREPRENEURSHIP GRANT PROGRAM (FY-22)

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

During this grant period, the Department may award up to \$500,000 annually in grants to nonprofit organizations that serve veteran entrepreneurs. The Department may award grants to nonprofit organizations that assist veteran entrepreneurs with entrepreneurship training, technical or business assistance, or other assistance to veteran entrepreneurs. The Department has allocated \$300,000 to be awarded during this grant period.

To be eligible, a nonprofit organization must meet all the following:

- Provide entrepreneurship training, technical or business assistance, or other assistance to veteran entrepreneurs.
- Is current on all federal and state tax obligations.
- Is a financially viable nonprofit organization. A nonprofit organization is financially viable if it can meet its financial obligations as they become due for the duration of the grant period.
- Is registered and in good standing with the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions (WDFI). **Please note, WDVA will not be responsible for ensuring this information is accurate and up to date. It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide the document showing they meet this requirement.**

The following attachments are required for the Entrepreneurship Grant and must be submitted with the application:

- Grant request cover letter that includes a synopsis of the grant proposal and amount of grant requested.
- IRS determination letter certifying 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(6) status.
- A description of the entrepreneurship training, technical, business, or financial assistance, or other entrepreneurship assistance that it provides to veterans.
- Income statement, balance sheet, and statement of cash flows for most recent fiscal year (independently audited).
- A detailed budget for the project.
- Most recent annual report or other literature summarizing the organization's program(s).
- WDFI Certificate of Status certifying applicant is registered as a nonprofit organization and in good standing.
- Disclosure of any other grants applied for or received from any other state agency for the same or similar purpose.
- Completed Application Checklist

For the previous year, the applicant **must** demonstrate all the following:

- Demonstrate, with **data and/or graphs**, past performance of expanding entrepreneur opportunities for veterans by providing services which may include entrepreneurship training, technical and business assistance, financial assistance, or other entrepreneurship services to veterans. **Please be specific and detailed in your response.**
- Demonstrate, with **data and/or graphs**, past performance increasing collaboration with other agencies to strengthen delivery of programs, resources, and services to veteran entrepreneurs. **Please be specific and detailed in your response.**
- Demonstrate, with **data and/or graphs**, past performance expanding outreach to underserved geographic areas of the state and underserved veteran populations. **Applicant must be specific in how they achieved success in this area. Applicant is to provide underserved geographic locations served, and demographics of individuals served in past performance.**

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EVALUATION CRITERIA

In addition to the application and attachments above, the following items must be submitted with the application and in the following order:

1. **Background and Organizational History:** Please describe in detail, your organization, organization's mission, goals, and how your organization's program services and supports the needs of Wisconsin veteran entrepreneurs.
2. **Organizational Qualifications and Past Performance:** Please describe in detail, your organization's experience providing entrepreneurship training, technical business assistance, financial assistance, and/or other entrepreneurship services to veterans. Please provide specific examples of efforts made by your organization to be diverse and inclusive. Additionally, please provide the organizations experience working with diverse groups.
3. **Experience Working with Veterans:** Please describe in detail, your organization's experience with the collaboration and coordination of services for veterans with the veteran business community, federal, state, local, and tribal governmental entities. Additionally, please provide the organization's experience working with underserved veteran populations to include, but not limited to, those veterans that are listed under the VA Center for Minority Veterans.
4. **Need for Grant Funding, including a detailed budget:** Please describe in detail, the need for funding that addresses the service needs of veteran entrepreneurs. This is to include current issues facing veteran entrepreneurs and how your program or project supports these needs. Include a detailed budget outlining expenses to be incurred; describe the services available to veterans, advertising, target audience, additional sources of funding, expected challenges and how they will be overcome. Detailed budgets will include all costs, direct and indirect, associated with the project or program.
5. **Outreach and Referral Plan:** Please describe in detail, your organization's plan for outreach in underserved populations and underserved geographic areas of the state. Include your plan for receiving participant referrals, how you will identify veterans for the program, and how you will assess the needs of veteran entrepreneurs. In your plan provide the demographic information of the underserved populations and geographical locations you will be conducting outreach to.
6. **Program Implementation Timeline:** Please describe in detail, your implementation plan (who, what, where, when, and how) and timeline for providing services to veteran entrepreneurs under this grant.
7. **Monitoring and Program Evaluation:** Please describe in detail, the financial and operational controls your organization has in place to ensure the proper use of grant funds. Also describe how your organization will monitor and evaluate program effectiveness and measure success.
8. **Program Goals and Objectives:** Please describe in detail, the program goals, initiatives, and goals to be reached, and the methods to be employed to achieve the stated goals. Program goals and objectives will ensure they address the needs of underserved populations and underserved geographic areas of the state. **It is important to be specific in your response.**
9. **Past Working Relationships with other start-up businesses and entrepreneurship programs:** Please provide three (3) letters of support from **start-up businesses or entrepreneurship programs** your organization has worked with in the past three (3) years. One support letter shall come from an organization that works with underserved populations or underserved geographic area of the state. **Letters of support shall be dated within the current six (6) months of this application announcement.**

IMPORTANT NOTICE: To be considered for an Entrepreneurship Grant, the complete application, including all supporting documentation, must be received by the date and time indicated in the Public Notice Announcement **and** submitted at one time in packet form.

Applications that do not contain all the requested materials, as detailed above, will be **considered incomplete** and will not be evaluated. If an incomplete application is received, the applicant will be notified that the application is incomplete. The applicant must submit a complete application by the date and time indicated in the Public Notice Announcement and submitting a prior incomplete application does not change the deadline. Previously submitted applications shall not be used to make a resubmission whole.

Complete applications, including all required supporting documentation, may be sent via email or postal mail to:

Grants Unit
Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs
Division of Veterans Benefits
P.O. Box 7843
Madison, WI 53707-7843
Email: vetsbenefitsgrants@dva.wisconsin.gov
Phone: 1-800-947-8387

(Grants sent via postal mail must be postmarked by the date indicated in the Public Notice Announcement)

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GRANT SCORING

The Evaluation Committee, comprised of at least one member of the Board of Veterans Affairs and other individuals appointed by the Department, shall weight the importance of each evaluation criterion by using a numerical point system based on the following point values from the criteria listed above:

- Background and Organizational History (up to 5 points)
- Organizational Qualifications and Past Performance (up to 10 points)
- Experience Working with Veterans (up to 10 points)
- Need for Grant Funding, including a detailed budget (up to 10 points)
- Outreach and Referral Plan (up to 25 points)
- Program Implementation Timeline (up to 5 points)
- Monitoring and Program Evaluation (up to 5 points)
- Program Goals and Objectives (up to 15 points)
- Past Working Relationships with other start-up businesses and entrepreneurship programs (up to 15 points)

Using the evaluation criteria specified above, the Evaluation Committee will evaluate each application against each applicable criterion and assign points signifying the degree to which the application meets the criterion up to the maximum number of points. The total points assigned to the application for all applicable criteria will be the score for the application. The Evaluation Committee will numerically rank each application.

The Department shall award grants to the applicants with the highest numerical scores determined under the criteria above as funds are available. The amount of each grant will be based on the amount requested and the amount approved by the Evaluation Committee. The grant award shall not exceed the amount requested.

Please note that sending additional information not required for this application will not increase the applicant's overall score. Scoring will be strictly limited to the outlined criteria.

Timeline (Subject to Change)

Date	Timeline Milestones
October 01, 2021	Grant opportunity announcement
November 01, 2021	Deadline for submitting applications
November 02 - 09, 2021	WDVA completes review all applications for qualifications and forwards to Evaluation Committee
November 09 – 19, 2021	Evaluation Committee will review grant applications and make recommendations to WDVA Secretary
November 22 – 24, 2021	WDVA Secretary completes review of grant recommendations by the Evaluation Committee
November 29, 2021	Award notices issued via email and hard copy sent via mail
December 03, 2021	Signed Grant Agreements by awardees due to WDVA
December 06, 2021	Grant award processed via ACH to awardees



WDVA ENTREPRENEURSHIP GRANT PROGRAM (FY-22) GRANT APPLICATION

Organization Information

Name of Organization:			
Legal Name, if Different:			
Physical Street Address:	City:	State:	Zip:
Mailing Address (Include P.O. Box, if applicable):	City:	State:	Zip:
Additional Locations:			
Contact Name:		Executive Director:	
Email:		Telephone:	
Fax No.:		Website Address:	
Federal Tax I.D. Number		Date of IRS 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(6) Determination Letter:	
WDFI Status in Good Standing as of:		Number of Dues Paying Members, if applicable:	
Number of Years in Service:		Number of businesses served annually by your organization:	

Board Member Information

(Attach additional sheets if necessary)

Board Member Name:		Title:
Occupation:	Phone Number:	Email:

Board Member Name:		Title:
Occupation:	Phone Number:	Email:

Board Member Name:		Title:
Occupation:	Phone Number:	Email:

Terms and Conditions

It is understood and agreed by the undersigned that:

1. By submitting this application, I certify to the best of my knowledge and belief, the information submitted is true and correct.
2. All application materials must be submitted at the same time as the application. An application that does not have all requested materials, in order, as outlined in the instruction sheet will be considered an incomplete application and will not be evaluated.
3. If an incomplete application is received, the applicant will be notified that the application is incomplete, and the applicant must resubmit a complete application. The applicant must submit a complete application by the date and time indicated in the Public Notice Announcement and submitting a prior incomplete application does not change the deadline. Previously submitted application materials will not be used to make a resubmission whole.
4. By submitting this application, I certify that the applicant is registered and in good standing with the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions (WDFI) as a 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(6) nonprofit organization and the grant funds will be used solely to benefit eligible veterans and their dependents located in the State of Wisconsin.
5. **Funds granted as a result of this request are to be expended for the purposes set forth herein from the effective date of this agreement through June 30, 2022**, and in accordance with all applicable laws, regulations, policies, and procedures of this state. Funds granted may not be used to supplant existing employee wages and compensation and may not be used to purchase capital equipment unless specified in the grant award. Grant funds shall only be used for the payment or reimbursement of reasonable and appropriate expenses to the approved purpose of this grant. Any other use of grant funds is prohibited. No extensions will be granted this grant period.
6. Grant funds may not exceed more than 50 percent of employee wages, compensation, and related expenses assignable to the approved purposes of the grant for new staff hired or supporting program. Grant funds may not be used to purchase capital equipment unless specified in the grant award and approved by the evaluation committee.
7. Grant funds may not be used to make loans or be used for repayment of loans or mortgages.
8. Grantee may not charge interest or otherwise financially profit from the funds awarded, may not reassign grant funds, and shall comply with any other restrictions as determined by the Department.
9. Grant funds shall be **maintained in a separate account** subject to audit by the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs.
10. Any grant funds awarded shall be paid via ACH payment.
11. As a condition of receiving the grant funds, each Grantee will be required to sign an Entrepreneurship Grant Agreement. Grant funds awarded may be reduced, suspended, or terminated at any time for violations of any terms and requirements of this Entrepreneurship Grant Application or the subsequently entered into Entrepreneurship Grant Agreement.
12. As a condition of receiving the grant Funds, each Grantee must submit a certification request to the Department to verify eligibility of each grant participant. Services can only be provided by the Grantee to grant participants verified by the Department as eligible on forms approved by the Department.
13. Any proposed changes in this grant request as approved shall be submitted in writing by the applicant, and upon notification of approval by the Department, shall be deemed incorporated into and become part of this Entrepreneurship Grant Application.

14. By submitting this application, I certify that the applicant has disclosed and will continue to disclose any occurrences or events that could have an adverse material impact on the project. Adverse material impact includes, but is not limited to, lawsuits, criminal or civil actions, bankruptcy proceedings, regulatory interventions, or inadequate funding for the purposes listed in this grant application.
 15. This application, any subsequently entered into Entrepreneurship Grant Agreement, and other materials submitted to the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs, may constitute public records subject to disclosure under Wisconsin Public Records Law, § 19.31, Stats.
 16. The applicant agrees to comply with all state and federal civil rights laws of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
 17. By submitting this application, I certify that the applicant is compliant with applicable state and federal laws, rules, and regulations, including tax laws and requirements of the grant award.
 18. The applicant agrees that no grant appropriated funds will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, any member of the Wisconsin Legislature, or an employee of a member of the Legislature in connection with the awarding of any state contract, the making of any state grant, the making of any state loan, the entering into any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any state contract, grant, loan or cooperative agreement. The applicant further agrees that no grant appropriated funds will be used to contact, or urge the public to contact, members or employees of any legislative body for the purpose of proposing, supporting, or opposing legislation, or to advocate the adoption or rejection of legislation.
 19. By submitting this application, I certify that the designated signatory official has the authority to sign on behalf of the applicant and has the authority to accept funds on behalf of the applicant.
-

The undersigned certifies they are authorized to complete this application.

Signature

Date

Print Name and Title



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APPLICATION CHECKLIST

The application checklist is used to ensure all required information is included in your submission. All items on the checklist must be gathered, presented in packet form, and submitted to WDVA. **This checklist is a required part of the applications packet and shall be completed accurately, completely, and signed by the applicant.**

Name of Organization:

Amount Requested:

Required for a Complete Application

- Grant Request Cover Letter.
- IRS Determination Letter (name on letter must match application name).
- Description of entrepreneurship training, technical business, and/or entrepreneurship assistance.
- Financials (income statement, balance sheet, statement of cash flows).
- Detailed Budget Proposal.
- Annual Report or literature summarizing the organization’s programs.
- WDFI Certification of Status.
- Disclosure of other grants applied for and or received.
- Previous years’ demonstrations of past performance outlined in application.
- Business Plan using Evaluation Criteria (outlined in the application and instruction sheet).
- Completed & Signed Application.

For descriptions or further instructions on the above, please refer to the instruction sheet with the application for the grant. Once we receive this checklist and completed application packet, a representative from WDVA will review your packet to ensure all required information has been received.

Applicant Print Name & Title

X _____
Applicant Signature

Date

Reviewed by: _____
WDVA Representative Name & Title

Date Reviewed



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SERVICE DELIVERY REPORT REQUIREMENTS

Below are the requirements to submit your Service Delivery Report (SDR) to WDVA by July 31, 2022. Please keep this form readily available in order to properly report out the outcomes of your program and grant funds expended. We appreciate all you do to support veteran entrepreneurs in Wisconsin and look forward to reviewing the outcomes and impact on the community.

The SDR consists of two sections; (1) outcomes related to veterans, and (2) outcomes related to veteran businesses.

- Please begin by providing a cover letter summarizing the SDR and the initial purpose/intent of the grant request.
- Please provide the grant amount requested and the grant amount received. Include a detailed YTD expense report listing the costs incurred by the grant program. (ex. Grant staff costs, supplies, marketing, travel, etc.).

Outcomes Related to Veteran Entrepreneurs

- Specify the number of veterans assisted with grant funds and dollar amount of grant funds applied to each veteran assisted.
- Specify the type of assistance given to each veteran with grant funds.
 - These can include, but are not limited to, outreach and development services and activities.
- Describe the expansion of or various outreach activities funded by the grant in underserved geographic areas of the state and underserved veteran populations.
- Describe the measurable outcomes of grant funds applied to each veteran assisted.
 - Include success stories on how or what the grant provided and contributed to the veteran’s success.

Outcomes Related to Businesses Owned/Started by Veteran Entrepreneurs

- Specify the number of veteran entrepreneurs planning to start a business.
- Specify the number and location of grant funded veteran owned businesses created.
- Specify the number of veteran jobs created by the entrepreneurs and how employment outcomes were improved.
- Specify the number of veteran owned businesses served through the program funded by the grant.
- Specify any businesses that increased revenue year over year due to the program or services provided by the grant funds to include the amount, name, contact and location of the business.
- Describe any other measurable outcome and share business success stories.

Acknowledgement of SDR Provided

Grantee - Print Name & Title

Organization Name

X

Grantee – Signature

Date

WDVA Employee Reviewer - Print Name

Date

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Our organization is not considered a registered 501(C)(3) or a 501(c)(6). Are we eligible to apply?

No, the Entrepreneurship Grant funds are for nonprofit organizations that are registered as a 501(C)(3) or 501(c)(6).

Our organization is not registered with the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions (DFI/WDFI) but we are in good standing. Are we eligible to apply?

The organization must be registered and in good standing with the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions (DFI/WDFI) by the application deadline of **November 01, 2021**.

Our organization is not based in Wisconsin, but we operate in Wisconsin. Are we eligible to apply?

If your application clearly demonstrates that your organization is a registered 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(6), is registered and in good standing with WDFI, and all grant funds are to benefit the veterans of the state of Wisconsin, you may apply for the grant.

How are the applications graded for consideration?

All applications are rated based on a 100-point system. The criteria and point system are located on the grant application.

Who makes the final determination for the grant?

The Evaluation Committee, comprised of at least one member of the Board of Veterans Affairs and other individuals appointed by the Department, evaluates the applications on a 100-point scale as described in the grant application.

Are there any similar grants that you offer for nonprofit organizations?

WDVA offers a Nonprofit Grant Program available to registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations that provide assistance to veterans and/or their families. The announcement was published **July 1, 2021**. The eligibility requirements and the deadline to apply for the grant is listed in the announcement. The grant period for the fiscal year 2022 Non-Profit Grant is currently closed.

The Veteran Employment Grant is an incentive program to support businesses hiring honorably discharged veterans with a 50 percent or more service-connected disability. To learn more, please go to the WDVA website and select the Benefits/Employment/Employer Resources tabs.

<https://dva.wi.gov/Pages/educationEmployment/EmploymentEmployers.aspx>

What is the amount that we can request for the grant?

For this grant period there will be no maximum amount that can be applied for.

Does our organization have a better chance of being approved based on the amount requested?

There is no recommended amount in which to apply for. The amount applied for will not impact the approval or denial of the grant award. The amount requested should be in relation to the planned program. Applicants are evaluated based on multiple factors as described in the application.

We are a new organization and do not have an annual report. What documents are acceptable to submit?

Per the application, you can also submit other literature summarizing your program(s).

We are a new organization and do not have income statement and balance sheet for the most recent fiscal year.
Please submit your organizations business plan and full budget plan with your application.

The name of our organization has changed since we requested our nonprofit status from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Will we need to provide any additional documentation to reflect this?

Yes, per the application, a letter from the IRS is required as verification of your organization's tax status. The name on the IRS letter must match the name of the applicant on the application. It is not permitted to have another organization with proper status serve as a surrogate applicant or sponsor. You will need to provide the necessary documentation that the IRS determines your specific organization's (name on the application) status as a 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(6).

If our organization is awarded the grant, will the funds go directly to us or our head organization?

The funds will be dispersed to the "Applicant" listed on the application. A separate bank account for the funds will be required as stated in the terms and conditions of the application.

Can a veteran from out of state attend a training class given by an Entrepreneurship Grant recipient in Wisconsin?

The grantee is responsible for determining eligibility of veterans for the program(s). For a grant participant to receive services from the grantee that are funded by this grant, a grantee must submit a certification request to the Department to verify eligibility of each grant participant. Services can only be provided by the grantee to grant participants verified by the Department as eligible on forms approved by the Department. The attending veteran must meet requirements of Wisconsin Statute § 45.01(12) and reside in Wisconsin. Violation of this use may result in an obligation to return the full grant award.

Can a grant recipient use the funds for a different purpose or add another item after the grant has been received?

The grant funds must be used for the intended purpose as outlined in the original grant proposal, subsequently approved by WDVA. Violation of this use may result in an obligation to return the full grant awarded.

Can the grant be used for employee salaries?

Grant funds are not to be used to supplant existing employee salaries. Not more than 50 percent of grant funds may be used for employee wages, compensation, and related expenses assignable to the approved purpose of the grant for staff hired exclusively to implement and administer the program(s). Violation of this use may result in an obligation to return the full grant awarded.

Are the grant funds equally disbursed by the number of applications received?

The total amount of the grant, \$300,000 is pooled and awarded based on the scoring criteria. WDVA retains full discretion on the amount of any award determined, including caps on awards to provide a wider distribution within the state.

Can the grant be used for start-up costs?

Yes, a nonprofit grant request/proposal could include (for the veteran) actual start-up costs, entrepreneurship training, technical assistance, etc.

What is the preferred method to submit the application?

You may only mail or e-mail your application. WDVA does not permit faxing the application due to transmittal issues and the potential for poor printing quality. Please note: If you select to mail your application, please include four copies, as described in the application. WDVA may be working remotely, therefore, we recommend that you email your application to the email address listed on the application and announcement.



If I send the application via postal mail, does it need to be received by you by/on the deadline?

No, if the application is postmarked before the application deadline of **November 01, 2021**, it is considered to be submitted on time.

The grant announcement lists an e-mail address for sending an application. Is there a specific person that I can send to the application to directly?

The e-mail address listed in the announcement is a general inbox address for grant applications. This email address will ensure a timely delivery versus if you send it directly to a WDVA employee.

If I forget to include anything with the application, will you let me know?

The applicant will be notified of an incomplete application and will be instructed to resubmit a complete application. Please see application instruction sheet.

How will I know if you received my application?

WDVA will contact the individual listed on the grant application once we have received your completed application.