

Dept. of Veterans Affairs: Gov. Walker announces \$400,000 for non-profits to help veteran entrepreneurs

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MADISON — Governor Scott Walker and Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) Secretary Dan Zimmerman announced today \$400,000 in grants to non-profit organizations that provide entrepreneurship training, or technical, business or other assistance to veteran entrepreneurs to improve employment outcomes.

“We are proud to support veterans who are choosing to invest in themselves to create businesses right here in Wisconsin,” said Governor Walker. “We want to invest in our veterans because they bring unique skills, shaped from their time in the service, to our workforce.”

“Veterans are a powerful and valuable presence in the workforce,” Secretary Zimmerman said. “Hundreds of Wisconsin employers offering thousands of jobs are seeking Veterans for their businesses. However, many other Veterans desire to be their own bosses. WDVA is excited to support organizations helping Veterans realize their business dreams through our Entrepreneurship Grant program.”

There are about 360,000 veterans living in Wisconsin, about half of those are working age. Approximately 11% of all businesses in the state, or 65,000, are veteran owned. Wisconsin’s veteran owned businesses account for about \$20 billion in annual sales.

Grant recipients include:

- **Ashland Area Development Corporation**, Ashland, is awarded \$33,333 to provide mentorship, professional instruction, and customized coaching to

veterans who new businesses in the Chequamegon Bay area. The grant will also provide some program participants with a lease and free incubator services in the Ashland Area Development Corporation Enterprise Center.

- **Fox Valley Technical College Foundation, Inc.**, Appleton, is awarded \$94,708 to conduct Innovation Accelerator for Veterans programs at Fox Valley Technical College to help veterans start or expand their own business. The grant will be used to provide entrepreneurial training and technical support, networking opportunities, one-on-one mentoring, and assistance with accounting and legal fees, etc. for veterans.
- **Horse Sense for Special Riders**, La Crosse, is awarded \$25,000 to offer career-building skills such as volunteer management, fundraising, scheduling, marketing, and non-profit administration, as well as lessons in therapeutic horsemanship for veterans.
- **Indianhead Community Action Agency, Inc.**, Ladysmith, is awarded \$19,000 to provide veterans with the technical assistance necessary to start or expand small businesses, as well as to provide outreach to veteran entrepreneurs in northwestern Wisconsin.
- **Wisconsin Veterans Chamber of Commerce**, Milwaukee, is awarded \$100,000 to expand economic opportunity for Wisconsin veterans, military service members and military families. The grant will be used to help veteran entrepreneurs leverage existing resources, offer educational programming to veterans, help veterans address the unique challenges as they start and grow a business, and organize a new market of consumers.
- **Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation**, Milwaukee, is awarded \$127,959 for a Veterans Cohort Pilot Project that will support the formation of all-veteran cohorts in the *Start Run & Grow* business planning series that teaches prospective entrepreneurs the fundamentals of running a business while providing expert advice on developing a business plan, as well as other resources such as mentoring and networking opportunities.