

Gov. Evers, Dept. of Veterans Affairs: Announce more than \$620,000 in grants to organizations helping Wisconsin veterans and families

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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today with Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) Secretary Mary Kolar announced \$620,940 in grants were awarded to 16 registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations that provide financial assistance, entrepreneurship training, or other services to Wisconsin veterans and their families.

“Our veteran community in Wisconsin is at its best when organizations work together to provide care and assistance to our nation’s heroes,” Gov. Evers said. “Especially after a difficult year for all of us, when many of our most vulnerable veterans are hurting, it is critical that we support these important organizations that can serve as a lifeline to veterans and their families.”

Since starting in 2015, the WDVA’s grant programs have awarded more than \$1 million in funding to organizations that have a goal of ensuring Wisconsin veterans and their families are properly cared for, and more than \$770,000 in funding to non-profit organizations that provide entrepreneurship or technical, business, or other assistance to veteran entrepreneurs to improve employment outcomes.

“By supporting these 16 organizations through the WDVA’s Non-profit Grant and Entrepreneurship Grant programs, we are further honoring our commitment to service and maintaining Wisconsin’s status as a national leader in offerings to veterans and their families,” Secretary Kolar said. “We must ensure we take care of those who have sacrificed so much in our defense and provide them with the tools and resources they need to prosper.”

The WDVA is proud partners with these and other community and nonprofit organizations across the state, forming a network that has resulted in thousands of in-need veterans receiving vital assistance and resources.

This year's Non-profit Grant recipients are:

C.O.T.S., Inc., (Appleton) is awarded \$25,000 for supporting and providing veterans experiencing homelessness with a safe and affordable place to live, food, household needs, and training on basic living skills.

Family Health Center of Marshfield, Inc., (Marshfield) is awarded \$25,000 to establish a fund for the provision of additional financial assistance to veterans for dental care, effectively reducing or eliminating all out-of-pocket dental expenses for many veterans in need.

Fox Valley Veterans Council, Inc., (Appleton) is awarded \$25,000 to provide for basic needs and to continue two vocational programs in collaboration with the Fox Valley Technical College. The program helps veterans by providing the necessary tools for employment and purchasing books for veteran students through the Veterans Book Assistance Fund. The grant funds will provide limited monthly rent payments enabling veterans and their families to obtain housing. In addition, the grant funds will assist with the costs associated with veterans moving into the Wisconsin Veteran's Village.

Heroes for Healthcare, Inc., (West Allis) is awarded \$25,000 to continue to provide free services for veterans who have or are transitioning from military medical fields and seeking healthcare employment in Wisconsin. This grant will allow Heroes for Healthcare to lay the groundwork to create a program based on the foundation of Virginia's Military Medics and Corpsmen Program. In addition, grant funds will assist in the hiring of an administrative coordinator, marketing, and reduce veterans' costs not covered by the GI Bill.

HorseSense, Inc., (La Crosse) is awarded \$25,000 for their HorseSense for Heroes program, which provides therapeutic equine services to veterans and their families. The grant will be used to support the program through the continued employment of a Veterans Program coordinator and supervisor and to provide care for horses, supplies, and equipment for lessons.

Milwaukee Homeless Veterans Initiative (West Allis) is awarded \$25,000 to be

used for general operating expenses and to support numerous programs for veterans and their families. Those programs include Crisis Management, the Emergency Food Pantry, and the Women Veterans Initiative.

New Community Shelter, Inc., (Green Bay) is awarded \$5,000 to support programs including the Emergency Shelter Program for Veterans and the Transitional Living Program for Veterans. Both programs provide veterans with shelter, case management, case management services, employment, education, and life skills services.

Rock Valley Community Programs, Inc., (Janesville) is awarded \$5,000 to support the rehabilitation and repair of 12 veterans transitional housing service apartments. Rock Valley Community Programs provides transitional housing to veterans with studio style apartments; case management; educational groups for emotional regulation; life skills training; sobriety maintenance; health, wellness, and addiction therapy; and substance abuse recovery services.

Trinity Equestrian Center Kids Kamp, Inc., (Eau Claire) is awarded \$25,000 to support their pilot program, Forgotten Veterans, which is a collaboration between Trinity Equestrian Center and Stanly Correctional Institution. Trinity Equestrian Center will conduct Equine Assisted Psychotherapy for incarcerated veterans battling PTSD, depression, anger, and anti-social behavior.

United Service Organizations (USO) Wisconsin (Milwaukee) is awarded \$25,000 to continue the support for and expansion of programs at Fort McCoy to include mobile centers, food, new staff, expansion of storage, event supplies, and technology.

Wisconsin Veterans Chamber Foundation, Inc., (Milwaukee) is awarded \$25,000 to support the creation of the Veterans Economic Wellness Report. The Wisconsin Veterans Chamber Foundation will engage with researchers at UW-Milwaukee to compile available data and research, and create an annual report providing accurate information on issues impacting the quality of life of Wisconsin veterans and their dependents to identify and monitor the critical needs of Wisconsin's veteran population.

Wisconsin Veterans Network, Inc., (West Allis) is awarded \$15,000 to support the Intake, Assessment, and Advocacy Programs, including salaries for their Navigators and emergency funds used to assist veterans in crisis situations.

This year's Entrepreneurship Grant recipients are:

Fox Valley Technical College Foundation, Inc., (Appleton) is awarded \$99,940 to conduct two Innovation Accelerator for Veterans cohorts, which provide entrepreneurial training and technical support, networking opportunities, one-on-one mentoring, and seed funds for startup/growth expenses.

Greater Green Bay Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Inc., (Green Bay) is awarded \$75,000 to support a new connecting point for veterans through coordination with their Startup Hub and Urban Hub entrepreneurial spaces. The initiative will work to assist transitioning service members and spouses and connect them to veteran-ready employers prior to separation.

Wisconsin Hero Outdoors (Pewaukee) is awarded \$96,000 to support and expand the Veteran Internship Program. The program allows veteran-students, particularly those in underserved populations, to obtain firsthand experience on how to start a nonprofit organization and how to operate and grow the organization. The grant funds will allow the program to increase the number of veteran-student participants by hiring a development director to oversee the program and allow WHO to increase advertising.

Wisconsin Veterans Chamber of Commerce, Inc., (Milwaukee) is awarded \$100,000.00 to support the Veteran Business Initiative program. The grant funds will be used to support education, networking, and promotional programming dedicated to supporting veteran-owned businesses across Wisconsin. By coordinating existing resources, offering educational programming for veterans, and organizing a new market of consumers, the program aims to create opportunities for sustainable growth of veteran-owned business.